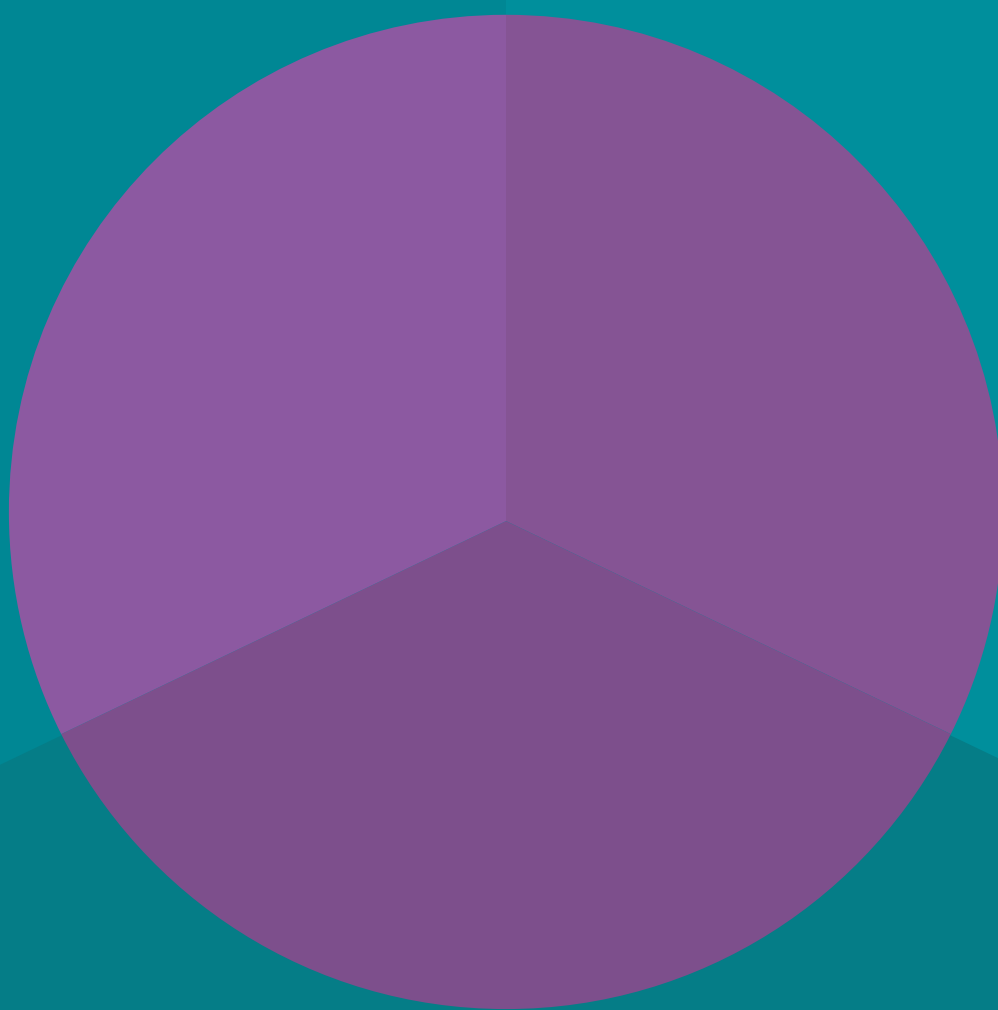


# FREEDOM TO LIVE



**GOVERNMENT OF MALTA**  
MINISTRY FOR INCLUSION  
AND SOCIAL WELLBEING

Malta's 2021 – 2030 National Strategy  
on the Rights of Disabled Persons

**Consultation Document**

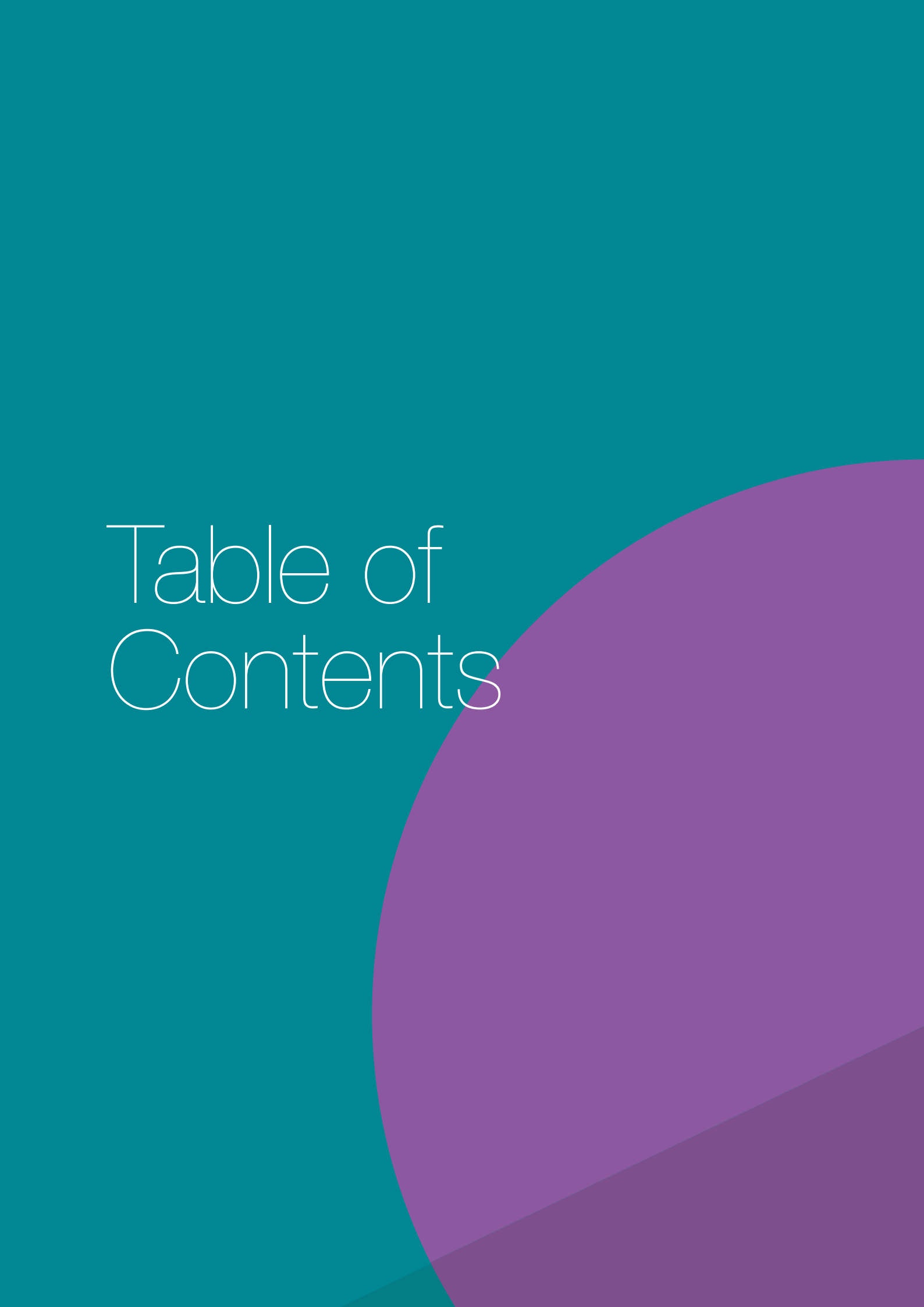


# **FREEDOM TO LIVE**

Malta's 2021 – 2030 National Strategy  
on the Rights of Disabled Persons

**Consultation Document**

# Table of Contents

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Glossary	5
General Introduction	8
Strategy Action Plan	12
Implementation of the Strategy	22
Monitoring of the Strategy	24
<b>Objective 1:</b> Reforms and Equality	26
<b>Objective 2:</b> Research and Data Collection	30
<b>Objective 3:</b> Disability Awareness Raising	34
<b>Objective 4:</b> Accessibility	38
<b>Objective 5:</b> Participation in Culture, Leisure and Recreation	46
<b>Objective 6:</b> Relationships, Family, Sexuality and Parenthood	52
<b>Objective 7:</b> Informal, Formal and Non-Formal Education	58
<b>Objective 8:</b> Healthcare	66
<b>Objective 9:</b> Work and Employment	70
<b>Objective 10:</b> Living Independently and in the Community and De-institutionalisation	78
<b>Objective 11:</b> Participation in Political and Public Life	84
<b>Objective 12:</b> Disaster Risk Management and Reduction	89
<b>Objective 13:</b> Regional and International Efforts	92

# Glossary

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ACM	Arts Council Malta
CPD	Civil Protection Department
CRPD	Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability
DDI	Directorate for Disability Issues
DDS	Department of Disability Studies, University of Malta
DSS	Department of Social Security
DET	Disability Equality Training
ECDL	European Computer Driving Licence
FHEA	Further and Higher Education Authority
FITA	Foundation for ICT Accessibility
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IEP	Individualised Education Plan
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
KLSM	Sign Language Council of Malta
LESA	Local Enforcement Systems Agency
LSE	Learning Support Educator
LSF	Lino Spiteri Foundation
LSM	Maltese Sign Language
MCAST	Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology
MTA	Malta Tourism Authority
NSO	National Statistics Office
OHSA	Occupational Health and Safety Authority
PA	Personal Assistant

SCSA Social Care Standards Authority

TM Transport Malta

UNCRPD United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

UN ESCWA UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

WCAG Web Content Accessibility Guidelines





# General Introduction

The key aim of this Strategy is to provide a roadmap for the Maltese disability sector over the next years, leading up to 2030, the target year for achievement of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

The key aim of this Strategy is to provide a roadmap for the Maltese disability sector over the next years, leading up to 2030, the target year for achievement of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. In 2015, Malta also signed up to a commitment to implement these goals, and every Objective in this Strategy makes reference to said Goals, alongside different Articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

Following on from the 2014 National Policy on the Rights of Persons with Disability, this Strategy covers all of the fields addressed by that Policy, and subscribes to the same cross-cutting ethos, that all disabled persons, no matter who they are or what their background is, should be treated equally. It also factors in major developments in disability rights, happening both locally and internationally, since the release of the Policy.

