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## The reasonable accommodation duty under EU law

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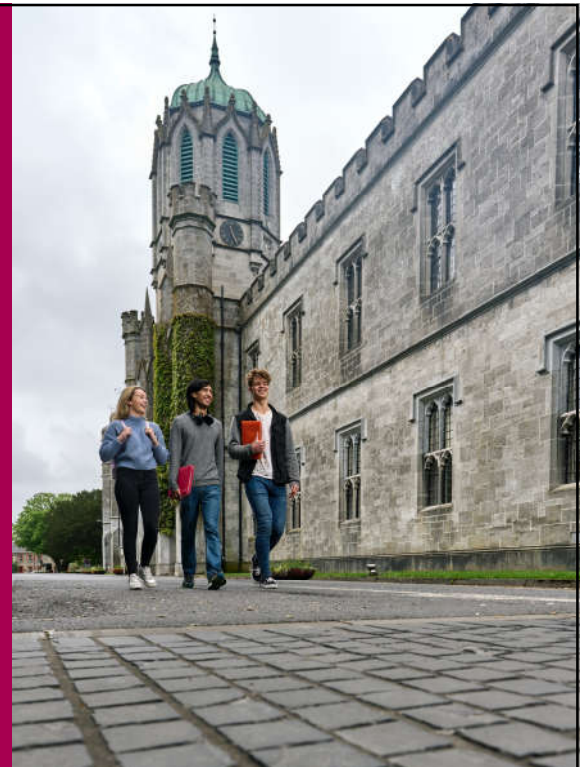
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## Structure

- Applies to People with Disabilities
- Framework Employment Directive 2000/78
  - BUT ...
  - 2010 – Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
  - CJEU Cases
- Some unresolved issues



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## Models of Disability

Medical  
model

Social  
model

Human  
rights  
model

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### Cases C-335/11, C-337/11 *Ring & Skouboe Werge*

- Framework Employment Directive must be interpreted in light of the CRPD
  - “the primacy of international agreements concluded by the European Union over instruments of secondary law means that those instruments must as far as possible be interpreted in a manner that is consistent with those agreements.”
- The CRPD is “an integral part of the EU legal order.”

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## Disability:

a limitation which results in particular from physical, mental or psychological impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder the full and effective participation of the person concerned in professional life on an equal basis with other workers and the limitation is a long term one.

*Cases C-335/11, C-337/11 Ring & Skouboe Werge*

See also

C-354/13 *Karsten Kaltoft*

C-397/18 *Nobel Plastiques Ibérica*

C-363/12 *Z*

C-270/16 *Ruiz Conejero*

C-406/15 *Milkova*

C-395/15 *Daouidi*

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## *C-363/12 Z v A Government Department*

- CJEU held that the concept of disability:
  - presupposes that the limitation from which the person suffers, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder that person's full and effective participation in **professional life** on an equal basis with other workers.
- Therefore, Z did not have a disability.

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## Fredman

- Instead of requiring disabled people to conform to existing norms, the aim is to develop a concept of equality which requires adaptation and change.



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## Reasonable Accommodation some clarifications

- 1) Reasonable accommodation and positive action are two separate and distinct concepts
  - Article 5(3) provides for reasonable accommodation
  - Article 5(4) provides for positive or affirmative action
- 2) Reasonable accommodation versus Accessibility
  - Reasonable accommodation is an *ex nunc* duty – triggered from the moment it is requested, individualized and reactive.
  - Accessibility is an *ex ante* duty – group duty and requires proactive and systemic actions.



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## CRPD and reasonable accommodation



- CRPD prohibits ‘all forms of discrimination including denial of reasonable accommodation.’
  - Duty to legislate
  - RA must be recognised as a punishable form of discrimination
    - (Concluding Observations – Germany May 2015)
  - Justiciable and immediately enforceable.

