

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

of 5 May 2003

on equal opportunities for pupils and students with disabilities in education and training

(2003/C 134/04)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1. STRESSING that in the European Union a significant number of people with disabilities face difficulties of different kinds in their daily life;
2. NOTING that the Treaty establishing the European Community gives the Community the opportunity to take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity;
3. RECALLING the Council Decision of 3 December 2001 on the European Year of People with Disabilities 2003 ⁽¹⁾;
4. RECALLING also

— the Resolution of the Council and the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council of 31 May 1990 concerning integration of children and young people with disabilities in ordinary systems of education ⁽²⁾,

— the Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council of 20 December 1996 on equality of opportunity for people with disabilities ⁽³⁾,

— the communication from the European Commission in 2000 — 'Towards a barrier-free Europe for people with disabilities' ⁽⁴⁾,

— the European Parliament Resolution of 4 April 2001 on the Communication from the Commission 'Towards a barrier-free Europe for People with disabilities' ⁽⁵⁾,

— the Detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of Education and training systems in Europe and in particular objective 2.3 on supporting active citizenship and social cohesion ⁽⁶⁾,

— the Council Resolution of 6 February 2003 'Accessibility — improving the access of people with disabilities to the knowledge based society' ⁽⁷⁾;

5. NOTING that the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20 December 1993, specifically refers in its rule 6 that 'States recognise the principle of equal primary, secondary and tertiary educational opportunities for children, youth and adults with disabilities, in integrated settings' and that 'special attention should be given in the areas of very young and pre-school children, and adults with disabilities, particularly women.';
6. NOTING the increased involvement of Governments, support groups, teachers and parents groups, and in particular organisations of persons with disabilities and their families in seeking to improve access to education for those with special needs;
7. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the initiatives in Member States and at Community level to ensure that people with disabilities have better access to education and training in a life long learning perspective;
8. NOTING, however, the need for further, appropriate practicable measures to improve access of persons with disabilities to education and training.

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION, WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE COMPETENCIES, TO:

- (i) encourage and support the full integration of children and young people with special needs in society through their appropriate education and training, and their insertion in a school system which is [...] adapted to their needs;
- (ii) pursue efforts to make lifelong learning more accessible to people with disabilities and, within this context, give particular attention to the use of new multimedia technologies and the Internet to improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and services as well as remote exchanges and collaboration (e-learning);

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 335, 19.12.2001.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 162, 3.7.1990.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 12, 13.1.1997.

⁽⁴⁾ Doc. 8557/00, COM(2000) 284 final.

⁽⁵⁾ Doc. A-0084/2001.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ C 142, 14.6.2002.

⁽⁷⁾ OJ C 39, 18.2.2003.

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- (iii) encourage the accessibility of all public websites covering guidance, education and vocational training [...] to persons with disabilities by respecting the web accessibility guidelines;
 - (iv) increase, where appropriate, adequate support of services and technical assistance to pupils and students with special education and training needs;
 - (v) facilitate further proper information and guidance in order to allow disabled people themselves or, if necessary, their parents or other responsible persons involved in choosing the appropriate type of education;
 - (vi) continue and, if necessary, increase the efforts aiming at the initial and in-service training of teachers in the area of special needs, with a view, in particular, to the provision of appropriate pedagogical techniques and materials;
 - (vii) promote European cooperation between the relevant actors professionally involved in the education and training of children and young people with disabilities, in order to improve the integration of pupils and students with special needs in ordinary or specialised establishments;
 - (viii) enhance sharing information and experiences on these matters at European level, involving, as appropriate, the European organisations and networks with relevant experience in this field such as the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education;
 - (ix) provide, where appropriate, facilities, training opportunities and resources regarding the transition from school to employment.
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