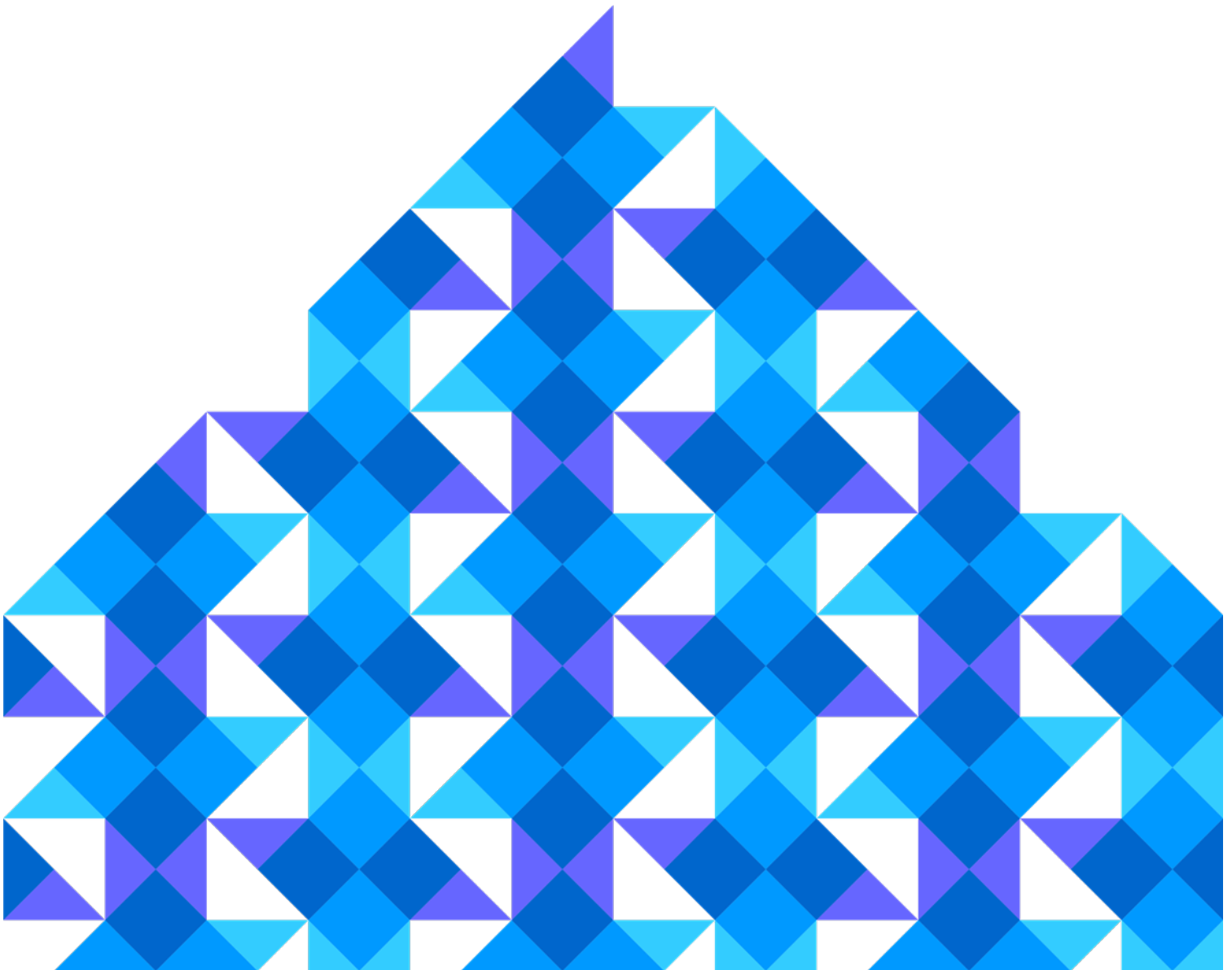


Disability rights, strategies and cross-sectoral governance in Europe



Swedish Agency for Participation, 2023

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Preface

Disability policy aims to create pre-conditions for inclusion and the realisation of human rights of all persons with disabilities. The policy area is wide and complex, implementation and governance are cross-sectoral and multi-layered to respond to the variety of needs of persons with disabilities in different societal areas. Persons with disabilities have the right to participate in society on equal terms with others. People's different backgrounds or conditions should not be decisive for participation.

The EU and its member states are parties to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Parties to the CRPD, use regional and national strategies and action plans to implement and monitor the progress.

In 2021, the European Union adopted the Strategy for the rights of persons with disability 2021-2030. The ambition to reach the goal of inclusion for all is high, the actions many and the flag ship initiatives of the strategy have the potential of contributing to the societal changes that are needed. To succeed, hard and systematic work on regional and national level is needed. Sweden wants to support and contribute to this important process.

In order to highlight and raise awareness of the EU strategy as well as other disability strategies and to facilitate the important exchange of knowledge and experiences, the Swedish government decided to organise a seminar on disability policy during the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2023. The government appointed the Swedish Agency for Participation to organise the seminar together with the European Commission and in dialogue with other relevant stakeholders.

In order to increase knowledge within the area of disability policy in the European context, the Swedish Agency for Participation commissioned the management consultancy company Governo AB to conduct an overview of available national and international disability strategies and models for cross sectoral governance. The overview aims to expand knowledge about how international and national actors within the European cooperation use disability policy to improve the conditions for inclusion. In addition to presenting an overview of disability strategies that exist at an international and national level, the overview also looks at the occurrence of cross-sectoral governance in the policy work.

This overview mirrors the diversity of ways of meeting the need for societal change through developing, adopting, implementing and monitoring disability strategies. Still, it only shares a glimpse of all the hard work that is done throughout the region. However, we hope it can contribute to fruitful dialogues, knowledge and experience exchange about this important topic.

The Agency for Participation would like to thank all participating actors and individuals for so generously contributing to the overview. We have received not only information on the strategies that are described in the overview but also about ongoing drafting processes of strategies that are to be adopted and published in the near future.

Malin Ekman Aldén
Swedish Agency for Participation

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Introduction

The protection from discrimination guaranteed in human rights treaties, and grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, should apply to all. However, in the rights debate persons with disabilities remain largely invisible, often excluded and denied from enjoying and exercising the full range of human rights.¹ Despite that the right to participation is stated in international agreements, European and national legal frameworks as well as it is fundamental for developing a sustainable society, persons with disabilities still face discrimination and barriers that restrict them from inclusion.

In the European Union (EU), by putting disability policy high on the agenda, several actions have contributed to improving the situation in a number of areas. This includes guaranteeing access to buildings, information and transportation etc. Accessibility and Universal design are therefore as a part of disability policies in the forefront in preventing disability. In the member states, persons with disabilities have the right to income support that ensures their living in dignity, services that enable them to participate in the labour market and in society and a work environment adapted to their needs. However, persons with disabilities still face considerable barriers in access to healthcare, education, employment, recreation activities, as well as in participation in political life.²

It takes time to bring about social changes, to read out and to achieve measurable effects. The work for the desired social change must be well coordinated, stable and long-term. Accessibility and a Universal design approach require a restructuring of societal policies in many areas. The aim of that work is to contribute to an accessible and equal society for all people regardless of functional ability.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (hereafter UNCRPD, CRPD or Convention) was adopted in 2006 and is an important human rights instrument that reaffirms that all persons with disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Convention contains no new rights but clarifies what is required for people with disabilities to have their rights

¹ The United Nations. *About the human rights of persons with disabilities*. See link: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/disabilities/about-human-rights-persons-disabilities>

² The European Commission (2021). *Union of Equality: Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2021-2030)*. See link: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8376&furtherPubs=yes>

fulfilled like everyone else and where adaptations must be made to effectively exercise their rights, and areas where their rights have been violated, and where protection of rights must be reinforced. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (hereafter CRPD Committee or Committee) is the United Nation's body of independent experts which monitors the implementation of the Convention by the States parties. The Committee examines each report and makes recommendations to strengthen the implementation of the Convention in that state. It forwards these recommendations, in the form of concluding observations, to the state party concerned.³

According to the human rights model of disability, disability is a social construct, which can be removed. It is the barriers within society, rather than personal functional impairments, that primarily exclude persons with disabilities.⁴ The Convention aims to enhance the opportunities for people with disabilities and enables a cross-sectoral change to prevent and eliminate barriers through accessible environments, services and information. It also strengthens social rights with regard to compensating for impairments.

The Convention has a significant importance for the achievement of the human rights and as of today, 185 countries have ratified it.⁵ By 2018 all EU Member States had ratified the Convention, thus committing alongside the EU to complying with the obligations under the Convention and to setting up the mechanisms for its implementation and coordination.⁶ Efforts are being made to implement the Convention at international, regional and national level. Even though the Convention is not in itself legally binding, the countries that have ratified it, have undertaken to act in accordance with its content and incorporate its intentions and content into national law and is therefore not optional.⁷

³ The United Nations. *Introduction to the Committee*. See link: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/crpd/introduction-committee>

⁴ [ibid.](#)

⁵ The United Nations. *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)*. See link: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>

⁶ The European Parliament (2021). *Understanding EU policies for persons with disabilities (2021)*. European Parliamentary Research Service. See link: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/698811/EPRS_BRI\(2021\)698811_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/698811/EPRS_BRI(2021)698811_EN.pdf)

⁷ UNA Sweden. *How the UN protects the human rights*. See link (in Swedish): <https://fn.se/vi-gor/vi-utbildar-och-informerar/fn-info/vad-gor-fn/fns-arbete-med-manskliga-rattigheter/sa-skyddar-fn-de-manskliga-rattigheterna/>

The European Union's ratification of the CPRD

The European Union is the only international organization to have ratified the Convention. In March 2021, the European Commission adopted the *Union of Equality: Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030*. With this ten-year strategy, the European Commission wants to improve the lives of persons with disabilities in Europe and around the world.⁸ The strategy highlights the EU's own structures and commitments as a party to the Convention, as well as what needs to be implemented at national level. The strategy emphasizes the importance of cross-sectoral governance at a national, regional and local level for a successful implementation and that the reinforced action by the Member States is a key factor.

The EU needs a provision in EU treaties to undertake any act, including ratifying international agreements. This legal act, along with the content of the final agreement, will determine who in the EU needs to vote on the final agreement. More specifically:

- The EU: both the Council of the European Union (the grouping of the 27 EU governments) and European Parliament,
- Or the EU plus member states' legislatures. Naturally this is a much more complicated process.

On the 30:th of March 2007, The EU signed the Convention on its opening day for signature and was ratified and entered into force 22:th of January 2011.⁹ Following formal ratification, it is the first time in history the EU has become a party to an international human rights treaty.¹⁰ The EU's ratification and strategy have had a significant impact on national policy level, including:

- Accessibility requirements for procurement
- Requirements for the structural funds
- Transport rights

⁸ The European Commission. *Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion*. See link: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1484>

⁹ The European Commission. *Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion*. See link: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1138>

¹⁰ The European Commission. *EU ratifies UN Convention on disability rights (2011)*. See link: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_11_4

- Web accessibility
- The Accessibility Act etc.

Parties to the Convention need to periodically inform the CRPD Committee about the measures taken to implement it. EU Member States must also submit individual implementation reports to the UN for matters falling under their competence.¹¹

The role of EU member states

Member States are bound to enforce the Convention in line with their commitments as state parties but also as member states of the EU. In this process, member states implement the Convention in their own national context and in parallel also contribute to enforcement of EU actions under the Convention. The Convention has a quasi-constitutional status within EU law, being hierarchically below the Treaties but above secondary EU law. Accordingly, the latter must be interpreted consistently with the Convention.¹²

For the EU-level, national disability strategies and action plans can play an important role in coordinating and guiding the implementation of the Convention by highlighting areas which will be prioritized at the national level.¹³ It remains the primary responsibility of Member States to develop their national disability policies in line with their obligations to implement the Convention and in line with applicable EU-rules.¹⁴

The European Commission will support member states in shaping their national strategies and action plans to further implement the Convention and the EU legislation in the field. Furthermore, the Commission calls on member states to contribute to this new and reinforced strategy as the framework for EU actions and for the implementation of the Convention.¹⁵

¹¹ The European Commission. *Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion*. See link: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1138>

¹² The European Commission. *The International and European Framework of Disability Law*. See link: http://www.era-comm.eu/UNCRPD/e_learning/B/introduction.html

¹³ The United Nations. *Disability Strategies and Action Plans by Country/Area*. See link: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/strategies.html>

¹⁴ The European Union. *Union of Equality - Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2021-2030, p.5)*. See link: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8376&furtherPubs=yes>

¹⁵ The European Commission. *Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion*. See link: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1484>

Other international cooperation on disability policy and CRPD

The Council of Europe and the Nordic Council of Ministers are two other examples of how international cooperation collaborate around disability policy. With regards to the Convention, neither the Council of Europe nor the Nordic Council of Ministers are parties to the Convention as regional bodies, but each one has developed disability strategies that aims to support and strengthen work on the national implementation and monitoring of the Convention.¹⁶ Since these actors have not ratified the Convention, they don't report back to the UN. Yet, their strategies are important documents, which makes their role important for the intergovernmental cooperation.

Description of the overview

EU Member States and other state parties to the Convention, are key actors to implement the Convention involving governments, parliaments and other stakeholders at various levels. Based on the premise that the cross-sectoral perspective is significant for the living conditions for people with disabilities and the fulfilment of the CRPD as in removing obstacles that disables as it is described in the Convention, this overview describes examples of national and international strategies of countries that are part of the European Disability Platform (EU-member states) and countries included in EEA, UK and Switzerland. The strategies are summarized based on the following five themes:

- Areas in focus and general measures for inclusion
- Integration of international agreements
- Cross-sectoral management, implementation and monitoring
- Involvement of organizations that represent persons with disabilities
- Integration of gender equality and child rights perspective

The last chapter contains descriptive case studies of how strategies are implemented in six different countries. The aim is to highlight country specific examples which can be considered promising or good, also to visualize opportunities and challenges.

¹⁶ The Nordic Council of Ministers. *Action Plan for Nordic Co-operation on Disability (2018 to 2022)*. See link: <https://www.norden.org/en/publication/action-plan-nordic-co-operation-disability-2018-2022>

The overview of each strategy is limited to only summarize the information that concerns the five earlier mentioned themes which were selected by The Swedish Agency for Participation with consideration to that the themes are central aspects in the implementation of the UNCRPD as well as Agenda 2030. Other themes that are potentially mentioned in the strategies are not included in this project.

Selection of countries and international actors

The initial selection of countries were countries that are all part of the European Disability Platform (EU-member states) and countries included in EEA, UK and Switzerland, as well as international cooperations that include European countries. However, not all strategies of these countries were available in English and some had expired. For that reason, all of the strategies from the initial selection are not presented in this overview.

Strategies from the following international actors and cooperations are included in the overview:

- The United Nations
- The Council of Europe
- The European Union
- The Nordic Council of Ministers

National strategies from the following countries are included in the overview and have been summarized based on complete versions or summaries of their national strategies that were available in English:

- Bulgaria
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- Germany
- Hungary
- Latvia
- Malta
- Norway
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- United Kingdom

Selection of countries for descriptive case studies

The selection of countries for the descriptive case studies was made by Governo and The Swedish Agency for Participation. The selection is based on information found in the available strategies that highlight examples of the country's approach to one or several of the five themes that were described. Furthermore, it was important to study a heterogeneous group of countries based on geographic location and size of population.

The following countries are included in the descriptive case studies:

Focus areas for descriptive case studies	Countries
Areas in focus and general measures for inclusion	Finland, Malta, Norway, Sweden, Latvia and Spain
How the strategies are connected to relevant international agreements	Finland and Malta
How the implementation of the strategies is governed cross sectoral, including the distribution of responsibility and monitoring	Norway and Sweden
Involvement of organizations that represent people with disabilities	Spain and Finland
The integration of gender equality and child rights perspectives	Latvia and Spain

The overview was conducted through desktop research. Each strategy document was retrieved from websites provided by the European Union and the United Nations.

The descriptive case studies were carried out through interviews with representatives from responsible authorities from each country. The interview guide was sent to the informants before the interview. As a complement to the interviews, the representatives from each country also sent their answers in writing in order to assure an accurate portrayal of the countries as possible.

The data collection was carried out between October 2022 - January 2023.

The European Union's strategy

Name of strategy: Union of Equality - Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Period: 2021-2030

Owner of the material: The European Commission

Introduction

In March 2021, the European Commission adopted the Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030.¹⁷ With this ten-year strategy, the European Commission wants to improve the lives of persons with disabilities in Europe and around the world.

The Strategy builds on the results of the previous European Disability Strategy 2010-2020,¹⁸ which paved the way to a barrier-free Europe and to empower persons with disabilities so they can enjoy their rights and participate fully in society and economy. Despite the progress made in the past decade,¹⁹ persons with disabilities still face considerable barriers and have a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion.

The objective of this Strategy is to progress towards ensuring that all persons with disabilities in Europe, regardless of their sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, age or sexual orientation:

- Enjoy their human rights
- Have equal opportunities, equal access to participate in society and economy
- Are able to decide where, how and with whom they live
- Move freely in the EU regardless of their support needs and no longer experience discrimination

¹⁷ The European Commission. *Union of Equality - Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2021-2030)*. See link: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8376&furtherPubs=yes>

¹⁸ The European Union. *European Disability Strategy 2010-2020: A Renewed Commitment to a Barrier-Free Europe*. See link: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM%3A2010%3A0636%3AFIN%3Aen%3APDF>

¹⁹ The European Commission. *European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 helped to remove barriers*. See link: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1484&furtherNews=yes&newsId=9835>

This new and strengthened Strategy takes account of the diversity of disability comprising long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments (in line with Article 1 of the CRPD), which are often invisible.²⁰

Addressing the risks of multiple disadvantage faced by women, children, older persons, refugees with disabilities, and those with socioeconomic difficulties, it promotes an intersectional perspective in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).²¹

The new strategy therefore contains an ambitious set of actions and flagship initiatives in various domains and has numerous priorities, such as:

- Accessibility: being able to move and reside freely but also to participate in the democratic process
- Having a decent quality of life and to live independently as it focuses notably on the de-institutionalisation process, social protection and non-discrimination at work
- Equal participation as it aims to effectively protect persons with disabilities from any form of discrimination and violence, to ensure equal opportunities in and access to justice, education, culture, sport and tourism, but also equal access to all health services
- Promoting the rights of persons with disabilities globally²²

Areas in focus and general measures for inclusion

- Employment
- Education
- Healthcare
- Housing
- Justice, legal protection, freedom and security

²⁰ The European Commission. *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. See link: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1138&langId=en>

²¹ The United Nations. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. See link: <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

²² European Commission. *Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion*. See link: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1484&langId=en>

- Social protection
- Art and culture
- Recreation
- Leisure
- Sport
- Tourism

Integration of international agreements

UN

The adoption of the CRPD in 2006 marked a breakthrough in setting minimum standards for rights of persons with disabilities. The EU and its Member States are parties to the CRPD and are progressing with its implementation. (p.4)

As party to the CRPD the EU had to set up a framework in order to promote, protect and monitor implementation of the Convention. In this respect, a specific EU framework has been put in place consisting of the European Ombudsman, the Committee on Petitions of the European Parliament, the Fundamental Rights Agency and the European Disability Forum, each performing their tasks in an independent manner but in coordination. The EU framework oversees areas in the CRPD where the Member States have transferred competences to the EU as well as the implementation of the UNCRPD by the EU institutions. (p.31)

Agenda 2030

This Strategy will help to achieve a Union of Equality and to strengthen Europe's role as a global partner in combatting inequalities, achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals and promoting human rights. (p.6)

The EU calls on all states to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of persons with disabilities as reflected in all policy initiatives shaping the next decade. It is essential that external action respects and implements the CRPD principles alongside the Agenda 2030, mainstreaming the Universal Design approach for better accessibility and provision of reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities into all actions. The EU will do this using all its tools ranging from political, human rights and trade dialogues to cooperation with third countries in the EU's neighbourhood, enlargement and international partnership policies covering also humanitarian action and cooperation with multinational organizations. (p.23-24)

Cross-sectoral management, implementation and monitoring

Building upon the experience from the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, the Commission will set up a framework to monitor the implementation of this Strategy, which will also provide input for the European Semester, the Social Scoreboard and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. (p.31)

Monitoring the progress in Member States will rely on improved statistical data collection on the situation of persons with disabilities, and information on national policies and practices complementing reporting by the Member States to the dedicated CRPD Committee. A new dashboard will present progress made in implementing the activities at EU level under this Strategy as well as those in which the Commission calls on Member States for action. The Commission will continue monitoring the implementation of EU disability legislation. Further, it will consider whether to fine-tune actions on the basis of a mid-term report of this Strategy. (p.31)

On behalf of the EU, the European Commission as EU focal point regularly reports to the CRPD Committee on the EU implementation of the Convention. To that end, the Commission will collect information, including from the European Parliament and the Council as well as from within the Commission services.

