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## **REPORT**

on the situation of people with disabilities in the enlarged European Union: the  
European Action Plan 2006-2007  
(2006/2105(INI))

Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

Rapporteur: Liz Lynne

**CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION .....	3
OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND EDUCATION.....	14
OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY	18
PROCEDURE .....	22

## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

### on the situation of people with disabilities in the enlarged European Union: the European Action Plan 2006-2007 (2006/2105(INI))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Commission communication on the situation of disabled people in the enlarged European Union: the European Action Plan 2006-2007 (COM(2005)0604),
- having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee (CESE 591/2006),
- having regard to Article 13 of the EC Treaty and to Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union on combating discrimination, including discrimination originating in various forms and kinds of disability, and having regard to Article 6 of the Treaty on European Union and to Article 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which prohibits all forms of discrimination,
- having regard to Article 26 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union on the integration of persons with disabilities and their right to benefit from measures designed to ensure this,
- having regard to Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to Directive 2001/85/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 20 November 2001 relating to special provisions for vehicles used for the carriage of passengers comprising more than eight seats in addition to the driver's seat, and amending Directives 70/156/EEC and 97/27/EC<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to Council Decision 2001/903/EC of 3 December 2001 on the European Year of People with Disabilities 2003<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to the draft United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities,
- having regard to its resolutions of 17 June 1988 on sign languages for the deaf<sup>4</sup>, of 18 November 1998 on sign languages<sup>5</sup> and of 4 April 2001 on the Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 42, 13.2.2002, p. 1

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 335, 19.12.2001, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 187, 18.7.1988, p. 236.

<sup>5</sup> OJ C 379, 7.12.1998, p. 66.

- Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Towards a barrier-free Europe for people with disabilities<sup>1</sup> and its position of 15 November 2001 on the proposal for a Council decision on the European Year of People with Disabilities 2003<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission Green Paper entitled "Improving the mental health of the population. Towards a strategy on mental health for the European Union" (COM(2005)0484),
  - having regard to the Commission Green Paper entitled "Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between the generations" (COM(2005)0094),
  - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the opinions of the Committee on Culture and Education and the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A6-0351/2006),
- A. whereas non-discrimination and the promotion of human rights must be the main focus of the European Union strategy for people with disabilities as established by Article 13 of the EC Treaty and by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- B. whereas the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union in 2000 insisted that there is no 'hierarchy of discrimination' and that support for comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation based on Article 13 of the EC Treaty would follow the agreement of a Directive providing a comprehensive non-discrimination on grounds of race in 2000; and whereas former European Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, announced the Commission's intention to propose such comprehensive non-discrimination legislation in favour of people with disabilities in 2003,
- C. whereas the United Nations ad hoc group has approved the proposal for an International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which is expected to be approved by the UN General Assembly in November 2006, and whereas the Commission's actions must now accord with the principles laid down in that Convention,
- D. whereas levels of unemployment among people with disabilities remain unacceptably high,
- E. whereas employment is one of the basic conditions of social inclusion,
- F. whereas a traditional kind of job cannot be an option for many people with disabilities, particularly people with serious disabilities, and whereas there is thus a need to provide a broad spectrum of employment opportunities, including protected and assisted employment,
- G. whereas it is important for people to obtain, maintain and constantly renew qualifications in order to fulfil their potential on the labour market,

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 21E, 24.1.2002, p. 246.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 140E, 13.6.2002, p. 599