While consultations concerning this Strategy commenced in 2015, that year also saw the adoption of Agenda 2030, outlining the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, and of its Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, also referenced in this document following Malta's adherence to it. Furthermore, the approach towards issues such as Independent and Community Living has been subject to further clarifications over the years, and this Strategy factors in

said clarifications, such as those obtained through the General Comments issued by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, when building upon the initial precepts laid down in the 2014 Policy.

One important element to highlight – although mentioned again in certain specific Actions within this Strategy – is the Convention's underpinning principle of 'Nothing About Us, Without Us'. No action, no matter how large or small, can be performed appropriately, or could have any legitimacy, if it is not designed by and for disabled persons, and with them at the very core of the steps resulting from such work.

This should be done in a two-fold manner – ensuring representation of disabled persons at all levels of policy and decision-making, and; ensuring the setting up and proper functioning of a civil society participation mechanism, EMPOWER, in line with Article 4(3) of the Convention, and General Comment No. 7 thereto issued by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and provided for in the UNCRPD Act.

Such mechanism would also factor in participation by allies, such as equality bodies, academics and supporters of disabled persons – however, the ownership and input of disabled persons in shaping their future and taking control of their Freedom to Live, would remain paramount above all else.



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# Strategy Action Plan

All Actions in this Strategy are colour-coded depending on the timeframes in which they are to be achieved, as follows:

**Pink:** To be achieved within the next 2 years

**Orange:** To be achieved within the next 5 years

**Green:** To be achieved within the next 9 years

OBJECTIVE 1 REFORMS AND EQUALITY	ACTION TO BE COMPLETED
<b>Action 1:</b> Development and Reform of Base Legislation and Structures	Within 2 years
<b>Action 2:</b> Further efforts by Working Group to Scrutinize Legislation and other key Documentation	Within 2 years
<b>Action 3:</b> Disability Assessment and Programme Eligibility Reform	Within 9 years
OBJECTIVE 2 RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION	ACTION TO BE COMPLETED
<b>Action 1:</b> Collaboration on research on innovative assistive technologies for disabled persons	Within 5 years
<b>Action 2:</b> Establishment of MoU between the Disability Rights Ministry and DDS	Within 2 years
<b>Action 3:</b> Public Dissemination of Specific Research	Within 5 years
<b>Action 4:</b> Aligning Data Collection with Best Practices	Within 2 years

**OBJECTIVE 3**  
**DISABILITY AWARENESS-RAISING**

**ACTION TO BE COMPLETED**

**Action 1:** Awareness on how to use legislation in cases of disability discrimination

Within 2 years

**Action 2:** Training on disability awareness for service providers in the public and private sectors

Within 5 years

**Action 3:** Provision of Basic Sign Language instruction to key personnel and students

Within 5 years

**OBJECTIVE 4**  
**ACCESSIBILITY**

**ACTION TO BE COMPLETED**

**Action 1:** Accessibility of Road and Transport Infrastructure

FWithin 9 years

**Action 2:** Accessibility of Public Transport and Taxi services

Within 9 years

**Action 3:** Accessibility of Beaches and Tourism

Within 5 years

**Action 4:** Accessible Information Policy

Within 5 years

**Action 5:** Better Access to Books and other Material in Accessible Formats at Educational Institutions

Within 5 years

**Action 6:** Ensuring Accessibility of Buildings and Services

Within 9 years



<b>Action 7:</b> Guidelines on Presentation of Information in various Accessible Formats	Within 5 years
<b>Action 8:</b> Accessibility Assessment and Implementation Reports by State Entities	Within 5 years
<b>Action 9:</b> New Disability Logo	Within 2 years
<b>Action 10:</b> Access to Justice	Within 5 years

**OBJECTIVE 5**  
PARTICIPATION IN CULTURE,  
LEISURE AND RECREATION

**ACTION TO BE COMPLETED**

<b>Action 1:</b> Making Cultural and Leisure Venues, and their Products, Accessible for All	Within 9 years
<b>Action 2:</b> Making Public Events Accessible for All	Within 9 years
<b>Action 3:</b> Incentives for promoting Cultural Accessibility	Within 5 years
<b>Action 4:</b> Representation of Disabled Persons in the Media	Within 2 years
<b>Action 5:</b> Sign Language and Closed Captioning in all Television Programmes and Adverts	Within 5 years
<b>Action 6:</b> Making local traditional events and Sports Inclusive and Accessible	Within 5 years

**OBJECTIVE 6**  
RELATIONSHIPS, FAMILY,  
SEXUALITY, AND PARENTHOOD

**ACTION TO BE  
COMPLETED**

**Action 1:** Comprehensive Sexual Education

Within 5 years

**Action 2:** Inclusive Sexual Health Policy and Strategy

Within 9 years

**Action 3:** Creation of a Family Unit at Agenzija Sapport

Within 9 years

**Action 4:** Inclusive Marriage Preparation Courses

Within 2 years

**Action 5:** Guidelines on the Right to Parenthood and Supported Parenthood

Within 5 years

**Action 6:** Media Campaign and Events for Key Professionals

Within 2 years

**OBJECTIVE 7**  
INFORMAL, FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

**ACTION TO BE  
COMPLETED**

**Action 1:** Legally Binding IEPs for all Students

Within 2 years

**Action 2:** Transition Programmes

Within 5 years

**Action 3:** Preparation of Accessibility Studies by Educational Establishments

Within 9 years

**Action 4:** Support for Training for Disabled Persons on the use of Digital Technology

Within 5 years

**Action 5:** Collaboration with FHEA on matters concerning Social Inclusion in Education

Within 5 years

**Action 6:** Warranting of suitably-qualified and experienced LSEs

Within 9 years

**Action 7:** Specific Initiatives

Within 5 years

**Action 8:** Setting up of a working group on Inclusion and Education

Within 2 years

## OBJECTIVE 8 HEALTHCARE

## ACTION TO BE COMPLETED

**Action 1:** Revision of Code of Ethics for practising medical professionals

Within 9 years

**Action 2:** Specialized Training to Medical Professionals on 'Breaking the News'

Within 2 years

**Action 3:** Better Disability sensitisation in Medical Boards

Within 5 years

**Action 4:** Reporting on matters related to access to health by disabled persons

Within 9 years

<b>OBJECTIVE 9</b> <b>WORK AND EMPLOYMENT</b>	<b>ACTION TO BE COMPLETED</b>
<b>Action 1:</b> Specific DETs and Information targeting All Employers	Within 2 years
<b>Action 2:</b> Pre-Employment, Employment and Job Retention Strategy	Within 5 years
<b>Action 3:</b> Work-Related Supports and Adjustments	Within 5 years
<b>Action 4:</b> Promoting Social Enterprise Incentives	Within 9 years
<b>Action 5:</b> Improved Career Guidance Services	Within 5 years
<b>Action 6:</b> Outreach and Detached Youth Work	Within 5 years
<b>Action 7:</b> Media Campaign and Inclusive Employer Certification	Within 2 years
<b>OBJECTIVE 10</b> <b>LIVING INDEPENDENTLY AND IN THE COMMUNITY, AND DE-INSTITUTIONALISATION</b>	<b>ACTION TO BE COMPLETED</b>
<b>Action 1:</b> Addressing Gaps in Mainstream Services in the Community	Within 5 years
<b>Action 2:</b> Strengthening of Schemes related to Personal Assistance	Within 5 years
<b>Action 3:</b> Setting up of a Train-the-Practitioner Unit	Within 9 years

**Action 4:** Better Co-ordination among Service Providers

Within 2 years

**Action 5:** De-Institutionalisation

Within 9 years

## OBJECTIVE 11 PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL AND PUBLIC LIFE

ACTION TO BE  
COMPLETED

**Action 1:** Discussion with stakeholders on the implementation of inclusive voting mechanisms

Within 9 years

**Action 2:** Supporting disabled candidates in local, national, and EU-level elections

Within 5 years

**Action 3:** Enhancing accessibility in Parliament

Within 5 years

## OBJECTIVE 12 DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT AND REDUCTION

ACTION TO BE  
COMPLETED

**Action 1:** Converting the COVID-19 Disability Task Force into a Standing Committee

Within 2 years

**Action 2:** General Emergency Plan

Within 2 years

**OBJECTIVE 13**  
REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL  
EFFORTS

ACTION TO BE  
COMPLETED

**Action 1:** Valletta Forum on EU-Arab  
Cooperation concerning Disability Rights

Within 5 years

**Action 2:** Cooperation and Exchange of  
Best Practices through Existing Fora

Within 2 years





# Implementation of the Strategy



Implementation of this Strategy would be congruent on the operation of the National Coordination Mechanism within the Directorate for Disability Issues (DDI).

Set up further to Article 33(1) of the UNCRPD, and also provided for in the UNCRPD Act, this consists of an Inter-Departmental Coordination Committee (IDCC), bringing together representatives of different Government authorities, agencies and entities whose work links directly or tangentially to the disability sector, and an Inter-Ministerial Administrative Committee on Disability (IACD), bringing together representatives of different line Ministries.

Meetings of these bodies bring together all stakeholders in a plenary formation, or else particular stakeholders further to a specific theme, and will also both flesh out and execute an implementation plan covering the different Objectives of this Strategy.

# Monitoring of the Strategy

Monitoring of the Strategy's implementation will be within the remit of the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD), designated as Malta's independent monitoring mechanism in terms of Article 33(2) of the UNCRPD, and by the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act.

CRPD's competences will be strengthened through the amendments being introduced to said Act, in line with this Strategy.

More specifically, this will happen through its Directorate for Investigations, Compliance and Enforcement, housing its Investigations, Compliance and Enforcement Units, further to monitoring carried out by CRPD's UNCRPD Monitoring Unit.

# OBJECTIVE 1

## OBJECTIVE 1 REFORMS AND EQUALITY

### UN CRPD Article

**4(3)** Active Involvement and Consultation of Disabled Persons in Implementing UNCRPD

**5** Equality & Non-Discrimination

**13** Access to Justice

**28** Adequate Standard of Living and Social Protection

**29** Participation in political and public life

**33** National implementation and monitoring

### SDG Target

**1.3** Appropriate Social Protection Systems and Measures for All, & Achieving Substantial Coverage of the Poor and the Vulnerable

**10.2** Social, Economic & Political Inclusion for All, irrespective of status (including Disability)

**10.3** Ensuring Equal Opportunities & Reducing Inequalities of Outcome

## Background

A key area for disability rights is that of Reforms and Equality. The need for solid base legislation to be enacted or amended as necessary is outlined, as a framework that would back up the implementation of this Strategy.

