



The Employment of People with Disabilities in each Partner Country

Comparative Analysis:

Based on Partner presentations at the Liege meeting November 2010.

All partner countries have systems/services which provide a diverse range of supports for people with disabilities. These support systems and services are based on broad definitions of disability and are in the main comprised of legislation, state benefits/allowances and/or payments, health and rehabilitation, vocational education and training programmes, labour force initiatives, disability employment quota systems, and other social welfare contributions/entitlements such as free travel, accommodation etc.

Available data on labour force participation for people with disabilities present with similar figures throughout the partner countries depicting low participation rates generally, particularly in the open employment labour market. For example in Turkey, 79% of persons with disabilities are not in the labour force, in Belgium 9% are working with 50% unemployed and in Ireland 74% do not participate in the labour force. The introduction of rights and equality legislation in partner countries is of significant influence in terms of work and employment provision and entitlements for people with disabilities. Most partner countries operate types of quota systems for the employment of people with disabilities. These quota systems are generally specific to public sector companies and/or employers and are governed by such issues as minimum number of employees in the company/workforce, target percentage quotas, penalties and tax deductions applied for unmet quotas.

For example, in Turkey and Romania, the target quota requirement is 4% for companies with over 50 employees, with fiscal/tax penalties applied for unmet quotas, sometimes directed towards education programmes (Turkey) and either returned to the state or directed towards the purchase of disability goods/products (Romania). In Belgium, a quota system applies for public sector companies with over 20 employees, whilst in Ireland a 3% quota applies for all public sector organisations.

State benefits/allowances and/or payments supports are a critical feature of social welfare/security systems in all partner countries, though these vary in structure and in payment type in terms of eligibility, means, status and degree of disability. In Turkey for example, a family may apply for a state pension if a person has a 70% handicap, whilst in Ireland, a person receives a disability allowance if classified as being 'disabled'. Sheltered workshops are also a prevalent feature of rehabilitation and training practices for people with disabilities. These may either be termed workshops, enterprises and in some case companies but exist generally to provide occupational activities for all persons with disabilities who are unable to participate in the open labour market. Vocational education and training and supported employment programmes is another feature of the rehabilitative process in partner countries which focuses on training and placement for transition to the open labour market.

There are many different types of labour force initiatives on offer in each country which aim to support the movement from the rehabilitative process to labour market involvement. In Ireland for example, there is a national supported employment programme which is funded by the state. Employment incentives include tax discounts for employers who employ people with disabilities is a feature in Turkey, whilst percentage/part payment of wages related to productivity by the government/state is common in other countries. Workplace adaptation grants are also a feature in most partner countries. Minimum wage criteria differs from country to country ranging from

approximately €332 per month in Belgium and Ireland, €300 in Turkey to € 266 per month in Romania, with the exception being Austria with none, rather a collective bargaining type approach with the minimum wage based on job description type.

Social welfare contributions/entitlements are yet another common feature of support systems throughout the partner country systems. Typical supports include free travel, free or subsidised accommodation, social welfare/security payments and/or contributions, free medical and/or other assistive type grants or subsidies.

a) Turkey:

- Unemployment is 10% of the population (+ hidden unemployment).
- Figures of the last OCDE labour rate participation (Workers of more than 16y.o./Total population) → 21% is part of the labour force; 16% unemployed; 79% not in the labour force (?? So a total of 116 %??).
- Legislation for disabled persons:
 - Sheltered workshops
 - In companies over 50 employees. → Obligation to hire 4% of disabled persons (if not: penalties directed to education.
 - Tax discount for the employment of disabled persons.
- Regarding the revenues of a family, there a possibility to ask a state pension (if the disabled person has a 70% handicap).
- If disabled person works, he/she loses that pension.
- The minimum wage in Turkey is 300 €/month.

b) Romania:

- Employers hiring a young graduated disabled person receive some state money.
- A contract of 2 years with a disabled person and the employer pay the minimum wage (200 €) for one full year.
- A normal wage is about 1.5 x minimum wage (+/- 400 €)
- There is a new law for disabled persons since 2002: if a company counts more than 50 employees, it must hire 4% of disabled persons. If it doesn't, there is a tax of 15% of the minimum wage and that money is returned to the state or dedicated to buy products produced by disabled persons.
- Severe disabled persons have free transportation and no taxes on incomes.
- Accommodations for disabled persons in companies are paid by the state: training, counselling, internship, workdays shorter than 8 hours.

c) Austria:

- Double allocation for disabled children but if the disabled person work, she/he loses it and once lost, she/he never gets it again (350 €/month).
- There are 8 categories of specific needs connected to the life income.
- There is an employment support in special education.
- Companies get money to create jobs for disabled persons.
- Companies hiring disabled persons pay only 80% of the wage for the first year. After the first year no state intervention.
- There is no replacement income for disabled persons but only pocket money (90 €) → disabled persons are willing to work.
- Good one to one assistance for physical disabled persons. Why not for mental deficiency?
- A national agency is in charge of mental disabled persons with a 50% handicap.
- If a disabled person is unemployed but has a less than 50% handicap, she/he depends of the labour service.
- If a person is unable to work → local government but the trouble is that laws are different in each provinces.

d) Belgium:

- There are 4.000.000 active people in Belgium and 10% of unemployed.
- 500.000 disabled persons.
- Public administration set the percentage of handicap of a disabled person.
- Public sector has an obligation to hire disabled persons if more than 20 employees.
- 9% of the disabled persons are working in companies.
- 50% are unemployed.
- 43% are working in sheltered workshops.
- → Very few disabled persons are effectively working.
- Much support in the 3 Belgians communities (3 communities → 3 agencies!!). Those agencies must make it easier to employ disabled persons (everything is different from one community to another...). It is different to get a global picture.
- Use of job coaches (connect persons from services to services).
- For moderate disabled persons: very few cases... Many slight disabled persons are working.
- Definition of a disabled person is very large.
- There are more and more local supports rather than a global/national support.
- Adaptations must be made.
- Incomes:
 - Social security for severe disabled persons.
 - Unemployment allowance.
 - Wages.

e) Ireland:

- COPE Foundation made a CD-rom measuring the impact of employment on disabled persons (Quality of life).
- (50)15% of unemployment.
- 5 % of handicapped persons among whom 85 % are unemployed.
- Disabled persons get a 200 €/week allowance (whatever they do).
- 2 Government Agencies/organizations are giving trainings to disabled persons: the Heath Service Executive (government) and FÁS the national training unemployment agency. The agency is also providing vocational training and a national support for unemployment program.
- There are also Employment incentive schemes for hiring people with disabilities but Unfortunately the state money was not used to its capacity so this funding was reduced (it went down).
- Due to the severe economic recession in Ireland and increasing unemployment figures, it is increasingly more difficult to find work for people with disabilities. (Companies are not trying anymore to create jobs for disabled persons (crisis and also proper to Ireland)).