In order to make effective monitoring possible, quality data together with long-term research are an indispensable prerequisite. This includes insights into what the green and digital transitions mean for persons with disabilities. Though Eurostat provides survey data for key areas, existing data collection does not cover all relevant areas yet and is not always frequent enough to identify trends. (p.31)

The Commission will reinforce data collection in all areas where gaps have been identified, including data on those living in institutions and research on disability under the EU Research and Innovation Framework Programme Horizon Europe (2021-2027) integrating an intersectional approach. Based on more comprehensive data collection, the Commission will strengthen monitoring of disabilities in the context of the European Semester. (p.31)

Involvement of organizations that represent persons with disabilities

The EU continues to support civil society organizations to ensure that representatives of persons with disabilities can participate in all relevant processes through specific and inclusive structured dialogues at EU, partner countries and global level. These trigger exchanges on strategic initiatives and best practices in combination with a wider dissemination of results. (p.24)

The Commission will reinforce structured dialogues with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, ensure their representation in relevant political processes and their consultation on relevant Commission proposals. It will continue to finance work by organizations of persons with disabilities contributing to implement the UNCRPD through the Citizenship, Equality, Rights and Values program. (p.30)

EU delegations provide support to advance the rights of persons with disabilities, guidance to implement accessibility and ensure meaningful consultation of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations based on existing good practices. Furthermore, EU-funding will be used to raise awareness for the needs of persons with disabilities using civil protection meetings with the Civil Protection Forum and the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network. (p.22)

The Commission established the Disability Platform in 2021. It replaces the previous High-Level Group on Disability and supports the implementation of this Strategy as well as national disability strategies. It will bring together national CRPD focal points, organizations of persons with disabilities and the Commission. The Platform could be used as a forum to exchange on the UN's assessments of Member States' implementation of the CRPD. (p.26)

As regards to staff selection, the inter-institutional European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) will update its targeted communication and outreach strategy, further develop its network of disability partner organizations, its expertise in reasonable accommodations, as well as its training and service catalogue. (p.29)

Integration of gender equality and child rights perspectives

The rights of children and youth with disability

The EU will continue to uphold the human rights of persons with disabilities and support their social inclusion in all international relations, and as part of all external action, policy planning, funding programs and activities. Attention must also be paid to children and young people with disabilities, especially in conflict and post-conflict societies or developing countries, where protection, access to school and basic services are often lacking. (p.23)

Many children and young persons with disabilities are enrolled in special schools which do not always offer effective bridges to the mainstream education system, continued training, or to the labour market. No sufficient systematic research has been carried out so far on the Conditions necessary for learners with disabilities to succeed, including learners with invisible disabilities such as autism, dyslexia, or hyperactivity. Confinement measures during the COVID-19 pandemic added

urgency to develop measures making inclusive and accessible remote learning an option for all. (p.18)

Education policies will continue to be supported by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. The Commission will collect policies and practices promoting educational achievements of persons with disabilities in the Member States to feed into policymaking. Synergies with a view to access and quality of education including early childhood and care will be exploited with the forthcoming EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child and the European Child Guarantee. (p.18)

Despite the right to access mainstream vocational education and training, the proportion of young persons with disabilities being referred to special vocational schools is high. This is often due to the general lack of accessibility and reasonable accommodation, and insufficient support provided to learners with disabilities in mainstream vocational training settings. The transition to the open labour market is more difficult than from mainstream educational settings. Moreover, participation of persons with disabilities in adult learning is lower compared to persons without disabilities. (p.12)

The Commission calls on Member States to:

- Implement good practices of deinstitutionalization in the area of mental health and in respect of all persons with disabilities, including children, to strengthen the transition from institutional care to services providing support in the community. (p.14)

The Commission will:

- Issue in 2021 a toolkit for inclusion in early childhood education and care, which includes a specific chapter on children with disabilities. (p.19)
- Support Member States to further develop their teacher education systems to address shortages of teachers in Special Needs Education and competences of all education professionals to manage diversity in the classroom and develop inclusive education. (p.19)

Gender equality

This Strategy promotes an intersectional perspective, addressing specific barriers faced by persons with disabilities who are at the intersection of identities (gender, racial, ethnic, sexual, religious), or in a difficult socioeconomic or other vulnerable situation. Among persons with disabilities, women, children, older persons, homeless persons, refugees, migrants, Roma and other ethnic minorities need particular attention. (p.6)

In its initiatives for digitalization of justice systems, protection of victims' rights and training for professionals, the Commission takes account of disability in line with the UNCRPD. Digitalization of judicial systems is essential for improving access to justice, including for persons with disabilities when accessibility is provided. The Commission will pay particular attention to women with disabilities who are two to five times more likely to face violence than other women. (p.16)

Mainstream support services need to be inclusive of and accessible for children with disabilities and older persons, while being gender- and culture-sensitive. Persons with disabilities have a higher risk of becoming victims of violence and abuse both in their home environment and in institutions, in particular women, older persons and children with disabilities. (p.21)

Furthermore, the EU strives for targeted action on disability as well as disability mainstreaming in its external action. The EU's Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 and the EU Gender Action Plan III 2021-2025 lay out the EU's ambitions to step up action to combat all forms of discrimination that persons with disabilities face, with a specific attention to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, in accordance with its human rights guidelines on non-discrimination in external action. (p.24)

Other examples of international strategies

The United Nations

Name of strategy: The United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy

Period: 2018 - until further notice.

Owner of the material: The United Nations

Introduction

The United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy²³ provides the foundation for sustainable and transformative progress on disability inclusion through all pillars of the work of the United Nations: peace and security, human rights, and development.²⁴

The Strategy will play a key role in enabling the United Nations system to support Member States in their achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the implementation of the CRPD, the Agenda for Humanity and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, among other international human rights instruments, as well as development and humanitarian commitments. (p.3)

The organizations of the United Nations system commit, through the policy, to accelerating efforts to support the achievement of the inclusion of persons with disabilities and their human rights through the practical implementation of the globally agreed commitments contained in the United Nations treaties, conferences and summits and their follow-up, in particular the 2030 Agenda etc. (p.5)

This policy establishes the highest levels of commitment and a vision for the United Nations system on disability inclusion for the next decade and is aimed at creating an institutional framework for the implementation of the CRPD and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, among other international human

²³ United Nations. *United nations disability inclusion strategy (2018 - until further notice)*. See link: https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/assets/documentation/UN_Disability_Inclusion_Strategy_english.pdf

²⁴ United Nations. *Disability Inclusion Strategy*. See link: <https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/>

rights instruments, as well as for development and humanitarian commitments. (p.1)

Areas in focus and general measures for inclusion

The main elements of the strategy include:

- Strategic planning regarding the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities and their human rights
- Coherence, coordination and knowledge and information management
- Oversight through monitoring, evaluation and audit
- Participation
- Data
- Universal design, accessibility and reasonable accommodation.
- Capacity development
- Awareness-raising and trust building
- Human and financial resources (p.7)

Integration of international agreements

UN

The organizations of the United Nations system reaffirm that the full and complete realization of the human rights of all persons with disabilities is an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. This is consistent with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments, in particular the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, as well as applicable International Labour Organization conventions, and is essential for the advancement of development, human rights and peace and security. (p.5)

Cross-sectoral management, implementation and monitoring

United Nations inter-agency networks, and the internal networks of the various entities, such as those of disability and accessibility focal points, interdepartmental task forces and staff unions and federations, will proactively support the implementation of the policy. (p.7)

The framework includes indicators that specify the core areas of responsibility of the United Nations as a whole and of individual departments and units in relation to the mainstreaming of disability inclusion. The 15 performance indicators will be rated according to a graduated scale and will support progressive improvement in institutional mainstreaming in the United Nations system. The aggregation of reporting at the United Nations system level will facilitate:

- System-wide planning to determine the comparative advantage of the United Nations and individual entities, promote synergies and reduce duplication
- Assessment of progress and gaps in the Organization's work on mainstreaming disability inclusion. (p.9)

The framework is based on a decentralized model, according to which accountability for meeting and exceeding requirements for specific indicators lies with individual staff, units and departments. This is because disability inclusion is the responsibility of all United Nations staff. Disability units and focal points will play a catalytic and coordinating role in relation to meeting and exceeding requirements but cannot be expected to make the United Nations fit for purpose without the full support of the entire Organization. (p.9)

The Secretary-General's Senior Adviser on Policy has been designated to provide initial high-level leadership, guidance and coordination support with regard to the implementation of the Strategy. (p.10)

Furthermore, the development of the Strategy was led by the sub-working group on system-wide action of the Inter-Agency Support Group on the CRPD between October 2018 and March 2019. The Strategy was developed through the intensive participation of nearly 60 United Nations entities, inter-agency networks and civil society organizations, as well as in consultation with Member States. The Strategy was validated through piloting/validation with 21 entities. (p.4)

Through the accountability framework, all United Nations staff will have a full understanding of their role in promoting and facilitating the inclusion of persons with disabilities and their human rights, well-being and perspectives across the Organization and be empowered to fulfil that role. Individual United Nations entities will retain their ability to add or enhance their internal approaches to

accountability and will retain their ability to take into account their specific mandates and roles. (p.7)

While the entire United Nations system is expected to report against the framework, not every indicator in the framework is applicable to every United Nations entity, given the variety of entity functions. The framework has been designed to ensure that progress can be promoted and tracked across organizations in a clear and impactful manner to ensure that all entities are monitoring progress and embedding disability inclusion. (p.9)

The framework is based on a decentralized model, according to which accountability for meeting and exceeding requirements for specific indicators lies with individual staff, units and departments. This is because disability inclusion is the responsibility of all United Nations staff. Disability units and focal points will play a catalytic and coordinating role in relation to meeting and exceeding requirements but cannot be expected to make the United Nations fit for purpose without the full support of the entire Organization. The policy will be subject to an external review after five years. (p.8)

Involvement of organizations that represent persons with disabilities

The Strategy was developed through the intensive participation of nearly 60 United Nations entities, inter-agency networks and civil society organizations, as well as in consultation with Member States. (p.4)

From the outset, persons with disabilities and their representative organizations have played an active role, including through participation in briefings and meetings and contributions to the drafting process. International Disability Alliance, an umbrella organization that comprises organizations of persons with disabilities, has been an active participant. The International Disability and Development Consortium, a civil society organization that works on disability issues, contributed to the drafting. (p.22)

Strategic planning regarding the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities and their human rights will be further strengthened throughout the United Nations system, in close consultation with and actively involving representative organizations of persons with disabilities. (p.7) Furthermore, the United Nations, in the development and implementation of normative frameworks and policies, and in other decision-making processes concerning issues relating to persons with disabilities, will closely consult and actively involve all persons with disabilities, including women and children with disabilities and those most marginalized, through their representative organizations. (p.8)

Integration of gender equality and child rights perspective

The rights of children and youth with disability

The United Nations, in the development and implementation of normative frameworks and policies, and in other decision-making processes concerning issues relating to persons with disabilities, will closely consult and actively involve all persons with disabilities, including women and children with disabilities and those most marginalized, through their representative organizations. Staff members with disabilities and those who have dependents with disabilities will, themselves and through staff unions and federations, also be consulted and involved, in particular on matters involving their career development, well-being, social benefits and health coverage. (p.8)

Gender equality

Synergies with other United Nations accountability mechanisms, in particular the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the United Nations country team performance indicators on gender equality and the empowerment of women, were built into the Strategy during development and will be further strengthened during its roll-out, taking into account feedback and input, as appropriate, from the High-level Committee on Management, the High-level Committee on Programmes and the United Nations Sustainable Development Group. (p.9) Furthermore, the Strategy was modelled on the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, which has been recognized by Member States as a pioneering accountability framework. (p.4)

The Council of Europe

Name of strategy: Council of Europe Disability Strategy

Period: 2017-2023

Owner of the material: The Council of Europe

Introduction

The Council of Europe promotes, protects, and monitors the implementation of human rights for all, including persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities are entitled to have access to and enjoy, on an equal basis with others, the full range of human rights safeguarded by the European Convention on Human

Rights, the European Social Charter, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other international treaties. The Council of Europe Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – Human Rights: A Reality for All – outlines the Organisation’s priorities in the period 2017-2023.²⁵ (p.5)

The overall goal of the Strategy is to achieve equality, dignity and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in specific areas where the Council of Europe can make an input. This requires ensuring independence, freedom of choice, full and active participation in all areas of life and society. (p.5)

Council of Europe Legal Standards:

- All legal standards of the Council of Europe apply equally to all persons, including all persons with disabilities.
- The European Convention on Human Rights provides the foundations for the Council of Europe work to protect and promote human rights for all, including the rights of persons with disabilities. The European Court of Human Rights has enshrined these rights in its case law and plays an important role by prompting States to undertake legislative changes to safeguard human rights of persons with disabilities.
- The European Social Charter contains specific rights for persons with disabilities, in particular Article 15 (right of persons with disabilities to independence, social integration and participation in the life of the community) and Article E (providing that the rights of the Charter shall be secured without discrimination on any ground).
- Other legally binding standards especially relevant to the rights of persons with disabilities include: The Council of Europe Conventions on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention); on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention); and on the Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. (p.8)

Areas in focus and general measures for inclusion

The Strategy has five rights-based priority areas. They are anchored in the European Convention on Human Rights and other Council of Europe standards promoting and protecting human rights. Each of them is also connected to

²⁵ The Council of Europe. *Council of Europe Disability Strategy (2017-2023)*. See link: <https://rm.coe.int/16806fe7d4>

corresponding Articles of the CRPD, aiming at its implementation in practice. The priority areas are:

- Equality and non-discrimination
- Awareness raising
- Accessibility
- Equal recognition before the law
- Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse (p.11)

The interpretation and implementation of these priority areas will be done in line with the CRPD, the evolving body of decisions, guidelines and General Comments of the CRPD Committee, the developing case law of the European Court of Human Rights, the decisions of the European Committee of Social Rights and policy and legislative developments at the level of the EU. (p.6)

Integration of international agreements

UN

This strategy sets out the commitment of the Council of Europe and its member States to make the rights a reality for all persons with disabilities, regardless of their impairments. This includes children and young persons with disabilities, wherever they are placed and without discrimination, in line with the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2016-2021 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This also includes older persons, in line with the Council of Europe recommendation on the promotion of human rights of older persons. (p.7)

The member States and other stakeholders, while implementing the Strategy should take into consideration the developments within the Council of Europe, as well as in the UN, on the interpretation and implementation of the CRPD. Additionally, international standards on social responsibility, including corporate social responsibility, aimed at promoting the engagement of private sector and business enterprises in respect of the implementation of human rights at the level of the UN Global Compact and the SDGs, will be used to improve the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the society. (p.6)

Agenda 2030

At the UN level, in addition to many interagency actors on disability all work to promote the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society and the full and equal access to and enjoyment of all human rights by persons with disabilities on the basis of the CRPD. The Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs) as well as the Global Compact, including Social Corporate Responsibility, also have disability-related dimensions. (p.32)

Cross-sectoral management, implementation and monitoring

The implementation of the Strategy by the member States and the Council of Europe will include co-operation with the government representatives to the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It will also include co-operation with national focal points, co-ordination mechanisms and independent frameworks, as they are established nationally under Article 33 of the CRPD as well as with civil society. (p.34)

The implementation of the strategy will be based on a “twin-track” approach. One track comprises specific projects, campaigns, trainings, activities, etc. organized at national and local levels by national stakeholders in the member states. The second track consists of mainstreaming disability-related issues in all the work and activities of the Council of Europe. The member States and other stakeholders, while implementing the Strategy should take into consideration the developments within the Council of Europe, as well as in the UN, on the interpretation and implementation of the CRPD. This includes the UN Global Compact and SDGs. Training within the Council of Europe on issues related to the human rights of persons with disabilities will be provided as needed and requested by the different sectors within the Organization. (p.34)

The monitoring of the strategy will focus on strengthening cooperation in the field of disability and will allow for effective exchange of information, experience and good practices both within the organization and in the member States. (p.34)

To assess progress in the implementation of the Strategy at the level of the Council of Europe and its member States, the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities will prepare biennial reports to be brought to the attention of the Committee of Ministers. The biennial report will take into account, among others and where applicable, recommendations by the independent monitoring mechanisms and various other structures within the Council of Europe, relevant case-law of the European Court of Human Rights, disability rights-related events, campaigns and publications, as well as legislative and structural developments at the international, regional, national and local levels. (p.35)

All Council of Europe work on issues related to disability rights will continue to pay particular attention to synergies, co-operation and coordination. This includes cooperation with national focal points, coordination mechanisms and independent monitoring frameworks. This also includes cooperation with other regional and international organizations, civil society, service providers, specialized agencies,

the media, the private sector, academia, independent experts and in particular organizations of persons with disabilities. (p.13)

To stimulate and facilitate the process of achieving the goals and strategic objectives of the strategy, the Council of Europe will foster internal cooperation and synergies with:

- The Committee of Ministers
- The Parliamentary Assembly
- The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
- The Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights
- The European Court of Human Rights
- The Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB)
- The Conference of the INGOs
- Steering committees, other inter-governmental bodies, Council of Europe monitoring mechanisms and partial agreements (p31)

The Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the intergovernmental group of experts open to all Council of Europe member States, has the mandate to support the implementation of the Disability Strategy, advise and involve the various stakeholders as well as liaise with relevant intergovernmental bodies, providing expertise and a forum for the exchange of good practices and issues of concern. (p.31)

The Strategy identifies five cross-cutting issues that need to be considered in all the Council of Europe work and in all its activities supporting member States. These issues are also essential for member States to take into consideration in their legislation, policies and activities and in all areas of life to improve the lives of persons with disabilities. The cross-cutting issues are:

