



The voice of blind and partially sighted people in Europe

Free movement for disabled citizens: the European Commission puts its cards on the table

EBU statement | 06/09/2023

Today, after various consultations with stakeholders including organisations representing persons with disabilities, the European Commission presented its **legislative proposal for a European Disability Card**. The proposal aims to promote the effective exercise by people with disabilities of their free movement rights by facilitating the mutual recognition of disability status for card holders within the EU.

"This responds to the **longstanding call** of the European disability movement to expand to all EU countries the current pilot project for recognition of disability in 8 countries, and to ensure equal treatment for people with disabilities who exercise their EU free movement rights", said EBU President Wolfgang Angermann.

We will analyse the proposal more in detail, in particular to see to what extent the **material scope** of the recognition is broadened beyond access to culture, sports, leisure activities, and transport. At this stage, we can already communicate the following reactions:

- We welcome the Commission's going for a **single directive to cover both the European Disability Card and the Disability Parking Card** —although we would have preferred a regulation for more legal certainty— but as **two separate cards**, each with their own purposes and eligibility criteria. We are also content that the Commission proposes, for both cards, physical and/or digital format at the choice of the applicant.

- However we are disappointed by the **missed opportunity** to facilitate, beyond short stays, the transition in having one's disability status re-assessed from scratch when moving permanently to another EU country—a matter which ought to be urgently addressed in another instrument of law if not here.

We call on the European Parliament and the Member States to use their examination of the proposal to preserve the advances it contains for persons with disabilities in the EU, whilst further improving its content. EBU will monitor this very closely, building on the recommendations contained in our [paper](#) of December 2022.

The proposal is one of seven 'flagship initiatives' of the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030.

Ends

The European Blind Union (EBU) EBU is one of the six regional bodies of the World Blind Union, and it promotes the interests of blind and partially sighted people in Europe. Our 41 national member organisations in Europe include 25 European Union member states (all the EU except Latvia and Malta).

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