



The voice of blind and partially sighted people in Europe

## **UN review of EU's compliance on disability rights: significant progress but areas of concern remain**

EBU Press Release | 08/04/2025

On 18 March, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted its [concluding observations](#) on the combined second and third periodic reports of the European Union.

While welcoming significant advances made by the EU to promote the rights of persons with disabilities and to implement the Convention over the last 10 years, including the two directives on standards for equality bodies, the European Accessibility Act, the Web Accessibility Directive, the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 and, most recently, the Disability Card and Parking Card Directives, the UN experts point at some main areas of concern. The European Blind Union is pleased that the report comprehensively illustrates the situation.

“We are happy that the Committee recommends deleting Article 3(6) in the EU Directive for the implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty, which is in fact contrary to the spirit of the Treaty”, said EBU President Tytti Matsinen. This article allows Member States to require authorised entities to pay compensation to rights-holders when exercising Treaty rights whereas the Treaty requires States Parties to take all appropriate steps to ensure that laws protecting intellectual property rights do not constitute an unreasonable or discriminatory barrier to the access by persons with disabilities to cultural materials.

EBU is also pleased that the other concerns it expressed found an echo in the UN experts' report, including: the limited scope of the European Accessibility Act, which inter alia does not cover essential products such as household appliances; and the absence of timelines and harmonised

EU-wide criteria for audiovisual accessibility in the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, including quantitative and qualitative targets.

Other recommendations EBU particularly welcomes include:

- Undertake sustained efforts to generate the necessary political support to pass the Equal Treatment Directive.
- Provide reasonable accommodations and accessible voting methods and information for blind and other disabled persons in European elections.
- Extend the scope of the European Disability Card to long-term relocation.
- Make accessibility a mandatory condition for EU funding of culture, leisure and sports.
- Disaggregate data by type of disability in key areas of life.

Together with the European Disability Forum, we now expect the EU and its institutions to implement the recommendations through an updated European Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and an ambitious EU Budget post-2027.

The CRPD review is a periodical evaluation of the EU's practices in respect of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The previous report was published 10 years ago. The next review of the EU by the CRPD Committee will be in 2032 in principle.

Ends.

**EBU** is a non-governmental, non-profit making European organisation founded in 1984. It is one of the six regional bodies of the World Blind Union. It protects and promotes the interests of blind and partially sighted people in Europe. It currently operates within a network of national organizations of the visually impaired in 42 European countries.

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