EASPD in Action: Advancing Rights, Innovation, and Resilience in Disability Support

EASPD Multiannual Strategy 2026-2029

Our Mission

EASPD's mission is to promote equal opportunities and high-quality support services for persons with disabilities by advocating for effective policies, fostering innovation, and strengthening the capacity of disability support across Europe.

EASPD works to help disability services in the transformation of support, in line with the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), emphasising inclusion, accessibility, and person-centred approaches.

Our Unique Role

As a leading European network, EASPD brings together over 20,000 service providers across Europe to shape policies, drive innovation, exchange knowledge, and foster mutual learning in pursuit of its mission.

We do so in partnership with European and international institutions, Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs), other like-minded organisations, the public and private sectors, academia and others.

EASPD also makes the most of its diverse membership, both thematically and by improving cooperation across all disability services.

Our Strategy

This Strategy aims to guide, help and inform the steps EASPD will take to make the most of the rapidly evolving context, strengthen its value proposition and fulfil its mission over the next 4 years (2026-2029).

Operating context, challenges and environmental factors

The transformation of disability support – both for persons with disabilities and the public and private sectors – relies on several key factors at different levels: service provider, policy and societal.

1 Service Provider Level

Firstly, it needs the service providers themselves to play a key role in driving the social transformation that will enable the people, organisations and communities they support to flourish. This means transforming the support itself to be more person-centred, inclusive and community-based.

This is typically done by developing self-directed support models, as well as integrated care systems. It is also done by creating continuous quality assurance systems and by building new partnerships with the public and private sector (businesses, schools, housing providers, arts, cultural and sports organisations, and others).

The increase and diversification of people requiring support must be adequately addressed, in particular from the angle of mental health. It is important to identify, develop and provide person-centred solutions for all, including those with complex, multiple and high support needs, as well as those who are in or at risk of poverty, to ensure no one is left behind.

Equally, there is increasing demand from the public and private sectors for partnerships with specialised support organisations to enable them to deliver and make the most of inclusion.

For this to be achieved, service providers must also be organised in a way that can enable the support to be responsive to changing individual choices and needs, as well as to the evolving requests of the public and private sectors they support. Service providers need to be resilient and financially sustainable if they are to make such changes.

In fact, the transformation of support can open up new opportunities in this regard. The attractiveness of the jobs they employ needs to be improved to have sufficient and motivated workers able to provide the right support. Again, the transformation of support could help to create more attractive jobs and reduce the sector's staff shortages.

This also requires providing space for re-skilling and up-skilling, as well as better considering intersectionality, including from the perspective of gender. Service providers also need to embrace and be prepared for the potential that digitalisation can bring to their activities, from artificial intelligence to accessibility and to assistive technology, including for making
services more sustainable.

2 Policy Level

The development of high-quality support will require the development of enabling policy environments, starting with the need for ambitious and well-considered reforms in the years to come to accompany the changes needed. This means overarching sectoral policies (for instance, in employment, in education, in culture or elsewhere), policies regarding accessibility and universal design, as well as policies directly targeting service providers. Funding gaps need to be urgently addressed as a priority, just as much as the funding models, which will need to encourage outcome-based results, innovation, partnerships, trust and flexibility.

Staff shortages remain chronic and finding systemic solutions – including by improving recognition, wages and working conditions - will be essential. Most service providers are not-for-profit, locally rooted and have close bonds to the disability community, which provides them with a natural advantage in providing high-quality support. Public authorities must take advantage of this and help to create supportive policy frameworks for the Social Economy, including through public procurement, state aid and taxation.

Last and not least, at a time of increasing waiting lists, policy makers will need to work strongly towards guaranteeing accessibility, affordability, adaptability and availability of

care and support services, as well as developing a culture of preparedness in disability services. This includes bridging formal and informal care and better taking into account the needs of families.

3 Societal Level

Society is evolving rapidly, politically, economically, digitally and in terms of sustainability. This means that a social transformation is happening too. In this context, service providers can, do and will play an important role in providing concrete, locally-responsive solutions to these developments. For instance, in helping:

- persons with disabilities to enjoy equal rights through digitalised, person-centred solutions;
- private, public and social economy sectors to be more inclusive and make the most of diversity;
- policy-makers to create economically, socially and environmentally sustainable and cohesive societies, with healthy democracies promoting participation, peace and the rule of law. This will also help to make Europe more competitive on a global stage.