Relevant structures should be created through this legislation, such as a structured focal point system, and a national coordination mechanism for collaboration on cross-cutting issues between different departments and line Ministries.

In the Convention's spirit of 'Nothing About Us, Without Us', a civil society participation mechanism would complete the framework of relevant entities aiding implementation.

Furthermore, other legislation that touches even tangentially on the disability sector, would be reviewed for compliance with relevant norms, and cleaned up from elements such as unsavoury language.

Representation of disabled persons on State entities would also be prioritised, while current divergent systems of disability assessment and programme eligibility would be reformed into a unified, holistic system based on functional and social, instead of medical criteria, in the interests of simplification, sustainability, and dignity of the disabled persons who have to use these systems.

## Specific Actions

### **ACTION 1:**

#### **Development and Reform of Base Legislation and Structures**

- 1.1 Finalisation of a UNCRPD Act, with the UNCRPD itself being the key point of reference. Any additional content should have the aim of better reflecting the Maltese context, while never diminishing the rights of disabled persons as granted by the aforesaid Convention
- 1.2 Base Legislation should make provision for relevant mechanisms necessary for implementing the UNCRPD in Malta, as well as effective mechanisms for civil society participation, and for monitoring and enforcement of the UNCRPD in Malta, on the basis of which relevant policy and practice could be further created and developed
- 1.3 Base Legislation should also provide for simple and effective redress mechanisms for persons making claims under such legislation, that would complement any existing and future mechanisms available at the time of passage of this legislation
- 1.4 Consultation with stakeholders, particularly through relevant mechanisms within DDI and CRPD
- 1.5 Formal tabling of new base legislation and amendments to existing base legislation before Parliament

**ACTION 2:****Further efforts by Working Group to Scrutinize Legislation and other key Documentation**

- 2.1 CRPD shall continue efforts through its working group, which is going through legislation and other important documentation, to:
- 2.2 Map all legislation and policy documents that make reference to disabled persons and their rights;
- 2.3 Point out clauses that discriminate against disabled persons. This also extends to terminology used when referring to disabled persons in an explicit and/or implied manner;
- 2.4 The working group's findings are to be collected in one or more reports as the working group deems fit, which are to be eventually passed to DDI for discussion and action

**ACTION 3:****Disability Assessment and Programme Eligibility Reform**

- 3.1 DDI will continue discussions with key stakeholders, being DSS, CRPD, Agencija Sapport, the Education Ministry, JobsPlus, the Health Ministry, Office of the Commissioner for Mental Health, and civil society representatives, to ensure that different disability assessment systems operated by different entities are rolled into one holistic system, managed through a unit set up within Agencija Sapport
- 3.2 The reformed system should be operated using functional and social criteria reflecting all aspects of a person's life, to ensure that assessments focus on what support disabled persons require to realise their life plans, instead of strictly medicalised criteria and quantitative outcome methods presently prevalent, since the latter prioritise functional impairments and the opinions of family members and professionals over the wishes and aspirations of disabled persons
- 3.3 Programme eligibility would remain within the remit of different departments, but be discussed among stakeholders, and implemented in congruence with the reform creating a single holistic disability assessment system

# OBJECTIVE 2



## OBJECTIVE 2

### RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION

#### UN CRPD Article

**31** Statistics & Data Collection

#### SDG Target

**17.18** Enhancing Capacity-building Support to Developing Countries, incl. least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS), to Increase Availability of High-Quality, Timely and Reliable Data Disaggregated by ex. Disability

## Background

This Objective emphasises the importance of Research, while providing for efficient, Convention-compliant Data Collection. In the latter instance, observance of best practice criteria such as those developed by the UN's Washington Group on Disability Statistics would be ensured when running exercises such as national censuses and surveys, while service provision needs would be bolstered through the setting up of a National Disability register, that would be linked to the disability assessment reform process mentioned in Objective 1.

Specific research on key areas, that would lead to improvements in the lives of disabled persons, such as in the field of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) technologies, would be given particular attention, while further frameworks would be laid in place, by ensuring conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding between Government and the University of Malta's Disability Studies Department.

The importance of disseminating this research is also recognised, and steps are prescribed in this respect.

## Specific Actions

### **ACTION 1:**

#### **Collaboration on research on innovative assistive technologies for disabled persons**

- 1.1 Discussions are to be undertaken between departments, institutes and faculties related to engineering and ICT at MCAST and the University of Malta, with representation from DDI and CRPD, concerning sharing of data and/or experiences and equipment, regarding designs/prototypes of specialised equipment for persons with a disability, and building on existing best practice initiatives.
- 1.2 As a result of said ongoing discussions, DDI shall put forward to Government suggestions as to new areas of investment with regard to specialised equipment.

### **ACTION 2:**

#### **Establishment of MoU between the Disability Rights Ministry and DDS**

- 2.1 the Disability Rights Ministry and DDS are to enter into discussions, facilitated by DDI, with the aim of identifying research areas that are salient to the lives of disabled persons.
- 2.2 A Memorandum of Understanding shall be entered into between the Disability Rights Ministry and DDS concerning identified research areas, further to these discussions.
- 2.3 DDS shall promote these identified research areas to their students and to academics at the University of Malta.
- 2.4 The salient areas of research are to be kept updated on a year-by-year basis, as to better reflect the prevailing context, and the needs of disabled persons at a particular point in time.

**ACTION 3:****Public Dissemination of Specific Research**

- 3.1 DDS shall develop a system whereby better promotion of research being held in the disability sector is envisaged.
- 3.2 Through its website and other means such as newsletters, various research efforts of public interest should be promoted. This will enhance further interest in this sector from the public.

**ACTION 4:****Aligning Data Collection with Best Practices**

- 4.1 DDI shall engage with NSO and other entities, while consulting CRPD, in order to ensure that the national Census, as well as exercises such as the Labour Force Survey, report disability-related data by using criteria established by the UN Washington Group on Disability Statistics
- 4.2 A single disability database, maintained in line with relevant legal obligations, including requirements related to consent and privacy, would be sourced and regularly maintained, through the input of different stakeholders involved in the disability assessment reform process referenced in Chapter 1, and administered by an appropriate entity, in order to ensure a better overview of the disability sector, and assist in appropriate provisioning of service and support needs.

# OBJECTIVE 3



## OBJECTIVE 3 DISABILITY AWARENESS-RAISING

### UN CRPD Article

**08** Awareness-Raising

**24** Education

### SDG Target

**10.2** Empowering and promoting Social, Economic & Political Inclusion for All, irrespective of status (including Disability)

**4.7** Ensuring acquisition of Knowledge and Skills to promote sustainable development through Human Rights Education and appreciation of cultural diversity

**4.c** Substantially increasing the supply of qualified teachers

## Background

Objective 3 covers the ever-necessary phenomenon of Awareness-Raising, both within society in general, but also among disabled families and those close to them. Although this has been a priority in Malta for a good number of years, the intensity and especially the content of such awareness-raising needs to be constantly adapted to changing needs and societal realities, and should always be linked to achieving acceptance, inclusion and empowerment of disabled persons.

In particular, initiatives linked to empowering disabled persons by skilling them in available resources towards ensuring respect of their rights at law are being promoted, as are continued training initiatives in both the public and private spheres, and provision of basic Maltese Sign Language training to students and key personnel.

## Specific Actions

### **ACTION 1:**

#### **Awareness on how to use legislation in cases of disability discrimination**

- 1.1 CRPD is to draw up an action plan, with the aim to reaching out to disabled persons, their families and society
- 1.2 CRPD, together with relevant stakeholders, in particular disabled people's organisations and civil society organisations, is to provide ongoing information on relevant anti-discrimination legislation, in various forms that include – but are not limited to – seminars, media campaigns and discussions with key stakeholders

### **ACTION 2:**

#### **Training on disability awareness for service providers in the public and private sectors**

- 2.1 CRPD is to develop an updated general framework for Disability Equality Trainings (DETs), through joint collaboration with DDS and DDI, as well as specifically tailored trainings as and where necessary
- 2.2 CRPD is to maintain, in consultation with DDS and DDI, a regularly updated register of private entities, including key businesses, civil society organisations and religious organisations, and public sector entities, including Government Ministries, Departments, Authorities and Agencies, and Local Councils, to whom DETs would be delivered on an ongoing basis
- 2.3 DDI, through its relevant mechanisms, is to engage with different entities, and seek guarantees of DETs being offered to their staff, including on a compulsory basis, in particular to staff in sensitive front-line positions, such as disciplined forces
- 2.4 CRPD and DDS are to further existing partnerships with the University of Malta's Faculty of Laws, the Chamber of Advocates and the Judiciary, to ensure that disability rights are a core component of human rights instruction for advocates, both prior to and after being called to the bar, and for magistrates and judges

**ACTION 3:****Provision of Basic Sign Language instruction to key personnel and students**

- 3.1 DDI, through its relevant mechanisms, and with the involvement of KLSM and Aġenzija Sapport, should initiate discussions in order to identify key personnel who would receive training in basic Maltese Sign Language (LSM), being members of entities or professionals who have a medium to high probability of contact with Deaf people, focusing primarily on those professionals with a front-line role, including social workers and disciplined forces, and persons active in sectors such as journalism, civil society and the religious sphere.
- 3.2 Tailored basic LSM instruction should be developed for and offered to secondary school students in State and private schools, through the joint efforts of KLSM and the Education Ministry.

# OBJECTIVE 4



## OBJECTIVE 4 ACCESSIBILITY

### UN CRPD Article

**09** Accessibility

**13** Access to Justice

### SDG Target

**09** (all targets) Building Resilient Infrastructure, Promoting Inclusive and Sustainable Industrialization & Fostering Innovation

**11.2** Access to safe, Affordable, Accessible & Sustainable Transport Systems (incl. Roads) for All, with special attention to vulnerable persons (incl. disabled persons)

**11.7** Universal Access to Safe, Inclusive and Accessible, Green and Public Spaces, in particular for (also) disabled persons

## Background

Accessibility, one of the most fundamental aspects of a disability rights framework, is covered by this Objective. Malta has long been focusing more closely on this area, particularly when it comes to the built environment, having created Guidelines which were adopted as a National Standard and eventually also written into law.

At European Union level, Malta also championed the European Accessibility Act, which it is now committed to implementing locally over the next years, while sharing its experiences through the relevant European Commission Ad Hoc Working Group. This Objective builds upon current achievements, while addressing those ever-evolving areas that need more attention.

