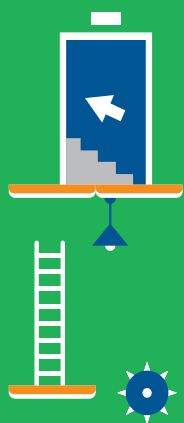


EQUITY AT WORK

WHAT IS THE SITUATION?



1 IN 4
PEOPLE

of working age (15 to 64) are estimated to live with long standing health problems that restrict their daily activities. The majority of these health problems come directly from chronic diseases.

They may need support and workplace adaptation or minor adjustments to continue working.

While some patients cannot continue their professional activity due to their health condition, many continue working or wish to do so.

Remaining at work with adequate support often results in improved quality of life and minimises the negative financial impact and the risk of social exclusion.

BARRIERS AT THE WORKPLACE

Discrimination at the workplace for patients with chronic conditions can take multiple forms.



1. Difficulty to return to work



2. Stigma at interview stage



3. Negative reactions of employers and colleagues upon disclosure or after a sick leave



4. Less promotions/opportunities for training



5. No adequate process for early retirement or professional re-orientation



6. Lack of adequate rights, or where they exist lack of awareness from both employees and employers

WHAT ROLE DOES THE EU PLAY IN THIS AREA?

To combat direct and indirect discriminations, the EU has adopted a legislative framework to implement the principle of equal treatment between persons.

This principle requires that all people have the right to receive the same treatment and are not discriminated against.



In particular, the Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishes a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, and addresses discrimination on grounds of disability. However, it does not harmonize the definition of disability in the EU, which varies in different Member States and is not always inclusive for all chronic diseases.



The EU is also a party of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with disability, Article 27 defines rights as regards work and employment.

WHAT IS EPF ADVOCATING FOR?



ESTABLISHING APPROPRIATE RIGHTS AND LEGISLATION FOR PATIENTS WITH CHRONIC DISEASES



Prohibiting explicitly discrimination on health status/chronic condition and provide support to patients that face discrimination.



Provide for clear rights to adjustments and accommodations at work and improving disability assessments systems.

INFORMATION, TRAINING AND AWARENESS RAISING



Actions and campaigns to raise awareness at EU and national level of difficulties faced by patients and existing policies to support both employees and manager – e.g. one stop website.

SUPPORTIVE, PATIENT FRIENDLY WORKPLACES



Appropriate processes (return to work, case review) and appropriate management culture.



Occupational health and safety at work strategies to support patients with chronic conditions.

COOPERATION BETWEEN MEMBER STATES, AND ACROSS POLICY AREAS (HEALTHCARE, EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT)



Exchange of information on good practices.



Policies aiming at ensuring equal treatment at the workplace should involve patient organisations to ensure patients' needs are met.



Youth employment programmes should target the needs of young patients with chronic and long-term conditions.