- H. whereas there is a need to continue to move away from the medical model of disability, whilst respecting the real needs for rehabilitation of each individual person, with a view to establishing a social model and a rights-based approach, which will be based on and promote the principles of equality, equality before the law and equal opportunities, or an approach based on the corresponding rights,
- I. whereas the excessive medicalisation of disability has so far prevented full appreciation of its social value and relevance to the field of rights, and not just to the right to claim benefits, and whereas there is therefore a need gradually to move away from this rather limited conception of disability,
- J. whereas many older people will become disabled in the coming years and many people with disabilities will become older,
- K. whereas participation by people with disabilities and their representative organisations is an essential part of such a rights-based approach,
- L. whereas the issue of service quality should be included as one of the horizontal points in the Commission's Action Plan on Disability 2006-2007,
- M. whereas the Commission communication entitled, "Equal opportunities for people with disabilities: A European Action Plan" (COM(2003)0650) represents a welcome follow-up to the European Year of Persons with Disabilities 2003, and whereas it is important to demonstrate continuous progress in advancing the rights and condition of disabled Europeans, as expressed during the European Year,
- N. whereas Regulation (EC) No 1107/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 concerning the rights of disabled persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air<sup>1</sup> represents the first ever EC legislation aimed exclusively at improving the rights of people with disabilities,
- O. whereas a proposal to establish the concept of independent living for persons with disabilities was a key demand of two historic 'freedom rides' by persons with disabilities mainly living in institutions and organised by the European Network on Independent Living to the Parliament, and its adoption by the Commission provides an excellent example of how the European Union can respond to citizens' demands,
- P. whereas it remains inexcusable for new infrastructure that is inaccessible to people with disabilities to be built using the resources of the European Regional Development Fund or other Structural Funds,
1. Calls on the Commission and those Member States which did not take the necessary measures by the deadlines of 2 December 2003 for the EU-15 and 1 May 2004 for the EU-10 (some of the EU-15 countries requested extensions) effectively to implement Council Directive 2000/78/EC which provides a legal framework for equal treatment in employment, and welcomes the decisions already taken by the Member States;

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 1.

2. Stresses that non-discrimination in access to goods and services must be guaranteed for every EU citizen and therefore calls on the Commission to bring forward a specific disability directive under Article 13 of the EC Treaty;
3. Calls on the Member States to repeal all current laws in their national legal system that discriminate against people with disabilities and are at variance with Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam;
4. Welcomes Directive 2001/85/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council<sup>1</sup>, which extends rights for disabled passengers using bus and coaches; considers that the directive should be strengthened in order to bring it into line with current EC legislation on the rights of disabled air passengers; supports and encourages the Commission to extend the same legislative rights to persons with disabilities in relation to all modes of transport over time; recalls that equal access to public transport is vital for disabled people travelling to their place of employment and to maintain social and family networks; further welcomes Regulation 1107/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 concerning the rights of persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air, which is the first regulation specifically relating to people with disabilities;
5. Welcomes the gradual trend towards eliminating the many forms of discrimination that people with disabilities encounter when using air, land or sea transport, and calls for efforts to avoid the risk of creating new forms of discrimination that do not exist at present, such as may be the case with financial discrimination
6. Welcomes efforts by the Commission to improve accessibility to information and communications technology; notes, however, that over 80% of public websites, including those of the European institutions, are generally not accessible to people with disabilities; maintains that the accessibility of information and communications technologies may contribute effectively to reducing high unemployment among people with disabilities;
7. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, acting within their respective competencies, to encourage the active involvement of people with disabilities in education, vocational training, e-learning, life-long learning, cultural events, sport, leisure activities, the information society and the mass media;
8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote the accessibility of the internet for people with disabilities, especially as regards public websites and websites relating to education and vocational training;
9. Calls on the Member States to take specific action aimed at ensuring that all public institutions' web sites are accessible to people with disabilities;
10. Calls for more to be done in terms of infrastructure to allow access to the built and newly-designed environment for people with disabilities , highlighting the importance of suitable access for people with disabilities from the planning and administrative

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 42, 13.2.2002, p. 1.