- Participation, co-operation and co-ordination
- Universal design and reasonable accommodation
- Gender equality perspective
- Multiple discrimination
- Education and training (p.10)

The Council of Europe will seek to enhance cooperation, dialogue and synergies with international and regional organizations and other global actors to facilitate and ensure full access to and enjoyment of all human rights by all persons with

disabilities and the effective implementation of the CRPD. Other natural partners in the implementation of the Disability Strategy include:

- Parliaments
- National governments
- Local and regional authorities and their associations
- Professional networks, especially in the judiciary, law enforcement
- Journalism, education, health and social services fields)
- Trade unions and employers' associations
- Higher education institutions
- The media
- The private sector (p.33)

Involvement of organizations that represent persons with disabilities

Close consultation and active involvement of persons with disabilities of all ages through their representative organizations in the work of member State governments is obligatory, as stipulated in the CRPD. Participation and contribution of National Human Rights Institutions, Equality Bodies and Ombudsman Institutions and their regional and international networks is of high importance. This will improve mainstreaming and implementation of strategy priorities and the CRPD principles. The Council of Europe will seek to increase this co-operation in all fields of its activities. (p.8)

The governments of member states drive the implementation of the Strategy at national and local levels in close cooperation with persons with disabilities, represented by their organizations, and all other relevant stakeholders. These include National Human Rights Institutions, Equality Bodies, Ombudsman Institutions, service providers and civil society. (p.6)

In constantly changing societies new situations emerge. The ongoing economic challenges and the increasing number of refugees and persons seeking asylum within the member States has changed priorities and has had an impact on persons with disabilities and their support services. In order to mitigate the challenges, continuous attention to and action on the rights of persons with disabilities by the decision makers, persons with disabilities, their organizations and their family members, service providers, and the population in general is required. (p.8)

Additionally, the Council of Europe will seek to involve, engage and use the experience and expertise of civil society organizations and the organizations of

persons with disabilities, when relevant, in the development, implementation and assessment of policies, programs and activities, and encourages the member states to do the same at the national and local levels. (p.33)

Integration of gender equality and child rights perspective

The rights of children and youth with disability

This Strategy sets out the commitment of the Council of Europe and its member states to make the rights a reality for all persons with disabilities, regardless of their impairments. This includes children and young persons with disabilities, wherever they are placed and without discrimination, in line with the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2016-2021 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. (p.7)

To tackle multiple discrimination and its harmful effects, including to the development of children and young people, it is important to acknowledge that it exists and take it into consideration in all the work and activities within the Council of Europe and at national and local levels, including in the work of independent monitoring mechanisms. (p.15)

Furthermore, it's important to promote information, learning opportunities and protection measures for persons with disabilities to enable safe and responsible use of the new information and communication technologies and to avoid their harmful side effects. Such side effects include, among others, cyber-bullying, fraud and sexual abuse or exploitation through the social network sites, especially regarding children and young persons with disabilities. (p.23)

Gender equality

Gender equality means equal visibility, empowerment, responsibility and participation for both women and men in all spheres of public and private life. In the context of the Council of Europe, this means that gender equality concerns are included in the planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies, programs and activities in the field of disability and vice versa. It also requires the use of sex and disability disaggregated data and the equal participation of women and men in all programs and activities in this field. (p.14)

Women and girls with disabilities often face additional barriers and higher levels of discrimination in their access to human rights and activities in comparison to men. Women and girls with disabilities are also often at greater risk of all forms of violence, both within and outside the home. In order to mitigate these additional barriers and improve equality, a gender equality perspective needs to be employed in all work and activities within the Council of Europe and at national

and local levels, including in the work of independent monitoring mechanisms. (p.15)

Women and girls with disabilities, in particular, are exposed to a high risk of gender-based violence, the structural nature of which has been recognized by the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. Council of Europe bodies, member States and other relevant stakeholders should seek to:

- Provide and promote human rights-based and gender sensitive disability-related training including in the framework of Council of Europe programs (such as the HELP Program) for professionals in public and private sectors to enable them to recognize and react against exploitation, violence and abuse of persons with disabilities and the risk of multiple discrimination. (p.29)

The Nordic Council of Ministers

Name of strategy: Nordic Programme for Co-operation on Disability Issues 2023 to 2027

Period: 2023-2027

Owner of the material: The Nordic Council of Ministers

Introduction

Equal opportunities and security regardless of a citizen's gender, ethnicity, religion, belief, functional capacity, age, or sexual orientation are cornerstones of the Nordic welfare societies. Our social rights provide everyone with equal access to healthcare systems, social services, education, culture, and the labour market.

Human rights and participation are unwavering principles in Nordic co-operation on disability issues. When we look at human rights from an intersectional perspective, we show respect for the person's unique circumstances in our quest for equality and inclusion and in assessing the risk of a person being discriminated against. How a person is perceived or treated should not be based on just one thing, such as their gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or functional ability. Instead, we need to look at the person as a whole.

In the Nordic Region, we strive for sustainable social development based on the opportunities of those living in the region to enjoy individual freedom and self-fulfilment. By working together, the Nordic countries demonstrate the value and benefit of an inclusive society, where digital and physical environments are accessible to, and can be used by, everyone. The application of universal design

makes society accessible to everyone, not just those with disabilities. Disability policy is about building a sustainable society in which no one is excluded. (p.3)

Areas in focus and general measures for inclusion

Nordic Programme for Co-operation on Disability Issues 2023 to 2027²⁶ consists of three focus areas:

- Human rights
- Participation
- Freedom of movement

Integration of international agreements

UN

The United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) aims to promote, protect, and ensure that all persons with disabilities have full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as to promote respect for their inherent value. All the Nordic countries have ratified the UNCRPD and implement the Convention's principles and norms. There are several challenges shared by the Nordic countries as well as a common need for greater and better knowledge and positive examples of successful implementation. Activities within the human rights focus area not only support UNCRPD implementation processes but also involve other conventions and efforts relating to human rights and disability in general. (p.8)

The Nordic countries have made commitments to and participate actively in UN efforts to promote human rights. The Universal Declaration forms the basis of international efforts on human rights. The rights were embodied in a number of conventions, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Committee on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (CESCR). Of particular relevance to this programme for Nordic co-operation on disability issues are:

- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
- The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

²⁶ Nordic Council of Ministers. *Nordic Programme for Co-operation on Disability Issues 2023 to 2027*. See link: <https://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1717763/FULLTEXT03.pdf>

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). (p.5)

EU

In the spring of 2021, the European Commission published a new strategy for people with disabilities: Union of Equality: Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030. The purpose of the strategy is to ensure that people with disabilities can participate fully and equally in society. The EU and all its Member States have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Strengthening the implementation of the Convention is a shared goal promoted through the strategy. The key principles of the strategy are equal treatment and non-discrimination. (p.6)

Council of Europe

The Council of Europe has several publications in the field of disability, and on the situation of women and girls with disabilities in particular. The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention), which outlines the rights of women and girls to health and safety, is also relevant and has been adopted by all the Nordic countries. (p.6)

Agenda 2030

The three dimensions of sustainable development (green, competitive, and socially sustainable) underpin Nordic co-operation and create the conditions for equal opportunities and security for all. There is a clear link between Our Vision 2030 and the UN's Agenda 2030, in that work on the former helps to achieve the latter and to ensure progress toward the sustainable development goals (SDGs). (p.4)

Cross-sectoral management, implementation and monitoring

With the ratification of the UNCRPD, the State Parties report on the implementation to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. (p.9)

The Nordic Welfare Centre has a renewed mandate to compile knowledge about the implementation of the UNCRPD and follow up on the Nordic countries' reporting to the UN and the recommendations made by the UN in its review of national implementation. A survey of current research networks and projects will be conducted during the programme period. This will, in turn, provide information on how rights for people with disabilities in the Nordic countries are facilitated.

The survey shall also show the extent to which people with disabilities are involved in research. Together with national and Nordic actors and research organisations, the Nordic Welfare Centre will also be tasked with carrying out a review of how various international organisations, including organisations for indigenous peoples, are working to follow up on the UNCRPD. The way in which relevant stakeholders, such as the EU Disability Platform, are working with the UNCRPD should also be followed up on. (p.9-10)

The Nordic Council of Ministers works systematically to strengthen the disability perspective in all relevant policy areas. Efforts relating to the integration of disability perspectives in Nordic governmental co-operation concern: raising awareness, integrating and following up on disability perspectives in policy areas, and internal efforts relating to accessibility within the Secretariat to the Nordic Council of Ministers and its institutions. (p.12). There is value in the Nordic countries working together, comparing lessons learnt, and sharing good examples in relation to issues of multiple discrimination, minorities, welfare, and demographic development. (p.8)

International co-operation within the Council of Europe and the UN, as well as within the EU and other organisations, contributes to Nordic added value by way of increased opportunities for discussion, exchange of experience, and co-operation. Co-operation with the Baltic countries is also important. (p.4)

As a follow-up to the recommendations in the report Nordic indicators for co-operation on disability, during the programme period, statistics will be produced and compiled in four areas: discrimination, education, the labour market, and accessibility. The aim of these initiatives is to produce comparable statistics on disability in the Nordic Region, as well as knowledge on the region's implementation of the UNCRPD. (p.9-10)

An external evaluation will be conducted in 2024 and 2026. The results will be reported to the Committee of Senior Officials for Health and Social Affairs in connection with feedback on the programme and the work of the Council for Nordic Co-operation on Disability. The evaluator will have contact with the organisations responsible for the project management of each activity. A progress report will be compiled by the Nordic Welfare Centre in its role as the Secretariat to the Council for Nordic Co-operation on Disability for the Nordic Council of Ministers. Progress reports will be presented to the Nordic Council in 2023, 2025, and 2027. The programme will be reviewed after 2024 to ensure compatibility with the new vision action plan. (p.16)

Involvement of organizations that represent persons with disabilities

Through support schemes for Nordic co-operation between disability organisations, grants are provided for Nordic meetings and conferences relating to field-specific policies arranged by a national or pan-Nordic disability organisation. The support scheme strengthens Nordic cooperation between disability organisations throughout the Nordic Region and contributes to the exchange of experience and building of networks. (p.9)

Nordic co-operation is a prerequisite for developing knowledge in the area of deafblindness, as each individual country has too small a population of deafblind people to pursue this at the national level. This venture includes training and development work, and the co-ordination of cross-border efforts between enterprises and organisations involved in the field of deafblindness in the Nordic countries. Co-operation is primarily aimed at practitioners, authorities, and research environments. A key task is to co-ordinate the development and dissemination of knowledge in the Nordic Region by way of projects, working groups, seminars, and networks. (p.9)

Together with national and Nordic actors and research organisations, the Nordic Welfare Centre will also be tasked with carrying out a review of how various international organisations, including organisations for indigenous peoples, are working to follow up on the UNCRPD. (p.10)

Integration of gender equality and child rights perspective

Equal opportunities and security regardless of a citizen's gender, ethnicity, religion, belief, functional capacity, age, or sexual orientation are cornerstones of the Nordic welfare societies. Our social rights provide everyone with equal access to healthcare systems, social services, education, culture, and the labour market. (p.3)

Based on the message of Agenda 2030 – “Leave no one behind” – it is essential that the Nordic Region successfully integrates the perspectives of gender equality, children and young people, and disability. It is therefore important that these perspectives be integrated from the outset and throughout implementation. (p.4)

In order to strengthen the children's and young people's perspective in Nordic co-operation on disability issues, an annual expert meeting will be arranged with representatives from interest groups for young people with disabilities. The theme and content of the meetings shall be based on the needs and wishes of children and young people. New methods must also be developed to incorporate a children's and young people's perspective into adults' decisions and the structures

that are most often upheld from an adult perspective. In addition to discussions on current issues for children and young people with disabilities, the youth representatives will also receive information about the Nordic Council of Ministers' programme for co-operation on disability issues and the Council for Nordic Co-operation on Disability. (p.9)

Young people and adults with disabilities continue to experience exclusion from the labour market. The aim is to gather knowledge and compile statistics on people with disabilities and the labour market. Annual expert seminars and other Nordic meetings within this topic will be arranged during the programme period. (p.13)

Examples of national strategies in Europe

Bulgaria

Name of strategy: National strategy for persons with disabilities

Period: 2021-2030

Owner of the material: The council of ministers

Areas in focus and general measures for inclusion

Based on the identified challenges in the field of disability rights policy, the following key priorities have been defined to achieve the objectives of the current strategy²⁷ for the period up to 2030:

- Ensuring accessibility of the environment
- Ensuring access to inclusive education and providing opportunities for lifelong learning
- Ensuring the sustainability of affordable and quality health services, including access to habilitation and rehabilitation without discrimination on the grounds of disability
- Providing opportunities for work and employment and appropriate working conditions
- Providing opportunities for participation in cultural life, sports and leisure
- Ensuring social protection and support in the community
- Guaranteeing the rights of children with disabilities (p.20)

Integration of international agreements

The strategy was developed in connection with the implementation of national commitments to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with

²⁷ The council of ministers. *National strategy for persons with disabilities (2021-2030)*.

Disabilities (CRPD) and as a continuation of the previous national strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities. (p.3)

The national strategy will be guided by international and European standards for the protection of human rights, addressing issues of combating poverty and social exclusion, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the European Social Charter, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, The European Pillar of Social Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, and other relevant documents to which the Republic of Bulgaria is a party. (p.3)

Cross-sectoral management, implementation and monitoring

To perform the functions of promoting, protecting and monitoring the implementation of the CRPD, a Monitoring Council has been established, which will carry out its activities in compliance with the principles of protection and guarantee of the rights of persons with disabilities independence and publicity, cooperation and interaction with state and local authorities and civil society. The Council consists of 9 members - two representatives appointed by the Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria, two representatives appointed by the Chairman of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination, four representatives of organizations of and for people with disabilities, appointed by them, and one representative of the academic community, determined by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Its term is 4 years and begins to run from the filling of the staff. The Chairman of the Monitoring Council is a representative of the institution that administers its activities. (p.9)

The strategy will be implemented until 2030 through action plans that include activities, responsible authorities, financial resources and indicators. Taking into account the horizontal nature of the policy on the rights of people with disabilities, the implementation of the activities included in the plans under the respective measures will be carried out by the institutions and organizations that have implemented them, according to their competencies. (p.55)

It is important to ensure good coordination between the responsible institutions and to recognize commitments in the implementation of policies in support of people with disabilities in the country and to create conditions for interaction, consultation, open dialogue and sharing of responsibilities between all stakeholders. A key prerequisite for the effective implementation of these policies is the existence of good inter-institutional interaction and the implementation of an integrated approach. (p.56)

The integrated approach will help reduce intraregional and interregional disparities by promoting synchronization of strategic planning at regional and local level. The planned implementation of an integrated approach and the coordination of projects targeting areas with common characteristics and / or development potentials aim to support local development through an appropriate combination of resources and measures. The approach is based on close coordination of different public policies based on local specifics. The integration of different sectoral impact activities is a component of site-specific policy development. The approach to integrated territorial development of the regions aims to develop a model of partnership and promote cooperation between individual stakeholders at local and regional level - both between local authorities and other organizations (representatives of business and civil society), which are led by a common goal, will work together to solve common problems or exploit the potential for policy development for the rights of people with disabilities in the territory. (p.57)

On the one hand, it is necessary to improve the horizontal coordination between the different sectoral policies, and on the other - the vertical coordination between the different levels - national, regional and local. In this regard, the implementation of a mainstream approach to disability rights policy and the improvement of mechanisms for the implementation and coordination of all levels of governance between stakeholders and related parties are essential for achieving better governance and coordination. This creation and implementation of good mechanisms for reporting, evaluation, monitoring and analysis, as well as opportunities for flexible dealing with emerging problems in the implementation of policies. In view of the complex needs and the various difficulties and problems faced by people with disabilities, it is necessary to policy adaptation and effective decision-making to promote their social inclusion. (p.58)

Furthermore, the monitoring and evaluation in the process of implementation of the strategic goals is carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy based on the information received from the line ministries, institutions and organizations. The monitoring of the progress in the implementation of the objectives and measures of the Strategy and the achievement of the defined expected results will be performed based on a set of activities and key indicators. The implementation of the measures will be specified in biennial action plans and reports on their implementation. (p.58)

Involvement of organizations that represent persons with disabilities

The policy on the rights of persons with disabilities is implemented by state and local authorities in cooperation with the nationally representative organizations of and for persons with disabilities, the nationally representative organizations of

employers and nationally representative organizations of employees who create conditions and assist in the implementation of programs and projects in this area. (p.7)

The full and equal exercise of the rights of persons with disabilities is a national priority, requiring an active, purposeful and consistent policy, as well as uniting the actions of responsible institutions and organizations with the active participation of civil society. Promoting cooperation with organizations of and for people with disabilities, with civil society in general, is key, with a view to consulting on envisaged reforms and monitoring the implementation of the CRPD to achieve the objectives of the strategy. (p.6)

It is also important that organizations of and for persons with disabilities be encouraged and supported to build and develop their capacity to protect the rights and interests of persons with disabilities, given the implementation of activities for public benefit and advocacy for this target group. This will ensure the application of the basic principle that persons with disabilities themselves should be involved in all steps in the social inclusion process. (p.51)

Integration of gender equality and child rights perspective

The rights of children and youth with disability

In order to ensure equal access to quality education and to include every child and student, active work will be done to create conditions for providing support for personal development of children and students, which provides an appropriate physical, psychological and social environment for the development of abilities and their skills. (p.29)

Guaranteeing the rights of children with disabilities has been defined as a key priority to achieve the objectives of the current strategy for the period up to 2030. This priority is aimed at ensuring that children with disabilities have access to all the rights enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The main implementation activities of this priority are aimed at identifying and removing all existing barriers to guaranteeing the rights of children with disabilities. (p.53)

An important element in guaranteeing the rights of children with disabilities is the support of the family, the provision of timely medical care aimed at preventing abandonment, appropriate rehabilitation and medical treatment according to the identified disease. Providing opportunities for the child's development in all areas of life by providing free health and social services for both the child and his family. All measures under this priority are aimed at providing appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in fulfilling their responsibility for

raising children with disabilities and providing appropriate care services for children in this target group. (p.54)

Another key priority is providing access to inclusive education and providing opportunities for lifelong learning: Persons with disabilities in Bulgaria continue to face problems with access to education and training. Many of them drop out of school prematurely. Universal primary education is unattainable without the inclusion of children with special educational needs. Getting an education for children and students with special educational needs is an important factor for their successful inclusion in society. This priority focuses on educational training, which is key for children, students with special educational needs and adults with disabilities. Efforts will be focused on building tolerance and respect, as well as overcoming negative public attitudes towards disability and inclusive education. (p.28)

Gender equality

The leading strategic document in the development of the National Strategy is the National Development Program Bulgaria 2030 (NDP Bulgaria 2030), which defines the vision and general objectives of development policies in all sectors of government. The objectives are committed to “ensuring a healthy lifestyle and promoting well-being for all at all ages; ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and stimulating lifelong learning opportunities for all; achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls; ending poverty in all its forms everywhere, promoting sustainable, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all by 2030”. (p.4)

Due to the lack of information on the protection of people with disabilities, especially women, girls and boys with disabilities and persons still in institutions, on forms of violence and harassment, it is necessary to step up efforts to protect against exploitation, violence and harassment, including by conducting effective investigations into all cases, giving priority to the prosecution of cases of gender-based violence against women and girls with disabilities. (p.17)

