



EU policy on disabilities

Towards full social inclusion of people with disabilities

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EAIE



Introduction

- The EAIE is a non-profit organisation whose main aim is the stimulation and facilitation of the internationalisation of higher education in Europe and around the world, and to meet the professional needs of individuals active in international education.
- The EAIE is a member led organisation made up of a number of different PS and SIGs
- One of the Special Interest Groups of the EAIE focuses solely on the issues faced by students with disabilities in the world on international education → DIW: Disability Issues Worldwide

DIW

- The DIW aims to create an international forum within the EAIE to make optimal use of the network function for exchanging and sharing ideas, good practices and information and getting to know other people in more or less similar jobs and institutions.
- DIW will try to bridge the gap that exists between the people working in the disability field (e.g. the Disability Support Services) and people working in international education



How you can become involved:

➤ <http://www.eaie.org/DIW>

Get involved in the DIW e-community to network and share your views on disability issues facing international education.

Facts and Figures

- 44.6 Million people in the EU between the ages of 16 and 64 report a long standing health problem or disability
- Translates to 1 in 6 people or **16% of the overall EU working age population**
- 7.3% of people in the EU between the ages of 16 – 25 are disabled
- Only 50% of disabled persons are employed, compared to 68% of non disabled persons
- Only 15.9% of these working disabled persons are provided with some assistance at work, though 43.7% of respondents in a survey believe that they could work if they were given adequate assistance.



What Europeans had to say:

In a recent survey in 2007, Europeans were asked their views on “discrimination in the European Union.”

- 74% of respondents think that there need to be more persons with disabilities in the workplace, although they perceive that having a disability as disadvantage to get a job
- 91% of respondents agree to spending more money to eliminate physical barriers for people with disabilities.

EU Policy

- Disability policies are essentially the responsibility of individual Member States
- However the EU Treaty offers several possibilities for action at an EU level
- This is important as European community policies and actions impact in many ways on the situation of people with disabilities
- Therefore it is NB to (1) reinforce the disability dimension in all relevant EU policies and actions and (2) establish a sustainable and operational approach to disability in the EU.

EU Policy



- The European Disability Strategy is based on equal rights and non-discrimination and mainstreaming disability issues in all appropriate EU policies, such as social policy, education and training, research, transport, telecommunications and public health

EU Policy objectives



- To promote equal rights for people with disabilities
- To combat social exclusion

Article 15 of the European Social Charter notes the “right of persons with disabilities to independence, social integration and participation in the life of the community”

4 pillars of the EU disability strategy



- EU Anti-Discrimination legislation and measures
 - Using legislation to protect disabled persons from discrimination
- Mainstreaming of Disability Issues
 - In order to facilitate active inclusion of disabled people
- Accessibility
 - In order to facilitate active inclusion of disabled people
- Mobilising Stakeholders through Dialogue
 - Through regular meetings with all parties (stakeholders, disabled persons, civil society representatives)

What the EU has been focusing on

➤ 2004 – 2005

- Access and retention of employment
- Lifelong learning
- Using the potential of new technologies
- Accessibility to the public built environment

➤ 2006 – 2007

- Encouraging activity (beyond employment)
- Promoting access to quality support and care services
- Fostering accessibility of goods and services
- Increasing the EUs analytical capacity

Why is it important to have disability strategy at an EU level?

- Ensure the rights of the disabled are advocated in all EU Member States
- To combat social exclusion of the disabled in all EU member states
- To ensure that all EU Member States offer adequate social policy, education and training, research, transport, telecommunications and public health to disabled persons

An example of a similar way in which EU Member States are working together to better their policies for the benefit of all within the EU

Bologna Process