Specific services and areas such as leisure are targeted for better accessibility coverage, and for appropriate enforcement, as are venues used for said activities, as part of the wider infrastructural landscape of the country.

Additionally, access to information and relevant materials such as e-books is tackled, as are relevant policies for such, while the State's responsibility to lead by example within its own entities, and Malta's obligations to ensure access to justice for disabled persons, are also covered through specific Actions.

## Specific Actions

### **ACTION 1:**

#### **Accessibility of Road and Transport Infrastructure**

- 1.1 DDI should initiate discussions through its relevant mechanisms, with the inclusion of TM, and consultation with CRPD's Compliance Unit, to discuss the accessibility of Malta's road and transport infrastructure, including that of the airport and seaports.
- 1.2 These discussions should also discuss existing use of, as well as engaging in a needs analysis concerning further appropriate accessible signage and crossings for all, and designs for such, including in respect of a uniform model for audio-visual traffic lights and kerbing.

- 1.3 The issue of pedestrianisation should additionally be tackled as a specific measure during these discussions.
- 1.4 A report detailing the current state of affairs should be drawn up following said discussions, including recommendations and an implementation plan to be coordinated by DDI, also covering test runs with the full participation of disabled persons for new features to be rolled out, and an awareness campaign.

## **ACTION 2:**

### **Accessibility of Public Transport and Taxi services**

- 2.1 CRPD should continue relevant discussions with key stakeholders, such as DDI and TM, in respect of application of adopted policy and practice related to accessibility of public transport and taxi services, including application of the Passenger Transport Services Regulations (Subsidiary Legislation 499.56) and the Taxi Services Regulations (Subsidiary Legislation 499.59).
- 2.2 Regular reports on the situation concerning accessibility of public transport and taxi services in Malta and Gozo, should be produced as a result of these discussions.
- 2.3 CRPD shall refer its reports to all relevant stakeholders, and liaise with them in order that concerns could be addressed, while the adoption of best practices could be constantly updated, in line with latest developments

## **ACTION 3:**

### **Accessibility of Beaches and Tourism**

- 3.1 CRPD should engage in continuing discussions with relevant stakeholders, including DDI, MTA and representatives of Local Councils, in respect of the application of relevant policy and practice measures on Accessible Beaches, and on Accessible Tourism.
- 3.2 Regular reports on the situation concerning accessibility of beaches around Malta and Gozo, as well as of the wider Tourism sector, should be produced as a result of these discussions.

3.3 CRPD shall refer its reports to all relevant stakeholders, and liaise with them in order that concerns could be addressed, while the adoption of best practices could be constantly updated, in line with latest developments.

#### **ACTION 4:**

##### **Accessible Information Policy**

4.1 DDI, through its relevant mechanisms, together with other stakeholders such as FITA, and in consultation with CRPD, is to conduct discussions towards the development and continual updating of a comprehensive policy on information accessibility, covering material related to sectors such as tourism, education, business and health, and provision of public services

4.2 A comprehensive mapping exercise is to be initially conducted, covering the state of play in areas such as accessibility of websites and brochures, and availability of information in different formats, such as Easy Read and Braille, or those that include closed captioning or sign language interpretation

4.3 The policy in question is to inform and be aligned with different obligations emanating from specific legislation, such as the European Accessibility Act, the Marrakesh Treaty and the EU's Website and Mobile Application Accessibility Directive

4.4 The policy should also contain a set of guidelines compliant with international standards such WCAG 2.1, which will list the essential disability features which shall be available on all websites providing services

#### **ACTION 5:**

##### **Better Access to Books and other Material in Accessible Formats at Educational Institutions**

5.1 DDI, through its relevant mechanisms, is to hold meetings with education services providers, with the goal being that their libraries have all intellectual property – such as books and dissertations – available in a wide range of formats, particularly in electronic format, also in line with the tenets of the Marrakesh Treaty.

- 5.2 CRPD is to monitor the state of play with education service providers through its UNCRPD Monitoring Unit, and provide regular updates to DDI, that can be raised with relevant service providers.

## **ACTION 6:**

### **Ensuring Accessibility of Buildings and Services**

- 6.1 CRPD shall continue with its current operations in respect of ongoing assessment of physical venues, such as hospitality and entertainment establishments, shops, health centres, youth centres and places of worship, housing blocks and accommodation for persons in situations of vulnerability, such as domestic abuse victims and asylum seekers, and including open spaces, as well as of services offered, through its Compliance Unit, and present regular reports to DDI.
- 6.2 DDI shall, through its relevant mechanisms, raise concerns brought forward by CRPD with appropriate stakeholders, while also taking on board necessary feedback, or making proposals of its own, for relevant legislation on accessibility to be fine-tuned, in light of supervening circumstances at any point in time.

## **ACTION 7:**

### **Guidelines on Presentation of Information in various Accessible Formats**

- 7.1 DDS, in consultation with other entities such as FITA, is to design and publish a guideline document on the accessible formats available for persons with various kinds of impairments.
- 7.2 The aforesaid guidelines are to cover documents in audio, electronic and Braille format. Production of Easy Read material is to be covered in depth. The guidelines are also to cover videos with Sign Language and closed captioning (subtitles), and audio description of still or moving images in videos for Blind and visually impaired persons.
- 7.3 The guidelines are to be made available for consultation to key stakeholders, and disabled persons and their representative organisations.

## **ACTION 8:**

### **Accessibility Assessment and Implementation Reports by State Entities**

- 8.1 DDI, through its relevant mechanisms, shall conduct discussions with governmental and parastatal entities, in order for an exercise to be initiated whereby all such entities would conduct, on a regular basis, a detailed accessibility assessment and implementation report, concerning their premises, work environment and services offered.
- 8.2 CRPD shall monitor said reports, and give regular feedback to DDI, which would discuss said feedback with relevant entities, with a view to said feedback being implemented.

## **ACTION 9:**

### **New Disability Logo**

- 9.1 DDI shall enter into discussions, through its relevant mechanisms, with stakeholders including the Disability Rights Ministry and CRPD, as well as representative organisations of disabled persons, on the replacement of the old disability logo, in favour of adopting the UN Disability Logo, promoting the image of disabled persons as active participants, and active citizens within mainstream society.
- 9.2 The new icon would be launched by the Disability Rights Ministry, followed by an awareness campaign through the media.

## **ACTION 10:**

### **Access to Justice**

- 10.1 DDI, through its relevant mechanisms, and in consultation with CRPD, shall enter into discussions with the Court Services Agency, in order to ensure that the Courts of Justice, and the services that they offer, are accessible from a physical, including sensorial, as well as an informational and procedural point of view, and including in the provision of legal aid.

10.2 DDI, through its relevant mechanisms, and in consultation with CRPD, shall enter into discussions with stakeholders such as the Malta Police Force and LESA, in order to ensure that disabled persons are to enjoy physical, including sensorial access to premises (such as police stations), as well as informational accessibility (such as access to information on the internet), and access to services, including emergency services.



# OBJECTIVE 5



## OBJECTIVE 5 PARTICIPATION IN CULTURE, LEISURE AND RECREATION

### UN CRPD Article

**21** Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information

**30** Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure, and sport

### SDG Target

**4.7** Ensuring accessible education for the appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

**8.3** Promotion of holistic development policies that support creativity and innovation

**8.9** Devising and implementing policies to promote sustainable, accessible tourism

**12.b** Developing and implementing tools to monitor sustainable, accessible tourism

**11.4** Strengthening efforts to protect and safeguard the world's culture and natural heritage for all

## Background

Accessibility of culture and leisure is also tackled more specifically in Objective 5 where, aside from building upon on the general precepts contained in Objective 4, particular actions are prescribed, especially as to specific elements such as

participation in traditional events such as village festas which, by design, could be said to not always conform to principles of universal design. Specific incentives to promote such participation are also tackled.

Accessing culture and leisure through the media require conformity with certain processes, and the inclusion of elements such as closed captioning, also in light of EU legislation binding Malta such as the European Accessibility Act and the Audio-Visual Media Services Directive.

Finally, the ever-present challenge of ensuring correct, rather than tragedy-based and medicalised portrayal of disabled persons through the local media, is again brought up, with the aim of enabling disabled persons to both feel comfortable engaging in the media, and also participating in media experiences on the same basis as others.

## Specific Actions

### **ACTION 1:**

#### **Making Cultural and Leisure Venues, and their Products, Accessible for All**

- 1.1 DDI, through its relevant mechanisms, with the involvement of DDS, FITA and Local Councils, and in consultation with CRPD's Compliance Unit, is to engage in discussions with operators of cultural and leisure venues in the public and private sectors, including their representative organisations in the latter case, such as cinemas, museums, parks, art galleries, historical and other heritage sites, to discuss the state of play concerning the possible and actual use of such facilities by disabled persons.
- 1.2 An initial report is to be drawn up, covering matters relating to accessibility, including informational accessibility, and relevant gaps, concerning both service delivery, as well as physical and sensorial accessibility of premises. The report should also pay particular attention to specific elements such as the needs of persons with sensory impairments. An exhaustive set of guidelines should be included, focusing on how to make such places accessible, together with an action plan.
- 1.3 CRPD shall review the implementation of the action plan on a regular basis, and refer its findings to DDI, in order that updates to said plan, and to the guidelines as necessary, could be effected and implemented thereafter through relevant implementation efforts.

**ACTION 2:****Making Public Events Accessible for All**

- 2.1 DDI, through its relevant mechanisms, with the involvement of stakeholders such as DDS, MTA, ACM, FITA and Local Councils, and in consultation with CRPD's Accessibility Unit, is to engage in discussions with organisers of public events, concerning the accessibility of such public events for disabled persons.
- 2.2 An initial report is to be drawn up, covering matters relating to accessibility, including informational accessibility, of public events, and relevant gaps.
- 2.3 A set of guidelines to support organisers of public events should be prepared by DDI, as an outcome of said discussions, rooted in the concept of universal design, and drawing on the experiences of disabled persons.
- 2.4 The promotion of accessible events should also be tackled through the joint efforts of the stakeholders, as an outcome of these discussions, together with initiatives for encouraging active participation.

