

4.3 Strategy for the social inclusion of young people

On this page

1. [Existence of a National Strategy on social inclusion](#)
 2. [Scope and contents](#)
 3. [Responsible authority](#)
 4. [Revisions/ Updates](#)
-

Existence of a National Strategy on social inclusion

Regional Development Concept (REK II): Horizontal project - “DG Inclusive 2025”

There is no proper strategy on social inclusion in the German-speaking community. However, social inclusion plays a central role in its Regional Development Concept. The Regional Development Concept was conceived as a long term strategy by the German-Speaking government, without any kind of legal basis. The process was initiated in May 2008 with a comprehensive stock-taking and regional analysis, whereby the strengths and weaknesses, chances and challenges of East Belgium were closely examined. On the basis of this study, strategic approaches and concrete recommendations were crystallized into a mission statement which characterized East Belgium as a Frontier Region, an Economic Region, a Learning Region, a Caring Region and a Living Region. The REK was published in four volumes: the first contains the regional analysis, the second contains the mission statement, development strategy and suggested measures, while the third outlines specific and concrete projects. Volume four looks back on the first implementation period and introduces the future and cross-sectional projects within the framework of the second implementation period, including the project “DG Inklusiv 2025”.

In the first implementation phase of the Regional Development Concept (REK I) there were already sub-projects on the subject of Inclusion.

In 2009 the parliament of the German-speaking Community accepted the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into their legal framework. The guiding principles of the UN convention are among other things accessibility and inclusion that enable all people to participate in the life of society regardless of their impairment.

This resulted in the responsibility of the whole of society to actively involve people with disabilities in all areas of life whether in politics, administration or society. In Article 1 the UN Convention defines people with disabilities as follows: “People with disabilities include people

who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

Inclusion must, however, be accompanied by supporting measures. The action plan “DG Inclusive 2025” flags up concrete measures and approaches that are intended to lead to the implementation of the UN Convention. This action plan has been drawn up with the involvement of the authorities, the service providers inside and outside the disability area and citizens and above all the people with disabilities. The UN Committee for the Rights of People with Disabilities has meanwhile examined the first Belgian state Report on the implementation and on 3 October 2014 published its closing observations with suggestions for further implementation. These observations complement the action plan “DG Inclusive 2025” and represent the guiding principles of the aspect of inclusion in the REK.

The creation of an inclusive society within the meaning of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities is an overarching task on which the public and private institutions and actors should be involved. In this connection, no one can decline jurisdiction. Therefore within the scope of REK II the implementation of the action plan “DG Inclusive 2025” is being commenced. All part subject areas of the REK are to contribute quite specifically to more inclusion in our community.

In the implementation of the action plan great importance is attached to people with disabilities being able to be involved as experts in their own matter.

Scope and contents

For the implementation of inclusion as a horizontal task the corresponding coordination opportunities must be created.

The Department for Service for self-determined life (DSL - [Dienststelle für Selbstbestimmtes Leben](#)) makes its expertise as the specialist department for the disability area available to other organisations, services and authorities. Furthermore the DSL gives information and awareness raising on the rights of disabled people.

For the coordination of the implementation, the government strives for the actualisation of legal bases that govern the role of the “focal points” on the coordination of the implementation of the UN Convention provided for in the UN Convention and embedded at the DSL. Furthermore rules are also to be found for the Forum, the Monitoring Committee and the other authorities and organisations in the implementation of the UN Convention. This takes place through the use of classical control instruments such as the management contracts and through the consolidation of the involvement of people with disabilities in decisions concerning them through different forms of participation.

Within the meaning of the UN Convention all authorities and organisations are to design their services step by step to be inclusive. As an expert regarding people with disabilities, the DSL supports the project managers of the future projects and horizontal projects as well as the

organisations, services and authorities in East Belgium in an advisory capacity on request.

In the concrete actualisation of REK II people with disabilities, representatives of the authorities and institutions and also the social interest groups work together in East Belgium in a Monitoring Committee. This Monitoring Committee has the aim of enabling a coordinated implementation, supporting and advising the future and horizontal projects as well as involving the persons with disabilities in this as experts in the own matters.

