

The European Commission marks European Day for People with Disabilities with a Panel on “Accessibility for People of All Abilities”

The European Commission will mark European Day of People with Disabilities with a Panel on “Accessibility for People of All Abilities” on Friday, 11 December at Bedestan in Nicosia from 10:30 to 13:00 organised by the EU Infopoint. Making Europe more accessible to those with a disability is a key part of the EU’s overall disability strategy. Accessibility issues and challenges, recommendations, short term and long term projects on accessibility for disabled persons, the EU policy and EU examples for accessibility rights of disabled persons, and examples on the inclusion of disabled individuals in the Turkish Cypriot community will be presented and discussed.

The aim of the event is to improve awareness about the accessibility needs of disabled individuals, the situation regarding this in Turkish Cypriot community and the EU policies on accessibility for people of all abilities. The EU policies, the disability strategy and the regulations and implementation in the Turkish Cypriot community on accessibility for disabled individuals will be discussed.

Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, **Marianne Thyssen**, commented: *“Disability should not be a barrier to full participation in society, nor should the lack of EU common rules be a barrier to cross-border trade in accessible products and services. With this Act, we want to deepen the internal market and use its potential for the benefit of both companies and citizens with disabilities. In fact, we all may benefit from it”.*

The European Accessibility Act will make it easier for producers and service providers to export products and services that comply with the EU requirements, since they won't need to adjust to divergent national rules. In particular, this will help small business to take full advantage of the EU market.

Background:

One in six people in the European Union – around 80 million – have a disability that ranges from mild to severe. Over one third of people aged over 75 have disabilities that restrict them to some extent. These numbers are set to rise as the EU population grows progressively older. Most of these people are all too often prevented from fully participating in society and the economy because of physical or other barriers, as well as discrimination.

The [EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#) says that the “Union recognises and respects the right of persons with disabilities to benefit from measures designed to ensure their independence, social and occupational integration and participation in the life of the community.” In addition, the EU and all its 28 Member States have already committed to creating a barrier-free Europe by signing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD).



'Accessibility' means that people with disabilities have access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, transportation, information and communications technologies and systems, and other facilities and services.

The Commission adopted a comprehensive strategy in 2010 to create a barrier-free Europe for disabled people by 2020. The plan outlines how the EU and national governments can empower people with disabilities so they can enjoy their rights.

Participation in the panel on “Accessibility for People of All Abilities” is free, however, pre-registration is necessary.

Interested individuals can get more information on these events on the EU Infopoint Facebook page [f/abbilgi](https://www.facebook.com/abbilgi) or by contacting the EU Infopoint: info@abbilgi.eu, 228 2577 and 11A Hasene Ilgaz Sokak, Köşklüçiftlik Nicosia.

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