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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Mînzatu
on behalf of the European Commission
(13.8.2025)

The Commission operates under the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030¹ (the Strategy), fulfilling EU obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)² to which both the EU and Member States are parties to the extent of respective competencies. The Strategy promotes inclusive and accessible education³ and refers to Article 24 of the UNCRPD, which states that persons with disabilities have the right to inclusive, quality and free primary and secondary education on an equal basis with others, along with the necessary support within the general education system⁴.

The rules governing the EU cohesion policy funds contain specific provisions for persons with disabilities. They refer to the UNCRPD in their enabling conditions and require accessibility to be considered throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes.

The European Social Fund Plus programme in Ireland supports ‘Path II – 1916 Bursaries’⁵, aimed at increasing participation in higher education among underrepresented groups, including students with disabilities. While Ireland’s 2021-2026 recovery and resilience plan includes reforms and investments to enhance digital inclusiveness in schools, it lacks targeted funding for disability-related treatment.

Students with physical, intellectual, sensory, or other disabilities are explicitly prioritised under Erasmus+ programme’s inclusion measures. They can get extra funding to help cover real costs related to their needs, which comes on top of the usual mobility grant.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0101>.

² <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>.

³ See section 5.3 of the Strategy.

⁴ Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 18.12.2013

https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Disability/StudyEducation/A_HRC_25_29_ENG.pdf

⁵ <https://hea.ie/funding-governance-performance/funding/student-finance/1916-bursary/>.