**ACTION 3:****Incentives for promoting Cultural Accessibility**

- 3.1 DDI shall coordinate discussions, through its relevant mechanisms, and involving the Disability Rights Ministry and DDS, and stakeholders such as MTA and ACM, while consulting CRPD, on matters concerning promotion of accessible culture, rooted in the principle of universal design.
- 3.2 The discussions should lead to the identification and eventual implementation of initiatives encouraging active participation of disabled persons in mainstream society, through cultural events, while ensuring that current shortfalls concerning accessibility of these events are addressed through appropriate initiatives.
- 3.3 Award schemes for promoters, together with relevant guidelines and eligibility criteria, should also be considered as an outcome to be followed up in virtue of these discussions.

#### **ACTION 4:**

##### **Representation of Disabled Persons in the Media**

- 4.1 CRPD shall bring together key stakeholders, including DDI, the Broadcasting Authority, DDS and representative organisations of persons with disability, to discuss the current state of play of representation of disabled persons in the media, in general and in particular in events such as telethons.
- 4.2 The discussions should focus on analysing current policy and practice in terms of the Requirements as to Standards and Practice Applicable to Disability and its Portrayal in the Broadcasting Media (Subsidiary Legislation 350.17 to the Broadcasting Act), and of CRPD's Rights not Charity publication, in order that regular reports could be drawn up by CRPD further to these discussions.
- 4.3 A number of recommendations concerning best practices and policy implementation in this field are to be extracted by CRPD from these discussions, and communicated to DDI, that would disseminate them among stakeholders, such as media houses, to ensure appropriate guidance, while working with said stakeholders as necessary.

#### **ACTION 5:**

##### **Sign Language and Closed Captioning in all Television Programmes and Adverts**

- 5.1 DDI, through its relevant mechanisms, are to coordinate with the Broadcasting Authority, KLSM and FITA, together with representatives of different media houses, while consulting with CRPD's UNCRPD Monitoring Unit, in order to formulate and discuss an implementation plan for ensuring that television programmes and adverts broadcast locally are rendered accessible through the use of Sign Language interpretation and closed captioning, for the benefit of, among others, Deaf persons and those with intellectual disabilities.
- 5.2 Implementation is to follow suit, with regular reports to be drawn up on the implementation phase by KLSM and CRPD, and referred to DDI, for discussion with relevant stakeholders, to ensure that appropriate follow-up is worked upon.

**ACTION 6:****Making local traditional events and Sports Inclusive and Accessible**

- 6.1 DDI shall coordinate discussions, in consultation with CRPD, and involving stakeholders including the Malta Police Force, the Curia, local band clubs and festa committees, and organisational committees for events such as Imnarja, to take stock of the current situation concerning accessibility of local traditional events, and to discuss solutions and concrete initiatives in order to address areas of concern.
  
- 6.2 DDI shall coordinate discussions, in consultation with CRPD, and involving stakeholders from the local mainstream sporting community, as well as representatives of disability-focused sports such as frame football, and relevant entities such as Special Olympics, Paralympics and Deaflympics, in order to discuss access to sport for disabled persons, current challenges, and concrete proposals and initiatives in order to ensure sport for all.



# OBJECTIVE 6

**OBJECTIVE 6****RELATIONSHIPS, FAMILY,  
SEXUALITY, AND PARENTHOOD****UN CRPD Article**

- 21** Respect for home and the family
- 22** Respect for privacy
- 25** Health
- 17** Protecting the integrity of the person
- 24** Education

**SDG Target**

- 3.7** Ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health care education and services for all.
- 4.a** Education facilities that provide age, disability and gender sensitive, inclusive and effective learning environments

## Background

This Objective deals with a very thorny but necessary aspect of Maltese society, the equal right of disabled persons for respect of personal and intimate relationships, the lack of paternalistic intrusion into their lives and choices, and provision of necessary support which is age, gender and impairment-specific, allowing disabled persons to live a full life, with full respect for their will, rights and preferences.

Although Maltese law currently touches on this topic, and a number of initiatives in this field have been undertaken over the past years, the fact still remains that overprotection remains a cross-cutting phenomenon in Maltese society, and disabled persons feel the brunt of this even more, leading to denial of their rights, misunderstanding and sometimes even less than correct treatment by those who are meant to respect and support them.

Actions cover aspects such as the need for sexual education to be appropriate to a person's profile, but to be nonetheless never denied, and for national sexual health policies and strategies to also be

disability-inclusive. They call for appropriate guidelines on the right to parenthood, including supported parenthood, to be made available, with the input of disabled persons at their core, and for wide dissemination of such through campaigns, events and the media.

The setting up of a Family Unit within Agenzija Sapport would also be a key step towards implementing the content of this Objective.

## Specific Actions

### **ACTION 1: Comprehensive Sexual Education**

- 1.1 DDI, through its relevant mechanisms, and with the involvement of the Education Ministry, Agenzija Zghazagh and DDS, as well as CRPD in as far as its awareness and outreach efforts are involved, is to convene discussions concerning the delivery of appropriate sexual education for young disabled people in both formal and non-formal education settings, while making efforts to ensure the widest possible mainstreaming of such content.
- 1.2 As a result of these discussions, an initial report is to be drawn up on the current state of play, focusing in particular on topics being covered or otherwise, as well as the extent and quality of sexual education being delivered.
- 1.3 On the basis of this report, a revised set of guidelines, together with an action plan, are to be drawn up, using a comprehensive approach, focusing on non-patronising discourse and the traditional, medicalized model, factoring in the full involvement of young disabled persons during both preparation and implementation, while also exploring novel delivery methods, such as peer education, as well as online methods, which are, furthermore, conducive to improved accessibility for certain end-users.



**ACTION 2:****Inclusive Sexual Health Policy and Strategy**

- 2.1 the Health Ministry is, in conjunction with DDI, which shall engage appropriate stakeholders through its relevant mechanisms, to commence discussions with a view to drawing up a new comprehensive inclusive Sexual Health Policy and Strategy, in which disabled persons are perceived beyond the traditional, deficit-type discourse, and are guaranteed equal opportunities for quality access to sexual health care.
- 2.2 In particular, the new Policy and Strategy shall emphasise that efforts towards forcing contraception on disabled persons, particularly persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, and including sterilisation by way of permanent contraception, are to be countered effectively, as are any efforts or measures towards allowing termination of pregnancies specifically linked to the disability of the parent or the foetus.
- 2.3 The draft Policy and Strategy are to be made available for public consultation, through joint efforts between the Health Ministry and DDI, which shall ensure that said process is fully inclusive for disabled persons.
- 2.4 Implementation of the final Strategy shall be the responsibility of the Health Ministry, with CRPD being responsible for reviewing the implementation of the Strategy on a regular basis with regard to the rights of disabled persons, and referring its findings to the Health Ministry, in order that updates to said Policy and Strategy could be effected and implemented thereafter through relevant implementation efforts.

**ACTION 3:****Creation of a Family Unit at Agenzija Sapport**

- 3.1 Agenzija Sapport is to set up a new Unit within its services. This Unit shall be responsible for supporting families of disabled persons, including disabled parents, and interpreting the term 'families' in the broadest sense possible. This Unit is to eventually become a one-stop-shop for family support services.

- 3.2 Working with DDI and other stakeholders through DDI's relevant structures, this Unit is to identify the necessary human and other resources required, and to adopt best practices for providing the necessary interventions, either on its own and/or in conjunction with other governmental or private entities, and building upon current efforts being undertaken by Agenzija Sapport and DDS.

#### **ACTION 4:** **Inclusive Marriage Preparation Courses**

- 4.1 DDI, through its relevant mechanisms, is to hold discussions with key stakeholders, including the Curia and DDS, in order to ensure that marriage-related courses offered by the Roman Catholic Church are inclusive, and do not portray disabled persons in negative, stereotypical ways, including concerning matters relating to their sexuality.
- 4.2 CRPD shall offer its expertise in relation to training of members of the clergy and lay persons involved in the creation and delivery of such courses, on relevant aspects, including support in the sourcing and training of guest speakers who are disabled persons.

#### **ACTION 5:** **Guidelines on the Right to Parenthood and Supported Parenthood**

- 5.1 DDS, Agenzija Sapport and other entities that provide services to disabled persons, and children of disabled parents, shall convene discussions with a view to drawing up guidelines on the right to parenthood, including issues of consent, and on supported parenthood, for disabled persons, and building upon current efforts being undertaken by stakeholders involved.
- 5.2 These guidelines are to be promulgated as standards through SCSA, following a consultation process, with the full participation of disabled parents, accorded all relevant supports and accommodations to be able to effectively participate in the process.

**ACTION 6:****Media Campaign and Events for Key Professionals**

- 6.1 DDI and CRPD are to convene with stakeholders such as representatives from the University of Malta's Faculty for Social Wellbeing, to develop educational audio-visual materials, aimed at the general public, that seek to break taboos on sexuality and debunk stereotypes associated with the sexuality of disabled persons.
- 6.2 DDI and CRPD are to discuss with key stakeholders such as DDS, concerning the organisation of regular conferences and seminars focusing on the sexuality of disabled persons, targeting professions such as medical doctors and nurses, teachers, carers and personal assistants, as well as their professional bodies.

The image features a large teal circle on the right side, which overlaps a purple background. The text 'OBJECTIVE 7' is centered horizontally and partially overlaps the teal circle.

# OBJECTIVE 7

**OBJECTIVE 7****INFORMAL, FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION****UN CRPD Article**

- 21** Education
- 7** Children with disabilities
- 9** Accessibility
- 21** Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information

**SDG Target**

- 4.4** Increasing the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills leading to decent employment and entrepreneurship
- 4.5** Eliminating Gender Disparities in Education & Ensuring Equal Access to All Levels of Education and Vocational Training for the vulnerable incl. disabled persons
- 4.8** Building and Upgrading Education Facilities that are (also) Disability-Sensitive & Providing Safe, Non-violent, Inclusive and Effective Learning Environments for All
- 9.c** Significantly increasing access to information and communications technology (ICT)

## Background

In the field of Education, although the last years have seen a better understanding of the concept of inclusion as opposed to merely integration, supports being added within the educational system, and better physical and sensorial accessibility, there is always more ground that remains to be covered in what is an ever-evolving domain. Transition planning is one of the key areas where more action is warranted under Objective 7, as are specific features such as ensuring that students' Individualised Education Plans (IEPs) are legally binding, following common practice in other countries. Additionally, ensuring that appropriate staff is adequately qualified to perform their roles is as crucial to the sector as are specific initiatives, such as those ensuring the spread of and access to digitalisation within the education system.

