

COUNCIL RESOLUTION of 6 May 2003
on accessibility of cultural infrastructure and cultural activities for people with disabilities
(2003/C 134/05)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1. NOTING that the Treaty establishing the European Community gives the Community the opportunity to take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation;

2. RECALLING the Council Decision of 3 December 2001 on the European Year of People with Disabilities 2003 (1);

3. RECALLING also:

— the Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council of 20 December 1996 on equality of opportunity for people with disabilities(2),
— the communication from the European Commission in 2000 — ‘Towards a barrier-free Europe for people with disabilities’ (3),
— the Council Resolution of 6 February 2003 on eAccessibility — improving the access of people with disabilities to the knowledge based Society (4);

4. STRESSING that in the European Union there is a significant number of people with disabilities who face physical, social and information barriers to their cultural and artistic expression and accordingly their access to the cultural heritage and artistic creation is restricted;

5. NOTING that the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20 December 1993, specifically refers in its rule 10 to the responsibilities of States in ensuring that ‘persons with disabilities are integrated into and can participate in cultural activities on equal basis’, and especially to their responsibilities in promoting ‘the accessibility to and availability of places for cultural performances and services, such as theatres, museums, cinemas and libraries’ and in initiating ‘the development and use of technical arrangements to make literature, films and theatre accessible’ to persons with disabilities;

6. NOTING the initiatives in Member States and at Community level to ensure that people with disabilities have better access to culture;

7. NOTING, however, the need for further, appropriate practicable measures to improve access of persons with disabilities to cultural infrastructure and cultural activities and to the media,

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

(i) examine ways to integrate people with disabilities into the arts and cultural sectors and to support equality of opportunity in the production and promotion of their work;

(ii) encourage the culture sector, to contribute to promoting a positive image of people with disabilities;

(iii) continue efforts to eliminate existing barriers and examine further appropriate ways and means to facilitate and improve the access of people with disabilities to culture, including:

— evaluating and improving physical access, without prejudice to Member States regulations concerning protection of monuments, to places such as archaeological sites, museums, monuments and places of cultural activities, as well as assuring physical access to buildings that will be constructed in the future,
— providing information via modern information technology,
— enhancing access to cultural activities through e.g. subtitled performances, use of easy-to-read and sign language, guides and catalogues in Braille, use of contrasts of light in exhibitions;

(iv) encourage the improvement of accessibility by using appropriate signage, for example by different logos;

(v) enhance sharing information and experiences on these matters at the European level, involving, as appropriate, the European organisations and networks with relevant experience in this field.

AGREES that the Council, by the end of 2005, should take stock of the follow-up of the measures to implement the present resolution

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(1) OJ L 335, 19.12.2001.

(2) OJ C 12, 13.1.1997.

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

(4) OJ C 39, 18.2.2003.

<http://europa.int.eu/eur-lex> (official journal)