

Statement on the Rights and Inclusion of Disabled Students

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. State of Play	3
a. UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).....	3
b. Disabled students in the EHEA.....	4
c. EU Policy.....	4
i. European Disability Card.....	4
ii. European Disability Strategy.....	5
iii. Anti-discrimination Law.....	5
3. Issues Faced by Disabled Students in Higher Education	6
a. Access to Education.....	6
b. Access to Mobility.....	7
c. Monitoring.....	8
d. Infrastructure.....	8
e. Participation.....	9
f. Employment.....	10
g. Access to healthcare.....	10
h. Support Services.....	11
i. Student-centred Learning.....	11
j. Digitalisation.....	12
k. Student life.....	12
4. Recommendations	13
5. Reference Documents	19

This statement is based on qualitative policy analysis combining international legal frameworks, European policy instruments and consultations with National Unions of Students across Europe, members of ESU. Key documents listed in the reference section were analysed to assess the current state of rights and inclusion of disabled students in higher education. A review of past ESU policies was conducted to identify gaps in accessibility, support services and the mutual recognition of disability status. Where available, insights from student unions' activities were integrated to reflect stakeholder perspectives based on their lived experiences and national legislation.

1. Introduction

Despite the growing recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities, access to higher education (HE) across Europe remains uneven and often exclusionary. Only [30.9%](#) of learners with disabilities successfully access higher education, a stark indicator of the structural and societal barriers they continue to face. This low participation rate reflects not only practical obstacles but also the deep-rooted challenges embedded in the way disability and inclusion are defined and addressed at both national and European levels.

One of the core challenges in developing effective, inclusive policies across Europe is the lack of a common understanding and definition of disability and inclusion. Member states vary significantly in how disability is conceptualised which directly influences legislation, institutional practices, and support mechanisms. This fragmentation makes it more difficult to implement coherent, rights-based approaches to inclusion at the European level.

Adding to this complexity is the lack of mutual recognition of disability status between countries. A student recognised as having a disability in one country may not receive the same recognition in another, limiting access to vital support services abroad. In many cases, students are also required to meet high thresholds of impairment to qualify for disability status, which excludes individuals with less visible or non-physical disabilities from receiving the accommodations they need.

In the following statement it has been decided to use the terms 'students with disabilities' and 'disabled students' interchangeably. Both terms are correct, with the first one being based on person-first language and the second one in line with the [Social Model of Disability](#) and identity-first language. What matters is that, when speaking to another person, the choice on the term depends on the preferences of the individuals you are referring to, respecting their choices.

2. State of Play

a. UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

The [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(UNCRPD\)](#), adopted in 2006, is a landmark international human rights treaty that provides a comprehensive framework for the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities. The Convention affirms a rights-based approach to disability, shifting the focus from an individualised, medical model to a model grounded in the recognition of societal and structural barriers. This approach establishes persons with disabilities as rights-holders entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms under international law. States Parties undertake to prohibit all discrimination on the basis of disability and guarantee equal and effective legal protection against discrimination, which includes ensuring that persons with disabilities are able to access higher education without discrimination, with reasonable accommodation provided. The UNCRPD's core principles, such as respect for inherent dignity, non-discrimination, full and effective participation and inclusion in society, accessibility, and equality of opportunity, are highly relevant for students with disabilities. Notably, Article 24 specifically addresses the right to inclusive education at all levels without discrimination and Article 9 emphasises accessibility to the physical environment, transportation, information, communication and other facilities and services. While the European Union and its Member States have taken steps to align policies with the UNCRPD, challenges remain in fully implementing and enforcing these rights within higher education.

