



SECRETARIAT D'ÉTAT
CHARGÉ DES PERSONNES
HANDICAPÉES

*Liberté
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Ministerial Conference on Disability: Improving accessibility and access to rights and implementing the 2021-2030 EU Strategy

Press Kit

Paris, 9 March 2022

Éditorial



Respect for human dignity, the rule of law and equality are cornerstones of the European Union. Collectively, it is our duty to ensure that all European citizens have equal access to education and a quality work life, as well as full mobility.

Major progress has been made for persons with disabilities thanks to the 2010-2020 Strategy, but we must now go further to make Europe more inclusive and just, in particular in terms of disabled persons' access to rights and personal independence.

To address these important issues targeted by the goals of the new 2021-2030 Strategy, I have invited my counterparts from the other 26 Member States, the ministers responsible for disabled persons, as well as civil society organisations to meet in Paris on 9 March 2022.

I believe in Europe's central role in building collective solutions, drawing inspiration from the best approaches already in place in the Member States. For this reason, I wished for us to together discuss the challenges we face and the solutions that can be provided in implementing the 2021-2030 Strategy, to enable people with disabilities to fully enjoy their rights.

Creating a society that provides true freedom of choice is the governing principle that must guide our efforts at European level. We must build on the momentum generated and promote inclusive education and lifelong learning, to enable access to employment and job retention, an essential requirement for real autonomy. We must make public job support services the keystone of our efforts, with the aim of better combatting discrimination to develop an inclusive

labour market. As ever, we will pursue this work drawing on the expertise of the people concerned and their representatives together with partners from European civil society.

A fully inclusive European society is one that works to ensure the professional and personal fulfilment of all of its citizens. This is why I am delighted to be holding this event, alongside my counterparts and members of civil society, to contribute to building a fully inclusive Union!



Sophie CLUZEL

French Minister of State for Disabled People,
attached to the Prime Minister

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The French Presidency of the Council of the European Union

What does the Presidency of the Council of the European Union involve?

A rotating presidency

Each Member State holds the presidency of the Council of the European Union for six months on a rotating basis. From 1 January to 30 June 2022, France holds the presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Presidency of the Council organises meetings, brokers compromises, submits conclusions and ensures the coherency as well as the continuity of the decision-making process. It ensures proper cooperation between all Member States and acts as a liaison between the Council and the European institutions, in particular the Commission and the European Parliament.

What is the Council of the European Union?

Also called the "Council of Ministers", or simply "the Council", the Council of the European Union brings together the ministers of the EU Member States who meet in configurations by sector of activity. Together with the European Parliament, it serves as the co-legislator of the European Union.

More specifically, the ministers preside over 10 sectors of activity or configurations of the Council of the EU:

- **General Affairs**
- **Economic and Financial Affairs**
- **Justice and Home Affairs**
- **Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs**
- **Competitiveness (internal market, industry, research and space)**
- **Transport, Telecommunications and Energy**
- **Agriculture and Fisheries**
- **Environment**
- **Education, Youth, Culture and Sport**
- **Trade**

The Foreign Affairs Council is an exception; it is chaired by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, currently Mr Josep Borrell.

The Council also holds budgetary powers; it adopts and amends the European budget together with the Parliament. Lastly, the Council adopts certain decisions as well as non-binding recommendations, concludes international agreements on behalf of the EU, and appoints members of certain institutions such as the European Court of Auditors, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions. The Council's deliberations and votes on legislative texts are public.

The Council of the European Union is not to be confused with:

- *The European Council, which is composed of the Heads of State or Government of its Member States and defines the general policy priorities and directions for the European Union. Its current president is Charles Michel.*
- *The Council of Europe, which is an intergovernmental organisation made up of 47 Member States. Founded in 1949, the Council of Europe serves to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Its seat is in Strasbourg and its Secretary-General is Marija Pejčinović Burić.*

Into what framework does the French Presidency fit?

➤ **The French Presidency of the Council of the EU** builds on the vision for a sovereign, united and democratic Europe laid out by the **President of the French Republic** in his address given on 26 September 2017 at the Sorbonne University. For four years, the French President and the Government have been working to build true European sovereignty, namely Europe's ability to act in today's world to defend our values and interests. The French Presidency of the Council of the European Union will continue this work to promote a more united, sovereign and democratic Europe.

➤ **The French Presidency is part of the presidency Trio programme**, with which France aligns its action. This system, in place since 2009, sets long-term goals and defines the main topics to be addressed over a period of 18 months. Following the Slovenian Presidency, France is beginning a new cycle and will work as a trio with the Czech Republic in the second half of 2022 and with Sweden in the first half of 2023.

NEARLY 400 EVENTS

IN TOTAL, NEARLY 400 EVENTS ARE PLANNED IN FRANCE AND THE EU THROUGHOUT THE PRESIDENCY, INCLUDING POLITICAL MEETINGS, A CULTURAL PROGRAMME AND CITIZEN EVENTS OPEN TO ALL.

Programme of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union for Disability

With regard to social inclusion, the French Presidency will seek to promote the EU's action on taking fundamental rights into account and the fight against the economic and social exclusion of vulnerable persons. In light of the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, the Presidency will hold a ministerial conference in early March to discuss how action can be taken to improve the social and economic participation of persons with disabilities as well as their access to rights. This conference will in particular be an opportunity to review progress on the employment package aimed at improving the employment situation of people with disabilities, as well as to discuss challenges related to European research on autism.