It is not just the formal education system that is covered by this Objective, but also non-formal and informal education, in line with a common approach increasingly emphasised within structures such as those of the European Union, and in terms of obligations such as the Sustainable Development Goals.

Accessibility studies by educational institutions are also covered as necessary towards implementing this Objective, as well as collaboration with regulatory authorities to ensure a cross-cutting element of social inclusion, and implementation of projects targeting specific groups, such as youths and those with hearing impairments.

## Specific Actions

### **ACTION 1:**

#### **Legally Binding IEPs for all Students**

- 1.1 DDI shall, through its relevant mechanisms, convene discussions with the Education Ministry, DDS and the University of Malta's Faculty of Education, and consult CRPD, in order to discuss concerns about the current system linked to Individualised Educational Plans (IEPs), including extension of this system to post-secondary and tertiary education students, involving institutions' relevant disability support entities in discussions, and chart a way forward.
- 1.2 DDI shall coordinate with the Disability Rights Ministry and the Education Ministry, in order that legislation be tabled to ensure that IEPs become a legally binding document in Malta, also specifying that disabled students should be involved in the development of their IEPs and in related transition planning.

### **ACTION 2:**

#### **Transition Programmes**

- 2.1 DDI shall, through its relevant mechanisms, in consultation with CRPD, and with the inclusion of stakeholders such as the Education Ministry, DDS and the University of Malta's Faculty of Education, discuss and assess the current transition programme for disabled students from one educational stage to another.
- 2.2 Relevant efforts should be made, on the basis of these discussions, in order to bring forward relevant policy and legislative changes, as well as schemes involving various actors, to ensure the used of tailored best-practice models.

### **ACTION 3:**

#### **Preparation of Accessibility Studies by Educational Establishments**

- 3.1 DDI shall coordinate with the Education Ministry, and consult with CRPD, in order that educational establishments, both public and private, could undertake regular studies, in the form of a detailed accessibility assessment of their buildings/ facilities, from both a physical and sensorial, and from a content delivery point of view.
- 3.2 Specific guidelines in this regard should be developed, including criteria to assist with drafting of studies, and should be updated following further discussions from time to time

### **ACTION 4:**

#### **Support for Training for Disabled Persons on the use of Digital Technology**

- 4.1 DDI and FITA, in consultation with CRPD, are to discuss ways on how disabled persons are to be supported in taking up ICT-related courses, including, but not limited to, basic use of computers and digital equipment such as tablets, as well as undertaking courses such as those leading up to ECDL certification.
- 4.2 Financial incentives should be explored during said discussions, with the involvement of the Disability Rights Ministry and the Finance Ministry as appropriate.
- 4.3 An action plan is to be drawn up, which includes budgeting. Implementation is to take place

### **ACTION 5:**

#### **Collaboration with FHEA on matters concerning Social Inclusion in Education**

- 5.1 DDI are to coordinate discussions with FHEA, while consulting CRPD's Investigations Unit, on ways to make post-secondary, tertiary, and other non-compulsory education more accessible to disabled persons.



- 5.2 An initial report is to be drawn up further to these discussions, also highlighting gaps on matters concerning accessibility of education services, pedagogical approaches, access to information (such as academic material), and staff awareness on disability.
- 5.3 Further to such report, an action plan is to be drawn up, with recommendations as to how identified shortcomings would be addressed, including through the creation of specific projects and initiatives, that would involve disabled persons at all stages.

### **ACTION 6:**

#### **Warranting of suitably-qualified and experienced LSE**

- 6.1 DDI, through its relevant mechanisms, shall hold discussions with the Education Ministry, while consulting CRPD's Investigations Unit, with a view to agreeing on a way forward in respect of the professionalisation of Learning Support Educators (LSEs), the gradual phasing-out of unqualified personnel serving in such capacity, and the gradual replacement by suitably-qualified persons.
- 6.2 An action plan is to be drawn up, further to these discussions, as well as draft legislation, to be then taken forward by the Education Ministry and the Disability Rights Ministry.
- 6.3 CRPD, through its UNCRPD Monitoring Unit, shall review the progress achieved in light of the action plan and legislation adopted, and offer regular feedback, to be factored into the implementation process, and to be used for any necessary amendments to the plan or to legislation, from time to time.

## **ACTION 7:**

### **Specific Initiatives**

- 7.1 The Youth. Inc programme within Agenzija Zghazagh, through youth workers and with the support of the Education Ministry, DDI and CRPD, shall promote more programmes designed especially to promote diversity in skills and abilities of students, with the crucial focus of these programmes being empowerment.
- 7.2 DDI shall coordinate with FITA, in order to discuss the installation of hearing loop systems and other assistive technologies, in buildings used by all educational providers.

## **ACTION 8:**

### **Setting up of a working group on Inclusion and Education**

- 8.1 DDI, acting through its relevant mechanisms, is to coordinate a working group, with the participation of the Disability Rights Ministry, the Education Ministry, civil society and relevant trade unions, that would meet regularly and discuss matters covered by this Objective.



# OBJECTIVE 8

## OBJECTIVE 8 HEALTHCARE

### UN CRPD Article

**25** Health

### SDG Target

**3.8** Achieving universal health coverage and access to quality essential healthcare, and safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all

**3.7** Universal Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health-care Services & Integration of Reproductive Health into National Strategies and Programmes

**3.d** Strengthening the capacity for early warning, risk reduction, and management of national and global health risks

## Background

Objective 8 is a crucial yet delicate area. While Healthcare is also of utmost importance to disabled persons, it is still a fundamental challenge to ensure that disability and health are not seen as interchangeable concepts. Rather, health conditions should be seen as a component of disability and, most importantly, access to healthcare in general for disabled persons, and not only in respect of their impairment, should be available to them on an equal basis with others.

Continued sensitisation of medical professionals is a must in this area, both content-wise, and in specific areas such as 'breaking the news', both in respect of health conditions contributing to a disability, and also in respect of communicating with different disabled persons, such as with Deaf persons or those with intellectual disabilities. Additionally, Codes of Ethics for the medical profession should be revised to ensure an appropriate disability perspective, and appropriate monitoring

and feedback mechanisms are to be put in place following such.

A disability perspective in medical boards is also addressed through a relevant action. Finally, a proper reporting mechanism concerning access to health by disabled persons, in order to identify shortfalls and inform future policy and practice, is discussed.

## Specific Actions

### **ACTION 1:**

#### **Revision of Code of Ethics for practising medical professionals**

- 1.1 DDI, through its relevant mechanisms, shall hold discussions with DDS, relevant medical professional bodies and their associated Faculties and Departments at the University of Malta, while consulting CRPD, with the aim of revising existing Codes of Ethics that steer away from traditional disability discourses.
- 1.2 CRPD would, through its UNCRPD Monitoring Unit and Research Unit, review the functioning of existing and revised Codes of Ethics, and put forward recommendations, which would then be discussed with stakeholders through DDI, with a view to implementation.

### **ACTION 2:**

#### **Specialized Training to Medical Professionals on 'Breaking the News'**

- 2.1 DDI is to convene discussions with the Health Ministry and DDS, while consulting with CRPD, on developing trainings to different groups of medical professionals, on breaking the news to disabled persons and their families in a disability-sensitive manner, be it in relation to diagnosis of an impairment, or to communicating other health-related matters when a particular approach is warranted.

- 2.2 CRPD are to regularly review any such trainings so devised, and communicate relevant feedback to DDI, in order that such feedback could be communicated to stakeholders, and relevant revisions to said training initiatives factored in accordingly.

### **ACTION 3:**

#### **Better Disability sensitisation in Medical Boards**

- 3.1 DDI would discuss with the Health Ministry representatives and other relevant stakeholders, through its structures, and while consulting CRPD, different ways as to how medical boards would have a better knowledge of disability and of the needs of disabled persons, in order to ensure that any decision taken by such boards respects the dignity and rights of disabled persons.
- 3.2 An initial report would be drawn up following said discussions, outlining the current state of play, gaps and recommendations, in order for said recommendations to be then presented to the Health Ministry, and the voices of disabled persons and their families would be paramount in carrying out this process.

### **ACTION 4:**

#### **Reporting on matters related to access to health by disabled persons**

- 4.1 CRPD is to coordinate with the Health Ministry, in order to produce regular reporting on access to services by disabled persons, on matters related to general health, and also on health issues that are specifically impairment-related, as well as relevant actions taken and gaps identified. Such reports should be forwarded to DDI.
- 4.2 On the basis of such reports, DDI will convene the Health Ministry and relevant stakeholders, through its mechanisms, in order to discuss a way forward in addressing issues and gaps identified, with the participation and input of disabled persons and their families.



# OBJECTIVE 9



## OBJECTIVE 9

### WORK AND EMPLOYMENT

#### UN CRPD Article

**27** Work and employment

#### SDG Target

**8.5** Full and Productive Employment & Decent Work for All, incl. for Disabled Persons, & Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value

**6.1** Substantially increasing the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship

## Background

One key area to be addressed by Malta is that related to Work and Employment. An understanding of the social model of disability and of a person-centred approach is crucial towards both taking stock of the current situation, and making necessary reforms and policy and practice additions. While a number of incentives were put into place over the past years, such as fiscal incentives for employers, and a legislative framework ensuring general reasonable accommodation for disabled employees, together with awareness efforts and enforcement measures, action has to be taken in a number of areas.

There is the need to move away from pigeon-holing disabled persons as qualifying for 'special', segregated employment, or for only being employable in certain low-end jobs. There also remains a lack of awareness within the business community about what disability really is, and what disabled persons can really offer.

The end goal of fulfilling this Objective should be equalisation of opportunity, through a multi-stakeholder approach, enabling disabled persons to become fulfilled, contributing members of society, and changing social perceptions in the process.

Thus, career guidance should start early on, twinned with information campaigns for all involved parties, including through the media.

While up-to-date employment strategies, including a strong focus on pre-employment, should be in place, a proper focus on job retention is warranted, while specific niches such as youth work, and social enterprise, both for disabled persons themselves, and for those who work with them, should be tackled.

Moving from a quota system to a more inclusive system should also be incentivised through certifying inclusive employers, all the while continuing to build upon existing structures, and obligations such as provision of reasonable accommodation.