In its latest [Concluding Observations](#), the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities acknowledged EU progress on disability rights, including the Disability Card and accessibility legislation. However, it raised concerns regarding education: Erasmus+ does not fully cover disability-related costs, the Digital Education Action Plan lacks guaranteed accessibility and the AI Act permits discriminatory use of AI in education. The Committee called on the EU to ensure quality, inclusive education at all levels and to revise Erasmus+ to cover all disability-related expenses.

b. Disabled students in the EHEA

The EHEA defines disabled students as students who can be disadvantaged or vulnerable. In the [2020 Rome Communiqué](#), the member states of the EHEA approved the [Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education \(PAGs\)](#), supporting countries in implementing targeted policies to make Higher Education more inclusive.

c. EU Policy

Beyond the 2 articles in the [EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#), stating the rights to non-discrimination based on disability (Article 21) and to benefit from measures designed to ensure the independence, social and occupational integration and participation in the life of the community for persons with disabilities (Article 26), the European Union has several policies and initiatives aimed at promoting the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

i. European Disability Card

The European Disability Card is a recently established initiative by the European Union aimed at promoting the free movement of persons with disabilities and facilitating their short stays in Member States other than their residence. Under Directive [\(EU\) 2024/2841](#), the card serves as proof of recognised disability status, granting access to special conditions or preferential treatment with respect to services, activities and facilities across the EU. For students with disabilities, this card is particularly relevant as it should ensure equal access to special conditions or preferential treatment during short-term mobility programmes like Erasmus+. The card aims to ensure equal treatment in education-related services, student facilities and cultural or transport benefits, reducing administrative burdens and uncertainty for disabled students studying abroad. However, if Member States limit support to a fixed period, such as a few months, students participating in longer-term mobility (e.g., one year) may face challenges if they exceed the decided period. The process of having one's disability status recognised anew in the host country may be time-consuming, creating a gap in support. Member States are also expected to provide both physical and digital versions

of the card, with the digital version aiming for interoperability at the Union level. Furthermore, the directive aims for equal access to special conditions or preferential treatment that are already offered in the visited Member State to its own residents with disabilities.

It does not mandate the harmonisation of disability benefits or the introduction of new, specific advantages for cardholders across the EU. The Commission's commitment to a report assessing remaining gaps in free movement for persons with disabilities further suggests that the current directive might not be a complete solution and that further improvements or actions may be necessary.

ii. European Disability Strategy

The European Union has in place a [Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), with the current iteration covering the period 2021-2030, which aims to address the diverse challenges faced by persons with disabilities and to advance the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) at both Union and national levels. A notable achievement under this strategy is the European Disability Card. However, gaps remain in ensuring comprehensive accessibility within higher education, as students with disabilities, including neurodivergent individuals, continue to face systemic barriers such as inadequate support services, inaccessible learning environments and a lack of institutional awareness. The strategy's commitment to strengthening accessibility, fostering independent living and combating discrimination is essential in addressing these challenges.

iii. Anti-discrimination Law

EU anti-discrimination laws prohibit discrimination based on disability, aiming to ensure equal opportunities in various areas, including education. Despite the existence of different policies on the matter, EU law still lacks a comprehensive and targeted approach. In June 2024, the Belgian Council Presidency put forward a compromise proposal for a new Council directive on equal treatment, which was supported by a majority of Member States after having been blocked in the Council for 16 years. However, particularly worrying is the recent decision of the European Commission to withdraw the proposed horizontal anti-discrimination directive from its 2025 Work

Programme. It was in fact expected to fill a significant legislative gap and generate benefits for society as a whole by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the EU's anti-discrimination framework beyond the workplace and promoting more harmonised living standards and free movement.

3. Issues Faced by Disabled Students in Higher Education

To ensure that higher education reflects the diversity of society, the action required entails more than widening accessibility clauses, but rather to steer away from the one-size-fits-all approach and to put emphasis on systems that are able to offer tailored individual support, in an intersectional way, to foster a diverse student population, moving from a paradigm of 'lack of barriers' to one of 'guaranteeing opportunities'. In this chapter we will highlight the main areas that need to be addressed to create a more inclusive environment in higher education.

a. Access to Education

Despite the progressive introduction of social dimension policies that support the access to higher education of disabled students, still many issues remain unaddressed and many students are excluded from higher education on the basis of disability. At the EU 27 level in 2022, about 22.2% of young persons with disabilities aged 18-24 were early school leavers in comparison with 8.4% of young persons without disabilities ([Grammenos S., 2024](#)). This happens for many reasons, including but not limited to health interruptions due to interventions or mental health issues, an education system which is not catered to disabled students' needs or the special schools in some countries which are not always providing a sufficient educational level to be able to continue in higher education. ESU strongly believes early-stage interventions are a key mechanism to achieve the goal of widening access and participation in Higher Education. From an early age on, both direct and implicit barriers to enable the access to Higher Education must be removed, along with cultural and social barriers restricting access and choice for students.

