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## **Disability mainstreaming in the European Employment Strategy**

### **I. Introduction**

As a follow up of the European Year of People with disabilities and as announced in the Communication "Equal opportunities for people with disabilities: A European action plan"<sup>1</sup>, the European Commission proposed to draft a working paper about disability mainstreaming in the European Employment Strategy (EES). The EES has since its start in 1997 paid particular attention to disadvantaged people who run a high risk of exclusion from the labour market. People with disabilities are one of the groups who are disadvantaged in most Member States as regards participation in the labour market.

Following the launch of the first series of employment guidelines in the framework of the EES in 1997, the Commission analysed which were the main challenges with regard to raising the employment levels of people with disabilities and how Member States responded to the needs of disabled people in their National Action Plans (NAPs).<sup>2</sup> The evaluation of the first five years of the EES<sup>3</sup> demonstrated that active measures and anti-discrimination policies had been stimulated under the EES, but remained inconclusive as to their impact on the labour market situation of disadvantaged people. In order to effectively narrow the employment gap, there was a continued need for tailored measures and comprehensive approaches involving both the supply and the demand side of the labour market.

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<sup>1</sup> COM (2003) 650 final of 30.10.2003

<sup>2</sup> Commission Staff Working Paper "Raising employment levels of people with disabilities. The common challenge. SEC(1998)1550 of 22.09.1998. – See also the following documents: Commission Staff Working Document "Delivering eAccessibility – Improving disabled people's access to the Knowledge Based Society". SEC(2002)1039 of 26.09.2002. – Council Resolution on "eAccessibility" – improving the access of people with disabilities to the Knowledge Based Society. Council document 5165/03 of 14.01.2003.

<sup>3</sup> COM (2002) 416 "Taking stock of five years of the EES".

Meanwhile, a number of important recent developments in the area of employment and social policies, in particular the refocusing of the Lisbon Strategy and the forthcoming start of a new period of Employment Guidelines (2005-2008) give rise to take again a closer look at the relevance of the EES for disabled people. It should also be noted that the new Employment Guidelines are part of an Integrated Guidelines package also comprising macroeconomic and microeconomic guidelines. Disability mainstreaming has direct relevance for some of the microeconomic guidelines, especially those related to the use of ICT and having a fully inclusive information society.

The purpose of the present paper is to underline the importance of Member States addressing, in the context of the revised EES, the specific impediments faced by people with disabilities as regards labour market participation. It also presents a number of good practices in this field which have already been developed by Member States in this area, often with the support of the European Social Fund (ESF) or the Community Initiative EQUAL.

This could provide guidance and inspiration for other Member States on how to design more effective policies addressing the particular labour market needs of disabled people, with a view to the forthcoming ESF programming period 2007-2013 which includes a priority on reinforcing social inclusion of people at a disadvantage through the promotion of pathways to integration in employment for disabled people.

The involvement of the Social Partners in all effort to improve the integration of disabled people into the labour market is equally important. Their recent initiatives at national level in this field include i.a. the sharing of best practices in Austria, recommendations for government policy in the UK and the establishment of a percentage target of disabled employees in the public sector in Denmark.<sup>4</sup>

The considerations in this paper follow the principle of mainstreaming, which can be defined as the systematic consideration of the specific needs of disabled people which have to be respected when setting up any measures in policies aimed at the promotion of employment.

In preparation of the paper, DG EMPL conducted a survey among the members of the MISEP<sup>5</sup> network, the European Social Partners and EU NGO's active in the field of disability, asking for examples of good practices on disability mainstreaming.

The working paper consists of two parts: the first, short, exploring in more detail the concept of mainstreaming and highlighting its strong potential to influence policy making and to improve the situation of people with disabilities (chapter II), and the second, examining how the Employment Guidelines can be concretely implemented in order to develop a mainstream approach addressing disabled people in employment policies.

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<sup>4</sup> CEEP, UNICE/UEAPME and ETUC 2004 Report on social partner actions in Member States to implement employment guidelines, 5 March 2004. – See also the Declaration of the Social Partners on the employment of people with disabilities of 20 January 2003.

<sup>5</sup> MISEP = Mutual Information System on Employment Policies in Europe, a network consisting of national correspondents nominated by the national ministries and departments responsible for employment and labour market policies and/or the employment services.