- approval stage, of standard design in buildings, fixtures and fittings and the elimination of architectural barriers; calls on the Commission to exercise fully its responsibilities in this respect in implementing the Structural Funds regulations during the period 2007-2013 and calls on the EU institutions to take the necessary measures in the interest of making their buildings accessible to everyone;
11. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take the necessary measures, including the use of modern technology where necessary, to make cultural infrastructures and activities more accessible to the people with disabilities and to increase their involvement in this area;
  12. Stresses the need for measures to encourage artistic expression and creation on the part of people with disabilities, giving them equal opportunities regarding the creation and promotion of their works and their participation in cultural exchanges;
  13. Highlights that there is a need to launch information campaigns to ensure that employers view the engagement of a person with disabilities without any kind of prejudice, in particular, as regards misconceptions concerning the financial costs of employment and the candidates' capabilities; emphasises that more should be done to increase opportunities for communication, so as to exchange best practice and raise awareness amongst employers of their duties and responsibilities, and to encourage proper enforcement of rules against discrimination through Member States' courts where necessary, particularly in relation to Directive 2000/78/EC; proposes that disability should be managed as a new service for businesses, with the aim of securing the conservation of employment (as a form of prevention) or reintegration in employment (as a form of rehabilitation) for people who are at risk of disability in the workplace;
  14. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to create the necessary conditions whereby the "benefit trap" and early retirement can be avoided, and security of employment can be created for people with disabilities;
  15. Urges the Member States to promote the application of the rights of people with disabilities under Directive 2000/78/EC and ways of protecting them and urges the trade unions to do all in their power to inform members of their rights under that Directive;
  16. Urges the Commission to do more to mainstream disability issues in employment legislation and elsewhere, in particular in the European employment strategy, in public procurement, the European Social Fund, and lifelong learning and to give more visibility to the rights of people with disabilities in the Lisbon Strategy;
  17. Calls on the Commission to increase the involvement of people with disabilities in the new multi-annual programmes over the coming budgetary period 2007-2013, for example the 'Culture', 'Life-long Learning', 'Youth in Action', 'MEDIA 2007' and 'Europe for Citizens' programmes;

18. Calls on the Member States to take due account of the problems faced by parents of children with disabilities , who are often forced to remain outside the labour market, and to promote policies to support and assist such parents;
19. Welcomes the Commission's intention to take into account in the ESF the training needs of staff who support people with disabilities, at home, in an institution or using a combination of methods;
20. Welcomes the clause of the ESF relating to people with disabilities;
21. Draws attention to the importance of taking account, when devising industrial risk prevention schemes and programmes, of the special circumstances of people with disabilities;
22. Urges Member States to use economic and social instruments to increase the scope for providing care to people with disabilities as part of intergenerational solidarity;
23. Urges the Commission to work with Member States to encourage the integration of people with disabilities, from an early age, in mainstream education wherever possible whilst still acknowledging in some cases that special schools are necessary; and to encourage access for people with disabilities to all levels of education and training and the new technologies, in accordance with their skills and wishes. Calls on the Commission to undertake research and consultation in conjunction with the Member States into the possibility of establishing a right to mainstream education for all children with disabilities and their families who choose it; recognises and encourages the contribution that people with disabilities can make to the European economy, while developing greater independence for themselves at the same time;
24. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, acting within their respective remits, to implement the Council Resolution of 6 February 2003 on 'e Accessibility'- improving the access of people with disabilities to the Knowledge Based Society, the Resolution of 5 May 2003 on equal opportunities for pupils and students with disabilities in education and training and the Resolution of 6 May 2003 on accessibility of cultural infrastructure and cultural activities for people with disabilities;
25. Calls on the European Union to follow up the European Year of People with Disabilities (2003) and The European Year of Education through sport (2004) by continuing efforts to remove exclusions affecting people with disabilities; recommends that special importance be given to the disability dimension in actions undertaken as part of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All (2007);
26. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to give special attention to facilitating access to mobility in education and training to people with disabilities;
27. Stresses the important role of sport as a factor for improving the quality of life, self-esteem, independence and social integration of people with disabilities;