Czech Republic

Name of strategy: National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities

Period: 2021-2025

Owner of the material: Government Board for Persons with Disabilities

Areas in focus and general measures for inclusion

- The areas in focus in the strategy are the following: Accessibility of buildings, transport, and roads
- Accessibility of information and public services
- Emergencies and critical situations
- Independent living
- Equality before the law and access to justice
- Family life
- Education and the school system
- Health and health care
- Rehabilitation
- Employing persons with disabilities
- Health assessment for individual social security sub-systems
- Caregivers
- Participation of persons with disabilities and their organizations in political and public life
- Access to cultural heritage and participation in cultural life and sporting activities
- Statistical data
- Coordination and monitoring of implementation of the national plan (p.3)

Integration of international agreements

UN

The national plan²⁸ focuses on strategic areas of support for persons with disabilities, which content follows the individual articles of the UN Convention on

²⁸ Government Board for Persons with Disabilities (2020). *National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (2021–2025)*. See link: https://www.vlada.cz/assets/ppov/vvozp/dokumenty/National-Plan-for-the-Promotion-of-Equal-Opportunities-for-Persons-with-Disabilities-2021_2025.pdf

the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The introduction to each strategic area includes the article or articles of the Convention to which the area applies. (p.27)

Council of Europe

The National Plan also follows up on a number of documents adopted at the European and international level. These are primarily human rights conventions and strategic documents of the Council of Europe and European Union, including legal regulations in the field of the rights of persons with disabilities. (p.16)

Another important instrument in this area is the Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017–2023. This strategy follows up on the preceding Action Plan 2006–2015 and identifies five cross-sectional areas that must be taken into account in all the activities of the Council of Europe and which member states should reflect in their legal regulations, policies and activities to improve all aspects of the life of persons with disabilities. (p.17)

In 2000, the EU Council adopted Directive 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation. The aim of this directive is not to create specific measures for persons with disabilities, but to remove obstacles preventing them from asserting their rights and integrating into society. The directive prohibits all discrimination, direct or indirect, on the basis of religion or faith, disability, age or sexual orientation. This directive has been integrated into the Czech legal code primarily through Act No. 198/2009 Coll., on Equal Treatment and Legal Means of Protection against Discrimination and on the Amendment of Certain Acts (Anti-Discrimination Act). (p.18)

Cross-sectoral management, implementation and monitoring

The coordinator ensuring implementation and monitoring of the National Plan is the Government Board for Persons with Disabilities (GBPD) that became the coordinating, initiative and advisory body of the Czech government for the issue of supporting persons with disabilities. Considering that this department does not have sufficient powers or staff to comprehensively advance equal rights for persons with disabilities, it acts primarily as a consultation site for ministries and other institutions that coordinate measures on the methods of implementation for National Plan tasks. (p.82) The central coordinator for implementing the strategy is the Government Commissioner for Human Rights, who is the Executive Vice-Chair of the GBPD. The function of coordinator is held by the GBPD Secretariat Department. (p.82)

At the central level:

- The Czech government

- The ministries: MT, MRD, MLSA, MJ, MEYS, MI, MH
- The Government Commissioner for Human Rights
- The GBPD
- The GBPD expert groups
- Non-profit NGOs associating and representing persons with disabilities (p.82)

At the regional and local level:

- Regions, municipalities
- Non-profit NGO:S associating and representing persons with disabilities (p.82)

Measures aimed at implementing the National Plan are assigned by Czech Government Resolutions and are thus binding for ministries and the organizations they run. In relation to regions, municipalities and non-profit NGOs, fulfilment of the National Plan is realized through cooperation and also the option of utilizing incentives. (p.82)

Each measure of the National Plan has a clearly defined deadline for implementation or is implemented on an ongoing basis, i.e., for the whole duration of the National Plan. Implementation of the National Plan will be checked every year through progress reports, which are to be submitted to the Czech government for approval. On the basis of these reports, potential modifications to both the text and deadlines of measures will be proposed. A comprehensive evaluation of implementation of the National Plan will take place along with the final interim progress report. (p.83)

Involvement of organizations that represent persons with disabilities

Organizations for persons with disabilities are associated under an umbrella organization – the Czech National Disability Council (hereinafter the "CNDC"), which was founded in 2000 and currently brings together more than 90 organizations for persons with disabilities. The members of the CNDC are organizations for persons with disabilities in which disabled persons, or their legal representatives form an absolute majority of the individual members. The primary objective of the CNDC is to defend, lobby for and fulfil the interests and needs of persons with disabilities in cooperation with state authorities and local governments in the Czech Republic and international institutions. (p.11)

The focal point of the CNDC's activities is primarily legislation, providing services and counselling for creating equal opportunities for the disabled in all

areas of life, public awareness, and working with other organizations for persons with disabilities at the international level. (p.10)

Furthermore, the activities of newly emerging associations of persons with disabilities focused primarily on two basic areas – defending the rights and interests of these persons and providing services that were needed but currently lacking. The activities of these organizations began to hone in on lobbying for what for them were essential legislative and organizational measures, spreading public awareness on the issue of disabilities, spreading awareness on treatment, rehabilitation, reconditioning and psychological care for persons with disabilities, publishing activities for its members and the lay and professional public, working together with similar organizations abroad, and (no less important) also the active use of free time (cultural and sporting events, trips, recreational sojourns for families with children, integrated camps for children, etc.). (p.10)

In order to make up for lacking or poorly functioning services, many associations became the founders or operators of various facilities providing services to persons with disabilities such as schools, educational facilities, care centres, counselling facilities, education and social rehabilitation and outreach social-service facilities (personal assistance, care service). (p.10)

Integration of gender equality and child rights perspective

The rights of children and youth with disability

The basic goal of the chapter Education of Children and Students with Disabilities is to apply the principle of inclusive education. Over the past five years, significant systemic changes have occurred in this area, helping improve the education of students with special needs, particularly in the availability of support measures for such students. However, it is still necessary to resolve a number of problems associated in particular with the quality of counselling services and ensuring sufficient staffing. To date no measures have been implemented for adopting standards for school counselling facilities for pupils with disabilities. It is also imperative to ensure that quality education be provided and that recommending education in such schools not be overused. (p.21)

Life in a family and a natural family environment is an important prerequisite for the mental and physical development of children. Some of the measures in the strategy concerning reduced numbers of children in institutional facilities are therefore focused on supporting families and family members with the goal of preserving or restoring the function of the family and increasing interest in alternative family care. It is particularly important to support the provision of assistance and support to parents and other persons taking care of children with

disabilities and the professionalization of foster care so as to prevent frequent changes of environment and caregivers. (p.52)

Gender equality

The Government Strategy for Equality of Women and Men in the Czech Republic is a strategy for the area of gender equality. It lays out the Czech government's policy, reflects the actual needs for institutional provision of equality between women and men and defines the issue of equality between women and men as a priority for all of society. It relates to the National Plan primarily in the area of domestic violence, i.e. violence against persons with disabilities. This area is dealt with specifically by the Action Plan for Preventing Domestic and Gender-Based Violence for 2019–2022, which focuses primarily on partner, intergenerational and sexual violence. Under the measures that should lead to more thorough prevention and more accessible assistance for victims, the position of persons facing multiple forms of discrimination, including that of persons with disabilities, is taken into account. (p.15)

1.6 Objective: To prevent violence against persons with disabilities.

- It is essential for increased attention to be paid to persons with disabilities as part of the system for assisting persons at risk of violence. These persons are often more vulnerable and defenceless against abuse in the family, community or institutions and need to receive instructions on how to prevent and recognize abuse, and they must also be able to report such acts so they can receive effective assistance.
- Measure 1.6.1 Focusing on prevention and raising awareness for persons with disabilities under the system for assisting people at risk of violence. (p.32)

Denmark

Name of strategy: The four principles of Danish disability policy

Period: 1980 – until further notice

Owner of the material: Ministry of Social Affairs and Senior Citizens

In Denmark, four ground principles have since the beginning of the 1980s formed the foundation of the work with the long-term visions and objectives for Danish

disability policy.²⁹ The four principles are the principle of equal treatment, the principle of compensation, the principle of sectoral responsibility and the principle of solidarity.

The long-term goal is to create an inclusive and diverse society based on respect for diversity, and where individual resources and opportunities are supported. But also, a society where responsibility and opportunities balance, and where the individual does his part to participate in and contribute to the community. In short, a society where the starting point for disability policy is the individual's encounter with the environment – not the disability.

Together with the principles of the CRPD, the four ground principles aim at supporting this development in the field of disability.

The principle of equal opportunities

- Everyone shall have equal opportunities to realize their dreams and potentials, including persons with disabilities.
- Public services shall aim at supporting persons with disabilities in achieving their potential on equal terms with persons without disabilities.
- Persons with disabilities are a diversified group and each person's opportunities, abilities and potentials are different. Therefore, equal treatment can sometimes only be attained by treating people differently. That is why it is a requirement that social assistance shall be provided on the basis of a specific individual assessment of the recipient's particular needs and circumstances and in consultation with the individual recipient. (p.1)

The principle of solidarity

- Refers to the Danish tax funded universal welfare system which ensures that almost all services to persons with disabilities are provided free of charge for the individual. Any person who is lawfully residing in Denmark is eligible to receive assistance under the Act on Social Services. (p.1)

The principle of compensation

- Danish disability policy rests on the compensation principle, which entails that society offers people with functional impairment a number of services and

²⁹ Ministry of Social Affairs and Senior Citizens. *The four principles of Danish disability policy (1980 – until further notice)*.

relief measures to limit or offset the consequences of their disabilities as much as possible. Compensation must ensure that persons with disabilities have the same starting point as people without them.

- Compensation may be in the form of individual personal aid, e.g. a wheelchair or a hearing aid, or of parallel services, for instance, that written material be published on special media in accessible versions such as audio or braille. Compensation may also consist of collective measures that orient society towards taking the widest possible consideration of persons with disabilities i.e. establishment of level access to buildings for wheelchair users.
- Aid can also be given as a financial compensation to cover any necessary extra costs the citizen has as a consequence of the functional impairment or to compensate for a loss of income to persons looking after their disabled child or other relative with a disability. (p.2)

The principle of sector accountability

- All public authorities are responsible for making their facilities accessible to people with disabilities. This applies to public buildings like libraries, public swimming pools and museums. But it also applies to all other kinds of public goods and services like education, health care and democratic participation.
- This principle ensures that activities in the disability area are not the sole responsibility of the social sector but covered in all areas, including the housing, health, traffic, labour market, education and communication sectors. Tasks must be performed in the sector normally performing the task and not transferred to a special sector, such as the social sector, merely because it targets people with functional impairment or impaired capacity for work.
- In addition to this, the principle of sector accountability also means that all public authorities have to take disability issues into consideration when developing policies and strategies in their respective areas of responsibility. (p.2)

Prohibitions on discrimination of persons with disabilities

In addition to the four principles, the Danish Parliament adopted a bill on cross-sectoral prohibition of discrimination of persons with disabilities (The Act on Prohibition of Discrimination of Persons with Disabilities) in May 2018. The prohibition covers both direct and indirect discrimination in addition to harassment and reprisals. The act entered into force on 1 July 2018 and prohibits

both public and private service providers outside the labour market to discriminate a person due to a disability. (p.2)

The law was revised in 2020 to also include the right to reasonable accommodation for children and young people in schools and day-care facilities to ensure that children and young people with disabilities can gain the same opportunities as children and young people without disabilities. (p.2)

In addition, the Discrimination Act (Forskelsbehandlingsloven) has since 2004 prohibited direct and indirect discrimination of persons with disabilities in the labour market. The act also imposes a duty on employers to make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities in relation to employment and training or education. (p.2)

It is possible to file a complaint with the Board on Equal Treatment (Ligebehandlingsnævnet) both in relation to the Act on Prohibition of Discrimination of Persons with Disabilities and the Discrimination Act if a person experiences discrimination on the grounds of his/her disability as defined by the two acts. The Board on Equal Treatment can then award compensation if it finds that discrimination has occurred in violation of the law. It is also possible to submit complaints on discrimination on more than one ground, for example disability combined with gender or ethnicity. (p.2)

Estonia

Name of strategy: Welfare Development Plan 2016–2023

Period: 2016-2023

Owner of the material: Ministry of Social Affairs

Areas in focus and general measures for inclusion

Two general objectives have been established for the implementation of the Welfare Development Plan.³⁰

- High employment rate and a high-quality working life

³⁰ Ministry of Social Affairs. *Welfare Development Plan (2016–2023)*. See link:

https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2019/10/Estonia_Welfare-Development-Plan-2016%E2%80%932023.pdf

- Reducing social inequalities and poverty, gender equality, and a greater social inclusion

Four sub-objectives have been established in the Development Plan for the achievement of the general objectives:

- Correlation between the demand and supply of the workforce ensures a high level of employment, and high-quality working conditions support long-term participation in working life.
- Supporting an activating, adequate, and sustainable social protection has increased the economic coping of people.
- Efficient legal protection and high-quality personal assistance have improved people's opportunities to cope independently, live in a community, and participate in society.
- Men and women have equal rights, obligations, opportunities, and responsibilities in all social sectors. (p.5)

Integration of international agreements

UN

Estonia joined these Covenant in 1991:

- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the United Nations (1966) is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations and includes economic, social, and cultural rights with the purpose of ensuring social justice, protection against disadvantages, and participation in the social, cultural, and economic aspects of social life.
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of the United Nations (1979) is the most important international document on women's rights, which prohibits the discrimination of women in using civil, political, economic, and cultural rights, and allows the use of positive special measures for the achievement of actual equality between women and men.

Estonia ratified this Convention in 2012:

- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) aims to consistently improve the situation of people with disabilities. The purpose of the Convention is to promote, protect, and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by

all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.
(p.49)

Cross-sectoral management, implementation and monitoring

The Welfare Development Plan shall be implemented in accordance with the State Budget Act (section 19–20) and Regulation No. 302 of 13 December 2005 of the Government of the Republic “Types of strategic Development Plans and the procedure for the preparation, amendment, implementation, assessment, and reporting thereof”. The Ministry of Social Affairs shall coordinate the implementation of the Development Plan and its tasks shall include agreeing with the parties on the implementation plan (and programmes) of the Development Plan, overall monitoring of the implementation of the Development Plan, organising the reporting and renewal of the Development Plan, forming a sectoral, i.e. steering committee for the Development Plan necessary for the implementation of the Development Plan, assigning its tasks, and organising its operation. (p.52)

For 2016–2020, an implementation plan shall be compiled for the implementation of the Development Plan, which shall plan the measures for the period of the state budget strategy. The implementation plan shall determine the activities carried out within the scope of the measures for the achievement of the objectives of the Development Plan in specific years, as well as the responsible persons and financial resources. (p.51)

One of the risks associated with the implementation and risk management addressed in the plan, connected to this area, is that the efficiency of the measures and activities planned for the achievement of the Development Plan’s objectives significantly depends on the collaboration of different levels. One problem is the collaboration with local governments, as their capacity and readiness for collaboration is uneven. In planning the Development Plan’s policy instruments, the need to promote and strengthen collaboration, on the one hand, between state institutions, offices, and local governments and, on the other, between local governments was considered, for example through improving the exchange of data and information, achieving a more efficient coordination of case management work, the development of funding principles, and training activities, etc. (p.53)

Additionally, specific measures and activities have been planned, which are directed at increasing the capacity of local governments in fulfilling the responsibilities and tasks imposed on them, such the provision and organization of social services, and the fulfilment of obligations assigned to them with the Gender Equality Act and the Equal Treatment Act. (p.53)

Involvement of organizations that represent persons with disabilities

Nine recurring principles have also been taken into consideration in compiling the Development Plan, and these shall also be adhered to in the implementation of the Development Plan. One of these principles, connected to this area, is:

- Collaboration must occur between people and communities, as well as institutions, including the various levels of public authority, domains, and public and private sectors, as well as the non-profit sector. Collaboration with a person means that they are included in the prevention and solving of their problems. Collaboration with a community is based on a community as the key figure between a person and society in the prevention, noticing, and solving of problems. Collaboration between institutions helps ensure that the needs of people are handled wholly, and nobody is not left “lost in the systems”. It also ensures that operation is unitary and efficient, includes as little bureaucracy as possible, and that public resources are used purposefully and practically. Collaboration with the non-profit and private sector highlights and values their role as service providers and their innovative solutions to sectoral problems. Collaboration also includes the involvement of interest groups and the empowerment of non-governmental organizations and communities. (p.5)

Integration of gender equality and child rights perspective

The rights of children and youth with disability

Sub-objective No. 1. Correlation between the demand and supply of the workforce ensures a high level of employment and high-quality working conditions support long-term participation in working life.

To support social cohesion and a sustainable economic growth, and due to the declining and aging population, it is important to promote an inclusive labour market by giving everyone the opportunity to contribute to the labour market. It becomes more and more important that people remain in the labour market for longer and that labour potential is utilised better. This requires supporting compliance between the demand and supply of the workforce. Therefore, the objectives and policy instruments planned for its achievement are closely related to the Development Plans of the following domains.

- The Development Plan for Children and Families 2012–2020 includes a strategic objective that focuses on the reconciliation of working, family, and private life.
- The Youth Sector Development Plan 2014–2020 focuses on creating many opportunities for young people for their development and self-fulfilment, including for learning and employment. (p.7)

Sub-objective No. 2. Supporting an activating, adequate, and sustainable social protection has increased the economic coping of people.

- This sub-objective and its policy instruments must be examined with regard to the Development Plan for Children and Families for 2012–2020. One of its strategic objectives focuses on securing adequate economic coping for families with children, reducing poverty among children, and includes measures and activities for children and families with children, including families with disabled children. (p.18)

Sub-objective No. 3. Efficient legal protection and high-quality personal assistance have improved people's opportunities to cope independently, live in a community, and participate in society.

- The directions and activities of the sub-objective are connected to the strategic objectives and measures of the Development Plan for Children and Families for 2012–2020. These focus on the establishment of a combined system of grants and services, which support the adequate economic coping of families, support the reconciliation of work, family, and private life, and include services meant for families with children, including those with disabled children, and measures that reduce the caretaking burden. The sub-objective's policy instrument for equal treatment is closely linked to the general and sub-objectives of the integrating development plan Integrating Estonia 2020. These objectives focus closely on cultural diversity and the equal treatment of people irrespective of their nationality, ethnicity, and race. (p.26)

Gender equality

In order to ensure equal rights, obligations, opportunities, and responsibilities for the men and women of Estonia, the Development Plan aims to reduce general segregation in the labour market, the gender pay gap, and to increase the gender balance in every decision-making level of the society. The capacity of the state to promote gender equality in different areas of the community life shall be strengthened as well. (p.2)

One of the principles in the plan address that:

- Gender equality refers to a situation where men and women have equal rights, obligations, opportunities, and responsibilities in participating in working life, education, and other social sectors. To achieve this, all legal, administrative, cultural, behavioural, social, and economic barriers or structural reasons that hinder the equal participation of men and women in social life and decision-making processes must be eliminated. To promote gender equality, the gender perspective shall be taken into account in the development of policies in all areas, and specific special measures shall be implemented as well. (p.4)

Sub-objective No. 4. Men and women have equal rights, obligations, opportunities, and responsibilities in all social sectors. This sub-objective focuses on the promotion and achievement of gender equality.