## **II. Mainstreaming policies as an approach to ensure equality and non-discrimination**

In its policies for disadvantaged groups, the Commission follows the approach of mainstreaming. Mainstreaming means that the needs of disadvantaged people need to be taken into account in the design of all policies and measures, and that action for disadvantaged people is not limited to those policies and measures which are specifically addressing their needs. As a consequence of this mainstreaming approach, the Commission's policy guidelines address the issue of policies for disadvantaged groups in a broad sense, but do not spell out detailed policy proposals addressing the needs of the different groups of disadvantaged people. It is then up to the Member States to ensure, in the setting up of their national policies responding to Commission guidelines, that these policies and the subsequent actions taken will be fully accessible to disadvantaged people.

The legal background for the need to apply the principle of mainstreaming in policies is to be found in the EU directive against discrimination<sup>6</sup> prohibiting discrimination in employment and occupation on the grounds of religion and belief, disability, age and sexual orientation. The Directive prohibits any discrimination - be it direct or indirect on all grounds mentioned - in employment and occupation, defined as access to employment, self-employment and occupation, vocational guidance and training, employment and working conditions including dismissal and pay, and membership of organisations.

With regard to disability in particular, the Directive (2000/78/EC) is in many ways a ground-breaking piece of legislation. It has and will require major changes to existing rules in certain Member States. Employers – public and private – will be obliged to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities to ensure that they have an equal opportunity to compete on the labour market. Failure to provide a reasonable accommodation in the workplace can constitute discrimination. In practical terms such accommodation includes measures to adapt the workplace to people with disabilities, for example adapting premises and equipment, patterns of working time etc. in order to facilitate their access to employment.

The Directive expands the concept of discrimination in respect of disability in that employers must not only refrain from discriminating but also must take steps to accommodate people with disabilities in the workplace to ensure that they are treated equally. This concept of reasonable accommodation is the keystone of fighting discrimination on the grounds of disability. Reasonable accommodation is not a positive action left to the discretion of public or private operators, but an obligation whose failure can constitute unfair discrimination.

The mainstreaming approach is of course not only relevant for people with disabilities. The concept has already been applied for several decades in the field of gender equality. Also other groups such as migrants and ethnic minorities, low skilled, ex-prisoners, and other disadvantaged groups could benefit from this

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<sup>6</sup> Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation. Official Journal L 303 , 02/12/2000 P. 0016 – 0022.

approach. In this context, it is particularly interesting to consider the employment rates of prime-age highly educated men (age 25-49) in the Member States<sup>7</sup>. In all Member States except Sweden (87.4%), the employment rate of this group was either about, or more than, 90% in 2004. This means that, in order to achieve the Lisbon employment targets, vulnerable groups need to be better integrated into the labour market. For efficiency and equity reasons, the promotion of the mainstreaming approach should target simultaneously all relevant vulnerable groups.

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<sup>7</sup> It can be assumed that the employment rate of non-disabled high educated men between 25 and 49 years old will even be higher but these statistics are not available.

### III. The new Employment Guidelines 2005-2008 and their potential for disability mainstreaming

#### III.1 More and better jobs

Reflecting the revised Lisbon Strategy, the new Employment Guidelines identify three core objectives which Member States' policies shall foster in a balanced manner: achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work and strengthening social and territorial cohesion:

*Guideline 16: Implement employment policies aiming at achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion.*

These core objectives are of general relevance with regard to the situation of disabled people in the labour market.

- Full employment

As one in six of the EU working-age population has a disability<sup>8</sup> of some sort and given the low employment rate of this group, increasing the employment rate of **disabled people contributes significantly to the Lisbon objective** of an employment rate of 70% by 2010. People with disabilities are a much-underused source of labour in Europe, which could contribute to overall economic growth. Raising employment and participation rates are vital for economic growth and social inclusion. This requires a good supply of labour and calls for a broad policy mix incorporating both demand and supply side measures.

- Improving quality and productivity at work

Not just more jobs, but better quality jobs, as was called for by the Council of Ministers at Lisbon and reconfirmed in Brussels in April 2005 should be pursued. This includes, in particular, satisfaction with pay and working conditions, health and safety at the work place, the availability of flexible work organisation, working time arrangements and the balance between flexibility and security.

