

Council approves conclusions on the protection of vulnerable adults



The Council today approved conclusions on the protection of vulnerable adults across the EU, with regard to civil and criminal law matters.

A significant number of adults face or will face limitations: Eurostat expects a fifth of the EU population to have some form of disability by 2050. Many of these adults are or will become vulnerable and, due to the multiple barriers still in place for persons with a serious mental or physical disability, they are not or will not be in a position to protect their own interests without adequate support. In cross-border situations, these existing difficulties may be made worse by additional obstacles related to language, representation or access to the judicial system and public services.

In these conclusions, the Council invites member states to use available funding opportunities from the EU budget to develop actions related to the protection and promotion of the rights of vulnerable adults, including on digital literacy. It also calls on them to promote greater awareness of the 2000 Hague convention on the international protection of adults and advance procedures to ratify it or consultations on possible accession. The Council invites member states to ensure the full implementation of existing legislation in the field of criminal law. It invites them to enhance the use of cross-border victim protection mechanisms and ensure that vulnerable adults, whether suspects, accused or victims, are properly identified so that they can fully exercise their rights.

The conclusions call on the Commission in civil law matters to conduct a study aimed at reflecting on how the protection of vulnerable adults could be further strengthened, and to consider the possible need for a legal framework within the EU to facilitate free circulation of judicial and extra-judicial decisions on the protection of vulnerable adults in civil matters.

In criminal law matters, the conclusions invite the Commission to consider whether there is a need to strengthen the procedural safeguards for vulnerable adults and to carefully reflect on the need to identify common criteria for identifying vulnerable adults in criminal proceedings.

[Visit the meeting page](#)