- The gender equality policy aims to support the development of human capital and the growth of economy, competitiveness, and welfare in Estonia by using the knowledge, skills, and abilities of men and women equally in the development of society, as well as by increasing gender equality.
- Promoting gender equality requires using two complementary strategic approaches simultaneously – implementing specific special measures meant for solving gender inequality problems and considering gender mainstreaming, i.e. the gender aspect in the policies of each domain. The direct objective of the special measures is to promote gender equality by changing the conditions and circumstances that hinder the achievement of social equality. Gender mainstreaming requires identifying the situation, needs, and social status of the women and men belonging to the target groups of the policy areas with special objectives, as well as taking into account their differences and considering the impact of the measures on men and women. The objective of gender mainstreaming is to make visible and analysable those social structures that support and reproduce gender inequality. This dual strategy is also reflected in the obligations imposed on the authorities of the state and local governments with the Gender Equality Act.
- The fourth sub-objective of the Development Plan also focuses on the special measures of promoting gender equality, which, among other things, include activities that support the implementation of gender mainstreaming. To reduce gender inequality, prevent its resurgence, and achieve gender equality in different spheres of life, attention shall be paid to reducing social stereotypes that cause social inequality and their negative impact, as well as reducing gender segregation in education and the labour market, supporting the economic independence of men and women, therein reducing the gender pay gap, achieving a gender balance on the decision-making levels of society,

enhancing the protection of rights, and ensuring institutional capacity, including the analysis and management capabilities necessary for the promotion of gender equality.

- The achievement of this sub-objective is, among others, supported by the National Health Plan 2009–2020, which aims to contribute to the increased life expectancy of men and women and the time they live healthily, and which, among other things, deals with the topics of reproductive health, healthy living environments, and healthy lifestyles. (p.37)
- The action plan for reducing the pay gap between men and women approved by a protocol of the Government of the Republic (2012) proposes complex measures and activities, which shall help reduce the gender pay gap and this is one of the objectives of the Welfare Development Plan. One of the meters of general welfare in the Development Plan is the gender pay gap, which is presumably affected by all sub-objectives of the Development Plan, including sub-objective No. 4. (p.48)

Finland

Name of strategy: National Action Plan on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Period: 2020-2023

Owner of the material: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Areas in focus and general measures for inclusion

The Action Plan consists of thirteen content areas, some of which are cross-cutting and important in principle, while others concern specific administrative branches.^{31,32}

1. Participation of persons with disabilities (Article 4.3 of UNCRPD)
2. Equality and non-discrimination (Articles 5, 6, 7, 12 and 13 of the UNCRPD)

³¹ Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (2021:22). *National Action Plan on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2020-2023)*. See link:

https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/163217/STM_2021_22_J.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

³² This country is also included in the chapter Descriptive case studies of countries within the European cooperation.

3. Raising awareness and building a knowledge base (Articles 8 and 31 of the UNCRPD)
4. Accessibility (Articles 9 and 21 of the UNCRDP)
5. Safety and emergency situations (Article 11 of the UNCRPD)
6. Independent living and inclusion (Articles 12, 14, 19 and 29 of the UNCRPD)
7. Movement and mobility (Articles 9, 18 and 20 of the UNCRPD)
8. Education (Article 24 of the UNCRPD)
9. Health and rehabilitation (Articles 25 and 26 of the UNCRDP)
10. Work and employment (Article 27 of the UNCRPD)
11. Adequate standard of living and social protection (Article 28 of the UNCRPD)
12. Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport (Article 30 of the UNCRPD)
13. International cooperation (Articles 11, 32 and 33 of the UNCRPD)

These content areas also contain descriptions of the current state, which cover legislative structures, pending matters and issues that need to be resolved alike. This lays the foundation for the objectives and actual measures of the Action Plan, without forgetting the parties responsible for the measures and the monitoring of the Action Plan. (p.9)

Integration of international agreements

UN

The National Action Plan on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities determines the measures that will be taken to promote the implementation of the Convention in different administrative branches during the second action plan period 2020-2023. When ratifying the Convention in 2016, Finland committed to reaffirming the full enjoyment of human rights and civil liberties for persons with disabilities as well as to promoting their realisation. Consequently, Finland prepares a national Action Plan on the implementation of the Convention for each term of government. The present document is Finland's second Action Plan on the Convention. (p.9)

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health are the national focal points for implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has established a national coordination system, the Advisory Board for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (VANE). The role of the Advisory Board is to facilitate the national implementation of the Convention within government. The duties of the autonomous and independent mechanism referred to in the Convention are carried out by the Parliamentary Ombudsman, the Human Rights Centre and its Human Rights Delegation, which form the National Human Rights Institution.

The role of this mechanism is to promote, protect and monitor the implementation of the Convention. (p.14)

Council of Europe

Council of Europe is mentioned in the area that focus on: *International cooperation (Articles 11, 32 and 33 of the UNCRPD)*.

Promoting and realising the rights of persons with disabilities is one of the crosscutting objectives of Finland's human rights and development policy. The aim is to increase the participation of persons with disabilities in political decision-making, both in Finland and internationally, to strengthen the international disability rights movement and promote the fundamental rights of persons with disabilities. The rights of persons with disabilities are taken into account as part of international efforts to promote human rights by the EU, the UN, the Council of Europe, OSCE and other international organizations. The views of persons with disabilities and the organizations that represent them are taken into account when formulating Finland's policies. Hearings are held within the framework of the coordination group for international disability policy led by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, for instance. (p.117)

Agenda 2030

The Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasises the fact that all the goals are important and interlinked. It is impossible to achieve one goal without another, and their achievement requires the input of states, decision-makers and citizens alike. One of the important goals of the Agenda is reducing inequality and promoting peaceful, fair and inclusive societies as well as protecting human rights. The slogan of the 2030 Agenda is "Leave no one behind". The aim is to first reach those who have been left furthest behind. Attention has been paid to giving a voice to those in the poorest and weakest positions when preparing the declaration. The Sustainable Development Goals take into account disability and persons with disabilities. The goals refer to disability 11 times in total, especially in the contexts of education, growth and employment, inequality, accessibility, data collection and the monitoring of set goals. Although disability is not mentioned in connection with all the goals, they are significant for the full inclusion of persons with disabilities. (p.12-13)

Cross-sectoral management, implementation and monitoring

The contents of the Action Plan mostly follow the structure of the first Action Plan on the UNCRPD, with one exception: safety has been identified as a separate content area in the current document. (p.9)

The Action Plan comprises 110 measures, and the ministries have committed themselves to their implementation. A responsible party or parties have been indicated for each measure. The implementation of the measures will be monitored during the action plan period and assessed at the end of the period. (p.3)

The human rights indicators of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights have been used to describe the current situation.³³ The indicator model developed by the UN distinguishes between structural, process and outcome indicators. This makes it possible to describe firstly, the acceptance, intent or commitment to the human rights obligation, the efforts required to make that commitment a reality, and finally the results of those efforts. (p.21)

Involvement of organizations that represent persons with disabilities

The Advisory Board for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, VANE, was responsible for drawing up the Action Plan. The Advisory Board includes representatives of disability organizations, labour market organizations and the ministries with key significance to the rights of persons with disabilities. Disability organizations and other stakeholders have been consulted during the process of drawing up the Action Plan to obtain information about the matters that according to the Convention should primarily be promoted in the Action Plan. (p4)

The Action Plan also emphasises the importance of social inclusion of persons with disabilities in the changing operating environment and the importance of accessibility as a precondition for implementing the other rights. One of the main objectives of the Action Plan is to increase awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities and to mainstream these rights in different administrative branches and more widely in society. (p.4)

The preparation process included dialogues with both disability organizations and other stakeholders. Persons with disabilities also had a strong representation in the background group that supported the preparation of the Action Plan and were present at all ministerial negotiations. (p.10)

Furthermore, two hearings were organised for disability organizations as part of the work on the Action Plan. The purpose of the hearings was to determine what the disability organizations perceived as the most important issues to be addressed

³³ The United Nations. *Human Rights Indicators: A Guide to Measurement and Implementation*; United Nations Human Rights; Office of the High Commissioner. See link: https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Human_rights_indicators_en.pdf

during the Action Plan period. In February 2020, disability organizations were asked to list three to five issues that, from their perspective, would be the most important ones to address in the implementation of the CRPD during this period. Written statements were also requested. (p.18)

Integration of gender equality and child rights perspective

The rights of children and youth with disability

Children's right is mentioned in following area in the plan:

- Participation of persons with disabilities (Article 4.3 of UNCRPD).

According to the UNCRPD, the States Parties shall consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities in decision-making processes concerning them. This mainly takes place through disability organizations. Children with disabilities must also be included in the decision-making that concerns them. (p.22)

- Equality and non-discrimination (Articles 5, 6, 7, 12 and 13 of the UNCRPD).

Everyone is equal before the law and entitled to equal protection and equal benefits. States Parties shall guarantee to persons with disabilities equal and effective legal protection against discrimination. States Parties shall take appropriate measures to provide the support they may require in exercising their legal capacity. Discrimination on the basis of disability is prohibited. The Convention pays particular attention to the status of children and women with disabilities. They must be entitled to the enjoyment of all rights on an equal basis with others. (p.29)

- Raising awareness and building a knowledge base (Articles 8 and 31 of the UNCRPD).

In spring 2020, the Office of the Ombudsman for Children carried out a survey addressed to experts in the disability field on the rights of children with disabilities. Based on the survey results, the Office of the Ombudsman for Children will edit a compilation work on the rights of children with disabilities in 2021. This work will be used to raise wider awareness of the personal views and experiences of children and young people with disabilities of their daily possibilities of attending education and having hobbies, their well-being and the realisation of their rights and inclusion. The target readers of the publication will be policymakers, authorities, families and children. (p.44)

- Education (Article 24 of the UNCRPD).

In early 2020, the Ministry of Education and Culture launched a study on the current state of early childhood education and training delivered in Swedish. The

current state of skills and educational opportunities of Swedish-speaking children, young people and adults with disabilities will be examined as part of this work. A working group titled Oikeus oppia ('Right to learn'), which prepares measures aiming to promote learning support, support for children and inclusion in early childhood education and care and pre-primary and basic education, was appointed in May 2020. Its term runs until 30 August 2022. (p.85)

The VIKKE project develops tools for assessing the language proficiency of sign language children. The corpus-based learning material developed in the project will be published online, where it can be freely used. (p.87)

- Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport (Article 30 of the UNCRPD).

In the context of children's culture, a project related to basic education in art and the accessibility of children's culture for special groups was funded under the Ministry of Education and Culture's support for cultural experimentation and development projects. The Finnish model of hobbies promotes the equal opportunities of children and young people, including children and young people with disabilities, to pursue enjoyable and free hobbies in connection with the school day. (p.111)

- The National Sports Council carried out an evaluation of the Schools on the Move programme in spring 2019 (publications of the National Sports Council 2019:4), in which children and young people with special needs were also taken into account. (p.111)

Gender equality

Gender equality is mentioned in following area in the plan:

- Equality and non-discrimination (Articles 5, 6, 7, 12 and 13 of the UNCRPD). The purpose of the Act on Equality between Women and Men (609/1986) is to prevent discrimination based on gender, gender identity or the expression of gender, to promote equality between women and men, and thus to improve the status of women, particularly in working life. The Equality Act contains three types of provisions: those promoting equality, those banning discrimination, and those related to legal protection and enforcement. As a rule, the Act on Equality between Women and Men applies to all social activity and in all areas of life. It is not applied to relationships between family members or other relationships in private life, or to activities associated with religious practices. In its conclusions issued to Finland in 2014, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) recommended such measures as promoting the participation of women with

disabilities in the labour market, acting to repeal the legislation on the sterilization of women with disabilities, and developing legal remedies for women with disabilities against multiple and intersectional discrimination. (p.31-32)

- A working group on equality is responsible for promoting equality and non-discrimination in the actions of Ministry of Education and Culture. The working group also deals with issues related to the rights of persons with disabilities. (p.33)

Germany

Name of strategy: "Our path to an inclusive society". The National Action Plan 2.0 of Germany's Federal Government for the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

Period: 2016 – until further notice

Owner of the material: The federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Areas in focus and general measures for inclusion

Fields of action that are in focus in the strategy³⁴:

- Work and employment
- Education
- Rehabilitation, health and long-term care
- Children, youths, family and partnership
- Women
- Older persons
- Construction and housing

³⁴ The federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (2016). "Our path to an inclusive society". *The National Action Plan 2.0 of Germany's Federal Government for the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (2016 – until further notice)*. See link:

https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2021/12/NAP-2.0_English.pdf

- Mobility
 - Culture, sports and leisure
 - Social and political participation
 - Personal rights
-
- International cooperation Awareness-raising

Integration of international agreements

UN

The entry into force of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) provided a comprehensive legal basis for the human rights-based approach to policies for persons with disabilities in Germany. (p.10)

In the coalition agreement for the 18th legislature, it was agreed to further develop the National Action Plan together with persons with disabilities to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The process of further development, which started with the “inclusion days” in 2014, has been completed with the adoption of the Federal Government's National Action Plan 2.0 for the UNCRPD by the Federal Cabinet on 28 June 2016. (p.2)

Cross-sectoral management, implementation and monitoring

Policymaking for persons with disabilities has become a cross-cutting task at all levels of state action, from the federal to the Land governments all the way down to the municipalities. But society also shares in this responsibility, and it is becoming clear that the interest in and the demand for full inclusion and social participation are growing by the day. This path must now be continued on resolutely and people with disabilities and their associations must be continuously involved in all matters and concerns impacting them. (p.10)

The NAP 2.0 succeeds in strengthening the approach across policy fields even further, which can be seen in the fact that this time all Federal Ministries contributed measures. This takes the idea of disability mainstreaming another step forward when compared to the first NAP. This is also reflected in the more uniform distribution of measures over the ministries compared with the first NAP. The social ministries (Health; Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth; and Labour and Social Affairs) are responsible for just over 45 percent of the measures, while the other ministries are responsible for 45 percent of the measures in NAP 2.0. With this broad substantive approach, the NAP 2.0 extends

horizontally across the various policy areas, as well as vertically through several levels. (p.3)

At the national level, Article 33 of the UNCRPD stipulates that each State Party shall establish at least one contact point (focal point) for all matters relating to the implementation of the Convention, as well as a governmental coordination mechanism and an independent mechanism. The Federal Government established the governmental focal point at the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) shortly after the entry into force of the UNCRPD in Germany. It is the body responsible for the steering process for the implementation of the Convention. This coordinating task is also embedded in the governmental focal point at BMAS. (p.10)

The *Länder* also have governmental focal points steering the implementation of the UNCRPD at *Land* level. These are usually part of the *Land* ministries in charge of policymaking for persons with disabilities - often the *Land* social affairs ministries. As the National Focal Point, BMAS regularly invites the *Land* ministries to Federal Government-*Länder* meetings to exchange views and coordinate the implementation of the UNCRPD. (p.26)

In the international context, the National Focal Point has the task of serving as the Federal Republic of Germany's expert representative in connection with the UNCRPD. This first and foremost entails representing Germany at the annual Conference of States Parties at the United Nations in New York, as per Article 40 of the UNCRPD, where an exchange takes place on matters relating to the implementation of the Convention. Since 2008, this conference has also provided a good opportunity to coordinate bilaterally with other States Parties on the implementation of the UNCRPD. The German delegation is usually headed by the BMAS at State Secretary level. (p.26)

Involvement of organizations that represent persons with disabilities

The implementation of the UNCRPD addresses all government bodies and civil society. One means to implement inclusion frequently harnessed is the creation of individual action plans, which the Federal Government supports. (p.23)

People with disabilities and their associations have been involved in 66 per cent of the 119 measures since 2016. Broad participation is increasingly becoming a matter of course. All the different actors stand to benefit from this cooperation and participation because people with disabilities are experts on their own situation. They have valuable experience to share, which in turn often allows project weaknesses to be identified at an early stage. In the 2018 interim report, the participation of people with disabilities and their associations in the measures

from the NAP 1.0 and 2.0 was 60 per cent. Here, again, it is pleasing to see that with the new measures this is continuing to trend upwards. (p.23)

Integration of gender equality and child rights perspective

The rights of children and youth with disability

The strategy has a field of action called "Children, Youths, Family and Partnership" that includes:

- Program for girls with intellectual disabilities to prevent sexual abuse
- Protect girls and boys with disabilities against violence in facilities for persons with disabilities
- Improving comprehensive early intervention services
- Merging services and benefits for children and youths with and without disabilities under the umbrella of child and youth welfare system (p.121)

Gender equality

The strategy emphasizes the empowerment of the Federal Network for Women's Affairs Representatives. In September 2019, a Federal Network for Women's Affairs Representatives in Facilities was founded. As this network is not yet structurally capable of representing its interests independently towards third parties, the aim of this project is to test structures, pilot democratic opinion-forming processes and to enable the federal network and the responsible actors to act independently in a self-determined way as a permanent representation body for the interests of women's representatives at sheltered workshops and residential facilities. (p.79)

With the federal funding program "Together against Violence against Women", the Federal Government aims to support the closing of known gaps in the support system for women affected by violence within the scope of its funding remit. This involves both the development of innovative concepts to create new support services and tailored improvement of the accessibility and functionality of existing services for all women impacted by violence and their children and/or for certain target groups that have not been reached sufficiently in the past, such as women with disabilities, women with multiple children, women with older male children, etc. The program also includes the development of new services for women with disabilities. (p.80)

Hungary

Name of strategy: National disability program

Period: 2015-2025

Owner of the material: The National Assembly

Areas in focus and general measures for inclusion

The strategy³⁵ focuses on the following areas:

- Healthcare
- Early development, education, and training
- Employment
- Social services and benefits
- Transport
- Sports, culture, and tourism
- Rehabilitation

Integration of international agreements

Hungary has in recent years and decades taken significant legislative steps to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities and to promote their independent living and social integration. First and foremost, Act XXVI of 1998 on the Provision of the Rights and Equal Opportunities of Persons Living with Disability (hereinafter: Disability Act) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ratified in Act XCII of 2007 are of priority importance among these regulations. Additionally, the Communication from the Commission 'European Disability Strategy 2010-2020: A Renewed Commitment to a Barrier-Free Europe' (COM/2010/636) also provides a fundamental foundation. (p.3)

³⁵ The National Assembly (2015). *National disability program (2015–2025)*. See link:

https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2019/10/Hungary_National-Disability-Program-2015-2025.pdf

Cross-sectoral management, implementation and monitoring

The most important value in up-to-date and complex approach to disabled accessibility is that it transmits a message interpretable and assessable by all, regardless of age, gender, residence and disability. Namely what is inevitable for a disabled person will be comfortable, simpler or safer for everyone else. This points at the horizontality of the area: accessibility, similar to several other fragments in the disability portfolio, cannot be successfully developed in lack of continuous and efficient intersectoral cooperation. (p.7)

The achievement of the Program objectives calls for active and planned government measures, so their implementation must rely on the accurate and scheduled determination of the partial tasks which are rested on the objectives of the Program. The Action Plan stipulated in the Disability Act must be prepared with an eye on the above, in collaboration with the disabled persons' interest advocacy organizations, relating the developments within the Program period to 4 and 3-year-long phases. (p.24)

Due to the peculiarities of the Program, dual requirements will need to be observed during the implementation of the Program. Disability is a horizontal issue wherein any considerable progress can only be made with common actions in the entire related government portfolio; therefore, the primary condition is that each related sector is integrated into implementation through actual measures. Still, the individual developments are interrelated in a number of points and can, in several cases, be interpreted in their interdependence only, so it will be inevitable to have efficient professional coordination in implementation. (p.24)

Accordingly, efforts should be taken to guarantee that the Action Plan is compiled with actual contribution from each related sector; moreover, proper authorizations must be embedded in the Action Plan so as to facilitate the intersectoral professional coordination of implementation, the harmonization of the individual developments and the efficient follow-up of Program implementation, in collaboration with the disabled persons' interest advocacy organizations. (p.23)

An interim assessment will be made about the time-rated achievement of the Program objectives at the half-time of the Program period, in cooperation with the disabled persons' interest advocacy organizations, and the Government will submit this as a report to the National Assembly. (p.23)

A summary assessment will be made about the achievement of the Program objectives concurrent with the submission of the subsequent National Disability Program to the National Assembly but within one year of lapse of the Program period the latest, with the involvement of the disabled persons' interest advocacy organizations, and the Government will submit this as a report to the National Assembly. (p.23)

Involvement of organizations that represent persons with disabilities

One of the principals in the strategy states that “Nothing about us without us” which refers to that people with disabilities should be granted to express their opinions.

