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ROADMAP TOWARDS A NEW EUROPEAN DISABILITY CARD

CONTRIBUTION TO A CALL FOR EVIDENCE BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions (CESI) is a confederation of more than 40 national and European trade union organisations from over 20 European countries, with a total of more than 5 million individual members. Founded in 1990, CESI advocates improved employment conditions for workers in Europe and a strong social dimension in the EU. CESI represents public and private sector workers and is a recognised European sectoral social partner.

CESI generally welcomes the envisaged initiative of the European Commission to introduce a new European Disability Card, as outlined in its Call for Evidence roadmap of November 23 2022, in order to promote persons with disabilities' right to free movement and residence across the EU by facilitating the mutual recognition of disability status for national card holders within the EU.

CESI stresses however the following:

1. While a new European Disability Card mainly aims at providing access to essential and disability related benefits as well as seamless social protection for the disabled, , it is important that a new Card will also span to related areas of employment and the world of work. In particular, where disabled persons move for work to another Member State, the Card should ensure a seamless provision and continuation of disability-related social benefits of the 'old' Member State until the disability recognition process (including the setting of benefits) in the 'new' Member State has been completed. Disabled persons should not fear to lose benefits in a transition phase of moving from one to another Member State for work. Having a guaranteed continuation of financial assistance in transition phases might actually encourage disabled persons, including those severely disabled, to make benefits of employment opportunities that the EU single market offers. This would constitute an important step towards equal opportunities for all parts of the population, as laid also out by principle 3 of the European Pillar of Social Rights on equal opportunities.
2. An EU initiative on a European Disability Card should be pursued by means of a binding Directive or Regulation. Practical experience has shown that a non-binding Recommendation would not provide for an adequate and comparable implementation and enforcement mechanism of a new European Disability Card, especially where there is no incentivising EU-funding attached to it.