In many cases, another barrier is posed by the admission systems, which should not solely be based on grade average, entrance exams, motivation letters and standardised testing, which can be a real burden for students with disabilities. Higher education institutions should put in place more diverse methods of admissions that cater for people from diverse educational backgrounds. The early-stage interventions and inclusive admission procedures should be coupled with other measures on entry, such as guidance programmes, academic goal setting, tutoring, first year transition programs, learning communities, orientation and re-orientation processes, and other such mechanisms.

b. Access to Mobility

Access to international mobility remains deeply unequal for students with disabilities, revealing the persistence of structural and systemic barriers within European mobility programmes. Despite the long-standing objective of making learning mobility inclusive, the numbers remain strikingly low: according to the [European Commission report of 2016](#), only between 0,11% and 0,15% of mobile students received a supplementary grant to cover access needs. These figures point not to a lack of interest among students with disabilities, but to the presence of substantial, unresolved obstacles that effectively exclude them from equal participation.

The current objectives of both the EU and the EHEA are to increase student mobility in the following years. With an aim of [20%/23%](#) of mobile students coming from fewer opportunities, it's important to tackle this issue, as well as to keep collecting data on the inclusivity of learning mobility, specifically for disabled students.

A key challenge in access to mobility is also the lack of an agreed-upon definition of what is considered to be a disadvantaged background for mobile students. Research [looking into access to the Erasmus+ programme](#) found that for partner countries the lack of a programme-wide definition of disadvantage causes a fragmented approach to access, therefore leading to inequity ([Bunescu, Davies, Gaebel, 2020](#)). Moreover, in some countries, students who go abroad for longer periods may risk losing access to national disability support systems, such as social or financial benefits. This is an unacceptable trade-off that undermines their right to participate on equal terms and must be addressed to ensure equal access to learning mobility.

To dismantle these barriers, action also must go beyond data collection and awareness-raising. While continuing to track the inclusivity of learning mobility, higher education institutions, national authorities, and the EU must also actively promote participation among students with disabilities. This can be done by securing continuity of support systems, raising awareness about available rights and resources, and guaranteeing sufficient additional financial support. True equality in mobility will only be achieved when students with disabilities can engage in cross-border learning just as freely, fully, and fairly as their peers.

c. Monitoring

Continuous and thorough monitoring is required for ensuring the rights and inclusion of disabled students in higher education. More data collection mechanisms are needed for assessment of policy compliance, evaluation of implemented measures at all levels and identification of areas that require improvement. Without a coherent monitoring approach, systemic barriers that hinder full participation and equal opportunities for disabled students will still exist.

A correct tracking of the enrollment and completion rates of students with disabilities helps provide relevant insights about the effectiveness of inclusion policies and whether additional support measures are needed for reducing dropout rates and improving academic success. Accessibility must also be evaluated, including the existing physical infrastructure, digital platforms, campus accessibility and relevant accommodations such as assistive technologies and alternative exam formats. Mobility programs including Erasmus+ should also be monitored, in order to ensure disabled students can participate without additional barriers. Moreover, employment outcomes should be tracked to assess post-graduation opportunities and the chances of getting employed in one's field of study.

d. Infrastructure

A core problem is the lack of fully accessible physical environments, including buildings, lecture halls, libraries and other facilities, which can restrict mobility and participation. When the physical environments are accessible, the existence of a path without

architectural barriers to exit every facility in case of an emergency should always be taken into consideration. Similarly, digital infrastructure, such as virtual learning environments, websites and online resources, often presents barriers due to a failure to adhere to accessibility standards, impacting students with visual, auditory, cognitive and motor impairments, as well as students with cognitive learning disabilities and neurodivergent students.