28. Calls on the Member States to make sports facilities more accessible, remove obstacles to participation by young people with disabilities in sports activities, provide incentives for their greater involvement in sport and promote sports events and competitions for people with disabilities such as the 'Paralympic Games';
29. Stresses that the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream education, taking account of the specific support required to meet the special educational needs of the pupils, is an obligation for the Member States,
30. Recalls that documentation produced by the European institutions should always be made available on demand in accessible formats, particularly as regards forms being fully accessible to blind and partially-sighted people and to people with learning difficulties; emphasises that clear and simple language must be used and that technical language should be avoided as far as possible;
31. Stresses that there are many forms of disability, including people with mobility problems, visual impairments, hearing impairments, mental health problems, chronic illness and learning disabilities; highlights the fact that people with multiple disabilities have exceptional problems, as do people subjected to multiple discrimination, and that greater attention should be paid to elderly people with disabilities and women with disabilities ;
32. Points out that the different types of disability require personalised care that takes due account of the disabilities of growing children and those of adults;
33. Points out that there is a need to give special attention to people with disabilities who are already in themselves discriminated against, as are elderly people, women and children; calls on the Commission to support programmes aimed at diagnosing disability in children at an early age, with a view subsequently to facilitating their social and occupational integration;
34. Stresses the need to encourage initiatives to develop greater interaction between the public and the mentally disabled, and to de-stigmatise people with mental health problems; and appeals for the necessary support for the families of people with a profound disability;
35. Stresses the leading role of the media in eliminating stereotypes and prejudices regarding people with disabilities and in developing a social awareness of the problems they face in their daily lives;
36. Calls on the Member States and the Commission, particularly under the MEDIA programme, to encourage the production and dissemination of films and television programmes projecting a more positive image of people with disabilities;
37. Calls on the Member States to exploit to the full the facilities offered by digital television to meet the special needs of people with disabilities, such as better subtitling, spoken commentary and explanations using symbols, while at the same time encouraging the general use of subtitling and sign-language in analogue television programmes;

38. Calls on the Member States to give special attention to women with disabilities, who are faced with multiple discrimination, a phenomenon which only can be challenged through a combination of mainstreaming measures and positive action measures designed in cooperation with women with disabilities and stakeholders of civil society;
39. Calls on the Member States to take vigorous measures against all forms of violence against people with disabilities, in particular women, elderly people and children, who are frequently victims of mental and physical violence as well as sexual violence; notes that almost 80% of women with disabilities are victims of violence and that the risk of sexual violence is higher for them than for other women; points out that violence is not only a frequent occurrence in the lives of women with disabilities but is also sometimes the very cause of their disability;
40. Welcomes moving away from the institutionalisation of people with disabilities; notes that deinstitutionalisation requires a sufficient level of community-based quality services favouring independent living, the right to personal assistance, and full participation in society within Member States; calls for special attention to be paid to possible barriers to access to such services caused by charging policies and to support for the principle of universal access; recommends that the Governments of the Member States focus current support on services directed towards encouraging the integration into society and employment of people with disabilities; stresses the need to strengthen public policies to ensure that equal rights exist in practice;
41. Welcomes the intention of the Commission to develop EU policies in relation to social care in the next phase of the Disability Action Plan and for an appropriate contribution to be made by service providers, insists, nevertheless, that research, training, conferences and other initiatives in this respect must be consistently user-led, and calls on the Commission to undertake clear monitoring on the participation of people with disabilities themselves in all such activities;
42. Calls on the Commission, as part of ongoing debate on social services of general interest, to take into account the role of services in achieving human rights and full participation in society; takes the view therefore that the active participation of users in determining quality services is indispensable;
43. Calls on Member States to put in place arrangements to ensure sound and transparent management and compliance with requirements relating to quality of support for all services provided to people with disabilities, whether at home or in an institution or using a combination of methods;
44. Whatever the method of support for a people with disabilities – home, institution or combination of methods – all Member States should be required to put in place arrangements for preventing mistreatment (use of restraints, physical and psychological violence, etc.) in accordance with the subsidiarity principle;
45. Calls on the Commission to press for a European charter on quality of support for people with disabilities with a view to ensuring a high level of integration and

