



TOGETHER FOR A FAIR DEAL FOR WORKERS

ETUC comments to draft Council Conclusions on fostering social inclusion of persons with disabilities through employment, reasonable accommodation and rehabilitation

The document includes key demands directed at national Member States and the European Commission, aiming to address the shortcomings of the mentioned strategy. Among these demands are calls to set ambitious national targets for increasing the employment rate of persons with disabilities, to improve pathways for transitioning from sheltered employment to the open labour market, and to strengthen national legislative frameworks on reasonable accommodation.

Additionally, the conclusions emphasize the importance of urging the European Commission to initiate the assessment of the Strategy's implementation—an exercise that the European Commission committed to during the Belgian presidency of the EU but has yet to begin.

ETUC agrees with these demands and, while the document covers important ground, believes that it could benefit from several improvements, which are outlined below:

In point 5, the document references the guidelines on reasonable accommodation published by the European Commission, noting that they help employers understand where and how accommodations should be provided. It should also state that these guidelines are intended to assist workers with disabilities, all employees within a company, and their trade unions.

Point 11 refers to the percentage of persons over 65 in 2024 and their need for disability, social, and support services. Since the document focuses on reasonable workplace accommodation, such specifics are unnecessary, as those over 65 should be enjoying their retirement.

In point 15, references are made to sheltered workshops and the variety of practices across the EU. It is important to prioritize a transition away from these models and toward full inclusion in an open, inclusive labour market. Where they exist, sheltered workshops must comply with labour legislation, including sectoral collective agreements.

Point 17 discusses accessibility and compliance but should clarify that compliance is the responsibility of companies, not workers. The burden of ensuring adherence to labour rights should not fall on the workers themselves.

Among the demands, the European Commission is called upon to promote the implementation of the guidelines on reasonable accommodation at work, identify and assess barriers to reasonable accommodation, and develop appropriate measures to effectively remove these barriers. ETUC requests that the Guidelines are converted into a mandatory directive to ensure that this right is upheld across European companies for workers with disabilities.



The Council conclusions should also invite Member States to promote collective bargaining as a valuable tool for providing reasonable accommodation in the workplace, as demonstrated by the many examples in the guidelines and the ongoing efforts of employers and trade union organizations across Member States.