Objectives and Topics of the Ministerial Conference on Disability: Improving accessibility and access to rights and implementing the 2021-2030 EU Strategy

The office of the French Minister of State for Disabled People is organising a ministerial conference in Paris on 9 March 2022, under the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Sophie Cluzel, French Minister of State for Disabled People attached to the Prime Minister, and Helena Dalli, European Commissioner for Equality, will be joined by the EU ministers responsible for disability as well as representatives of civil society at the conference. The aim of the conference is to discuss available policy measures to increase the participation of disabled persons, as part of the new 2021-2030 Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted by the European Commission.

Supporting Accessibility and Mobility: Challenges and opportunities for implementing the 2021-2030 Strategy

As the public health crisis has reminded us, ensuring social inclusion, participation and equal access to education, work and quality care for all must remain a top priority for Europe.

During the first session of the conference, the ministers and representatives of civil society will discuss and assess the recent progress made in terms of accessibility and mobility for persons with disabilities, at both national and European level.

Improving access to education and training in a more inclusive European Union

In Europe, the employment rate among persons with disabilities (50.8%) remains significantly lower than among persons without disabilities (75%). Considerable barriers to work force participation remain, such as persistent stereotypes, a lack of workplace adaptation and inadequate educational and training opportunities. Access to employment is a critical priority for future European actions to support persons with disabilities.

To address this issue, the second session of the conference will focus on the education of children with disabilities as well as access to ongoing education and training, in order to increase equal opportunity in employment. The steps for implementing the 2021-2030 Strategy will thus be discussed in order to prepare for the launch of one of the European Commission's flagship initiatives, the disability employment package.

Towards an open and inclusive labour market in view of the European package on employment for persons with disabilities

During the third session, the participants will discuss the issue of improving accessibility and inclusivity in the labour market for persons with disabilities. These discussions will be held in view of the upcoming EU package which will be introduced in 2022.

The participants will touch on the role of European public services in employment, as well as the importance of combatting stereotypes, in order to improve access to employment for persons with disabilities.

Developing a European vision of research on autism in neurodevelopmental disorders

The ministers will visit the topic of autism, during a separate working session. The aim of the discussion will be to share best national practices promoting the inclusion of persons with autism, from the perspective of European approaches to research into its causes.

Key facts on disability in the European Union

Approximately 87 million people aged 16 to 64 in the European Union have a disability, which accounts for 17.9% of this age group.

- 50.8% of persons with disabilities are employed in the European Union, compared to 75% of persons without disabilities. They are over-represented in precarious and low-paying jobs*
- 29.4% of persons with disabilities have a secondary level of education, compared to 43.8% of persons without disabilities*
- More than half of persons with disabilities affirm they have experienced discrimination*
- 64.3% of persons with disabilities over 16 years have access to internet in their homes compared to almost 88% of persons without disabilities.*

Source: Eurostat, 2019, 2020

Programme/Agenda

MORNING

8:30 A.M.

Formal arrival of ministers and welcome of delegations



9:30 A.M.

Opening



10 A.M.

First working session

Topic: "Supporting Accessibility and Mobility: Challenges and opportunities in implementing the 2021-2030 Strategy"



11 A.M.

Second working session

"Improving access to education and training in a more inclusive European Union"



12:30 P.M.

Working lunch

Topic: "Developing a European vision of research on neurodevelopmental disorders"

AFTERNOON

2:45 P.M.

Family photo



3:15 P.M.

Third working session

Topic: "Towards an inclusive labour market in view of the European package on employment for persons with disabilities"



6 P.M.

Conclusions



6:30 P.M.

Press conference

Participants

Sophie CLUZEL

French Minister of State for Disabled People, attached to the Prime Minister

Helena DALLI

European Commissioner for Equality

Katarina IVANKOVIC-KNEZEVIC

Director of Social Rights and Inclusion at the European Commission's DG EMPL

Ana Peláez NARVAEZ

Vice-President of the European Disability Forum

Micheal O'FLAHERTY

Director of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

Catherine BARTHELEMY

Director of the French Scientific Interest Group for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders

Johannes KOPF

Chair of the European Network of Public Employment Services

Paul BAZIN

Deputy Director-General in charge of services, Pôle Emploi (the French national employment agency)

Charline NICOLAS

Deputy Director-General in charge of strategy, Pôle Emploi

Raffaela KIHNER

Head of Policy, European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)

Thomas SIGNAL

EASPD (European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD))

Ministers and representatives responsible for disability from the 27 Member States

City of Paris

Paris is a multifaceted city that is at once eternal and innovative. Its exceptional architectural and cultural heritage win over millions of visitors each year, who come eager to sample the unique Parisian way of life.

A global centre for fashion, gastronomy and shopping, the city is brimming with events and new projects including busily preparing to host the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Eiffel Tower, Notre-Dame Cathedral, Sacré-Cœur and the Arc de Triomphe are just a few of the French capital's iconic monuments and tourist favourites. The city also abounds with a wide variety of sites to experience culture, such as the Musée d'Orsay, the Arab World Institute, the Philharmonie de Paris, the Fondation Louis Vuitton and the Louvre Museum, which welcomes over nine million visitors each year. The capital attracts major projects and new experiences which continually bolster its allure, as attested by the recent openings of the Bourse de Commerce - Pinault Collection, the new Samaritaine, the Atelier des Lumières, and soon Chanel's Manufacture de la Mode.

From the Marais and Montmartre to the Latin Quarter, the city's neighbourhoods each boast a unique atmosphere waiting to be discovered among its quaint boutiques, its art galleries and its café terraces.

➤ Visit Paris

Press contact

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Disabled People

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FRENCH PRESIDENCY
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