Strategic Objectives

EASPD has four main strategic objectives for the next 4 years (2026-2029):

A. Strengthen support to members in service transformation

Strengthen and improve support to members and others, helping them to develop high quality support systems that are responsive to the choices of persons with disabilities, in line with the principles of the UNCRPD.

B. Enhance EASPD's representation, visibility, and sustainability

Future-proofing EASPD by strengthening representation, brand, culture and value while ensuring long-term financial and organisational resilience.

C. Be a leading voice for policy reform and implementation

Establish EASPD as a key reference for shaping, implementing and monitoring disability support policies at all levels.

D. Establish a culture of knowledge and innovation, foster sectoral upskilling and accelerate digitalisation in disability services

Build up the awareness, knowledge and capacity of professionals, service providers, policymakers, training providers and others by using EASPD's resources to drive meaningful change. Promote digital transformation to enhance service quality, workforce conditions, and organisational effectiveness. This includes artificial intelligence, assistive technology, accessibility and others.

What will EASPD do differently?

A. Strengthen support to members in service transformation

Key Action 1: Develop a system to assess and measure EASPD's impact on our members and partners in terms of fulfilling EASPD's mission, in view of further refining EASPD's activities moving forward.

Key Action 2: Prioritise further community-building opportunities between members and partners, including through events, Member Fora, General Assemblies, an Online Membership Platform, and by identifying additional financial resources to facilitate this. Particular attention will be given to creating a safe and warm environment that encourages open dialogue, creating bridges and friendships.

B. Enhance EASPD's representation, visibility, and sustainability

Key Action 3: Improve EASPD membership across Europe with the target of getting 30 new membership applications each year, with a particular emphasis on areas with weaker representation.

Key Action 4: Expand EASPD's visibility and recognition, through a brand refresh, sharper communication, better outreach to local service providers and engagement with new partners, including globally.

Key Action 5: Improve EASPD's financial sustainability by optimising institutional funding, improving relationships with foundations and the private sector, providing capacity building and technical assistance services, as well as a review of the Membership contribution system.

C. Be a leading voice for policy reform and implementation

Key Action 6: Strengthen EASPD's voice by establishing a process to continuously access data on EASPD's membership and the broader sector's contribution, including jobs created, staff trained, people supported, partnerships with private sector, geographical distribution, etc.

Key Action 7: Further establish EASPD as a "key policy partner" for the European and International institutions, in the development of enabling policy environments for high quality support, in line with the UNCRPD. Continue to highlight the crucial role of service providers to the successful implementation of any policy reform.

Key Action 8: Become a reference partner for public authorities looking at reforming their policies to create equal opportunities for persons with disabilities through high-quality support, in partnership with members and DPOs.

Key Action 9: Strengthen partnership and joint advocacy with DPOs, social services, the social economy, the public and private sectors and others, in view of becoming a propelling force for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

D. Establish a culture of knowledge and innovation & accelerate digitalisation

Key Action 10: Develop and promote ambitious Knowledge and Innovation activities and services to strengthen take-up and implementation of the UNCRPD by supporting Service Providers, Public Authorities and others (eg. Businesses) through a range of services: advisory policy support, study visits, peer to peer learning, training programmes and certification, research, cooperation with universities, innovation awards, guidance, advice and support, etc).

Key Action 11: Identify, design, pilot and prompt Impact Measurement tools to help monitor, evaluate, improve and communicate the value of support, including in view of improving quality services and policies at local and national level.

Key Action 12: Develop and implement a Digitalisation Action Plan, to prioritise ways through which EASPD can promote the digital transformation of disability service providers to improve support quality, workforce conditions and organisational effectiveness. This includes artificial intelligence, assistive technology, accessibility, etc.

To provide resources for these new and additional activities, EASPD will prioritise high impact and successful programmes, better coordinate some activities and seek to find additional financial resources through the diversification of funding.

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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