- participation whatever the method of support – at home, in an institution or using a combination of methods;
46. Calls on the Commission both to promote further and to undertake an evaluation of the implementation of its guidelines on disability in the provision of EU development assistance; calls on the EU's European Initiative on Democracy and Human Rights to maintain and extend its support to projects promoting the rights of persons with disabilities worldwide; stresses that the chapter in the EU's annual report on human rights dealing with people with disabilities should be more detailed in future;
  47. Expresses concern that the Commission has not sufficiently considered the human rights of people with disabilities in assessing compliance with the Copenhagen Criteria within the process of EU enlargement; calls on the Commission to redouble its efforts in this respect and to ensure full access to Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS) funding by people with disabilities and their organisations in candidate states;
  48. Calls on the Council and the Commission to implement the European action plan on the situation of people with disabilities and report back to the parliament on progress; asks the High-Level Group of Representatives on Disability to review and if necessary update the Nine Principles of Excellence for services for people with disabilities;
  49. Welcomes the Commission's intention to move on from a specific focus on promoting employment (2004-5) to a new emphasis on 'active inclusion', and calls for this to have a balanced emphasis in all areas of participation by people with disabilities and for specific benchmarks to be set to guide this phase of implementation of the Disability Action Plan;
  50. Recognises the important role that NGOs, non-profit welfare organisations and people with disabilities' associations play in the development and implementation of rights for people with disabilities and stresses that the Commission must do more to consult people with disabilities' organisations, so that policies for the disabled secure the more active involvement of the groups of people that form part of this sector;
  51. Welcomes the essential role played in this respect by the European Disability Forum, as well as by other European disability-specific networks, and calls on the Commission to monitor carefully its financial support to these organisations whilst respecting their independence, in order to maintain a strong and vibrant civil dialogue with people with disabilities at the European level;
  52. Calls on the Member States, in conjunction with undertakings, the social partners and other competent bodies, to explore more intensively ways of offering jobs to people with disabilities;
  53. Calls for data collection to be more coherent across Member States, by making use of systems that enable the content and quality of European and national statistics to improve, particularly in relation to the different problems experienced by people with different disabilities; calls therefore on the Commission to include disability as an indicator in EU-SILC data on income and living conditions in the EU;

54. Calls for a common European definition of disability;
55. Welcomes the ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Communities on 11 July 2006 in Case 13/05, Chacón Navas regarding a common EC definition of disability; considers this will go a long way to enforcing and improving the rights and treatment of people with disabilities in all Member States;
56. Welcomes the agreement of the draft United Nations Convention on the rights of people with disabilities; congratulates the Commission, the Member States and the European people with disabilities' organisations for the integral role played in securing this outcome; calls for an EU-wide campaign to secure swift signature and ratification of the Convention, following its agreement, both within Europe and by our partners worldwide;
57. Highlights the importance of ensuring that the principles enshrined in the UN's proposed Comprehensive and Integral Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities are promoted and followed at an EU level;
58. Welcomes the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities; considers this to be a landmark convention, which has the potential to improve the lives of people with disabilities throughout the world; recalls that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which is legally binding on those Member States which have signed it specifies that disability is a matter of human rights which must be protected;
59. Calls on the Commission to define more clearly in its text the projects that have already been started under the European Action Plan on the situation of people with disabilities;
60. Calls on the Commission to pay more attention to the gender perspective and specific information on women with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities in the new phases of the DAP;
61. Supports the call of the 2005 United Kingdom Presidency of the EU for an annual meeting of Member States' Disability Ministers;
62. Calls on the Commission, having carried out the appropriate monitoring, to review and publish every two years a progress report on the policies and good practice pursued on behalf of people with disabilities in the individual Member States of the EU in the various sectors concerned;
63. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the disability dimension of activities under the European Year of Equal Opportunities 2007 build on and do not simply replicate the achievements of the European Year of Persons with Disabilities 2003;
64. Calls for more effort to be made with regard to elderly people suffering from a disability with a view to facilitating their integration or reintegration into the labour

market and minimising early retirement among people with disabilities ; notes that, in line with demographic change, the number of elderly people with disabilities is growing significantly; considers that elderly people with disabilities are in particular need of holistic care and a greater degree of social rehabilitation; calls on the Commission to study what is being done in the Member States in this area to guarantee care appropriate to people's needs; recommends that the results of this study be set out in a best practice comparison;

65. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, Commission and the parliaments of the Member States and acceding and candidate countries;

12.9.2006

## **OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND EDUCATION**

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on the situation of disabled people in the enlarged European Union: European Action Plan  
2006-2007  
(2006/2105(INI))

Draftsman: Nikolaos Sifunakis

### **SUGGESTIONS**

The Committee on Culture and Education calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, acting within their respective competencies, to encourage the active involvement of people with disabilities in education, vocational training, e-learning, life-long learning, cultural events, sport, leisure activities, the information society and the mass media;
2. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, acting within their respective remits, to implement the Council Resolution of 6 February 2003 on 'e Accessibility'- improving the access of people with disabilities to the Knowledge Based Society, the Resolution of 5 May 2003 on equal opportunities for pupils and students with disabilities in education and training and the Resolution of 6 May 2003 on accessibility of cultural infrastructure and cultural activities for people with disabilities;
3. Calls on the Commission to increase the involvement of people with disabilities in the new multi-annual programmes over the coming budgetary period 2007-2013, for example the 'Culture', 'Life-long Learning', 'Youth in Action', 'MEDIA 2007' and 'Europe for Citizens' programmes;
4. Calls on the European Union to follow up the European Year of People with Disabilities (2003) and The European Year of Education through sport (2004) by continuing efforts to remove exclusions affecting people with disabilities; recommends that special importance be given to the disability dimension in actions undertaken as part of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All (2007);

5. Stresses that the de-institutionalisation, to the extent possible, of people with disabilities and the creation of appropriate structures embedded in local communities should be reflected in Member States' policies;
6. Calls on the Member States, through education and training, to promote the full social integration of children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities under the relevant framework legislation for their integration into the general educational system while, at the same time supporting, where necessary, the provision of special educational infrastructures;
7. Points out that inclusive education must be accompanied by appropriate funding, specialised teaching staff, appropriate equipment, customised educational programmes and the provision of appropriate pedagogical and technical materials;
8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to give special attention to facilitating access to mobility in education and training to people with disabilities;
9. Calls on the Member States to take appropriate measures to increase the participation of people with disabilities, especially at tertiary education level, in lifelong learning and in informal learning;
10. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote the accessibility of the internet for people with disabilities, especially as regards public websites and websites relating to education and vocational training;
11. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take the necessary measures, including the use of modern technology where necessary, to make cultural infrastructures and activities more accessible to the disabled and to increase their involvement in this area;
12. Stresses the need for measures to encourage artistic expression and creation on the part of people with disabilities, giving them equal opportunities regarding the creation and promotion of their works and their participation in cultural exchanges;
13. Calls on the Commission, especially within the framework of the Culture programme to promote the establishment of an annual prize for artistic creation for persons with disabilities;
14. Stresses the leading role of the media in eliminating stereotypes and prejudices regarding people with disabilities and in developing a social awareness of the problems they face in their daily lives;
15. Calls on the Member States and the Commission, particularly under the MEDIA programme, to encourage the production and dissemination of films and television programmes projecting a more positive image of people with disabilities;
16. Calls on the Member States to exploit to the full the facilities offered by digital television to meet the special needs of people with disabilities, such as better subtitling, spoken

commentary and explanations using symbols, while at the same time encouraging the general use of subtitling and sign-language in analogue television programmes;

17. Stresses the important role of sport as a factor for improving the quality of life, self-esteem, independence and social integration of people with disabilities;
18. Calls on the Member States to make sports facilities more accessible, remove obstacles to participation by young disabled people in sports activities, provide incentives for their greater involvement in sport and promote sports events and competitions for disabled people such as the 'Paralympic Games'.



