


# Procedure file

Basic information	
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic) <a href="#">2000/2296(COS)</a>	Procedure completed
People with disabilities: promoting equal rights and opportunities	
Subject 4.10.06 People with disabilities	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	<b>EMPL</b> Employment and Social Affairs	PPE-DE <a href="#">HERMANGE Marie-Thérèse</a>	06/06/2000
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	<a href="#">Education, Youth, Culture and Sport</a>	<a href="#">2503</a>	05/05/2003
European Commission	Commission DG <a href="#">Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion</a>	Commissioner	

Key events			
12/05/2000	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2000)0284	Summary
29/11/2000	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
27/02/2001	Vote in committee		Summary
27/02/2001	Committee report tabled for plenary	<a href="#">A5-0084/2001</a>	
03/04/2001	Debate in Parliament		
04/04/2001	Decision by Parliament	<a href="#">T5-0187/2001</a>	Summary
04/04/2001	End of procedure in Parliament		
24/01/2002	Final act published in Official Journal		
05/05/2003	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2000/2296(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper

Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	EMPL/5/12774

### Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		COM(2000)0284	12/05/2000	EC	Summary
Committee of the Regions: opinion		<a href="#">CDR0301/2000</a> <a href="#">OJ C 144 16.05.2001, p. 0067</a>	13/12/2000	CofR	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		<a href="#">A5-0084/2001</a>	27/02/2001	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		<a href="#">T5-0187/2001</a> OJ C 021 24.01.2002, p. 0133-0246 E	04/04/2001	EP	Summary

## People with disabilities: promoting equal rights and opportunities

**PURPOSE** : to remove barriers and enhance the opportunities for people with disabilities to participate fully in all aspects of society.

**CONTENT** : people with disabilities are recognised to be one of the most disadvantaged sections of our society and continue to face considerable barriers in accessing all aspects of social life. The approach endorsed by the European Union acknowledges that environmental barriers are a greater impediment to participation in society than functional limitations. Barrier removal through legislation, provision of accommodations, universal design and other means, has been identified as the key to equal opportunities for people with disabilities. While responsibility for these issues remains mainly with the Member States, the present scope of Community competence provides for substantial means and added value to achieve better equal opportunities for people with disabilities. The inclusion of a general non-discrimination article (Article 13) covering inter alia disability in the Treaty of Amsterdam provides the basis for a crucial leap forward to promote equal rights for people with disabilities at EU level. To complement the above mentioned initiatives as well as to meet the commitment made by the Intergovernmental Conference should take into account the needs of people with disabilities, the present communication seeks to review some key EU policies which can contribute to the improvement of access for people with disabilities. In this context, the communication places a particular emphasis upon the achievement of a greater synergy between related issues in the fields of employment, education and vocational training, transport, the internal market, information society, new technologies and consumer policy. Mobility plays a crucial role in ensuring participation in economic and social activity and the lack of it is an inhibiting factor against the participation rights of people with disabilities to the detriment of all. The improvement of access for people with disabilities will have positive implications for other areas such as quality of working life, the protection of the consumer and the competitiveness of European Industry. Accordingly, the Commission is drawing the links between the relevant inter-sectorial policies and is looking forward how much more synergy can be obtained. Furthermore, recent EU developments in the field of new technologies will also play a crucial role in enabling people with disabilities to overcome functional limitations and thus enhancing their prospects for participation. Equally, the communication underlines the fragmented and underdeveloped state of the EU market in this field and identifies some actions to be undertaken to develop a truly common market and to bring supply more closely into alignment with demand. A strong knowledge base, including reliable statistical data on the prevalence of disability and on its implications to participate fully in all aspects of society are seen as essential tools for the implementation of this communication. Lastly, negative attitudes towards disability must be challenged. With this aim in mind, the Commission will propose to the Council that the year 2003 be declared as the European Year of Disabled Citizens in order to promote society's awareness of disability issues and to provide a catalyst for the introduction of new policies in this regard at all levels of governance. The objective of the proposal, therefore, is to strengthen the concept of citizenship for people with disabilities. ?

## People with disabilities: promoting equal rights and opportunities

The committee adopted the report by Marie-Thérèse HERMANGE (EPP-ED, F) on the Commission communication. The report called for an equal treatment directive going beyond employment (under Article 13 of the Treaty), financial support to enable people with disabilities to participate in all Community programmes, an action plan for their involvement in the information society, an evaluation of research projects which had already received EU funding and the inclusion in the Sixth R&TD Programme of a special section on research into people with disabilities. The committee also underlined the need to mainstream disability issues into all policy formulation and to promote a culture of non-discrimination, recognition of diversity and civil dialogue with, and funding for, NGOs representing people with disabilities. The EU institutions were reminded of their own responsibility to provide access for disabled people. The Commission was invited to submit a proposal for a specific action programme for disabled people beginning in 2004 with a view to continuing the work carried out during the 2003 European Year of Disabled Citizens and promoting the coordination of Member States' disability policies.?

## People with disabilities: promoting equal rights and opportunities

Parliament voted 467 to 3 with 15 abstentions in favour of a resolution by Marie-Thérèse HERMANGE (EPP/ED, F) on the Commission communication "Towards a barrier-free Europe for people with disabilities". (Please refer to the previous document). Moreover, the resolution adds that businesses should be encouraged to employ disabled workers by means of incentives, including tax breaks and reduced social

security contributions. It should be noted that this is the first time in Parliament's history that a report was available in braille and the debate was interpreted in sign language.?