When effectively implemented, universal design can reduce barriers and minimize the need for individual accommodations. However, inconsistent application means that many students still encounter obstacles. As a result, individual adaptations are often necessary, though the process of requesting and securing them can be burdensome, time consuming, and may require students to repeatedly validate their needs. Beyond academic buildings, accessible and suitable student housing remains a significant challenge, with a potential lack of available or affordable options that meet specific accessibility requirements. Lastly, transport infrastructure, both to and within campus, can be inadequate for students with mobility impairments, language, or learning difficulties, further hindering their ability to engage fully in their studies and student life.

e. Participation

Disabled students still face many barriers that hinder their participation in decision-making processes within academia. This leads to a lack of diversity in representative bodies, particularly among marginalised and underrepresented groups. Addressing these issues is key to fostering a more inclusive academic environment.

When institutional standards are not designed by putting inclusivity at their core, disabled students experience exclusion or isolation. To foster their meaningful involvement and participation, new and more inclusive practices in decision-making should be pursued. Depending on the specific needs of disabled students, appropriate measures should be taken to ensure that they can effectively participate in meetings and feel confident about expressing their opinions and sharing their ideas. This entails that the shared documents should be accessible to all the components of the decision-making body, allowing full transparency and equal information, and that the location, timing and moderation of the meeting allow everyone's participation without barriers. These responsibilities are shared among student unions and higher education

governance, since both can actively contribute to an environment that allows everyone to participate equally in decision-making.

f. Employment

Even if access to meaningful employment is one of the key aspects of a qualitative higher education, students and graduates with disabilities keep facing systemic barriers in securing employment. Higher education institutions, together with policy makers and employers must take immediate action for removing the existing obstacles and creating equal opportunities for all.

Higher education institutions should provide accessible career guidance, internship opportunities and dedicated support. All stakeholders should commit to advocating for disability-inclusive recruitment and for work-based learning opportunities, accessible to all students and graduates. Employers should adopt inclusive hiring practices, and foster a workplace culture that supports young people with disabilities. The persistent stigma and bias around the idea of disability in the labor market must be addressed through awareness campaigns and mandatory disability inclusion training, both for the academic communities and for the other employees. Policy makers should strengthen monitoring mechanisms and funding incentives, such as subsidies, tax benefits, and funding support, in order to ensure that employment policies are effectively implemented and enforced.

g. Access to healthcare

A primary challenge is the lack of appropriate and accessible healthcare services that students with disabilities are entitled to under their right to equal treatment and non-discrimination. This can manifest as a failure to provide health services specifically needed due to their disabilities, including early identification, guidance, intervention and services designed to minimise progression and complications. Furthermore, discriminatory practices can persist, such as misdiagnoses or the denial of healthcare or health services, based solely on their disability. International students with disabilities may face additional barriers related to accessing the healthcare system in their host country and forcibly displaced students with disabilities often experience legal,

linguistic, administrative and language barriers that impede their access to quality healthcare. Moreover, historical systematic discrimination further disadvantages intersecting groups of students and their access to healthcare.

h. Support Services

Access to support services is of the utmost importance and it is fundamental that when they are designed for students they take into account what is needed for students with disability to be fully accessible. Student support services cover a large aspect of student life, like housing, scholarships, academic support and counselling, psychological support, sign language provision, or orientation and mobility for partially blind students, etc.

Some HEIs offer these support services themselves, some are offering them through student volunteers, and some others are outsourcing this role to external service providers, creating a problem of a lack of a harmonised approach in their provision. While some students may get enough support already from a person accompanying them, others need specialised professional help and therefore, the lack of harmonisation often results in some students not receiving the support they need.

i. Student-centred Learning

By changing rigid teaching methods to adaptive and flexible learning approaches, HEIs can create a more inclusive environment for students with disabilities.

