



**EU Statement – 16th Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on
the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: General Debate**

13 June 2023, New York –

Statement on behalf of the European Union

**by European Commissioner for Equality, Helena Dalli, at the 16th Conference
of the States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with
Disabilities: General Debate**

13-15 June 2023

Dear President, dear friends,

I am speaking on behalf of the **European Union and its Member States**.

Last year I presented the **European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**. It **translates** the rights and obligations of the Convention into concrete actions and provides a **comprehensive framework** and **timeline**.

These contribute to enable persons with disabilities to **fully enjoy the rights** enshrined in the Convention.

This year's Conference will highlight **several important topics** and we are taking action in those areas.

The EU has a comprehensive set of accessibility laws and standards, including on **digital accessibility**. And now we are focused on implementation.

Last year, we set up **AccessibleEU**, a resource centre to increase coherence in accessibility policies and to reinforce the **implementation of our legal instruments**.

We are committed to providing **digital accessibility** in our own in-house services, websites, publications and events.

We agreed on **package to improve labour market outcomes for persons with disabilities**. It includes guidance to **public employment services**, guidelines on **reasonable accommodation** and **incentives for employers** and supports the establishment of targets for increasing the employment rate of persons with disabilities in the Member States.

2023 is the “**European Year of Skills**” bringing a renewed focus on skills development for everyone, including persons with disabilities, resulting in better job prospects for them.

Access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services is an issue of human rights, a matter of dignity and integrity of the person.

To that end, our **EU4Health programme** provides financial support to improve health systems to ensure that access.

Women with disabilities disproportionately experience violence and we proposed **legislation on combatting violence against women and domestic violence**, protecting women with disabilities on an equal basis with others.

In accordance with the new European Consensus on Development, the EU remains committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the outcomes of their review conferences and remains committed to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), in this context. Having that in mind, the EU reaffirms its commitment to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence. The EU further stresses the need for universal access to quality and affordable comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, education, including comprehensive sexuality education, and health-care services.

In implementing actions in our Strategy, we **closely consult** organisations representing persons with disabilities.

Our commitment to equality is a commitment to ensure the full participation of all persons with disabilities, without discrimination and in an inclusive manner.

That is why we pursue an **intersectional approach** and pay particular attention to the situation of all persons **and their care givers** with a special focus on those in the most vulnerable situations. EU citizens have the right to **move freely** within and between countries in the EU. But persons with Disabilities face barriers in exercising this right.

To enhance **mutual recognition** of disability status across borders, we are preparing a proposal for a **European Disability Card** that will be recognised in all EU countries.

I have shared examples of actions that implement our obligations under the Convention and deliver on our Strategy.

We are determined to **continue to improve our efforts**.

Last year, we welcomed the **UN Special Rapporteur** on his visit to the EU and have taken careful note of his recommendations.

In the context of the **ongoing review** of the EU's implementation of the Convention, we recently submitted our second report and look forward to the **constructive dialogue**.

We are convinced of the **opportunities** these different processes offer to advance our policies.

They can only **strengthen** our path towards a Union of Equality where persons with disabilities fully enjoy their rights.

Thank you