

## Digital inclusion

Digital inclusion is an EU-wide effort to ensure that everybody can contribute to and benefit from the digital world.



Every day, we use the digital world to perform a range of tasks. This has only increased with the COVID-19 pandemic. We use the Internet and new technologies to work from our homes, learn new skills, watch tv and films, and find out the latest news with the click of a button.

Indeed, the transition to the digital world has brought us many new and exciting opportunities. However, not everyone has equal access to these opportunities. For some people, the digital world is not yet fully accessible. For others, it is not affordable. And, others were not taught the skills to participate fully.

The EU is working to make the Internet more accessible. It has introduced activities such as:

- accessible ICT: making ICT more accessible for all and fostering the development of accessible technologies;
- assistive technologies: supporting the development of ICT that assists people with disabilities in the digital world;
- skills and digital skills: empowering citizens to fight marginalisation and social exclusion,

including in careers, through ICT in Education;

- social inclusion: increasing the participation rate of disadvantaged people in public, social and economic activities through social inclusion projects.

Another barrier to online participation is language. There are 24 official languages of the EU and more than 60 regional and minority languages. No single language can address all EU citizens at once, and the Internet must reflect this.

The EU is taking action to promote multilingualism online. It has invested over €200 million in this area over the last decade. It also launched the Connecting Europe Facility, which has an eTranslation service providing multilingual support to digital services and public administration across the EU.

The EU is fostering digital inclusion through other policy areas, such as digital skills, active and assistive living, and social inclusion.

European Disability Strategy 2021-2030

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Mountain regions have much to gain from digitalisation and broadband connectivity. There is great potential for Smart Villages, SMEs, and access to online services in healthcare, education and much more. Mountain communities, however, face greater obstacles than most in becoming full participants in the European Union's Digital Decade. Their remoteness, in terms of distance and topography, combined with smaller populations, make them technically and financially challenging to reach with broadband infrastructure.

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