In planning and implementing the legal regulations and programs that (also) affect people with disabilities, the disabled persons' actual option to express their opinion about the content of a specific state or government action by their own right or via their elected representatives should be emphatically granted. It is also written in the program that interest advocacy organizations for disabled should be integrated. (p.8)

In collaboration with the professional, non-governmental and interest advocacy organizations for the disabled, the strategic-type professional documents compiled in the individual areas of the disability portfolio still need to be continuously monitored, and the possibility of integrating their content in governmental action plans should be assessed. (p.10)

Interest advocacy organizations for disabled will be involved in the interim assessment. An interim assessment will be made about the time-rated achievement of the Program objectives at the half-time of the Program period, in cooperation with the disabled persons' interest advocacy organizations, and the Government will submit this as a report to the National Assembly. (p.23)

Integration of gender equality and child rights perspective

The rights of children and youth with disability

In the group of children taken into child welfare care, the rise in the proportion of disabled children taken over by foster parents greatly depends on knowledge about disabilities and on any fear or prejudice due to the lack of such information. Therefore, efforts should be made to provide mental hygiene and psychological support to foster parents who care for disabled children in child welfare care, for the sake of the complex management of any problems arising upon caring for and bringing up the children. (p.21)

Gender equality

Programs need to be launched to map the disabled women's current social conditions, in order to identify the reasons for potential exclusion; and on that basis, a disadvantage managing strategy and complex services can be developed. (p.21)

Latvia

Name of strategy: Plan Promoting Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disability

Period: 2021-2023

Owner of the material: The Cabinet of Ministers

Areas in focus and general measures for inclusion

The Plan^{36, 37} envisages a set of measures in five directions of action:

- Improvement of the disability assessment system.
- Improvement of the support system for reducing the consequences of disability.
- Strengthening inclusive employment.
- Ensuring the accessibility of the environment and services.
- Reduction of stereotypes and prejudices in society.

Integration of international agreements

UN

The overarching goal of the disability policy is consistent with the goal defined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, namely to promote, protect and ensure that persons with disabilities can fully and equally with others enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms, promote personal dignity observance, as well as to take measures to reduce the consequences caused by disability. The basic principles of disability policy derive from the main principles of the UN Convention.

Latvia ratified the UN Convention on March 1, 2010 (in force since March 31, 2010). By ratifying the UN Convention, Latvia is committed to ensuring and

³⁶ The cabinet of ministers (2021). *Plan Promoting Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disability (2021-2023)*. See link: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/325492-par-planu-personu-ar-invaliditati-vienlidzigu-iespeju-veicinasanai-20212023-gadam>

³⁷ This country is included in the chapter Descriptive case studies.

promoting that all persons with disabilities can fully exercise all human rights and fundamental freedoms without any form of discrimination due to disability.

Cross-sectoral management, implementation and monitoring

Cross-sectoral management on general level

The aim of the plan is to promote the development of an integrated support system that meets the needs of persons with disabilities. To achieve the goal, the Plan envisages a complex set of measures at the cross-sectoral level, including the improvement of the disability detection system, measures to promote the employment of persons with disabilities, to reduce the consequences of disability, to promote the accessibility of the environment and services, and to reduce the prevailing stereotypes about persons with disabilities in society.

In order to successfully fulfil Latvia's obligations by implementing the principles set out in the UN Convention, the Plan addresses cross-sectoral issues, covering as wide a cross-sectoral coverage as possible, providing measures for strengthening inclusive education, promoting the accessibility of public transport, developing the diversity of information, ensuring the accessibility of the election process, etc.

Cross-sectoral management within employment

Integrating the target group of unemployed people with disabilities into the labour market is one of the NVA's priorities, therefore the NVA (National Employment Agency) cooperates with employers and NGOs to find opportunities for the integration of the unemployed into the labour market. In recent years, several new measures have been implemented in Latvia to further support the integration of persons with disabilities into the labour market.

Implementation

The responsible institution for monitoring the results of the implementation of the Plan is the LM (The Ministry of Welfare). LM is also responsible for coordinating the implementation of the plan's measures. In addition, ministries and other institutions must ensure the implementation of the measures provided for in the plan in 2021 from the allocated state budget funds.

Involvement of organizations that represent persons with disabilities

In order to ensure the development of a disability policy aimed at the needs of persons with disabilities, it is essential to involve the persons themselves in

creating the content of services, explaining and discussing the most important issues that affect the effectiveness of one or another service. LM (The Ministry of Welfare) organizes cooperation with organizations representing persons with disabilities in various formats - meetings and discussions on various topical issues, meetings on changes in legislation, work in various working groups to ensure the exchange of opinions on what measures would be necessary to promote the provision of equal opportunities and rights for persons with disabilities, thus also obtaining the opinion of persons with disabilities themselves and ensuring their involvement in disability policy making.

Integration of gender equality and child rights perspective

The rights of children and youth with disability

The plan states several measures that will be taken to improve the situation for children with disabilities in different societal areas. These are:

- Introduce functional assessment-based disability determination for children
- Promote the opportunity for children with disabilities to receive social care services
- Provide services of day care centres for children with disabilities
- Promote the availability of social rehabilitation services for children with disabilities
- Promote the availability of community-based social services for children with disabilities provided by NGOs
- Establish provision of interdisciplinary psycho-emotional support for children with severe medical diagnosis and their legal representatives
- Strengthen communication skills in daily work with children with hearing impairment
- Promote parents' understanding of the educational process of children with special needs and the role of parents in it
- Promote the opportunity for children with hearing impairments to acquire quality education
- Monitor the participation of students with disabilities in education (primary school, elementary school, secondary school, vocational education)

Malta

Name of strategy: Freedom to live. National Strategy on the Rights of Disabled Persons

Period: 2021-2030

Owner of the material: Ministry for Inclusion and Social Wellbeing

Areas in focus and general measures for inclusion

The strategy^{38,39} is based on 13 objectives which has been developed based on prioritized areas in Agenda 2030 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The objectives are:

- Reforms and equality
- Research and data collection
- Disability awareness raising
- Accessibility
- Participation in culture, leisure, recreation and sports
- Relationships, family, sexuality, and parenthood
- Informal, formal and non-formal education
- Healthcare
- Work and employment
- Living independently and in the community and de-institutionalization
- Participation in political and public life
- Disaster risk management and reduction
- Regional and international efforts

³⁸ Ministry for Inclusion and Social Wellbeing. *Freedom to live. National Strategy on the Rights of Disabled Persons (2021-2030)*. See link: <https://inclusion.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Disability-Doc-ENG-SEP-21.pdf>

³⁹ This country is included in the chapter Descriptive case studies.

Integration of international agreements

UN

Every objective in this Strategy refers to different international conventions, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Ever since the country ratified the convention, Malta has been committed to implementing the main principle behind the Convention – ‘Nothing About Us, Without Us’. (p.9)

In line with its obligations under the Convention, Malta has also set up a National Coordination structure towards implementing all the key obligations in the Convention on Maltese territory. This also means that this structure will have a key role towards ensuring a coordinated approach in implementing and following up on this Strategy. (p.10)

EU

At European Union level, Malta also championed the European Accessibility Act, which it is now committed to implementing locally over the next years, while sharing its experiences through the relevant European Commission Ad Hoc Working Group. (p.63)

Agenda 2030

The key aim of this strategy is to provide a roadmap for the Maltese disability sector over the next years, leading up to 2030, the target year for achievement of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. In 2015, Malta also signed up to a commitment to implement these goals, and every Objective in this Strategy refers to said Goals, alongside different Articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). (p.13)

Cross-sectoral management, implementation and monitoring

Implementation of this Strategy would be congruent on the operation of the National Coordination Mechanism within the Directorate for Disability Issues (DDI). The Mechanism consists of two arms. The first is an Inter-Departmental Coordination Committee (IDCC), which brings together representatives of different Government authorities, agencies and entities whose work links directly or tangentially to the disability sector. The second is an Inter-Ministerial Administrative Committee on Disability (IACD), that brings together representatives of different line Ministries. (p.37)

Monitoring of the Strategy's implementation will be within the remit of the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD), designated as Malta's independent monitoring mechanism in terms of Article 33(2) of the UNCRPD, and by the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act. (p.39)

The need for solid base legislation to be enacted or amended as necessary is outlined, as a framework that would back up the implementation of this Strategy. Relevant structures should be created through this legislation, such as a structured focal point system, and a national coordination mechanism for collaboration on cross-cutting issues between different departments and line Ministries. (p.42)

While most stakeholders operate on a national level, a particular role is envisaged for Local Councils, given their local knowledge and outreach, which is essential in capturing the UNCRPD's goal of securing an independent life within the community for all disabled persons. A reporting system for implementing stakeholders is also being put in place by DDI, whereby quarterly progress reports would be submitted through a centralized system. These would then form the basis for further discussions in this respect, at both bilateral level, and especially through DDI's National Coordination Mechanism, and through ENGAGE, its civil society participation mechanism. (p.37)

Furthermore, meetings of these bodies bring together all stakeholders in a plenary formation, or else particular stakeholders further to a specific theme, and will also both flesh out and execute an implementation plan covering the different Objectives of this Strategy. (p.37)

Implementation of the final strategy shall be the responsibility of the Health Ministry, through its Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate, with CRPD being responsible for reviewing the implementation of the strategy on a regular basis with regard to the rights of disabled persons, and referring its findings to the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate within the Health Ministry, in order that updates to said Policy and Strategy could be effected and implemented thereafter through relevant implementation efforts. (p.87)

Involvement of organizations that represent persons with disabilities

We want to make sure that we will continue to give a constant voice to disabled persons and to civil society. This is why we are also setting up ENGAGE, Malta's Civil Society Participation forum for the Disability sector, within the Directorate for Disability Issues. This forum will bring together disabled persons, their families and allies, as well as academics, NGO representatives, and CRPD, the National Disability Regulator. It will have a key role in connecting to all

disability-related policy in Malta, and in particular, a major role in making sure the contents of this Strategy are brought to life. (p.10)

A reporting system for implementing stakeholders is also being put in place by DDI, whereby quarterly progress reports would be submitted through a centralized system. These would then form the basis for further discussions in this respect, at both bilateral levels, and especially through DDI's National Coordination Mechanism, and through ENGAGE, its civil society participation mechanism. (p.37)

Base Legislation put forward by the Disability Rights Ministry should make provision for relevant mechanisms necessary for implementing the UNCRPD in Malta, as well as effective mechanisms for civil society participation, and for monitoring and enforcement of the UNCRPD in Malta, on the basis of which relevant policy and practice could be further created and developed. (p.43)

CRPD, together with relevant stakeholders, in particular disabled people's organizations and civil society organizations, is to provide ongoing information on relevant anti-discrimination legislation, in various forms that include – but are not limited to – seminars, media campaigns and discussions with key stakeholders. (p.57)

Under each objective there's a map with all the actions that need to be accomplished and civil society organizations and disabled persons and their representative organizations are mentioned as key stakeholders for the implementation. (p.47)

Integration of gender equality and child rights perspective

The rights of children and youth with disability

A particular focus should be on DETs for entities offering services to children, to ensure that disabled children are not denied their services due to fear. (p.58) A specific action that is mentioned in Objective 7 *Informal, formal and non-formal education* is:

- Specific research on key areas, that would lead to improvements in the lives of disabled persons, such as in the field of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) technologies, and leisure activities for disabled minors, teenagers and young persons, would be given particular attention. (p.49)

Specific actions and linked outputs that are mentioned in Objective 2 *Research and data collection* are:

- Discussions are to be undertaken between relevant departments, institutes and faculties at MCAST concerning gaps in leisure activities which are accessible and age appropriate for disabled minors between the ages of 9-12 years, as well as teenagers and young persons.
- As a result of said ongoing discussions, DDI shall put forward to Government suggestions reflecting exploration and outcomes, further to participatory action research having been conducted using key input from disabled minors, teenagers and young persons, carried out in an accessible manner, and with due provision of all necessary supports, towards this gap being addressed by finding solutions to create such activities. (p.51)

Gender equality

Specific outputs that are mentioned in Objective 6 *Relationship, family, sexuality and parenthood* is:

- Education facilities that provide age, disability and gender sensitive, inclusive and effective learning environments. (p.84)
- Guidelines on the Right to Parenthood and Supported Parenthood should contain a strong emphasis on the gender perspective, such as in respect of ensuring support to disabled women in their motherhood, including as single disabled mothers. (p.89)

A specific output that is mentioned in Objective 7: *informal, formal and non-formal education*:

- Eliminating gender disparities in education and ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable incl. disabled persons. (p.96)

Norway

Name of strategy: A society for all. Norway's strategy for disability-inclusive development

Period: 2020-2030

Owner of the material: Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Equality

Areas in focus and general measures for inclusion

Through the strategy^{40,41}, the government will direct its efforts towards four specific areas. These are based on knowledge on the barriers encountered by persons with disabilities and on which initiatives should be prioritized to achieve equality. The areas are:

- Education
- Employment
- Health care
- Culture and leisure

Other specially formulated areas that are mentioned in the strategy are:

- Housing
- Transport
- Democratic participation
- Rule of law

Integration of international agreements

UN

In 2013, Norway ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). It obligates Norway to work to ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities are protected in the same way as those of others. (p.5) The government will ensure that applicable laws and regulations and the CRPD are fulfilled in the policy development. The Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality will be responsible for coordinating this work. (p.7)

The CRPD obligates Norwegian municipal authorities to work in a coherent manner on service development to protect the fundamental rights of persons with disabilities. It is the government's wish that the municipal authorities should have more knowledge about the Convention's contents and obligations as part of their

⁴⁰ Norwegian Ministry of children and equality. *A society for all. Norway's strategy for disability-inclusive development (2020-2030)*. See link: https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/bc8396c163f148dc8d4dc8707482e2be/a-society-for-all_web.pdf

⁴¹ This country is included in the chapter Descriptive case studies.

work on equality for persons with disabilities. The CRPD must be complied with in all policy formulation. (p.22)

In addition to this CRPD, which particularly applies to persons with disabilities, Norway has obligations to work on the equality of persons with disabilities under other UN conventions. These include:

- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR),
- The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (p.14)

EU

The EU has stipulated – and the European Commission has submitted proposals on – directives that directly apply to persons with disabilities. During the plan period, questions will be raised over whether these directives should be incorporated into the EEA Agreement and implemented in Norwegian law. (p.14)

The Web Accessibility Directive (WAD) sets requirements on accessible websites and mobile applications and instructs public enterprises to have accessible ICT solutions. The European Commission’s proposed directive on the accessibility of goods and services for persons with disabilities, the European Accessibility Act (EU-AA), is another directive that will have direct consequences for persons with disabilities. The proposed directive includes proposals for provisions on requirements for universal design in connection with public procurements, including the enforcement of such obligations. (p.15)

Council of Europe

Consideration for persons with disabilities is addressed in various conventions, including the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, which was ratified by Norway in 2017. The purpose of the Conventions is to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women and domestic violence, to protect the rights of women who are exposed to such violence and to promote national and international collaboration against violence. The Conventions are also key to combating violence against women with disabilities. (p.13)

Agenda 2030

The sustainability goals apply until 2030, underpinning the government's ambition that all persons should have opportunities for progress and development. No one should be left behind of the implementation of the UN's sustainability goals. (p.5) The government will follow up the work on the UN's sustainability goals, including the obligation to ensure that no one be left behind. (p.23)

Cross-sectoral management, implementation and monitoring

Effective, consistent and coherent command signals are vital in order for employees of municipal, county and state services to be able to operate a sound and efficient administration in line with laws and regulations. It is the government's ambition that this strategy will contribute to better coordination and more unified governance. (p.21)

Many public studies and reports show that there is a need for better coordination and coordinated governance of cross-sectorial efforts for persons with disabilities in order to ensure a more effective implementation of the policy. In 2009, the Office of the Auditor General of Norway recommended a more coordinated commitment from ministry level. (p.22)

Policies, measures and services that affect persons with disabilities should be coordinated in the best way possible. The sectors shall cooperate when a service from one sector is a precondition for the individual's rights being observed in another sector. Decision makers have a primary responsibility for securing procedures for good coordination. (p.11)

The government's policy for persons with disabilities will be implemented by various sectors and directorates. The key players in the field are the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, the Norwegian Directorate of Health, the Norwegian Agency for Public Management and eGovernment (Difi) and the Norwegian State Housing Bank. The government will assess measures that may contribute to increased collaboration between the governmental agencies where necessary. (p.22)

Furthermore, the government will clarify the Ministry of Children and Equality's responsibility as a coordinating ministry for policy for persons with disabilities. This means that the responsibilities of the Ministry of Children and Equality include:

- Maintaining an overview of the equality situation for persons with disabilities, based on such information as the ministries' interim, inspection, Research &

Development, and statistics on key figures from various sectors and from subordinate enterprises and directorates.

