



# TOGETHER WE CARE

## EU SUPPORT FOR INCLUSIVITY IN UKRAINE

### CONTEXT

Promoting unity, equality, solidarity, social cohesion, a participatory approach, and inclusivity are crucial to Ukraine's recovery process, mitigating the destructive effects of the war, ensuring the effective functioning of Ukrainian society and the economy at all levels, and fostering the development of economic and human potential. However, war pressures, infrastructural gaps, social attitudes, and other significant challenges hinder progress towards inclusivity. Civil society, international organisations, and the government are working on reforms. The EU's support also facilitates making life in Ukraine more inclusive.



The war has exacerbated the need to **adapt infrastructure for people with disabilities**. According to the [Ministry of Social Policy](#), there were officially over 3 million people with disabilities in Ukraine as of 2024, and more broadly and unofficially, over 6 million people are [estimated](#) to have a disability. These numbers are growing due to the ongoing war. Therefore, the development of inclusivity in Ukraine is becoming particularly important within the framework of the EU's strategy and assistance. Ukraine has a [Barrier-Free Strategy](#) (2021–2030) aimed at improving accessibility in public spaces, transportation, and buildings. There are laws on employment quotas for people with disabilities. However, actual implementation is mixed. According to the latest research, **only 20% of all Ukrainians with disabilities are employed**. In European Union countries, the rate can be as high as 50%.

Ukrainian legislation promotes **equal rights**. Ukraine's constitution guarantees equality and prohibits discrimination based on disability, gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, etc. There is also a joint [EU–Council of Europe initiative](#) (2023–2026) to align Ukraine's anti-discrimination laws with European standards, especially for national minorities.

Meanwhile, there is a growing **discourse around tolerance and inclusivity** in Ukrainian civil society. Significant strides have been made in recent years, but progress is uneven and often slow. Media coverage of disability still faces challenges: stereotypical and pity-centred language persists.



## WHY INCLUSIVITY IS IMPORTANT FOR UKRAINE AND THE EU

Inclusivity is a core European value, fixed in the [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2030](#). The [Ukrainian Strategy for 2030](#) aims to enhance inclusion in line with the EU motto 'United in Diversity.' Inclusive societies are generally more sustainable, which supports their long-term development and growth. Inclusive policies can expand job opportunities, thereby supporting economic recovery and growth. Meeting EU human rights standards enhances Ukraine's international legitimacy and could facilitate its integration into the EU.

The EU and Ukraine jointly acknowledge the value of every person.

Creating barrier-free environments plays a transformative role. It is not just a technical requirement.

It is the foundation of a fair and humane society, which allows people to move freely, access services, and fully participate in their communities. Prioritising inclusivity is vital in rebuilding efforts. Ukraine's path to the EU is closely tied to the implementation of inclusivity. Ukraine is working to align its laws with European standards on equality and non-discrimination.

One of the most powerful tools for promoting inclusivity is the [Ukraine Facility](#). It links reconstruction money to reform, democratic norms, and social cohesion. Part of the Ukraine Facility's support aims to strengthen democratic governance, minority rights, and inclusive institutions. The EU focuses on technical assistance to help Ukraine align its institutions with EU standards.

The EU implements a series of programmes for inclusivity in Ukraine. For children and their parents and caregivers – **Better Care for Every Child** (EU-UNICEF), **Save the Children, European Child Guarantee, Erasmus+**, working based on the principles of inclusiveness and diversity, promoting equal opportunities and access for everyone, and **the Vocational Education and Training (VET) project**, which includes an €8.5 million EU grant. For women focusing on leadership, there are initiatives such as **EU 4 Gender Equality** (EU-UN Women), **Women in Business** (EBRD), and **Partnership for Good Governance** (PGG). For people with disabilities and special needs, the EU supports the **rebuilding of inclusive cities** that incorporate universal design principles. The war has increased the need for **inclusive transport** due to the growing number of people with disabilities. A significant percentage of Ukraine's population is ageing and becoming less mobile. This creates an urgent need for barrier-free access to transport, which is further complicated by damaged infrastructure.

## EU'S SUPPORT FOR INCLUSIVITY IN UKRAINE

Along with various other projects, **the Barrier-Free Movement** includes low-floor trams and buses in 12 Ukrainian cities. The EU partly funds it through the United Nations Development Programme. The European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+) also supports initiatives to modernise transport hubs and create barrier-free routes. At the Ukraine Recovery Conference in London in 2023, Ukrainian and EU officials signed agreements worth **€800 million** to mobilise private investment, some of which relate to inclusive infrastructure. During the Ukraine Recovery Conference 2025 in Rome, participants established the Fund for the Reconstruction of Ukraine. Joint statements totalling over €3.5 billion were signed, including a **€10 million** grant from the EBRD to Ukrzaliznytsia to improve station accessibility, particularly for people with disabilities, elderly passengers, parents with children, and other groups with reduced mobility. The EU-UNDP created a **safety room for children with visual impairments** in Chernihiv as part of a grant initiative within the framework of the "EU4Recovery – Empowering Communities in Ukraine" project.

In particular, in 2025, the EU announced a call for proposals for CSOs totalling **€14 million**, including €5 million with a focus on gender leadership and conflict resolution. Through this funding, the EU supported several projects that brought together **women from diverse backgrounds, regions, and sectors**, ensuring they play a central role in the reconstruction and shaping the future of Ukraine.

The EU, through its European Investment Bank (EIB), implements **the Ukraine Recovery Programme**, one of three recovery initiatives supported by the EIB. As of October 2025, the EIB has provided **€740 million** through these programmes to support Ukraine's recovery. The modernisation and construction of critical infrastructure facilities are carried out with inclusivity in mind, creating barrier-free spaces that are accessible to everyone.

Legal changes do not automatically alter public opinion. Anti-discrimination norms must contend with traditional or conservative views. The EU, however, is committed to shaping attitudes by acknowledging that every person is valuable and important, that no one is left behind, and by explaining why this is essential for everyone.

## WHAT IS AN INCLUSIVITY CAMPAIGN?

The inclusivity campaign's goal is not just to promote the EU as a people-centred and caring partner of Ukraine and Ukrainians, but also to engage and involve the audience in the EU's comprehensive support for improving inclusivity in Ukrainian society.

The general umbrella message – **Together We Are Europe** – is amplified by a company-specific key message that highlights and strengthens the primary communication focus – **Together We Care**. Together, they form the central message of support: **the EU and Ukraine are building an inclusive society with equal opportunities for all**.

**The campaign aims** to strengthen the understanding of common EU and Ukrainian values. The EU is not just an economic partner, but a partner supporting the prosperity and well-being of Ukrainians.

While addressing inclusivity in a broad sense for the wider public, the campaign focuses on three main pillars: support for children, from childcare to safe, continuous education; women's leadership and gender equality; and barrier-free accessibility, from access to schools to public transport for persons with disabilities.