BORDER REGION

People with disabilities are to be able to participate without restriction in all society and social provision. We want to contribute to all people with or without disabilities being promoted together in the discovery and exercise of their individual cultural, artistic and social skills. This applies for example to all services of the public libraries and media libraries or to events of all kinds. We must learn that it is normal to be different. The subject of inclusion is accordingly an important horizontal subject for many voluntary projects, particularly in the sports, youth and social area. Awareness raising, accessibility and further education are important fields of action.

Trainers and instructors in sport must have the necessary information to also be able to best supervise people with disabilities in everyday training. For this barriers and anxieties must be reduced and inclusion skills developed. In the basic training of the trainers in the sport area a module will be introduced that is devoted to inclusion skills for people with a disability.

As part of the cross-border pilot projects, the DG is involved in addition in the evaluation and labelling of barrier-free access to public buildings and those accessible to the public and in the introduction of an EU Mobility Card for people with disabilities. To achieve the aim of an inclusive society, in addition intensive exchange and collaboration with partners domestically and abroad is needed. An example of good practice for this is the “inclusion mainstreaming” approach of the Landschaftsverbandes Rheinland [Rhineland Regional Council].

ECONOMIC REGION

[Article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) is specifically devoted to the work and employment of people with disabilities. Under this article 27 the contracting states recognise the same right to work of people with disabilities. This also includes the right to the opportunity to earn a living by work.

To promote this right the partners undertake to take appropriate steps. Among other things Article 27 provides for acts of discrimination because of disability to be prohibited in employment matters. This ban also concerns the selection, recruitment and employment conditions.

Furthermore the contracting partners commit themselves to the same right of people with disabilities to fair and reasonable working conditions, the same wage for equivalent work and effective access to job placement and further training.

In this connection, the UN Convention requires that people with disabilities are employed in the public sector. These aspects that are intended to achieve equal opportunity on the labour

market are also taken up in the DG action plan on the implementation of the UN Convention “DG Inclusive 2025”. Together with other measures, the action plan campaigns for inclusive application procedures. The recommendations of the Economic and Social Council of the DG (ESC) go in the same direction with its current study “Diversity on the labour market as opportunity for the economy” of June 2014. In this study the authors have identified people with disabilities as a target group that has difficulties getting a foothold in the economy and on the labour market. The ESC points out that discrimination tendencies in recruitment procedures towards people with disabilities continues to be the reality.

In this connection reference must also be made to the future project “Increasing employment and securing skilled workers” of the “Economic Region DG” that likewise takes into account the group of people with disabilities.

As a horizontal project of the Economic Region the DG would like to press ahead with the inclusion in the area of employment for persons with disabilities and counter or prohibit discrimination against this group of people.

The action plan “DG Inclusive 2025” on the implementation of the UN Convention proposes, alongside other measures for promoting equality of opportunity on the labour market, the introduction of a minimum employment rate for persons with disabilities in the public sector as well as inclusive recruitment procedures. As part of the present project, the DG aims to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the public authorities of the Community. For this a steering group and if necessary working groups will be set up. The members of the steering group will be representatives of the government, the Ministry, the public interest bodies, the services with separate rules of procedure, the local authorities and the ESC. The steering group will discuss and develop the various work stages. Adapted to the respective need, working groups composed as required can meet. It is planned to invite people with disabilities as experts in their own matters to the working meetings of the steering group and to the working groups.

In a first stage the actual situation at the public authorities of the DG concerned is to be recorded, i.e. the current employment rate of persons with disabilities in the respective authorities. Furthermore the steering group should stimulate checking of the recruitment procedures of the individual authorities for their inclusive, equal-opportunity character. Is there still not optimisation potential in the recruitment procedures that might increase the chances of a job for people with disabilities in the public services?

Based on these work stages the steering group will develop targets that may if required be presented and concerted in the working groups. If needed the working groups will also assist in the execution of these targets.

EDUCATION REGION

Participation in mainstream education provision is to be aimed at whenever possible. If this is not the case the Community will ensure individually adapted education provision. Thus tailor-made resources must be available for inclusive teaching so that all pupils can receive high or

low-threshold support to meet their needs. In this connection the teachers both in SME and in school-based training should use special needs educational methods in their lessons. In this connection the future project “giving individual support to pupils” is already planning measures at the level of the overall system, the school and the lesson in the classroom.