- Coordinating work on national strategies and propositions and reports to the Storting that cover policy and measures across the various policy areas.
- Contributing to related national strategies and propositions and reports to the Storting that are of significance for persons with disabilities. (p.21)

Many persons with disabilities are dependent on well-coordinated municipal services. The government expects good cooperation between sectors and services, so that each individual user can receive a unified and individually tailored service offering. (p.22)

Local advisory councils for persons with disabilities are advisory bodies for the municipal and county authorities. These councils provide advisory statements to the municipal and county authorities in cases that affect persons with disabilities, such as budgetary and planning matters for municipal and county councils to gather ideas for national policy development in the area of equality for persons with disabilities. (p.23)

Planned activities:

- Give County Governors the task of maintaining a complete overview of the regulations and guiding the municipalities in relevant regulations and the significance of seeing the connection between the regulations.
- Provide a program on municipal training on the CRPD and prepare guidance materials on how the Convention can be implemented in municipal enterprises.
- Facilitate annual meeting places between the municipal authorities in order to contribute to an exchange of experience on municipal projects that have been implemented in order to secure equality for persons with disabilities within various areas of society. (p.23)

Involvement of organizations that represent persons with disabilities

The government thanks the Norwegian Federation of Organizations of Disabled People (FFO), the Norwegian Forum of Disabled Peoples' Organizations (SAFO) and the Norwegian Association of Youth with Disabilities for their assistance in developing this strategy. These organizations have contributed knowledge, expertise and experience. The government will also continue to prioritize participation from and dialogue with the organizations in ongoing work to promote equality and inclusion. (p.5)

Integration of gender equality and child rights perspective

The rights of children and youth with disability

- The best interests of the child should be a fundamental consideration in all actions that affect children with disabilities. (p.11)
- Research suggests that children with chronic illnesses or other disabilities have an increased risk of being exposed to violence from their parents. (p.20)
- The government wants to:
- Work to ensure that all children and young people are able to achieve their potential, both socially and academically.
- Ensure that children and young people with special needs will receive the necessary support and assistance as early as possible during their education. (p.25) Early intervention is necessary in order to prevent social exclusion and to facilitate good development and learning in kindergarten and school.
- Provide assistance to children and young people with disabilities to have the opportunity to regularly participate in at least one organized leisure activity.
- In close dialogue with voluntary sector provide disabled children and young people with proper leisure activities. (p.28)

The government will continue the work of securing coordinated services for children and young people with disabilities as part of the government's follow-up of better coordinated services for vulnerable children and young people. (p.22)

Gender equality

In Norway, we have sound legal protection against discrimination. The purpose of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act is to promote equality and prevent discrimination. The Act is built on the foundation that everyone should have the same opportunities, rights and obligations, irrespective of gender, care responsibilities, ethnicity, religion, belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, or any combination of the above. (p.4)

The government's objective in health and care policy is that everyone should have equal access to health services, irrespective of diagnosis, place of residence, personal finances, gender, ethnic background or living situation. (p.27)

Furthermore, the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, was ratified by Norway in 2017. The purpose of the Conventions is to prevent and combat all forms of violence

against women and domestic violence, to protect the rights of women who are exposed to such violence and to promote national and international collaboration against violence. The Conventions are also key to combating violence against women with disabilities. (p.14)

Slovenia

Name of strategy: Action programme for persons with disabilities

Period: 2022-2030

Owner of the material: Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

Areas in focus and general measures for inclusion

The action program⁴² is based on thirteen objectives:

- Raising awareness and providing information
- Accommodation and integration
- Accessibility
- Education
- Work and employment
- Financial and social security
- Health and the provision of medical care
- Cultural engagement
- Sports and leisure activities
- Spiritual and religious life
- The self-organization of persons with disabilities
- Violence and discrimination Ageing with a disability

⁴² Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (2021). *Action program for persons with disabilities (2022-2030)*. See link: <https://www.gov.si/zbirke/projekti-in-programi/akcijski-program-za-invalidne/>

Integration of international agreements

The following basic documents of the United Nations and the documents of the European Union have been considered in the preparation of the Programme: (p.3)

- The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities
- Global Disability Action Plan,
- The EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030

Cross-sectoral management, implementation and monitoring

The Commission for Monitoring the API appointed by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia is responsible for monitoring the implementation of objectives and measures under the Action Program for Persons with Disabilities 2022–2030. The Commission's task is to submit an annual report to the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on the implementation of the Action Program for the preceding year. On the basis of the reports sent by the members of the API Monitoring Commission, the report for the preceding year is drawn up. In submitting the information, the members of the Commission follow the Instructions on Reporting mentioned below. The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities produces a report and submits it to the Government of the Republic of Slovenia. (p.20)

In order to achieve the greater social integration of persons with disabilities and better regulation of the issues relating to disability, closer cooperation between individual line ministries, governmental institutions, disability organizations and other organizations addressing issues relating to disability must be enhanced. (p.4).

The institutions mentioned below are responsible for the implementation of the objectives and measures under the Action Program for Persons with Disabilities 2022-2026:

- The Ministry of Culture
- The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
- The Ministry of Infrastructure
- The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning

- The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- The Ministry of Public Administration
- The Ministry of the Interior
- The Ministry of Health
- The Ministry of Finance
- The Ministry of Defence
- The Ministry of Economic Development and Technology
- The Ministry of justice
- Government offices
- Professional Institutions

Organizations for persons with disabilities and other organizations

Involvement of organizations that represent persons with disabilities

Persons with disabilities and their legal representatives associated by interest voluntarily join disability associations to establish, justify and fulfil the special needs of persons with disabilities and represent their interests. The objectives of disability organizations to achieve a high quality of life of persons with disabilities are the following:

- To enforce the human rights of persons with disabilities
- To draw attention to the principle of the non-discrimination of persons with disabilities
- To promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in social life
- To contribute to public awareness
- To participate in preventing and removing obstacles, etc. (p.15)

In representing the interests of individual and common content relating to disability issues, disability organizations, in accordance with the Organizations for Persons with Disabilities Act, should be ensured the strengthening of permanent advisory and representative roles at the national, regional and local levels. The

Act also regulates the role of the National Council of Disability Organizations. (p.17)

The action program mentions the importance of funding to strengthen the capacity and activities of advocacy within the National Council of Disabled People's Organizations of Slovenia and disability organizations themselves. (p.20)

Professional institutions mentioned in the action program:

- IRSSV – Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia
- JŠRIPSR – Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Maintenance Fund of the Republic of Slovenia
- SOUS – Association of Slovenian Training Organizations for Persons with Special Needs
- URI – Soča – University Rehabilitation Institute of the Republic of Slovenia
- ZRSZ – Employment Service of Slovenia
- ZZZS – Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia (p.24)
- Organizations for persons with disabilities and other organizations mentioned in the action program:
 - NSIOS – National Council of Disabled People's Organizations of Slovenia
 - FIHO – Foundation for the Financing of Disability and Humanitarian Organizations in the Republic of Slovenia
 - ZDUS – Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Organizations
 - YHD – Association for the Theory and Culture of Disability
 - Zveza SONČEK – 'SONČEK' Association of Cerebral Palsy Societies of Slovenia (p.2)

The action program has specified which objectives and measure each organization is responsible for, including responsibility and involvement of organizations that represent people with disabilities. (p.25)

Integration of gender equality and child rights perspective

The rights of children and youth with disability

The API 2022-2030 includes persons with disabilities who are defined by the Placement of Children with Special Needs Act as children with mental development disorders, children who are blind or partially sighted, or children

with visual impairment, children who are deaf or hard of hearing, and children and adolescents with reduced mobility. (p.9)

In order to ensure the transition of young persons with disabilities to the labour market, system-level preparation for entering the labour market should already begin during schooling, and students should be provided support in their transition until they find a stable job. Taking measures to effectively develop possibilities and opportunities for young persons with disabilities is also promoted by the European Disability Strategy 2021–2030 and the United Nations World Program of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. (p.11)

Measures regarding health and the provision of medical care:

- Ensuring early detection and comprehensive early treatment of children with special needs and their families, with a special emphasis on mobile forms of assistance allowing children to stay with their families. (p.14)
- Systematically collecting information on the health and needs of persons with disabilities and children with special needs and the existing network connections within the community, as well as seeking ways to adapt health-care capacities to the actual needs of persons with disabilities. (p.14)

Acts mentioned in the API that focuses on children's rights:

- The Act on the Treatment of Children and Youth with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders in Education: The main goal of the Act is to establish a unified systemic solution for the integrated treatment of children with emotional and behavioural disorders in educational institutions involved in the work of various departments, and to enable the creation of professional centres that can offer preventive activities to children in kindergartens and schools; this will accelerate assistance and thus possibly postpone placement in institutions.
- The Integrated Early Treatment of Preschool Children with Special Needs: The Act is intended to provide children assistance as soon as possible and their parents all the necessary information in one place
- Decision on the establishment of the Working Group for the Integrated Treatment of Children with Mental Health Problems: Tasks of the working group is the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the analysis for the assessment of needs in the integrated treatment of children with special needs.
- Decision initiating the procedure for the implementation of the Public Tender for co-financing the integrated early treatment of children with special needs and their families and strengthening the competencies of professionals.

- Rules amending the Rules on criteria for exercising rights for children in need of special care: The Rules determine the criteria for defining children in need of special care and protection, the composition, work and payment of medical commissions that issue opinions in procedures for exercising rights for children in need of special care under the Parental Care and Family Benefits Act, and the list of serious diseases and conditions, which is an integral part of the Rules as an annex. (p.44)

Gender equality

Parts of the action program mentioning gender equality:

- Ensuring particularly vulnerable groups of persons with disabilities, particularly women and girls with disabilities and older persons with disabilities, access to increased social security and poverty reduction mechanisms. (p.13)
- The protection of personal inviolability must be ensured for persons with disabilities also in cases of forced hospitalisation and involuntary treatment. In realising this objective, particular attention should be devoted to women, older people and children, since they are especially exposed to violence and discrimination. (p.17)
- The importance of drawing public attention to violence and abuse (in particular, violence against children, women and old persons with disabilities) and to the importance of (non)discrimination. (p.18)

Spain

Name of strategy: Executive summary Spanish strategy on disabilities 2022 – 2030 for the access, enjoyment and enjoyment of the human rights of people with disabilities

Period: 2022-2030

Owner of the material: The Ministry of Social Rights

Areas in focus and general measures for inclusion

Seven strategy^{43,44} areas have been established that are linked to specific objectives and measures:

- Active citizenship and full exercise of human rights
- Social inclusion and participation
- Personal autonomy and independent living
- Support for families
- Equality and diversity
- Design and universal accessibility
- Territorial cohesion, data and statistics, governance and civil dialogue, leadership and cooperation, innovation and digitization, sustainable development

Integration of international agreements

This Strategy, as the 2030 Agenda, is conceived from an intersectional approach and with a gender perspective and will respond to other cross-cutting challenges such as the climate emergency and the demographic challenge. (p.1)

Cross-sectoral management, implementation and monitoring

The strategy has been submitted to the consensus of the different Spanish ministries involved, who have been able to incorporate their considerations into the document and actively participate in the preparation. (p.6)

Furthermore, the Strategy is articulated based on multi-level concept and multi-stakeholder governance. In Spain, the responsibility for developing and implementing the strategy rests with the Dirección General de Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad, which reports to the Secretary of State for Social Rights of the Ministry of Social Rights and the 2030 Agenda, who coordinates disability policy at the state level.

⁴³ The Ministry of Social Rights. Executive summary Spanish strategy on disabilities 2022 – 2030 for the access, enjoyment and enjoyment of the human rights of people with disabilities.

⁴⁴ This country is included in the chapter Descriptive case studies.

The governance system of the strategy is made up of the following coordination mechanisms:

- Monitoring Committee in the framework of the Consejo Nacional de la Discapacidad.
- Delegated Commission of Social Services in the framework of the del Consejo Territorial de Servicios Sociales y del SAD. (p.6)

Involvement of organizations that represent persons with disabilities

To prepare the strategy, a participatory methodology has been followed that has sought to collect the feelings of people with disabilities and their families through a fully accessible citizen survey, which has received more than 8,000 responses, and 13 discussion groups. on key issues for disability in which 190 people have participated, of which more than 60% have been people with disabilities. (p.6)

Furthermore, governance and civil dialogue: promote collaboration between Public Administrations and social entities for disability, in preparation, execution, monitoring and evaluation of policies that affect people with disabilities. (p.5)

Integration of gender equality and child rights perspective

The rights of children and youth with disability

The strategy emphasizes the importance to Improve the response to the needs, expectations and demands of children and adolescent population with disabilities, aimed at their personal, social, training and work development, personal autonomy, participation in the community and independent living, bearing in mind at all times the perspective of the childhood. (p.4)

Gender equality

The strategy highlights the following perspectives:

- Ensure that women and girls with disabilities have equal access to their rights and eradicate situations of violence and discrimination against them, with special emphasis on the effects of intersectional discrimination, in accordance with the SDG aimed at achieving equality among genders and empower all women and girls.
- Ensure that actions and policies on disability allow for gender and gender policies allow for disability.

Sweden

Name of strategy: Strategy for systematic follow-up of the disability policy

Period: 2021-2023

Owner of the material: Ministry of Social Affairs

Areas in focus and general measures for inclusion

- Work and livelihood
- Education and lifelong learning
- Transport
- Environment and community planning
- Digitalisation
- Public procurement
- Health, public health and social welfare
- Culture and leisure
- Democratic participation
- Justice system
- Consumer policy
- Crisis preparedness

To achieve the national goal of the disability policy^{45,46}, the implementation of disability policy will target four areas:

- the principle of universal design
- accessibility shortcomings
- individual support and solutions for individual independence
- preventing and countering discrimination

⁴⁵ Ministry of Social Affairs. *Strategy for systematic follow-up of the disability policy (2021-2023)*.

⁴⁶ This country is included in the chapter Descriptive case studies.

Integration of international agreements

UN

The national disability policy goal is based on the CRPD and the strategy is in line with Article 31 on Collection of Statistics and Information. The Convention states undertake to collect appropriate information including statistics and research that make it possible to design and implement guidelines that have effect to the Convention. (p.4)

The government believes that measures need to be taken to increase the work on implementing the CRPD and the national goal for disability policy. A fundamental part of this work is a control and follow-up system that is long-term and stable, to enable the disability perspective to be better integrated into activities in various areas of society. (p. 33) The government emphasizes that a longer strategy period is needed in order to do a proper follow-up of the disability policy. Furthermore, the government makes the assessment that a new national action plan for the disability policy can be decided on, at the middle of the strategy period, i.e. 2026. (p.5)

Agenda 2030

One part of the strategy focuses on how the measures taken by the authority in connection with the national goal for the disability policy contribute to fulfilling the goals of the Agenda 2030. The strategy also highlights the importance of including dialogues with both disability organizations and other relevant actors. (p.4)

Cross-sectoral management, implementation and monitoring

The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs is responsible for coordination the disability policy. The government's strategy focuses on strengthening the follow-up of the disability policy. The government makes the assessment that there is a need to be able to follow the development towards the national goal for disability policy in a more systematic way. A more secure basis through improved follow-up is needed, among other things, to be able to take appropriate measures, or for the development of action plans at different levels within the field of disability. (p.3)

30 public administration bodies are included in the Swedish strategy and divided into the 12 areas/sectors above which forms the basis of the disability policy. The authorities must follow-up the strategy in the respective authority's annual report. (p.1)

The sector-wise management of the authorities forms the basis for the implementation of the disability policy and is based on the responsibility and financing principle. The principle essentially means that every sector in society has responsibility for implementing the disability policy. It is the responsibility of society as a whole that has to ensure that people are not excluded. The costs of removing obstacles and creating accessibility for all people must be financed within the framework of ordinary operations. In accordance with the specification of the principle, it means that each sector must design and conduct its activities so that it becomes accessible to all citizens, including persons with disabilities. (p.6)

This means that the authorities should report the measures that each authority has taken to reach the national goal for the disability policy. Furthermore, the authorities should, to the extent possible, assess target fulfilment and report on it in their documentation for follow-up. A starting point for the follow-up can be to produce a current description of how the situation is in relation to the national goal for the disability policy. The follow-up can consist of both quantitative and qualitative reporting. In cases where quantitative data is not available to a sufficient extent, the goal fulfilment should be supplemented with or consist of qualitative analysis. (p.10)

Involvement of organizations that represent persons with disabilities

To be able to implement the national goal for the disability policy, in accordance with the Convention, consultation should be made with disability organizations. This must also be included in the authorities' reporting where the consultations must be reported. (p.4)

Integration of gender equality and child rights perspective

Gender equality and the rights of children and youth with disability

Gender equality is an important part of the disability policy, which is clear from the national goal. To enable equality between girls and boys and women and men with disabilities is a priority. It is important to clarify the child's rights in all measures concerning children with disabilities. According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Convention on the Rights of the Child) children's best interests must be considered in all actions concerning them. In the national goal for the disability policy, it is made clear that children's rights are an important part of the disability policy. (p.3)

United Kingdom

Name of strategy: DFID's Strategy for Disability Inclusive Development

Period: 2018-2023

Owner of the material: Department for International Development

Areas in focus and general measures for inclusion

Through the strategy⁴⁷, UK will prioritise four strategic pillars for action:

- **Inclusive education:** Ensure that all children with disabilities can access a quality education that enables them to learn and thrive, including children who are currently out of school.
- **Social protection:** Ensure social protection systems are inclusive of, and deliver better outcomes for, people with disabilities and their families.
- **Economic empowerment:** Empower people with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, to access and have choice and control over economic opportunities.
- **Humanitarian action:** To promote a fully inclusive humanitarian response, within DFID and across the broader system, which is evidence-based, equitable, inclusive in design, and founded on the principles of dignity, safety, empowerment and protection.

Under each strategic pillar follows several deliverables.

