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## EU's First Disability Card: A Step to Inclusivity in Europe



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The EU's inaugural Disability Card has been generally applauded for creating a more consistent framework for accessibility across the member states. However, this card represents just the initial stage in safeguarding complete mobility across the EU for those living with disabilities.

In Europe, an estimated 87 million people experience some level of disability. Due to a varied set of criteria and corresponding national disability card, there is a disparity that often places people at a crossroads while voyaging or making calls to other nations within the bloc because of the ununiformed acceptance.

Efforts have been channeled by the EU to homogenise the experience, aligning on 8 February to adopt a cross-EU Disability Card. This project is created to simplify and extend the benefit of open movement for Europeans with disabilities, assuring that the accessibility measures actions anticipated in their states are met in the others.

The creation of this piece of legislation has stirred significant hope. ***"Persons with disabilities have been eagerly awaiting this legislation. The significance of the European Disability Card extends beyond simply facilitating travel; it embodies the EU's commitment to ensuring free movement for all Europeans,"*** said the liberal MEP Lucia Āuriš, rapporteur of the file in the Parliament.

Alejandro Moledo, from the European Disability Forum (EDF), has portrayed the work also as a message of unity. ***"It doesn't only have a practical value, especially for people with invisible disabilities, (...) but a symbolic one as the 'European project' of feeling part of the European Union."***

***"The important thing is that we will have the card and that it is the first step,"*** Moledo explained.



EU Commission's Vice-President Věra Jourová and Commissioner for Equality Helena Dalli during the presentation of the proposal.

Moledo outlined the intention to expand the card's utility to support extended stays abroad for purposes like education or employment.

Sharing his experience, Moledo recounted his relocation from Spain to Belgium. In Spain, his disability had been acknowledged, allowing him to receive necessary workplace adjustments, such as a larger screen. However, upon moving to Brussels, he faced a year-long process to have his disability recognised in Belgium to access similar accommodations, during which he temporarily lost his existing supports.

The European Disability Forum (EDF) welcomed the inclusion of programmes like Erasmus and the Solidarity Corps in the agreement but expressed disappointment over the exclusion of temporary disability support and allowances for those moving abroad for work or study. The European Parliament is seeking temporary measures to assist individuals with disabilities who stay in another EU country for over three months and require social benefits.

The Parliament is expected to approve the new measure in April, and then it will start to take effect. The European Union's decision-makers have a settled plan: it will take 30 months to fully adopt the law across EU countries, and then one more year to give out the first special card. This means people with disabilities will have to wait around four years from now to actually see these benefits.

Source: [Euractiv](#)

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Published on : Fri, 16 Feb 2024