

Roadmap

An Agenda for the modernization of higher education

2017

Key points

Our modern societies are characterised by their diversity and complexity, and we must actively work towards social inclusion to face the future challenges¹. As highlighted in the Roadmap for this initiative, “Higher education could do more to tackle social divisions”. Aside from its role in innovation and high-skills, higher education has an important role as a model of what individuals can achieve. As such it must make sure everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in higher education and contribute to society to the best of their abilities. The more systematic **inclusion in teachers’ curriculum of modules on inclusion** would be a first step in ensuring a broader social inclusion in higher education.

In its report, Eurostat underlined that **only 15% disabled persons attain first and second stage of tertiary education**, 10 points below average². EASPD thus invites the Commission to give the necessary attention to this issue, and include people with disabilities as a priority target group along people from low socio-economic and migrant groups.

Recommendations

- If the Commission aims to “understand better the patterns of change in the labour market and graduates’ careers”, the initiative must be articulated around gathering **disaggregated data**. On one hand, **key indicators for graduates** should include women, people with disabilities, third country nationals, etc. On the other hand, **key sector such as the social sector should be identified** in order to assess the impact of employment strategies on different sectors. As one of the sectors with the largest job creation potential, the health and social services sector must be promoted and valorised to encourage young people to opt in this career path³.

¹ For more, see Luk Zelderloo, [‘There is no path to social inclusion, social inclusion is the path’](#)

² Eurostat, [Disability statistics – Access to education and training](#)

³ For more information, [How to unlock the job creation potential of the health and social services](#)

- In order to promote “student-centred learning and teaching, [...] and good curriculum design”, EASPD invites the Commission to **promote the use of the Universal Design for Learning methodology**⁴, according to which the provision of skills and competences is designed having in mind the needs of all learners.
Furthermore, flexible curricula allow education providers to deliver **flexible certifications adapted to the skills acquired**. By not focusing on the needs and challenges but rather on the abilities of the individual, this methodology facilitates the promotion of the skills and competences of each individual and the transition to the labour market.
- For higher education institutions to become more inclusive, it’s important to include all stakeholders in the design of the support offered, so that it answers the needs of the users. **Disability support services in particular should be directly involved in the design and delivery of the support**, to ensure the unique expertise and knowledge they have developed facilitates the inclusion of people with disabilities.
Furthermore, teachers, staff and HEI themselves need quality support from such specialised services to manage the development of more inclusive learning environments.

Who we are

EASPD is the European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities. We are a European not-for-profit organisation and represent over 15,000 social service provider organisations across Europe and disability. The main objective of EASPD is to promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities through effective and high-quality service systems.

EASPD is registered at the Transparency Register under the following number:
120906010805-50

A third of EASPD’s membership provides employment and training services to Persons with Disabilities. It is our understanding that the huge experience developed by our sector in terms of supporting persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups in gaining relevant and useful skills for the labour market would be of particular interest to the European Commission and the authorities working on the implantation of the new skills agenda and the agenda for the modernisation of higher education.

For additional information, please contact

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⁴ See [General Comment n°4 of the UNCRPD on inclusive education](#)

