

EU Mobility card project summary - The Disability Card... in Italy too.

The project plans to activate all actions required to set up the "Disability Card" in Italy too. It is common knowledge that, there is not yet a single card in Italy allowing access to benefits and concessions on the transport system, as well as in culture, leisure or sport. However, this does not mean that individual administrations or agencies operating in these fields have not paid particular attention to persons with disabilities. Since there are no binding laws, both public and private domains have adopted their own criteria both to define who should be entitled and the type of benefit provided.

FISH (Italian Federation for Overcoming Disabilities), presents the following project as an Applicant, by indication of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (the specific national body in the field of disability policies, in partnership with FAND (Federation of National Associations for Persons with Disabilities) - acting as an Associate Organization. The purpose is to support the process of acquiring a European Disability Card from the relative public, private sector and non-profit organisations in our country as a whole. It is in the interest of persons with disabilities and their organizations to increase the opportunities guaranteeing rights and non-discrimination concerning access to goods and services. The objective of the project, in accordance with European guidelines, is to facilitate access for persons with disabilities to the transport system and to cultural, sporting and leisure events. All this should be done in a homogeneous manner, throughout the national territory in co-ordination with similar European initiatives. The process presented in this project will be based on drafting a significant and mutual proposal with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies. A proposal that can initially be implemented within the competences of Central Government and then progressively expanded to the other areas of responsibility of the various entities and institutions involved in the project as stakeholders. In order to present a convincing proposal to those involved, the task force responsible for drafting the project will have to insist on two fundamental aspects: convenience and reputation.

Convenience: immediate because it makes the relationship between transport and cultural bodies and users with disabilities easier and immediate. In the mid to long term, because it will increase the number of users and customers of the service with disabilities and their families and friends.

Reputation: The increased awareness of their rights by persons with disabilities exposes associations promoting public initiatives to discrimination charges in cases where they do not meet essential accessibility criteria. Adopting a Disability Card will both encourage sharing this awareness and increase the reputation of adhering associations, not only in the eyes of persons with disabilities, but also of the entire community.

The condition for this growth of convenience and reputation is that the activation process of the Disability Card is accompanied by the activation of adequate communication and information services, concerning the characteristics of the card and on the opportunities it can offer.

Once planned activities for the project have ended, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies will collaborate to define access modes (defining beneficiaries) and functions (what benefits and facilities will be obtainable) of the "card" in Italy, in order to activate it within the time frame defined by the European Commission. The Disability Card must be easy to apply for, activate and use. A card that allows access to a system of benefits and facilitations to maximise transport opportunities and access to cultural heritage. The definitive objective will be to merge all different systems onto the Disability Card. This includes public transport in Italy, access to major museums and monuments in the country, entry to major sports facilities (stadiums and buildings), cinemas, theatres, concert halls and arenas. A set of opportunities which, through an online information

system, can provide information on the nature and opportunities of the Disability Card, but also information on the level of accessibility of services and facilities.

The work program has been divided into various phases

- Start-up phase and operational planning.
- Research and data collection phase
- Proposal processing phase
- Sharing, first adhesions and activation, communication
- Development and consolidation
- Monitoring

The Project duration is 18 months (January 2016 - June 2017) but the presentation, activation and distribution of the first "Disability Card Italy" should take place on December 3, 2017, in conjunction with the celebrations of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.