Introduction to EU Strategy on Disability

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WHY DOES EU DEAL WITH DISABILITY RELATED ISSUES?

1) **EC and MS act in a framework of:**

• International human rights law

• Copenhagen Criteria

• EU Charter of Fundamental Rights

• UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (in the negotiation process)

2) **Amsterdam Treaty, Article 13:**

".. action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, **disability**, age or sexual orientation."

HARD AND SOFT DISABILITY RELATED ACQUIS COMMUNAUTAIRE

1) HARD ACQUIS: LEGISLATION

• Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC)

2) SEMI-HARD ACQUIS:

• Council Recommendation on Parking Cards for People with Disabilities (98/376/EC)

3) SOFT ACQUIS: RECOMMENDATIONS, COMMON DIALOGUE WITH MS

• Council conclusions of 1st and 2nd of December 2003 on the follow up of the European Year of People with Disabilities and the promotion of Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities

• EU Disability Strategy

HARD DISABILITY RELATED ACQUIS COMMUNAUTAIRE

Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC)

Prohibits throughout the Community any direct or indirect discrimination based on religion or belief, **disability**, age or sexual orientation.

- Disability not covered and addressed per se, but in the context of general anti-discrimination clause. Disability policies continue to be predominantly the responsibility of individual MS.

Council Recommendation on Parking Cards for People with Disabilities (98/376/EC)

Stipulates that MS should introduce a parking card in accordance with their respective national provisions, on the basis of the standardised Community model described in the Council Recommendation.

More information on the hard acquis will be given to you in the Anthony Lockett's presentation in the Friday morning!

SOFT DISABILITY RELATED ACQUIS COMMUNAUTAIRE (1)

Council conclusions of 1st and 2nd of December 2003
On the follow up of the European Year of People with Disabilities and the promotion of Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities.

1) Commission asked by the Council to produce an EU Action Plan for 2004-2010 period, establishing a road map for the Commission and the MS to follow when promoting integration of people with disabilities into society and labour market

2) Commission asked by the Council to issue regular, biannual report on the situation of people with disabilities in the EU

3) MS recommended by the Council to take into account the conclusions of the report and follow the Commission recommendations when designing and implementing national disability strategies and policies

Other relevant documents adopted in the context of EYPD 2003:
• Promoting the Employment and Social Integration of PWD (2003/C 175/01)
• On Equal Opportunities for Pupils and Students with Disabilities in Education (2003/C 134/04)
• On Accessibility of Cultural Infrastructure and Cultural Activities for PWD (2003/C 134/05)
• eAccessibility – Improving the Access of PWD to the Knowledge Based Society (2003/C 39/03)

SOFT DISABILITY RELATED ACQUIS COMMUNAUTAIRE (2)

EU DISABILITY STRATEGY

1) Regular, biannual update of the EU Disability Action Plan 2004-2010
Analysis and assessment of the disabled people situation in the EU, impact of national policies, legislation, ESF and other EU programmes in the MS.

2) Monitoring and screening of the National Action Plans
Within the Open Method of Coordination, screening and analysis of Employment and Social Inclusion / National Reform Programmes

3) Support of good practices exchange
Through ESF, Anti-Discrimination Programme, Pilot Projects and other programmes (PROGRES

4) Institutionalised dialogue with MS
Within the framework of High Level Group on Disability

5) Continual dialogue with civil society representatives (EDF, National Disability Councils, et

6) Other specific (ad hoc) initiatives – EYPD 2003

MAIN PILLARS OF THE EU DISABILITY STRATEGY

• <u>EU ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION AND MEASURES</u>
Providing access to individual rights (Directive 2000/78/EC, Anti-Discrimination Programme)

• <u>ELIMINATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL BARRIERS</u>
Elimination of obstacles preventing disabled people from exercising their abilities

• <u>MAINSTREAMING DISABILITY ISSUES IN COMMUNITY POLICIES</u>
Mainstreaming in order to facilitate active inclusion of disabled people

• <u>MOBILISING STAKEHOLDERS THROUGH DIALOGUE</u>
Creating dialogue through regular meetings with civil society representatives and other stakeholders

• FURTHER IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES:
- Independent living
- Encouraging active inclusion of disabled persons
- Promotion of the citizenship concept

STRUCTURE OF THE 2005 DISABILITY COMMUNICATION (COM(2005) 604 final)

<u>MAIN BODY</u>

Biennial Report:
Provides overview of the main development trends and analysis recent statistics, mainly within the area of active inclusion and employment of disabled people and integration of disabled people into society in general.

EU Disability Action Plan for 2006-2007:
Outlines policy priorities and identifies priority areas for the forthcoming years.

<u>ANNEXES</u>

Annex 1:
Overview of the ongoing actions within the framework of DAP 2004-2005

Annex 2:
Overview of the actions forecasted within the framework of DAP 2006-2007

Annex 3:
Examples of mainstreaming of disability issues in practice in MS

COMMUNICATION IN DETAIL (1)

Biennial Report – main findings:

• Lack of common EU definition of disability constitutes an obstacle for efficient data collection and analysis throughout Europe.

• Strong correlation between disability and increasing aging of the European population. Surveys show that disability schemes affect early retirement. This development calls for further actions to support active aging and active labour force participation.

• Figures indicate gap between the employment rate of disabled and non-disabled people. The inactivity rate of disabled persons is twice that of non-disabled.

• Correlation between disability and level of education.

• Modern technologies (ICT) constitute one of the main tools for overcoming environmental barriers

COMMUNICATION IN DETAIL (2)

Priorities of the EU Disability Action Plan 2006-2007:

• <u>Encouraging activity</u>:
Objective is to attract more people into active employment in the open labour market (where possible). ESF is one of the most important tools in this respect.

• <u>Promoting access to quality support and care services</u>
Commission will, inter alia, present a proposal to streamline different Open Methods of Coordination in social protection and social inclusion and will develop policy cooperation on health and long-term care. Commission will also issue Communication on Social Services.

• <u>Fostering accessibility of goods and services</u>
Work on transport services and increased ICT accessibility, including access to the new generation of assistive technologies.

• <u>Increasing the EU's analytical capacity</u>
Quality and quantity of disability-related statistical data will be increased through cooperation with Eurostat and through 7th Framework Programme on Research.

COMMUNICATION IN DETAIL (3)

Annexes:

• <u>**DAP 2004-2005 (examples of actions)**</u>:
- 06.2005: Commission Discussion Paper: Disability mainstreaming in the ESS
- 12.2005: MS submit information on implementation of the Anti-Discrimination Directive. Commission will analyse the implementation and submit a report.
- 09.2005: Publication of the eAccessiblity Communication

• <u>**DAP 2006-2007 (examples of actions)**</u>:
- 01.2006: Seven projects selected and launched within the framework of the Pilot Projects on Actions to Mainstream Disability (EP)
- 06.2006: ESF Conference will be organised, focusing on equal opportunities

• <u>**Mainstreaming of disability issues in practice (Annex 3)**</u>:
Contains examples of good practices in individual Member States in various areas – employment, life long learning, public built environment, etc. Particular focus is devoted to the role of the ESF and other Community programmes in promotion of equal opportunities

FURTHER INFORMATION

1) DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities' website:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/disability/index_en.html

2) Contact Unit for Integration of People with Disabilities:

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