13.9.2006

## **OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY**

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on the situation of disabled people in the enlarged European Union : European Action Plan  
2006-2007  
(2006/2105(INI))

Draftswoman: Eva-Britt Svensson

### **SUGGESTIONS**

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Regrets that the Commission communication does not include an integrated gender perspective or a separate chapter on gender-specific disability policies, despite the fact that disabled women are often in a more disadvantaged position than disabled men and are more often victims of poverty and social exclusion;
2. Stresses that disabled people are not a homogeneous group of the population and that the policies and actions planned on their behalf should take account of that lack of homogeneity and of the fact that some groups, such as disabled women, face additional difficulties and multiple forms of discrimination;
3. Calls on the Commission to pay more attention to the gender perspective and specific information on women with disabilities and parents of disabled children in the new phases of the DAP ;
4. Calls on the Commission to compile specific data and indicators for disabled women and children so as to ensure that actions and policies can be better targeted;
5. Calls respectively on the Council, the Commission and the Member States to introduce gender mainstreaming into all disability policies, and disability mainstreaming into all areas of politics, particularly as regards education and access to employment, taking into

account the scope for overcoming disabilities offered by new technologies, including sometimes those that are the most widely-used on the labour market;

6. Calls on the Member States to work for active integration of the disabled into society, in particular by implementing Community legislation on the fight against discrimination and on gender equality in the employment sector, promoting access by the disabled to new technologies and more effective use of the opportunities offered by the relevant Community programmes and the European Social Fund;
7. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to pursue measures to tackle the particular problems faced by disabled women, which are attributable to both the stigma of disability and the gender factor and because of which such women are impeded from gaining access to education, the productive process and, in more general terms, to social, economic and political life;
8. Calls on the Member States, in combination with enterprises, the social partners and other stakeholders, to more vigorously explore the labour-force potential of people with disabilities, in particular by establishing a working environment geared to their needs and by organising training courses to promote an entrepreneurial spirit and encourage disabled people to enter the labour market; in this respect, calls for the specific situation of women with disabilities to be taken into account;
9. Calls on the Member States to implement more vigorously employment programmes for the disabled so as to facilitate their integration into society and combat solitude and social exclusion, while at the same time providing preventive health care;
10. Calls on the Member States to apply the UN's 22 standard rules for the disabled and to work towards converting those rules into a legally binding convention along the lines of the UN Convention on Human Rights;
11. Notes that the measures the European Union has adopted with regard to disabled people relate almost exclusively to the establishing of a general framework for equal treatment in employment in the context of the combating of discrimination laid down in Article 13 TEC;
12. Calls on the Commission, the Council and the Member States to work towards the adoption of a horizontal anti-discrimination Directive which removes barriers in all areas of EU competence that prevent disabled people and especially disabled women and girls from achieving their full potential for social participation and independence;
13. Calls on the Member States to give special attention to disabled women, who are faced with multiple discrimination, a phenomenon which only can be challenged through a combination of mainstreaming measures and positive action measures designed in cooperation with disabled women and stakeholders of civil society;
14. Calls on the Member States to integrate the needs of people with disabilities and the specific needs of women and children with disabilities into all their policies at national, regional and local level, particularly in the fields of education, employment, housing, transport, health and social services, bearing in mind the diversity of disabilities and the

fact that these may affect all categories of the population and that disabled people form a very varied group;

15. Calls on the Member States to take due account of the problems faced by parents of disabled children, who are often forced to remain outside the labour market, and to promote policies to support and assist such parents;
16. Calls on the Member States to take vigorous measures against all forms of violence against the disabled, in particular women, elderly people and children, who are frequently victims of mental and physical violence as well as sexual violence; notes that almost 80% of disabled women are victims of violence and that the risk of sexual violence is higher for them than for other women; points out that violence is not only a frequent occurrence in the lives of disabled women but is also sometimes the very cause of their disability;
17. Calls on the Member States to tackle the lack of adequate gynaecological and primary medical care for disabled women by ensuring that specialist medical personnel and appropriate facilities are available; calls on the Commission, in cooperation with the competent national authorities, to investigate the particular problems associated with health and medical care faced by disabled women, focusing on the area of prevention and information;
18. Calls on the Member States to develop both independent and collective forms of accommodation, which are of good quality and affordable for all regardless of the individual's own financial situation;
19. Calls on the Commission to urge the Member States to introduce legislation to protect the rights of disabled women in cases of sexual abuse and violence in general and within their home environments;
20. Calls on the Member States to boost the current inadequate profile and image of disabled women in the media, which would make their daily reality more widely appreciated and give them more opportunities to express themselves and take part in social and political life;
21. Urges the Commission and Member States to implement programmes to assist disabled persons, particularly women and children, to integrate as fully as possible into society;