## Specific Actions

### **ACTION 1:**

#### **Specific DETs and Information targeting All Employers**

- 1.1 CRPD is to, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including employers' representatives and its Malta Business Disability Forum, disabled persons and their representative organisations, as well as DDS and DDI, revise and update their DET programme specifically geared at employers and their staff, to reflect the situation on the ground, and relevant needs, while developing accessible, on-demand online and print materials for employers, including specific guidelines.
- 1.2 DDI shall assist CRPD, through its relevant mechanisms, in discussing with employers and their representatives, and also with State entities, in order to obtain guarantees from different employers and entities to ensure that said DET is delivered by CRPD, in a tailored manner, to an as wide catchment area as possible,

and to ensure the widest possible dissemination of online and print materials for employers, including specific guidelines.

## **ACTION 2:**

### **Pre-Employment, Employment and Job Retention Strategy**

- 2.1 DDI shall, through its relevant mechanisms, coordinate with different stakeholders, including JobsPlus, LSF, Malta Enterprise and employers' representatives and experts, consulting CRPD and factoring in the involvement and input of disabled persons, to draft a Pre-Employment, Employment and Job Retention Strategy, based on the peculiarities of the local scenario, while drawing on tried and tested best practices used elsewhere.
- 2.2 The preparatory work on the Pre-Employment, Employment and Job Retention Strategy should ensure a particular focus on training of and investment in sections of the population where disabled persons, due to factors such as impairment type or socio-economic status, have been historically chronically disadvantaged, while considering specific measures such as formal certification of job coaches, in collaboration with FHEA and specific educational institutions
- 2.3 Such a Strategy shall be issued for public consultation, and include an implementation plan, to be overseen by DDI in conjunction with JobsPlus, through relevant mechanisms, and also propose specific projects or schemes, of a medium to long-term duration, aimed at putting into place the main tenets of said Strategy.
- 2.4 CRPD would, through its UNCRPD Monitoring Unit and Research Unit, review the functioning of the Strategy, and of all schemes and initiatives being operated in virtue of said Strategy, and put forward recommendations while highlighting shortcomings, as to a better functioning of the Strategy and of said initiatives, and the need of amendments to the Strategy, or amendments to, discontinuation or creation of new schemes in virtue of said Strategy, in order that DDI and JobsPlus could then liaise with stakeholders to take appropriate steps accordingly.

### **ACTION 3:**

#### **Work-Related Supports and Adjustments**

- 3.1 DDI, together with JobsPlus' Inclusive Employment Services Division and LSF, while consulting CRPD shall, acting through its relevant mechanisms, analyse current needs of disabled employees, as well as of those persons in employment who actively support disabled persons, the latter being minors or adults, such as flexible working hours, and reasonable accommodation such as the use of assistive technologies.
- 3.2 Specific factors related to the rights of disabled persons and unionisation, as well as the need to address specific modalities and challenges faced in this regard, should also be addressed through this analysis.
- 3.3 The results of said discussions shall be presented by DDI to the relevant authorities, in order to reach a proposal that would be laid before the Cabinet of Ministers, whereby appropriate mechanisms would be put into place for the benefit of different disabled employees, as well as for those persons in employment who actively support disabled persons.

### **ACTION 4:**

#### **Promoting Social Enterprise Incentives**

- 4.1 DDI, through its relevant mechanisms, and in consultation with CRPD and its Malta Business Disability Forum, shall discuss with key stakeholders, including but not limited to the Economy Ministry and Malta Enterprise, the formulation and implementation of a social enterprise scheme in Malta, to also benefit initiatives undertaken in relation to the Maltese disability sector, with a particular focus on initiatives staffed and managed by disabled persons.
- 4.2 A policy document and legislative proposals emanating from said discussions should be put to a public consultation, conducted in an accessible manner to ensure the widest possible participation by disabled persons, prior to being implemented by relevant stakeholders.

## **ACTION 5:**

### **Improved Career Guidance Services**

- 5.1 DDI shall discuss, through its relevant mechanisms, and with the inclusion of JobsPlus and LSF, proposals for the creation or improvement of career and vocational guidance services, commencing early in a person's life, to better serve disabled persons engaging in the employment market, and in particular in the mainstream employment market.
- 5.2 Such discussions should also specifically target the sourcing and training of appropriate personnel, who would implement programmes based on observed best practices, while being tailored to the realities of the local employment sector.

## **ACTION 6:**

### **Outreach and Detached Youth Work**

- 6.1 Agenzija Zghazagh, together with other key stakeholders including the University of Malta's Faculty for Social Wellbeing, LSF, JobsPlus, DDI and CRPD, shall undertake efforts in order to ensure the utilisation of youth work as a tool for better including social minorities, including disabled persons.
- 6.2 Said efforts should lead to the creation of specific initiatives, having the twin purposes of creating awareness of existing services and facilities for employability of social minorities, and serving as a link to entities such as LSF and Jobsplus.
- 6.3 The training of qualified youth workers on matters such as disability awareness should also be undertaken as a key aspect of said Action, following coordination between the stakeholders involved.

## **ACTION 7:**

### **Media Campaign and Inclusive Employer Certification**

- 7.1 DDI and CRPD shall, together with JobsPlus, LSF and DDS, discuss an ongoing media campaign promoting disabled persons in employment, and creating awareness of services and facilities that belong to JobsPlus and LSF.
- 7.2 the Disability Rights Ministry shall, together with DDI, CRPD, JobsPlus, LSF and DDS, develop and launch a scheme to certify Inclusive Employers, and said employers shall be regularly featured as best practice examples in the ongoing media campaign.
- 7.3 A concerted effort should be made to give ownership to disabled persons over all different stages of design and delivery of the media campaign, and of the Inclusive Employer Certification programme.





# OBJECTIVE 10



## OBJECTIVE 10

### LIVING INDEPENDENTLY AND IN THE COMMUNITY, AND DE-INSTITUTIONALISATION

#### UN CRPD Article

**27** Living independently and being included in the community

**26** Habilitation and rehabilitation

**14** Liberty and security of person

**15** Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

**16** Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse

**17** Protecting the integrity of the person

**20** Personal Mobility

#### SDG Target

**10.2** Empowering and promoting the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of disability or other characteristics

## Background

Objective 10 deals with one of the most controversial yet fundamental areas linked to implementation of the Convention. Approaches towards independent living have shifted globally and even locally, over the past years. Most crucially, while the initial drive was to move disabled persons

out from hiding and into the community in some form, not least as a way to fight stigma and increase visibility, the rationale underpinning institutions and group homes has been challenged over the years.

While it is clear that differing levels of support are required for different disabled persons, the consensus within a large part of the activist and academic community is that support should start from within, ensuring that the necessary services and supports are available within one's own community and within one's own home, instead of externalising and grouping these into specialised facilities. Furthermore, a greater focus on personal support schemes, such as that focused on personal assistance, has gained more traction, and is a system which Malta has already started to implement.

While factoring in specific and more complex needs experienced by certain disabled persons, that would be addressed through particular services being offered through more centralised facilities due to aspects such as Malta's size and economic considerations, the fact remains that this should be the exception, rather than the rule.

Therefore, a push towards independent and community living being in line with the precepts of the Convention, and of General Comment 5 to Article 19 thereto, issued by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, lies at the centre of this Objective.

Specific actions in this respect call for a gap analysis in the field of service provision, to take stock of the current situation, and address relevant gaps, a strengthening of existing community living schemes, mechanisms for better coordination among local service providers and, very importantly, a focus on training existing and new practitioners and creating multipliers.

An overarching national de-institutionalisation strategy is also advocated, on the lines of practice that was followed by other countries, which would have a significant impact on fulfilling the aims of this Objective.

## Specific Actions

### **ACTION 1:**

#### **Addressing Gaps in Mainstream Services in the Community**

- 1.1 DDI, through its relevant mechanisms, with the involvement of different public and private service providers and Local Council representatives, and while consulting CRPD, is to initiate discussions concerning the current state of play with regard to accessibility of mainstream services in the community, in different localities in Malta and Gozo.
- 1.2 Aside from the service provision needs of disabled persons, these discussions should also tackle support for parents, including for the process of letting go of their adult disabled offspring, in order that the latter could make their own choices and decisions and act on them, including through the provision of appropriate support, without their plans being thwarted by parental demands, and including instances where said disabled persons would have already moved out of the family home.
- 1.3 An initial report shall be drawn up, and issued for Public Consultation, in an accessible manner, also underlining major accessibility needs, as well as recommendations.
- 1.4 On the basis of the report and feedback received from the public consultation, an action plan is to be drawn up, the coordination of which shall be the responsibility of DDI.
- 1.5 CRPD, through its UNCRPD Monitoring Unit and Research Unit, shall be tasked with monitoring the implementation of the action plan, and with providing regular reports to DDI on its functioning and on shortcomings observed, in order that DDI might then take up such issues with relevant stakeholders, as well as update said action plan as and when appropriate.

## **ACTION 2:**

### **Strengthening of Schemes related to Personal Assistance**

- 2.1 DDI and Agenzija Sapport are to consult with disabled persons and other key stakeholders, including PA service providers, DDS and CRPD, in order to take stock of the current situation concerning PAs, and identify gaps related to accessibility of such services for disabled persons.
- 2.2 As a result of these discussions, recommendations are to be drawn up, concerning enhancing and widening of such services in a sustainable manner, including through ensuring appropriate reform of disability assessment and programme eligibility procedures.
- 2.3 Relevant standards in this respect would also be discussed with SCSA, with a view to eventual promulgation, while monitoring of this Scheme would be the responsibility of CRPD, which would offer relevant feedback on a regular basis, in order that the relevant framework and operation of the Scheme could be addressed accordingly, while relevant standards could be amended or enforced accordingly, as necessary.

## **ACTION 3:**

### **Setting up of a Train-the-Practitioner Unit**

- 3.1 The unit is to be set up within Agenzija Sapport. Towards this end, discussions are to be held on matters related to specialized training to be delivered to professionals involved with disabled persons. Discussions are to be coordinated by DDI, while Agenzija Sapport, DDS and other relevant faculties and departments at the University of Malta would be the key stakeholders involved, with CRPD being consulted throughout.
- 3.2 This unit, once set up, shall offer to all those interested professional and specialised training concerning all areas /services in relation to disabled persons. This unit would also be the official accreditation centre for staff working with disabled persons.

