

# Press information

Press briefing for the Meeting of the EU  
Ombudspersons for Persons with Disabilities on 16  
November 2018

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# Press briefing for the Meeting of the EU Ombudspersons for Persons with Disabilities on 16 November 2018



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Upon the initiative of the Austrian Disability Ombudsman and as part of the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, a meeting of the EU ombudspersons for persons with disabilities took place on 15 and 16 November 2018. The meeting revolved around the topic “Jobs for persons with disabilities”.

In their final statement, the EU ombudspersons for persons with disabilities highlighted that the possibilities for full participation of persons with disabilities in European job markets are in reality very limited. This is the case in spite of the European-wide protection against discrimination established by an EU directive. Their situation worsens when they are confronted with multiple discriminations, for instance, on grounds of age and sex. On average, persons with disabilities become unemployed earlier and more often and are unemployed for longer than persons without disabilities.

Persons with disabilities who have a high need for support are often unable to gain access to the job market and find themselves limited to segregated special forms of employment. There often is a lack of arrangements enabling these people to access the regular job market.

In Austria alone around 72 000 “persons with health-related placement limitations” (term used by the Public Employment Service Austria (AMS)) are currently unemployed; some 24 000 people are employed in activity centres run by the federal provinces.

The EU directives and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) are important foundations for the equal treatment of persons with disabilities in all areas of life. This illustrates the importance of transnational cooperation when enforcing the rights of persons with disabilities.

The final statement of the meeting contains demands that are supported by the Austrian Disability Ombudsman and the Austrian Disability Council.

The ombudspersons call, among other things, for persons with disabilities to be given comprehensive access to inclusive education. This is an essential prerequisite for access to the general job market. Exclusion from education has a

particularly serious – and often life-long – impact on the participation opportunities of those concerned.

Comprehensive participation of persons with disabilities in the job market needs to be guaranteed. All existing advisory and support services should also be accessible for all persons with disabilities and without restrictions. It is of equally decisive importance that persons with disabilities are afforded efficient protection from discrimination.

There is a particular need for the creation or extension of support measures for young persons with disabilities with a special focus being placed on the transition from school or vocational training to employment.

In addition, the statement calls for the long-term abolition of segregating forms of employment as they cause considerable disadvantages for the employees and are usually considered to have a therapeutic function. In the short term, the permeability towards the regular job market – as well as the social security of the persons concerned should be improved.

Generally and in conclusion the EU ombudspersons for persons with disabilities call upon the member states of the European Union to guarantee that their mandate covers the equal treatment of persons with disabilities in all areas of life and that the effectiveness and independence of the European equality bodies and ombudspersons for persons with disabilities is ensured.