## PROCEDURE

<b>Title</b>	The situation of disabled people in the enlarged European Union : European Action Plan 2006-2007		
<b>Procedure number</b>	2006/2105(INI)		
<b>Committee responsible</b>	EMPL		
<b>Opinion by</b> Date announced in plenary	FEMM 18.5.2006		
<b>Drafts(wo)man</b> Date appointed	Eva-Britt Svensson 24.4.2006		
<b>Previous drafts(wo)man</b>			
<b>Discussed in committee</b>	11.7.2006	12.9.2006	0.0.0000
<b>Date adopted</b>	12.9.2006		
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 20	-: 0: 2	
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Edit Bauer, Edite Estrela, Věra Flasarová, Claire Gibault, Lissy Gröner, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Piia-Noora Kauppi, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Urszula Krupa, Astrid Lulling, Siiri Oviir, Christa Prets, Marie-Line Reynaud, Raül Romeva i Rueda, Amalia Sartori, Eva-Britt Svensson, Britta Thomsen, Anna Záborská		
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Iratxe García Pérez, Ana Maria Gomes, Zita Pleštinšská, Karin Resetarits		
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote</b>			
<b>Comments (available in one language only)</b>	...		

## PROCEDURE

<b>Title</b>	Situation of people with disabilities in the enlarged European Union: the European Action Plan 2006-2007		
<b>Procedure number</b>	2006/2105(INI)		
<b>Committee responsible</b> Date authorisation announced in plenary	EMPL 18.5.2006		
<b>Committee(s) asked for opinion(s)</b> Date announced in plenary	CULT 18.5.2006	FEMM 18.5.2006	ITRE 18.5.2006
<b>Not delivering opinion(s)</b> Date of decision	ITRE 20.6.2006		
<b>Enhanced cooperation</b> Date announced in plenary			
<b>Rapporteur(s)</b> Date appointed	Elizabeth Lynne 14.12.2005		
<b>Previous rapporteur(s)</b>			
<b>Discussed in committee</b>	12.9.2006	4.10.2006	0.0.0000
<b>Date adopted</b>	5.10.2006		
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+ 40 - 0 0 3		
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Jan Andersson, Jean-Luc Bennahmias, Emine Bozkurt, Iles Braghetto, Philip Bushill-Matthews, Milan Cabrnoch, Alejandro Cercas, Ole Christensen, Derek Roland Clark, Luigi Cocilovo, Jean Louis Cottigny, Harald Ettl, Carlo Fatuzzo, Ilda Figueiredo, Joel Hasse Ferreira, Roger Helmer, Stephen Hughes, Karin Jöns, Ona Juknevičienė, Jan Jerzy Kułakowski, Sepp Kusstatscher, Raymond Langendries, Bernard Lehideux, Elizabeth Lynne, Thomas Mann, Mario Mantovani, Ana Mato Adrover, Maria Matsouka, Csaba Óry, Pier Antonio Panzeri, Jacek Protasiewicz, José Albino Silva Peneda, Kathy Sinnott, Jean Spautz, Gabriele Zimmer		
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Mihael Brejc, Udo Bullmann, Françoise Castex, Richard Howitt, Roberto Musacchio, Leopold Józef Rutowicz, Elisabeth Schroedter, Patrizia Toia		
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote</b>	Ari Vatanen		
<b>Date tabled</b>	13.10.2006		
<b>Comments</b> (available in one language only)			