

International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2018: Statement by Commissioner Thyssen

Ahead of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, taking place every year on 3 December, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, said:

“Last year, I said I wanted 2018 to be the year of delivery for the European Accessibility Act. I am very pleased that my wish came true, as a few weeks ago, the European Parliament and the Council came to a provisional agreement which should be finalised in the coming weeks.

The agreement will improve the lives of more than 80 million Europeans with disabilities. Soon, they will have at their disposal more accessible products and services, such as phones, computers, e-books and e-commerce. This will establish the European Union as the world’s largest market for accessible products and services and is a concrete realisation of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, which aims to create a barrier-free Europe for all European citizens.

Throughout 2018, we have achieved progress on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In addition to the agreement on the European Accessibility Act, all EU Member States are now parties to the Convention.

I am determined to continue working on our path towards a more inclusive society. One step at a time, we are making the European Pillar of Social Rights a reality, building a fairer and more social Europe for everyone.”

Background

More than 80 million people in the EU are affected by a disability to some degree. Accessibility of products and services is a precondition to their equal participation and active role in society. It also contributes to ensure smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

In 2011, the EU ratified the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(UNCRPD\)](#). The Convention addresses disability as a human rights issue – not from a medical or charity perspective. It covers civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and a wide range of policy fields: from justice to transport, employment to information technology, and so on. All EU Member States have signed and ratified the Convention.

At EU-level, action has been taken with the [proposal of the European Accessibility Act](#). Inclusion of people with disabilities in our society and economy is also a key principle of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#).

The [annual Conference on the European Day of Persons with Disabilities](#) will

take place on 3 and 4 December in Brussels and coincides also with the annual [Access City Award](#) recognising cities that have worked to become more accessible for their citizen.

For more information

[Making key products and services accessible across the EU: Statement by Commissioner Thyssen following the provisional agreement between the EU institutions](#)

[Press release: Commission proposes to make products and services more accessible to persons with disabilities](#)

[European Day of Persons with Disabilities conference 2018](#)

[European Commission webpage on persons with disabilities](#)

[Access City Awards](#)

[News item on gender equality for women with disabilities from the European Institute for Gender Equality](#)

Follow Marianne Thyssen on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), #EUdisability

Subscribe to the European Commission's free e-mail [newsletter](#) on employment, social affairs and inclusion