**ACTION 4:****Better Co-ordination among Service Providers**

- 4.1 DDI shall, through its relevant structures, initiate dialogue with public and private service providers, in a manner similar to that adopted by the Autism Advisory Council, while involving DDS and consulting CRPD, to coordinate best practices and discuss key concerns in relation to service provision, with a view to ensuring appropriate service coverage and delivery within the community, and to safeguarding the right of disabled persons to live independently.
- 4.2 Such discussions should provide Government with a more accurate picture of the situation on the ground in Malta, and provide a basis for being able to address gaps in policy and legislative regulation in an ongoing manner, while making sure that the input and voices of disabled persons and their representative organisations are factored in throughout.

**ACTION 5:****De-Institutionalisation**

- 5.1 Government shall coordinate discussions with a view to bringing together relevant stakeholders and entities, in order to formulate a National De-institutionalisation Strategy for Malta, which would also address the need in this area related to the disability sector, factoring in the situation on the ground, while presenting a phased approach for ensuring long-term planning, as well as relevant transitional arrangements meanwhile.
- 5.2 CRPD, while being consulted throughout this process, shall also be responsible for monitoring the progress achieved in this regard with respect to the disability sector, while reporting regularly to DDI, in order that said feedback could then be factored into updates of the Strategy, or of actions being undertaken in virtue thereof.

# OBJECTIVE 11

## OBJECTIVE 11 PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL AND PUBLIC LIFE

### UN CRPD Article

**29** Participation in political and public life

### SDG Target

**10.2** Social, Economic & Political Inclusion for All, irrespective of status (including Disability)

**10.3** Ensuring Equal Opportunities & Reducing Inequalities of Outcome

## Background

Participation of disabled persons in political and public life is also an obligation which Malta is bound to tackle, in particular due to the time-limited reservation it had lodged in respect of Article 29 of the Convention upon ratification. Malta will eventually have to ensure that both access to voting, and also relevant voting practices, would be fully accessible to disabled persons on an equal basis with others, and wide-ranging discussions factoring in all relevant stakeholders, with disabled persons and their needs at the very centre, need to be convened towards this end.

Malta has taken encouraging steps in the area of access to voting in the past, such as by introducing Braille ballots, including photographs of candidates on ballot papers, and changing the appearance of said ballot papers, while initiatives to improve physical accessibility at polling places have been undertaken, and information events by the State and political parties have been rendered more accessible through tools such as sign language interpretation.

Nevertheless, initiatives to support and encourage wider participation by disabled persons in all kinds of elections run locally should be implemented, while the accessibility of Parliament, the highest institution of the land, should be ensured, both for present and future disabled representatives, as well as for members of the general public, and any person working temporarily or more long-term in this environment.

## Specific Actions

### **ACTION 1:**

#### **Discussion with stakeholders on the implementation of inclusive voting mechanisms**

- 1.1 DDI, acting through its relevant mechanisms, is to coordinate a working group, with the participation of CRPD, the Electoral Commission, and representatives of political parties, to discuss such measures, with a view to Malta lifting the reservation to Article 29 UNCPRD that it entered upon ratification
- 1.2 The conclusions of said Working Group should be compiled in the form of a Report presented to the Cabinet of Ministers, that would include recommendations of legislative and policy amendments necessary to implement said reform
- 1.3 DDI and the Electoral Commission are to work to implement the conclusions of said Report, following its endorsement by the Cabinet of Ministers



**ACTION 2:****Supporting disabled candidates in local, national, and EU-level elections**

- 2.1 DDI, acting through its relevant mechanisms, and with the inclusion of representatives from the Electoral Commission and political parties, including disabled candidates, is to convene meetings, while consulting CRPD, to discuss ways and means in which disabled candidates can be supported.
- 2.2 The results of these discussions are to be raised by the Electoral Commission before the Cabinet of Ministers, in order that appropriate legislative and policy actions can be adopted to this effect.

**ACTION 3:****Enhancing accessibility in Parliament**

- 3.1 DDI, in consultation with CRPD, is to organise discussions with representatives of Parliament, as well as of the Government and Opposition, in order to take stock of the current accessibility situation, and make recommendations for improvement.
- 3.2 The report is to be communicated to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, in order that relevant action might then be taken.
- 3.3 CRPD would be responsible for monitoring the implementation of relevant recommendations, and of communicating any concerns and other feedback to DDI, in order that said feedback may be discussed with relevant stakeholders, with a view to its being actioned.

# OBJECTIVE 12

## OBJECTIVE 12

### DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT AND REDUCTION

#### UN CRPD Article

**11** Situations of Risk and Humanitarian Emergencies

#### SDG Target

##### 19(d)

- Empowerment and inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory participation, paying special attention to people disproportionately affected by disasters.

- (Also) a disability perspective should be integrated in all policies and practices

**19(g)** A Multi-hazard Approach and Inclusive Risk-informed Decision-making based on:

- Open Exchange and Dissemination of Disaggregated Data, incl. by Disability;

- Easily Accessible, Up-to-Date, Comprehensible, Science-based, Non-sensitive Risk Information, complemented by Traditional Knowledge

## Background

Objective 12 deals with the less talked about but very crucial twin aspects of Disaster Risk Management and Disaster Risk Reduction. While traditionally understood as preparing for and providing for contingency during phenomena such as natural disasters, this area equally covers any other kind of emergency, and was most recently felt during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the effect it had on disabled persons everywhere, including in Malta. In this respect, aside from Malta's obligations in terms of the Convention, cited in the text of the Objective, its obligations in terms of the UN's Sendai Framework are also cited and must also be adhered to.

The COVID-19 Disability Task Force, set up during the pandemic, should be structured into a Standing Committee, drawing on the experience and lessons of the pandemic, and acting in future as a Standing Committee on Disaster Risk Management and Reduction.

Furthermore, Malta's General Emergency Plan should, when updated, reflect a disability perspective, making it fit for purpose in multiple scenarios, and having been informed by the input and needs of disabled persons.

## Specific Actions

### **ACTION 1:**

#### **Converting the COVID-19 Disability Task Force into a Standing Committee**

- 1.1 DDI, acting through its relevant mechanisms, would subsume the existing COVID-19 Disability Task Force, having a broad representation of disabled persons and their representative organisations, as well as Government entities and experts, and convert it into a Standing Committee dealing with Disaster Risk Management and Reduction.
- 1.2 The Standing Committee would be restructured, following discussion with persons and stakeholders currently involved in it, as well as other entities who would be well-placed to be represented on said Committee, in order to have a down-sized coordination body, overseeing a pool of expertise that could be called on regularly to assist with the Committee's work.

- 1.3 The Standing Committee would liaise with relevant actors, both in Malta and abroad, in order to exchange best practices, and be on the forefront of initiating and running, together with other stakeholders, information campaigns and projects, delivered in an accessible manner, and ensuring a disability-sensitive perspective to situations stemming from disasters, both man-made and otherwise.
- 1.4 The Committee would, in particular, ensure that it develops capacity related to pre-emption and early warning, drawing from the COVID-19 experience, as well as other disasters tackled elsewhere, in order to be able to represent and advocate for the best interests of disabled persons in similar situations, with all levels of Government, as well as with other key actors such as private sector entities.

## **ACTION 2: General Emergency Plan**

- 2.1 DDI, acting through its relevant mechanisms, involving OHSA and the Department for Health, and in constant consultation with CRPD, while factoring in the voice and input of disabled persons and their families, will engage CPD, in order to ensure delivery of a timely and effective General Emergency Plan, that also addresses the needs and rights of disabled persons, while being tailored to the national context.
- 2.2 CRPD will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the General Emergency Plan in respect of disabled persons, and for giving regular feedback to DDI in this regard, in order that said feedback could be discussed with CPD and other relevant entities, through its structures, to ensure that the Plan itself, as well as actions undertaken or planned under it, are restructured accordingly.

# OBJECTIVE 13



## OBJECTIVE 13 REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS

### UN CRPD Article

- 32** International cooperation
- 33** National implementation and monitoring

### SDG Target

- 17.6** Regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation, and enhancing knowledge-sharing, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms
- 17.7** Encouraging and promoting effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partners

## Background

Finally, Objective 13 tackles Malta's obligations in the field of International Cooperation, outlining actions tackling regional and international partnerships of mutual benefit. Malta has long participated in international and regional fora, of both a standing and ad hoc nature, and continued participation will allow sharing of best practices that would ultimately benefit the lives of disabled persons in Malta, while also showcasing Malta's achievements beyond its shores.

A flagship initiative that should be developed further is Malta's effort to be a bridge between the European Union and the Arab world, through the setting up of the Valletta Forum on Disability Rights in April 2019, following a high-level meeting held in Malta. Specific thematic initiatives within this framework can rope together different stakeholders to explore and work together on different facets related to disability rights.

This should be done alongside continued participation at State level, and promotion at individual level of more participation, in other events, groupings and fora of a regional or international nature.

## Specific Actions

### **ACTION 1:**

#### **Valletta Forum on EU-Arab Cooperation concerning Disability Rights**

- 1.1 DDI shall facilitate relevant discussions with different local stakeholders, including DDS, and liaise with the Foreign Affairs Ministry, while consulting CRPD, in order to revitalise the EU-Arab partnership created through the Valletta Forum in April 2019, with the involvement of UN ESCWA, the League of Arab States and several governments, and the participation of the European Commission, to find a workable way forward for exchanging best practices and creating content, that would ultimately benefit disabled persons in Malta.
- 1.2 Following up of initial leads with DDS and other stakeholders in the EU-Arab region should be effected, towards the creation of an EU-Arab Research Network, and with ITU and UN ESCWA, towards creating and building a knowledge base and concrete partnerships in the field of Accessible ICT, following on from the Accessible Europe conference held in Malta in December 2019.



**ACTION 2:****Cooperation and Exchange of Best Practices through Existing Fora**

- 2.1 DDI shall, through the nurturing of existing international contacts, and the cultivation of new ones, acting either in a bilateral manner, or through multilateral fora in the deliberations of which it participates, including through representing Malta in the membership of standing committees, and in conjunction with relevant stakeholders within Government, academia and civil society, whereby the input of disabled persons would be paramount, participate in, develop and host initiatives such as panel discussions, regional workshops and thematic events, whereby themes of mutual benefit in connection with the disability sector are discussed.
- 2.2 DDI shall, acting in conjunction with said stakeholders on the domestic level, undertake relevant efforts to disseminate the outcomes of said efforts at international level, for the benefit of the local disability sector, while also working to encourage the participation of local stakeholders in continuing and follow-up initiatives being held in virtue of initial undertakings.