Integration of international agreements

UN

There has been far too little global progress to deliver the SDGs and implement the UN CRPD. Business as usual will not achieve the transformational change that is needed. Many policy makers and practitioners have been unaware that

⁴⁷ Department for International Development. *DFID's Strategy for Disability Inclusive Development (2018-2023)*. See link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/760997/Disability-Inclusion-Strategy.pdf

international frameworks for disability exist or that people with disabilities must be included in all development, stability, and humanitarian efforts. The world must do more to address this and must do more to uphold the fundamental rights of all citizens, including women, girls, men and boys with disabilities. (p.6)

Agenda 2030

The strategy highlight that they will not eradicate poverty, deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) without including people with disabilities in all our work. (p.3). Furthermore, the SDG's is part of DFID's theory of change for disability inclusion. (p.12)

Cross-sectoral management, implementation and monitoring

There is a close fit between the areas mentioned above and the SDGs, and they are areas where DFID has a comparative advantage, and global influence. We will measure success in the four pillars; by doubling the proportion of programmes that are disability inclusive by 2023 – tracked across all areas using the internationally agreed OECD Development Assistance Committee's (OECD-DAC) disability inclusion and empowerment marker. (p.11)

To complement this focus, we are adopting three cross-cutting areas, vital to disability inclusion, which will be consistently and systematically addressed in all of our work:

- Tackling stigma and discrimination
- Empowering girls and women with disabilities
- Access to appropriate assistive technology

We are introducing a new DFID-wide Disability Inclusion Delivery Board to hold senior responsibility for the implementation of this strategy within DFID. This Board will include senior officials from all relevant DFID Departments with lead responsibility for actions included in the accompanying delivery plan. The Board will meet on a quarterly basis and review progress against this strategy and the actions in the accompanying delivery plan, consider risks to delivery, and ensure delivery remains on target. We will publish an annual assessment against progress, which will include an assessment against the standards. The delivery plan will be a live document, revised and published at regular intervals. We will measure progress to increase the proportion of programmes that are disability inclusive through regular analysis and publication of data from the OECD-DAC disability inclusion and empowerment marker. Whilst we have set a high bar for

all of DFID's work, we do anticipate some failure and therefore we will build in measures to learn from this. (p.26)

Involvement of organizations that represent persons with disabilities

With advice from people with disabilities and their representative organizations all over the world, we have selected and prioritised the areas where we can add the most value and make the greatest impact. (p.3)

External scrutiny in the monitoring and accountability of this strategy will be vital to deliver on its ambition. We will undertake regular engagement with stakeholders, including people with disabilities and their representative groups and wider civil society organizations, on delivery and our assessment of progress. We will continue to build partnerships and forge close relationships with people with disabilities, their representative bodies and other appropriate networks and work together to influence others. We will forge close relationships with key stakeholders including bilateral development agencies, multilaterals, foundations and private sector organizations to prioritise disability inclusion in their work. Country offices will work with people with disabilities and their representative bodies, including through the provision of technical support and funding to build their capacity and increase knowledge. (p.26)

Integration of gender equality and child rights perspective

The rights of children and youth with disability

These deliverables are mentioned under pillar 1: Inclusive Education

- Deliverable 1: DFID will build on these commitments and keep our promises to support millions of children with disabilities who are out of school (including those with mental health conditions, psychosocial disabilities, and those with intellectual disabilities).
- Deliverable 2: We will deliver targeted interventions to increase the number of children with disabilities accessing inclusive and equitable quality education and improve their learning outcomes.
- Deliverable 3: We will catalyse the will, tools and resources needed to realise inclusive and equitable quality education. (p.13-14)

Gender equality

Empowering girls and women with disabilities is critical. Women and girls with disabilities are often disadvantaged on multiple levels, chronically under-

represented and often excluded from both gender equality and disability inclusion initiatives. We recognise the multiple layers of discrimination faced by the most excluded girls and women with disabilities, and we will ensure that implementation of this strategy works hand in hand with delivery of DFID's Strategic Vision for Gender Equality. The Strategic Vision calls for greater focus on those who face multiple and compounding discrimination or disadvantage, including girls and women with disabilities. (p.20)

At GDS18, 20 national governments, 4 donors and 6 multilaterals committed to strengthening inclusive approaches relating to women and girls with disabilities. Furthermore, as we go forward, we will bring about a step change in how we understand, include and empower the most excluded and vulnerable girls and women with disabilities. We will take a twin-track approach, providing specific funding and support for women and girls with disabilities, for example through the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, whilst systematically taking a gender and disability inclusive lens to all our work to redress power imbalances and promote the rights of people with disabilities. (p.20)

We will go further than our obligations under the UK's Gender Equality Act (2014), which considers gender equality at the outset of all our development and humanitarian assistance. We will promote the leadership of women and girls with disabilities, amplify their voices, and ensure their effective and meaningful participation in all spheres of life at all levels. We will tackle the taboos and denial of their rights to information, advice and autonomy around their own sexual and reproductive health, including menstrual health, particularly those with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities. (p.20)

This deliverable is mentioned under pillar 3: Economic Empowerment

- Deliverable 1: We will seek to address the systemic and attitudinal barriers to economic empowerment; strengthening anti-discrimination laws and policies (and supporting implementation) including those related to people with psychosocial disabilities, and shifting the underlying harmful attitudes that weaken the rights and opportunities for all people with disabilities, including women and girls. We will improve access to financial services for people with disabilities; exploring how suitable digital finance can overcome barriers to access, supporting the modernisation of payment infrastructure, and learning from, and scaling up, programmes in countries such as Burma and Ghana where people with disabilities receive innovative micro-finance and agricultural support. (p.16)

This deliverable is mentioned under pillar 4: Humanitarian Action:

- Deliverable 1: As a critical first step, DFID will promote the routine, systematic collection and use of disaggregated data, and improve the evidence

base. Accurate and systematic disaggregated data (using tested tools such as the Washington Group questions) on the extent of people with disabilities affected by a given crisis, as well as rigorous evidence on the barriers experienced, is the foundation to including all individuals in a response. We must better understand who is in most need of humanitarian assistance and who may be excluded from responses in each context. This starts with efficient identification of needs and through listening more to the voices of affected people, including women and girls with disabilities. This will require us to build the capacity of humanitarian actors to collect, analyse and use quality disaggregated data and for us to explore barriers facing people with disabilities affected by issues such as climate change. By 2021 we expect all individual level data generated by core delivery partners to be disaggregated by disability wherever possible. (p.18)

- Deliverable 2: We will strive for equitable access to essential humanitarian services for all people with disabilities, including both refugees and home populations with disabilities. We must seek to understand the barriers faced by people with disabilities, including women and girls, and ensure that we go beyond physical challenges to eliminate all barriers. We will undertake an inclusion review of DFID's humanitarian portfolio beginning in 2019, and explore the intersection of disability, safeguarding, gender and protection needs in sudden onset and protracted crises. DFID Nigeria will pilot this approach. Through these inclusion reviews we will develop our understanding of inclusive programming, share good practice, and make recommendations for improved humanitarian programming going forward.
- Deliverable 4: We will advocate for the safety and protection of girls, women, boys and men with disabilities in humanitarian crises. We will focus on providing services that work to end physical, sexual and psychological violence and all types of discrimination, and promote dignity, safety, empowerment and protection. We will expect partners receiving UK Aid (including through our Rapid Response Facility) to demonstrate disability inclusion by highlighting the collection and analysis of data, and to adhere to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action, which includes specific guidance on the protection of people with disabilities. At the country level, we will push for stronger accountability mechanisms which partner with people with disabilities and their representative organizations to deliver stronger outcomes. (p.19)

Descriptive case studies

Finland

Areas covered by the strategy and general measures for inclusion

When Finland drafted their current action plan, they based it on the articles in the CRPD. As part of the drafting, a questionnaire was sent to citizens with disability in Finland, asking what articles in the CRPD were the most important and what should be prioritized. Along with other work, they made an interpretation of the content in the Convention and selected 13 areas that the action plan would focus on. In each area, relevant articles from the CRPD are listed and the core content of each article is described. What is notable is that due to the covid pandemic, additional needs emerged, resulting in that the objective *safety and emergency* was added to the current action plan.

Finland finds it is very important to connect the objectives in the national action plan to the CRPD. Relating the objectives in the national action plan to the CRPD supports relevant actors to identify measures that need to be taken to promote the rights of persons with disabilities in line with the CRPD.

The Advisory Board for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (VANE) is tasked to facilitate the national implementation of the CRPD within the government. As part of the follow-up work of the objectives, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health have meetings with VANE four times a year. Before each meeting, information is collected from all ministries to get the latest update on what's happening in order to discuss how the work should proceed. They highlight the importance of integrating persons with different kinds of backgrounds. For example, Sami Parliament has been involved in the preparation of the Action Plan and they also have a permanent representative in VANE.

Integration of international agreements

The action plan is connected to other international agreements such as the CRPD and Agenda 2030 and they have tried to involve the guideline principles from the international agreements into their action plan. Therefore, the CRPD and Agenda 2030 serve as a basis for Finland's action plan.

Involvement of organizations that represent people with disabilities

Through VANE, Finland have insured that organizations are involved in every phase when drafting a new action plan. For example, it was considered necessary to consult disability organizations and stakeholders more extensively to support the preparation of the Action Plan. For this purpose, two hearings were organized with national disability organizations. At the first hearing, the organizations were asked to identify the most important issues that the Action Plan should address. Statements were submitted from 17 disability organizations and speeches were given by 17 organizations at the event. After the first hearing, there were meetings with the relevant ministries in order to define the targets and measures. In each meeting, there were also a representative/s from organizations of persons with disabilities.

The second hearing took place as the ministries had to a great extent formulated their objectives and measures. At this hearing, the organizations commented on the plan and proposed further changes to it.

The covid pandemic was something that changed the established ways of working, as well as the work within the advisory board, they can have meetings with the ministries and disabled organizations in more ad hoc ways. In person seminars can now be conducted through webinars, which makes it easier for people to participate since people are not limited by geography.

There is a straight connection between the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and disability organizations, and the ministry has a good network to which they can outsource the information to. For example, they work closely with municipality councils to communicate important information to persons with disabilities.

Key factors for a successful implementation

The key factors for a successful implementation of the CRPD is to focus on the process, not just the outcome. The process is a very valuable way to promote rights of persons with disabilities and creates an opportunity for different stakeholders to discuss and inform about the situation and together define the targets and measures of the disability policy. They also highlight the value of having discussions with disabled organizations and other actors, both for drafting and implementing. Two other key factors mentioned is the importance of collaboration between different ministries and exchanging more experiences with other countries about their work with the CRPD.

Latvia

Areas covered by the strategy and general measures for inclusion

The main goal of the disability policy in Latvia is in line with the goal set by the CRPD, and their strategy envisages a set of measures in five directions of action that are chosen based on the principle that they are not found in other policy planning documents. At the same time, they cover people's needs as widely as possible, promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities in society.

A significant contribution has been made to the development of measures to promote the independent life of persons with disabilities in society. In recent years, emphasis has been placed on the reform of minimum income thresholds in order to promote the improvement of the material situation of low-income residents (including persons with disabilities). The availability, accessibility and content of various services have also been improved in the last years. For example, in 2021, personal assistant services in the municipalities were reformed, promoting mobility and inclusion opportunities for persons with disabilities.

In recent years, the public awareness of the role of universal design has grown significantly and is applied both in the designing of the built environment, in the development of information communications, and also in the planning and design of products and services, especially in the context of transposing and implementing the European Accessibility Act.

When developing policy planning documents and draft legislation, line ministries are responsible for including the principle of equal opportunities for persons with disabilities, thus ensuring the implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities. Therefore, the implementation of the disability policy is ensured both at the national and municipal levels. Local governments, when developing their development strategies, also take into account disability issues and the needs of persons with disabilities.

Integration of gender equality and child rights perspective

Disability policy in Latvia is developed in a way that the aspect of gender equality is taken into account. Though, there are no specific measures to promote the rights of women or men with disabilities, but the Ministry of Welfare have different forums to raise awareness about the role and opportunities for people with disabilities in society, incl. from a gender perspective. The Ministry of Welfare has also developed a gender equality plan for 2021-2023, which covers measures to ensure the interests of women and men with disabilities. At the same time, the

Ministry of Welfare develops support services that are directly aimed at ensuring the best interests of children with disabilities and integrating them into society. This includes close cooperation with the ministries of other sectors to ensure the development of inter-institutional services.

Key factors for a successful implementation

Latvia emphasizes that cooperation between the state and local government institutions and the non-governmental sector is important, incl. the involvement of the non-governmental sector in the decision-making process. The common understanding of the public on disability issues and the political will to develop support services for persons with disabilities in such a way as to ensure an inclusive society, is also a key factor to ensure the implementation of measures set in the national strategy.

Malta

Areas covered by the strategy and general measures for inclusion

The 13 strategy objectives have been identified following a consultation process with persons with disabilities and stakeholders in the disability sector in Malta, whilst also observing the obligations under the CRPD. The Directorate for Disability Issues through its National Coordination Mechanism (in line with Article 33 CRPD) has developed an implementation plan which monitors the progress of all stakeholders involved. Monthly progress is requested from the owners of the objectives.

The strategy outlines specific objectives and outputs/deliverables in line with specific timeframes. Stakeholders are also identified in the strategy document to ensure the implementation of each objective. Furthermore, the strategy outlines a number of practical measures that need to be implemented by specific timeframes and stakeholders involved are on board to implement the objectives. In line with Article 4.3 of CRPD, this Ministry has also appointed ENGAGE, which is a committee represented by persons with disability and their families.

Malta has the *access for all* guidelines published in 2011 and adopted as the national standards for accessibility in the built environment in 2015. In 2019, these guidelines were given legal standing through a legal notice. In 2022, Malta also transposed the EU Accessibility Act in their national law giving a legal basis to the accessibility of services and products.

Integration of international agreements

Malta's National Disability strategy is pegged with the CRPD, SDGs and Sendai Framework. Furthermore, the implementation plan created to monitor the progress on the National Disability strategy will assist this Office in the reporting for both the Agenda 2030 and the CRPD.

Key factors for a successful implementation

Key factors that are mentioned for a successful implementation of the CRPD is to have a national strategy with clear objectives, and not a one-size fits all. The legal structures in the country are also a key factor for the implementation process.

Norway

Areas covered by the strategy and general measures for inclusion

The areas in Norway's national strategy are chosen to enable a clear connection to the CRPD. In order to follow up on the work with the strategy, there is an associated action plan to concretize the goals contained in the strategy, as well as an action plan on universal design. As all political issues compete with each other, Norway identifies several values with connecting the focus areas in the strategy and action plans to other international agreements. They have noticed that other actor's commitment to disability issues increases if the disability strategy and action plans have a clear connection to high-status international agreements, such as Agenda 2030. Different actors have been involved and given input to the measures and activities presented in the strategy as well as the action plans, for example ministries, civil society, the public and interest organizations.

Norway highlights that there is a tradition in the country of talking about universal design as something that applies to everyone, and not just to people with disabilities. So, having a specific action plan on universal design, increases attention to the issue on a wider basis among the different ministries. They also emphasize that the definition of universal design is complex, which contributes to that many ministries have the perspective integrated in their work, even if they do not call it universal design. Therefore, as a coordinating authority, The Directorate for Children, Youth and Families try to gather the work of other ministries under the umbrella of universal design.

Cross-sectoral management, implementation and monitoring

In the national strategy, there are four goals that are concretized in two action plans. The Directorate for Children, Youth and Families is responsible for the coordination of the measures included in the action plans and can provide input on what should be done. Although, the responsibility for the implementation lies with the various sectors.

There are both a horizontal and vertical distribution of the work with the strategy and the action plans, but Norway highlights that the municipalities in Norway have great responsibility. For example, many of the services are managed at the municipal level, which means that the state has limited influence. Furthermore, there are many forums for collaboration and one of them is a network forum on universal design where all municipalities in Norway are involved, with the aim of exchanging knowledge between the municipalities.

Norway also highlights another example that shows good example of cross-sectoral management as they hold seminars every two years where they gather all actors who have responsibilities in the action plan to exchange experiences and discuss disability issues. In addition to this, continuous meetings are held with civil society, as well as bilateral meetings between different ministries.

As part of Norway's work with monitoring, they for example analyse previous action plans to see what has happened and not. Furthermore, they also analyse the statistics in the field to see the concrete effects of the work. The directorates' also compiles annual status reports that are sent to the respective ministries.

Key factors for a successful implementation

Norway mentions that the key factors to be able to implement the CRPD are that enough resources must be allocated at all levels of society. They also highlight that good communication and integration between all levels of society is of highest importance, as well as a good dialogue with those actors who really know the field, so that measures are implemented where there are concrete needs.

Spain

Areas covered by the strategy and general measures for inclusion

The main lines of action in the strategy have been selected, essentially, taking into account the recommendations made by the CRPD Committee in its last evaluation

of Spain.⁴⁸ Furthermore, normative and policy references was also taken into account, as well as a citizen consultation, focus groups and interviews with people with high support needs.

From an overall rights perspective, the measures taken to improve the situation for people with disabilities are based on the recommendations made by the CRPD Committee in its last evaluation of Spain. One example of measures taken is ensure a common 112 emergency number throughout Spain, accessible to people with deafness, making it possible to locate and respond to an emergency call, regardless of the autonomous region in which it takes place.

On their integration of universal design, Spain highlights that a collection of "Universal Accessibility Manuals for Architecture Professionals" has recently been published by the Autonomous Region of Extremadura, with the aim of condensing the information on the different elements into a single document that will help them to create accessible, friendly and healthy spaces. The guides include the regional and national regulatory framework applicable to accessible housing for people with reduced mobility and people with sensory disabilities so that they become accessible for different professionals, easy to understand, practical and useful.

Involvement of organisations that represent people with disabilities

In general, people with disabilities and the organisations that represent them participate in the drafting of regulations through the procedures of prior public consultation, hearing and public information. Furthermore, according with the General Law on the rights of persons with disabilities, the National Council on Disability institutionalizes the collaboration of:

- The associative movement of persons with disabilities and their families
- The General State Administration, for the definition and coordination of public policies that guarantee the rights of persons with disabilities.

The Spanish Committee of Representatives of Persons with Disabilities (CERMI) is designated as the coordination mechanism in Spain and the most representative public utility association at state level of the different types of disability. Also, the

⁴⁸ The United Nations. *Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - Concluding observations on the combined second and third periodic reports of Spain*. See link:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/concluding-observations/crpdcespco2-3-committee-rights-persons-disabilities-concluding>

CERMI works as an independent mechanism to promote, protect and supervise the application in Spain.

Integration of gender equality and child rights perspective

The Spanish strategy focuses on ensuring that women and girls with disabilities have equal access to their rights and eradicate situations of violence and discrimination against them. Furthermore, the strategy highlights the importance of improving the response to the needs, expectations and demands of children and young people with disabilities, aimed at their personal, social, educational and labour development, personal autonomy, participation in the community and independent living.

Despite gender perspective being a cross-cutting issue, it could be said that both, gender and childhoods perspectives, fall within the scope of social affairs. A lot of responsibility lies within the autonomous Regions, and that is why the integration of both perspectives depends mainly on regional policies.

Key factors for a successful implementation

The key factors that are mentioned in order to accomplish a successful implementation of the CRPD are the promotion and awareness of universal accessibility throughout the public administration, given that accessibility concerns not only to persons with disabilities but everyone with a functional limitation, whether permanent or temporary. Furthermore, they highlight the importance of a political situation that promotes and drives the Spanish strategy during its complete lifetime. The coordination between the Public Administrations according to the different levels of competence the General State Administration, Autonomous Regions and local entities is also a key factor, as well as the participation of people with disabilities and their associative movements.

Sweden

Areas covered by the strategy and general measures for inclusion

The foundation of Swedish disability strategy is the CRPD and therefore, the Swedish strategy follows the Convention's priorities very closely. The focus areas in the strategy are an operationalization of Swedish politics and are also based on the results of a previous investigation appointed by the Swedish government. The investigation aimed to examine how a more efficient governance could be achieved and highlighted particularly strategic areas of society in order to achieve the Swedish disability strategy goal. Sweden highlights that many rights issues

have to fight for attention in the political arena. Therefore, there is an added value to be able to connect the national strategy to international agreements such as Agenda 2030 as they have a lot in common.

The measures implemented to improve accessibility, etc. for people with disabilities is primarily based on many changes in the law, with regulations and general advice that specify the changes in the law. Furthermore, Sweden highlights that all EU-directives have been of great importance in strengthening accessibility in various areas of society. However, there is no unified national reform to increase accessibility in Sweden.

While there have been several efforts to improve the situation for people with disabilities, it is an ongoing work of development. Examples of initiatives that have been implemented in order for people with disabilities to participate in the same way as everyone else in society are strengthening of school legislation and the labour market area. Furthermore, there have also been new regulations regarding digitalization and web accessibility, something that was previously unregulated in Sweden.

Universal design is one of the four pillars for the entire disability policy and therefore constitutes a basis for the national goal of the disability policy to become a reality. However, Sweden highlights that the concept of universal design is difficult to define and that there is no “universal model” how to work with it.

Cross-sectoral management, implementation and monitoring

The governance begins with the Swedish government and in accordance with the CRPD, there is a coordinating function which is at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs.

As part of the work with the strategy, there are interdepartmental working groups where the policy area is discussed. There are also various councils where ministries, officials from the Government Office and disability organizations, engage in dialogue about what they want the politicians could focus on. They highlight the importance of including people with disability and their organizations to get a picture of how they perceive the living conditions.

The Swedish Agency for Participation is a coordinating agency that enables a more cross-sectoral follow-up and monitoring of the disability policy, for which the agency is also responsible. The monitoring consists of feedback reports from other government agencies, national statistics, data collection from public authorities at national and municipality level etc. To illustrate the results of the monitoring, The Swedish Agency for Participation conducts annual reports where the results are presented.