HEIs should implement flexible curricula that allow students to engage with learning materials in different ways, such as offering multiple formats for course content (audio, text, video, braille, easy-to-read versions) and ensuring accessibility in all digital learning environments. Moreover, it is important to provide dedicated facilities, specific equipment and adaptive assessment methods, such as oral exams, extended assessment time and deadlines or open-book tests. Students should have the right to request accommodations that best suit their learning style and specific needs. HEIs must ensure that academic staff receive dedicated training on accessibility requirements, inclusive pedagogy and assistive technologies, in order for them to develop accessible course materials and adapt their teaching and assessment

methods. Additionally, implementing collaborative learning environments, where peer support networks and mentoring programs are encouraged, can be of support to students with disabilities.

j. Digitalisation

Especially in recent years, digital tools and AI have proven to be effective instruments in promoting a more inclusive environment for disabled students in higher education. From simple digital resources or recordings available online, which allow students to engage with course materials at their own pace, to the development of interactive learning materials, the use of speech recognition software and personalised teaching aids, digitalisation can hugely impact disabled students' learning experiences. However, reports show that persons with disabilities are often left behind in the digital divide and more discriminated against by proctoring tools, and if these issues are not timely addressed while HEIs move their first steps towards digitalisation, they may become other barriers for disabled students.

AI tools can provide solutions for people with different learning styles and abilities, but it is important to always supervise their careful implementation and testing to ensure that systems are optimally designed and do not limit human rights or discriminate against minorities. Personalisation of these instruments to tailor them according to the specific needs of the students should be pursued, never forgetting that these should not be the only support tools, but many efforts should still be put into social interactions.

k. Student life

Going beyond the aspects strictly related to the HEI environment, life outside of the classroom also plays a crucial role in shaping the overall HE experience. Disabled students often face limitations to their full participation in extracurricular activities, social events, and cultural life. HEIs, collaborating with students' unions, have an important responsibility in ensuring that campus spaces, sports facilities and recreational activities are fully accessible.

The accessibility of the city where students study also significantly impacts the quality of life. Public transportation, cultural institutions, and social spaces must be designed to accommodate and foster inclusion and participation of all individuals. HEIs should actively collaborate with local authorities and the student unions to promote urban accessibility, in order to guarantee that disabled students are not excluded from cultural and social experiences.

Finally, it is also essential to address the issue of ableism and the stigma it creates. Ableism refers to policies, behaviours, rules, etc. that result in unfair or harmful treatment of disabled people. To counter this form of discrimination, it must be addressed in all its forms and instances, starting from the language and words used, which reflect and shape how we understand the world and construct social identities. Academia has the responsibility to foster an inclusive and informed dialogue about disability, in order to contribute to raising awareness among the broader society. This can be done, for example, through a further inclusion of disabled people's voices in the discussion, as well as with the offering of tailored training to the academic community. Furthermore, stigma towards disabled people often manifests through assumptions about their competence; these biases must be challenged by centring disabled voices and lived experiences in academic spaces.

4. Recommendations

EU policy:

- The European Union should establish a European Agency for Accessibility, in order to improve how EU policies on accessibility are designed and how national governments effectively apply the European Accessibility Act, ensuring that a special focus is put also on disabled students in higher education.
- The European Commission should ensure a special stream of funds for accessibility in the new European Plan on Affordable Housing, which should tackle especially also the needs of disabled students, both to renovate existing facilities, or to integrate accessible architectural design into the building of new housing.
- Council conclusions on the implementation of the EU Disability Rights Strategy should be adopted, calling on the Commission to commit to and devise new

flagship initiatives and actions, especially to foster disabled students access and participation in HE, for the second half of the Strategy until 2030, as well as strict implementation of those from the first half (such as the EU Disability Card).

- It should be ensured that the European Disability card is recognised by higher education institutions and places of study.
- The portability of social security-related benefits for students beyond the European Disability card should be ensured.
- The EU should ensure that the proposal for a revised Regulation on Erasmus+ and Solidarity Corps for the 2028-2034 funding period is disability inclusive.
- A disability component should be added to the Union of Skills' objective to increase access to Higher Education.
- A clear definition of what inclusion means and what it emphasises should be ensured, as member states have different definitions and some of them are exclusive of certain groups.
- The European Commission must resume its work on the new anti-discrimination directive.