Particularly training and further training at the Autonome Hochschule [Autonomous University] (AHS) must reflect this increased training need so that teaching and non-teaching staff, school managements and coordinators can meet the new requirements. Here continuing education courses within the school can represent important solution approaches to anchor the idea of inclusiveness into mainstream schools. The area of initial training and continuing education will be further differentiated in the future project “supporting teachers”.

In addition the adaptation and opening of the provision aimed at as well as the methods and concepts of lifelong learning is to enable all people to acquire additional qualifications and be able to continue in education according to their personal interests, abilities and needs. The future project “recognising skills” will particularly meet this target.

Support must also benefit the young people who are just about to make the transition from special education into professional life. This also applies to young people who do not have the level necessary for training and neither pass the professional technical secondary education nor succeed in direct entry into the dual apprenticeship training. The future project “Evaluating technical professional training” will look in more detail at this level necessary for training and flag up options for action.

SOLIDARITY REGION

In the Solidarity Region the future project “Living diversity” will promote the inclusion of people with disabilities by measures of awareness raising and accessible information. Furthermore also in the other future projects of the Solidarity Region people with disabilities and their equitable participation in society will be supported.

LIVING REGION

It is important to the DG to enable all people to have access to the life of society and thus also to private and public buildings. This is also important with respect to demographic change. Most people would like to remain living at home as long as possible. For this purpose these buildings should be planned barrier-free as far as possible right from the start. Being barrier-free in the public space is not only useful for people with disabilities and the many senior citizens who use a wheelchair or rollator to get about but also people with short-term impairments such as a broken leg, people with toddlers or people who have to carry heavy loads and are helped by a lift. With the consistent implementation of the Decree on Barrier-free Building we are planning long-term and thus sustainably so that our buildings are open to as many people as possible. In our guiding principle, this means: “We want to set up barrier-free standards for new housing developments and restoration work, actively promote and fundamentally ensure a barrier-free standard for social housing development.” After the first experiences with the Decree of 12 July 2007 on the accessible design of subsidised infrastructures ([Erlass der Regierung zur Festlegung der Bestimmungen zur behindertengerechten Gestaltung von bezuschussten Infrastrukturen](#))

) it has turned out that in some points it has been necessary to make adjustments. These revisions and improvements to the Decree are intended to lead to the accessibility of buildings and thus the inclusion of people with an impairment being constantly optimised.

Furthermore, after the transfer of the responsibilities for housing development, initiatives on the barrier-free design of living space are possible. These possibilities are to be used single-mindedly. Because of the fact that the scope of the transfer of competence has not yet been specified, concrete measures cannot currently be defined.

Over and above that, a concept is being developed to give a special award by the introduction of a label to buildings designed to be barrier-free, to create positive stimuli and the give persons with disabilities inspected information on accessibility that meets the different needs. In a first phase, the DPB has drawn up questionnaires to check the conditions in the area “Accessibility” on site. The questionnaires are being tried out in a test phase. After that, the DPB plans to train two persons with disabilities so that they can conduct surveys on site. The results of the surveys conducted by the two persons will be published on the website www.eurecard.org. A link between this website and the website of the [Tourismusagentur Ostbelgien](#) [East Belgium tourist agency] (TAO) is to be recommended.

Responsible authority

The “social affairs” remit is wide-ranging. Numerous organisations and establishments work in this area. Supervision of most of this work lies with the Department for Family and Social Affairs of the Ministry of the German-speaking Community.

Subsidising and inspecting the existing services, contributions by the German-Speaking Community are carried out via the specialist department in the Ministry.

Since the transfer of the supervision of the Public Welfare centres to the German-speaking Community a focus of the work of the Ministry lies in giving legal advice to those responsible for the centres. Added to this are developing of statutory regulations in the social area, improving coordination in social work and expanding and consolidating the socio-psychological support network. For this East Belgium is integrated into social work at regional, national and international level.

Revisions/Updates

As the REK outlines future developments in East Belgium up to 2025, it may undergo revisions and updates over the period of its implementation, in order to deduce and elaborate measures as can best meet East Belgium’s current and future needs.