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### Part one – positive legal obligation to provide a reasonable accommodation

- “Reasonable” Accommodation – one term
  - Accommodation must address a barrier to participation of an individual – *HM v Sweden*
- No ‘one size fits all’
- Individualised and reactive duty
- Dialogue



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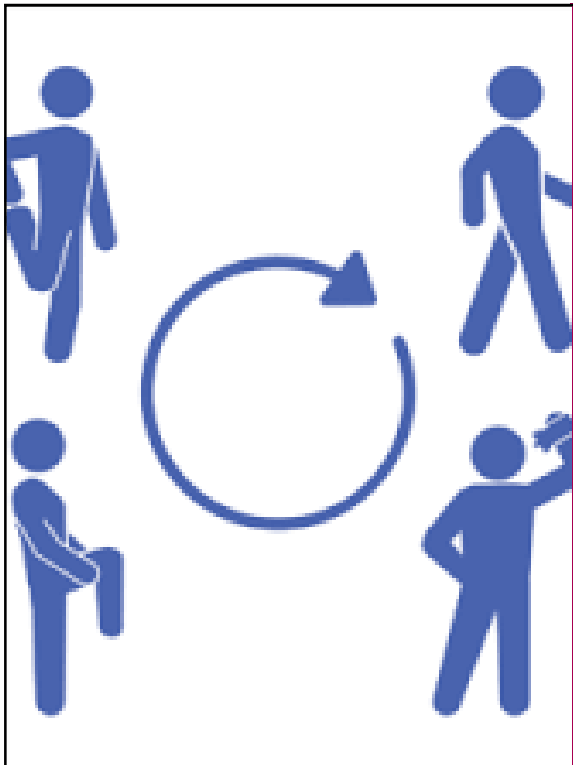
## Ring and Skoubue Werge

- The concept of reasonable accommodation encompasses not only “material but also organizational measures, and the ‘pattern’ of working time must be understood as the rhythm or speed at which the work is done” ...
- recital 20 in the preamble to Directive 2000/78 is not exhaustive and, consequently, even if it were not covered by the concept of ‘pattern of working time’, a reduction in working hours could be regarded as an accommodation measure



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## Case C-485/20 – HR Rail

- Trainee falls within the scope of the FED
- Where a worker becomes incapable of remaining in his or her job due to the onset of disability, reassignment to another job may constitute an appropriate measure:
  - Where there is at least one vacancy and the worker in question is capable of doing it, then it is not disproportionate.



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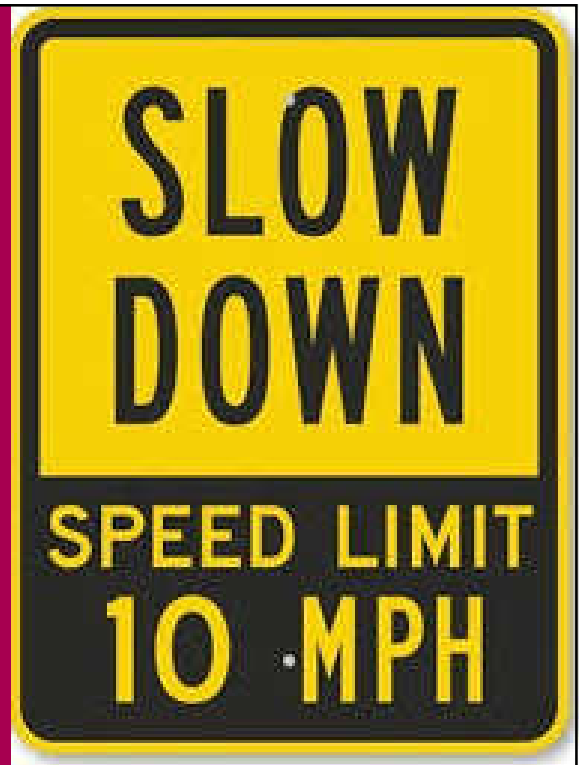
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## Part two – limits to the duty

- Disproportionate and undue burden – one term, not two separate restrictions.
- Individualized and reactive
  - Cost, resources available (including grants) size of the party (in its entirety), effect of modification on institution, third party benefits, impact on others, reasonable health and safety requirements.
  - NB – look at whole entity
- Not valid – attitude of others



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## *CJEU – Disproportionate burden*

- *Ring & Skouboe Werge* - account must be taken of:
  - the financial and other costs;
  - the scale and financial resources of the undertaking,
  - the possibility of obtaining public funding or any other assistance.
- *HR Rail*
  - Where there is a vacancy
  - Should not deprive another of his or her job or force a job swap

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## Some concluding thoughts

- FED does not define reasonable accommodation as a form of discrimination.
- The issue of whether the term 'reasonable' is an independent modifier of the duty to accommodate must be reassessed throughout EU
- CRPD applies the principle of reasonable accommodation to ALL rights in the Convention. EU only applies it to employment.
- CJEU – caselaw on reasonable accommodation positive and at times expansive, but contrast that with the caselaw on the definition of disability.

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