Access to education:

- Public authorities should ensure the implementation of early-stage interventions, in order to remove structural, social, and cultural barriers to higher education from an early age.
- Public authorities should implement national level social dimension strategies based on the PAGs.
- HEIs should adopt more inclusive and diverse methods for admission procedures, which can recognise the potential of students from varied backgrounds.
- Public authorities and HEIs should implement more comprehensive support mechanisms such as guidance programmes, tutoring, first year transition programs, learning communities, orientation and re-orientation processes, to facilitate entry into higher education.
- HEIs must actively monitor and improve accessibility policies, and co-develop inclusion strategies with disabled students.
- Institutional websites should be accessible for all and allow for transparent communication of the available support services.
- Relevant education stakeholders, including national government and HEIs, should develop rights- based guidelines for admitting students with disabilities

to study fields with strict health or functional requirements (e.g. medicine, aviation, maritime studies). These guidelines must ensure non-discrimination, allow for reasonable accommodations, and guarantee fair, transparent, and inclusive admissions.

Access to mobility:

- The financial support for students with a disability when going on mobility should be increased to compensate for the increased cost of living and reduce the bureaucracy to access the extra grants.
- Existing initiatives like the European Disability Card should be used to recognise the specific needs of students when going on mobility and reducing bureaucracy.
- Better data collection on the satisfaction of mobile students should be implemented in order to monitor and improve access to mobility.
- To ensure and accurately monitor the inclusion of mobility programmes, the disability movement should always be included when shaping and monitoring mobility programmes.
- The access to information when it comes to mobility should be increased, especially on topics such as extra grants, the accessibility of a HEI, etc.
- Structural and financial support for the [Inclusivemobility.eu](https://www.inclusivemobility.eu) platform should be provided, so that it can continue to offer accurate and up-to-date information for students with disabilities going on mobility.

Monitoring:

- Standardised methods for gathering data on disabled students should be established, including enrollment, completion rates, and support needs, at HEI level, national and European level.
- To ensure continuity in academic support, a system for automatic and secure transfer of accessibility-related records from secondary to higher education should be implemented. With the consent of the student, this mechanism should facilitate the timely provision of necessary accommodations without the need to repeatedly disclose or prove one's condition.
- Dropout rates and academic performance should be analysed to identify gaps in support and improve retention.

- HEIs should publish reports on their inclusion efforts and accessibility improvements and collect feedback from students with disabilities regarding accessibility, academic progress and employment outcomes.

Infrastructure:

- HEIs should adopt and implement comprehensive accessibility standards.
- HEIs must ensure that all digital infrastructure, including websites, virtual learning environments, online resources, and digital tools, fully complies with recognised accessibility standards.
- The principles of universal design should be proactively integrated into the planning, design, and development of all physical and digital infrastructure within HEIs.
- HEIs should ensure that quality student housing options are accessible and affordable and cater to the diverse needs of students with disabilities. Renovations for student housing are essential where facilities do not meet accessibility requirements, however, such improvements should not result in higher housing costs for students.
- Training on accessibility and universal design principles should be mandatory for all staff.
- HEIs should regularly audit their infrastructure, both physical and digital, for accessibility and usability.
- HEIs must collaborate with local and national authorities to guarantee accessible and reliable transport options on and to campus that enable all students to engage fully and independently in their studies and student life.

Participation:

- Decision-making processes and bodies should be revised and based on the principle of inclusivity.
- It should be ensured that shared documents should be accessible to all the components of decision-making bodies.
- Location, timing and moderation of the meetings should allow everyone's participation.
- An inclusive environment that allows everybody to share their vision and ideas should always be pursued.

