



Media statement

EURORDIS: Commission's Disability Card plans are promising, but implementation will be key

6 September, Brussels – EURORDIS – Rare Diseases Europe welcomes the European Commission's proposal for an EU Disability Card, which will facilitate the access of persons with disabilities to some services while travelling within the EU.

The Commission is proposing an EU Disability Card that will ensure access to a range of services under preferential conditions for persons with disabilities. By means of mutual recognition of one's disability status, EU nationals will access those services under the same conditions as citizens of the visited EU country.

Responding to the Commission's proposal for the EU Disability Card, **Raquel Castro, Social Policy and Initiatives Director at EURORDIS – Rare Diseases Europe**, said:

"Our community welcomes the European Commission's important proposal of an EU Disability Card, as many people living with a rare disease also live with a related disability. This disability is often invisible to others or can be easily misunderstood, due to the complex nature of rare conditions. The Commission's proposal promises persons living with disabilities more equal opportunities and benefits when accessing services across the European Union. The Commission has also made the wise decision to keep the European Disability Card separate from the European Parking Card.

"We feel very reassured by the Commission's choice to use binding legislation that commits Member States to the same goals relating to the EU Disability Card's implementation. This should optimise the card's potential to be successfully expanded right across the EU.

"However, the success of the directive will majorly depend on a monitoring framework which keeps track of whether eligible individuals can access the card and can indeed enjoy preferential conditions thanks to the card when using services.

"We are very pleased that the Commission has proposed that the Disability Card should cover the services, activities and facilities in each country which already offer distinct benefits to users with disabilities. However, we agree with the European Disability Forum that the proposal should have been more ambitious.

"In particular, the proposal falls short of requiring equal recognition of benefits in a number of services and activities, such as EU mobility programmes, that would have better ensured that persons with disabilities could actually live and work in another EU country on an equal basis with other citizens. We therefore count on EU policymakers to expand the scope of the Commission's ambition to truly facilitate the rights of all citizens to live and work anywhere in the EU.

“The EU Disability Card is an important step in the right direction. We encourage EU policymakers to recognise that the success of the Card will greatly hinge on national governments improving and expanding access to disability assessments. Disability assessments do not fall within the competence of the EU, but we persist in advocating for the establishment of EU-wide guiding standards on these assessments. Better national assessment processes would help make sure that no EU citizen with a disability is excluded from initiatives aimed at promoting equitable societal participation.”

About EURORDIS-Rare Diseases Europe

[EURORDIS-Rare Diseases Europe](#) is a unique, non-profit alliance of over 1,000 rare disease organisations from 74 countries that work together to improve the lives of the 30 million people living with a rare disease in Europe. By connecting people, families and rare disease groups, as well as by bringing together all stakeholders and mobilising the rare disease community, EURORDIS strengthens the patient voice and shapes research, policies and services.

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