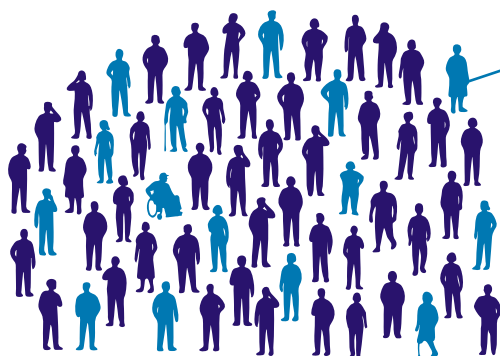# 101 million reasons to build better Artificial Intelligence

101 million people in the European Union have a disability. That is 1/4 of the population.
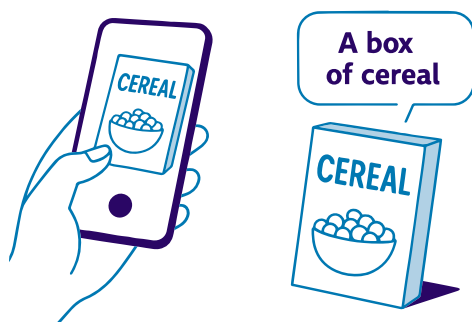
27% of the EU population over the age of 16 had some form of disability (2003).

- **50%** people with disabilities in the European Union (EU) feel discriminated.
- **51.3%** of working-age persons with disabilities are employed, compared to 75.6% of those without disabilities.

Source: Eurostat (hlth_silc_12) and EU-SILC UDB

Why we need an inclusive AI

As society increasingly relies on AI, we need to ensure that AI systems are inclusive and accessible to all, including people with disabilities. Otherwise, it can undermine trust in digitalisation and create negative experiences for people with disabilities.

CEREAL

A box of cereal

CEREAL

Benefits from AI

Improved accessibility
through AI-powered assistive technologies.

Greater independence
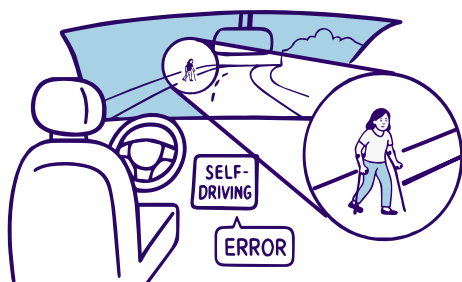through AI applications in daily life.

Enhanced mobility and autonomy
for example with the assistance of self-driving cars (when technology has matured).

Risks with AI

SELF-DRIVING

ERROR

Being flagged as suspicious or potential fraud, leading to loss of essential services.

Discrimination and exclusion,
perpetuating existing social inequalities.

Life-threatening accidents
can happen when self-driving cars fail to spot pedestrians with disabilities.

What can you do to secure inclusive AI

For Policymakers

As a policymaker, you have a critical role to play in promoting inclusive AI and ensuring that the rights of people with disabilities are protected.
The Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act) is an important step in this direction, but it requires careful implementation and enforcement to ensure that it achieves its goals.

Ensure disability rights are protected
in the implementation of the AI Act.
Strengthen human rights-based provisions.
Close existing loopholes to ensure comprehensive protection and inclusion.

Support initiatives to improve IT literacy
ensure the material and courses are accessible.
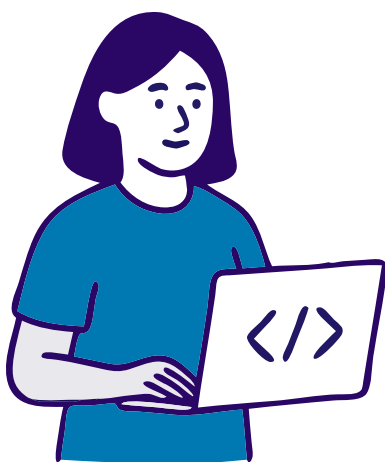Increase public spending to support the development of AI that benefits persons with disabilities.

Resist pressure to water down the AI Act
and other tech regulation.
Stand strong on fundamental rights and democracy.

For Developers

As a developer, you have the power to create AI systems that are accessible and usable by people with disabilities. By prioritising inclusive design and working with people with disabilities, you can create AI systems that improve the lives of millions of people.

Engage with people with disabilities
and their representative organisations during the AI design process.

Consider the diverse needs of persons with disabilities in AI development.

Continuously monitor & improve AI
to prevent bias and discrimination.
Ensure interoperability between new AI-powered solutions and existing hardware and assistive technology device.

Together, we can create a future where AI is used to promote social inclusion and equality.

Find out more about AI on the EDF website