Employment:

- HEIs should provide tailored career counselling, job placement support and networking opportunities for students with disabilities, also by creating accessible internships and job shadowing programs that accommodate diverse needs.
- Employers should provide reasonable accommodations, mentorship programs and support networks for young professionals and recent graduates with disabilities.
- Awareness campaigns and mandatory disability inclusion training should be implemented in both academic and professional settings.
- Policymakers must enhance compliance mechanisms, data tracking, and funding incentives to ensure employment policies are effectively implemented.

Access to healthcare:

- HEIs and national governments must ensure that students with disabilities have equitable access to the same range, quality and standard of free or affordable healthcare services.
- HEIs and healthcare providers should proactively provide health services specifically needed by students with disabilities due to their impairments.
- Comprehensive and accessible mental health support services must be readily available and free of charge to all students with disabilities who require them. These services should be catered for the specific accessibility requirements of students with disabilities and the therapists should be trained in disability to understand students' reality.
- While cross-border recognition of medical prescriptions is legally permitted, practical barriers and regulations often hinder access to essential medication during long-term mobility periods. Therefore, disabled mobility students must have guaranteed access to their prescribed medication and should be allowed cross-border portability of medical prescriptions and regulated transport of essential medication, supported by clearer implementation mechanisms to ensure uninterrupted care and support during exchanges.
- The specific healthcare needs of international students with disabilities must be addressed.
- Barriers faced by forcibly displaced students with disabilities in accessing healthcare must be actively removed.

Support Services:

- HEIs should ensure that students with disabilities have access to the support services they need via their internal mechanisms or in cooperation with specialised service providers.
- Special scholarships to cover the additional costs of studies for students with disabilities should be put in place;
- The student's right to have their physical and/or mental disabilities taken into account and to receive all necessary support when attending classes or being assessed should be ensured.
- HEIs should provide high-quality study guidance which is person-centred and adapted for specific needs.
- Dedicated government funding should be allocated to each HEI specifically for developing measures to integrate students with disabilities.
- Each HEI should establish dedicated support services aimed at facilitating the integration and inclusion of students.
- HEIs should establish confidential and accessible mechanisms for disabled students to report cases of misconduct or abuse they may face. These reporting channels must guarantee student safety as well as include anti-retaliation policies, whilst ensuring proper follow-up procedures and institutional accountability.

Student-centred learning:

- HEIs should offer course materials in multiple formats and provide adaptive assessment methods like oral exams, extended deadlines, and open-book tests.
- HEIs should provide mandatory training on inclusive pedagogy, accessibility requirements, and assistive technologies to support accessible teaching.
- Collaborative learning environments with peer support networks and mentoring programs for students with disabilities should be created.

Digitalisation:

- HEIs should provide training on digital accessibility and inclusive teaching practices, and integrate universal design principles in the used digital learning platforms.
- Digital tools and policies should be developed in collaboration with disabled students, and they should have adequate instruments to report accessibility issues and receive resolutions.

- Public authorities should allocate funding to ensure that all students have access to the necessary digital tools, including assistive technologies, without financial or logistical barriers.
- HEIs must ensure the digital tools in use respect students' privacy, avoid algorithmic bias, and do not lead to exclusionary practices.
- All HEIs, national and European agencies and institutions should have an accessibility widget for their website.
- Governments and HEIs should establish clear policies and accountability frameworks to regularly assess and improve the accessibility of digital education.

Student life:

- HEIs should ensure that campus spaces, sports facilities and recreational activities are fully accessible.
- HEIs should closely work with local authorities, student unions and cultural organisations to make sure all students can freely and equally have access to museums, theaters, festivals, and other cultural events.
- HEIs should engage in discussions with local authorities to implement accessible and inclusive public transport, student accommodations, and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure.
- Tailored training should be offered to the academic community to avoid the persistence of discriminatory behaviours and practices.

5. Reference Documents

- [Policy Paper on Social Dimension](#)
- [Statement on the discrimination of neurodivergent students](#)
- [Student Rights Charter](#)
- [Internationalisation and Mobility Policy Paper](#)
- [Policy Paper on Quality of Higher Education](#)
- [Fundamental Values and Solidarity Policy Paper](#)
- [Statement on Artificial Intelligence](#)
- [Statement on Digitalisation](#)