

EN

2023

20

Special report

# Supporting people with disabilities

## Easy-to-read version



EUROPEAN  
COURT  
OF AUDITORS



# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Our audit</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1. Checking if the European Commission’s strategy is well designed</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2. Checking if the money from the European Union helps people with disabilities</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3. Checking if people with disabilities get the same support in the different member states</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4. Checking how the member states collect information</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5. Checking if the European public bodies employ people with disabilities</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Our recommendations</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Disclaimer</b>	<b>13</b>

# Introduction

The European Union is made up of 27 countries.  
We call these countries the member states.

The European Union helps its member states  
to support people with disabilities.  
It does this by setting goals and providing money.

Disabilities can limit people's daily activities.  
This means that support is important.

About a quarter of people in the European Union  
say that they have a disability.  
People over 65 are more likely  
to have a disability.

People now live longer than before.  
This means that there will be more  
people with disabilities in future.

People with disabilities may have difficulty:

- o finding the right school or job,
- o travelling abroad,
- o getting the healthcare they need.

People with disabilities are more likely to be poor.  
It can be harder for them to take part equally in society.

The COVID-19 crisis made these problems worse.

# Our audit

Our organisation is called the European Court of Auditors.  
Our job is to check what the European Union does with its money.

We check that the European Union is spending its money correctly.  
We also check that the money makes things better.

Our checks are called audits.

In this audit we checked if support from the European Union really helps people with disabilities.

Our audit checks what the European public bodies are doing.

It would cost a lot of money  
to check every member state.  
Because of that, we only check 4 member states  
in this audit:

- o Spain,
- o the Netherlands,
- o Romania,
- o Sweden.

In those 4 member states  
we spoke to some public bodies.

These bodies deal with issues  
affecting people with disabilities.

We also interviewed groups  
that represent people with disabilities.

Our audit checks 5 points.  
The next section of this easy-to-read report  
explains each of the 5 points.

## **1. Checking if the European Commission's strategy is well designed**

One of the European public bodies  
is called the European Commission.

The European Commission has a strategy  
to help people with disabilities.

A strategy is a plan of what you want to do  
and how you will do it.

The strategy follows the United Nations Convention.

The United Nations Convention is an agreement between countries.

Its full title is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The European Commission's strategy sets goals for the European Union and the member states.

The goals aim to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Here are some areas they cover:

- accessibility,
- quality of life,
- equal access,
- people's rights,
- non-discrimination.  
Discrimination is when people are treated unfairly because of who they are.

The member states of the European Union decide how to reach the goals in their own countries.

The European Commission only helps if the member states cannot reach the goals on their own.

Our audit shows that the strategy tries to help people with disabilities. It also shows that the strategy could help people with disabilities even more.

## **2. Checking if the money from the European Union helps people with disabilities**

Our audit checks if the money from the European Union helps people with disabilities directly.

It also checks if the European Commission keeps track of the money.

The European Commission needs to keep track of the money to see if it improves the lives of people with disabilities.

Our audit shows that it is hard to keep track of the money.

This means that it is hard to know if the money makes a difference to people with disabilities.

## **3. Checking if people with disabilities get the same support in the different member states**

Our audit checks if the member states have the same way of deciding who should have disability status.

Having disability status means that people can get support.



The member states have different ways of deciding who should have disability status.

The member states also have different ways of deciding what support people get.

Sometimes the member states do not agree with each other on who has a disability.

Our audit shows that people with disabilities get different support in different countries.

Our audit also shows that people with disabilities might get different support in different parts of the same country.

#### **4. Checking how the member states collect information**

Our audit checks if the member states have the same way of collecting information about disabilities and support.

This is important because the European Commission needs to compare information from different countries.

Our audit shows that the European Commission collects this information using surveys.

Our audit also shows that the member states have different ways of collecting this information.

All these different ways of collecting information mean that the European Commission can't compare the information easily.

It also means that we can only guess how many people have disabilities in the European Union.

## **5. Checking if the European public bodies employ people with disabilities**

The European Commission says that the European public bodies need to set a good example.

They should make sure that they employ people with disabilities.

Our audit shows that the European public bodies do not know exactly how many people with disabilities they employ.

# Our recommendations

Now we have finished our audit.  
We are making some recommendations.

Recommendations are ideas  
that can make things better.

The European Commission can use our recommendations  
to help more people.

**Here are our 3 recommendations for the European Commission.**

1. The European Commission should collect enough information.

It needs enough information to know  
if the support is helpful.

It also needs enough information to know  
what needs to be done better.

2. The European Union should make the European Union rules better.

The rules should help people with disabilities  
with work and with their daily lives.

3. The European Union should help people with disabilities to travel abroad easily.

People with disabilities should not need extra paperwork to travel abroad.

**Here are our 3 recommendations for the European public bodies.**

1. The European public bodies should employ people with disabilities.
2. The European public bodies should keep track of how many people with disabilities they employ.
3. The European public bodies should compare the results from the different European public bodies and member states.

# Disclaimer

## Use and purpose (disclaimer)

This is an easy-to-read version of our report.

We have tried to make it accessible and easy to understand.

We hope it will help people with intellectual disabilities and other people who have difficulty reading.

This easy-to-read report explains what we check in this audit.

It also tells people the results of our checks.

At the end, it gives our ideas on how the European Union can do better.

The full report is available on our website.

The full report is the official report.

It is the version approved officially by the European Court of Auditors.

The full report is more difficult to read.

It includes more details and examples.

Please use the full report for all purposes other than accessibility and easy understanding.

## Copyright

© European Union, 2023. You will find the full copyright notice on the [ECA website](#).

© European Easy-to-Read Logo: Inclusion Europe. More information at [www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read](http://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read).

**Revision of the easy-to-read version:** Inclusion Ireland. The National Association for People with an Intellectual Disability.

HTML	ISBN 978-92-849-0818-9	doi: 10.2865/053497	QJ-09-23-334-EN-Q
PDF	ISBN 978-92-849-0759-5	doi: 10.2865/324	QJ-09-23-334-EN-N



EUROPEAN  
COURT  
OF AUDITORS



Publications Office  
of the European Union

**EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS**  
12, rue Alcide De Gasperi  
1615 Luxembourg  
LUXEMBOURG

Tel. +352 4398-1

Enquiries: [eca.europa.eu/en/contact](http://eca.europa.eu/en/contact)

Website: [eca.europa.eu](http://eca.europa.eu)

Twitter: @EUAuditors