This is in particular relevant for disabled people as a survey carried out by European and national disability organisations showed that disabled workers are more likely to be in low paid jobs and are often discriminated against in access to training and career promotion.

Only 15.7% of working-age people with disabilities in the EU 15 and 11.4% of those in the New Member States, who faced work restrictions (as regards the type of work, the amount of work, or mobility to and from work), were provided with some

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<sup>8</sup> This figure is based on the EUROSTAT survey on "Employment of disabled people in Europe in 2002" Statistics in focus, Theme 3 - 26/2003 in which 15.7 % of population aged 16-64 stated that they have a long-standing health problem or disability. As the definition of disabled people varies among Member States, there are no harmonised figures on the number of people recognised as disabled available for the EU.

assistance to work in 2002<sup>9</sup>. However, 43.7% of non-working persons with disabilities consider that they would need some form of assistance to work.

**Table 1: Working disabled persons with restrictions receiving assistance to work (%) in 2002.**

	EU15	New MS
<b>% receiving assistance to work</b>	15.7	11.4
<b>Type of assistance provided to work</b>		
Kind of work	37.1	51.5
Amount of work	13.1	33.3
Mobility to get to and from work	6.4	1.6
Mobility at work	2.7	3.3
Support and understanding by superiors and colleagues	14.8	6.1
Other	26.0	4.2
All	100.0	100.0

Source: Eurostat News release, 142/2003 of 05.12.2003

It is important to keep in mind that most people become disabled during their working lives and yet relatively very few return to work but go instead onto benefits, which constitute a substantial amount in Member States' social budgets<sup>10</sup>. In order to change this practice, employers should support their employees who become disabled in the course of their working career. Positive actions such as a period of leave combined with further training, change of their job descriptions or alternative assignments should be envisaged before considering the person to be invalid. In this context, it is important to propose these measures at an early stage.

Measures to address this issue should therefore include, among others, initiatives targeted at employers to ensure that their human resource policies also take more and better account of the needs of disabled employees.

- **Strengthening social and territorial cohesion**

Most social expenditure on health and social policies represents an investment in human resources with positive economic effects. Social policies should have sufficient financial resources in order to contribute to an increased labour supply and to be able to alleviate the difficulties faced by disabled people in accessing or remaining in the labour market.

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<sup>9</sup> Employment of disabled people in Europe in 2002, Statistics in focus, Theme 3 - 26/2003 and Eurostat News release, 142/2003 of 05.12.2003.

<sup>10</sup> Due to the different systems in Member States, no harmonised EU figures on the expenditure on disability benefits and other relevant schemes are available. However, one striking figure is that 2.7 million people receive sickness/disability benefits in the UK, twice as many people as those receiving unemployment benefits.

Access to a job, ensuring opportunities to acquire the skills necessary to facilitate participation in the labour market and remain in the labour market (reflecting in particular the wide use of ICT and the move towards a knowledge-based society), and the possibility to progress in terms of pay and qualifications are major factors for promoting social inclusion.

The Guidelines stress the need that Member States, in taking action, should ensure good governance of employment policies. Implementing disability mainstreaming in an effective way requires the active participation of employers, trade unions, public authorities, civil society and other relevant actors. This active participation should be organised in a systematic and structural way in order to ensure continuity in the pursuit of this important goal.

One of the most striking points from a survey among 24 Development Partnerships (DPs) under the EQUAL programme was that more than half of the DPs mentioned their composition and cooperative work as being the most important element in their achievement of good practice. The survey showed that the principle factor of success is often a very strong co-operation among public and private health and rehabilitation bodies, training organisations and enterprises' associations.

#### Examples

Access Ability in Dublin is an EQUAL DP with the mission to maximise employment opportunities for disabled people by addressing the structural, attitudinal and policy issues which currently prevent employers from recognising the abilities of individuals. It has created a comprehensive package of services for employers that enables them to take on a person with a disability without any attendant concerns or administrative inconveniences by providing a complete package of training and consultancy services.

The Hungarian Ministry of Employment and Labour supports so-called 'model programmes' that are essentially pilot programmes developed in close co-operation with non-governmental organizations and research activities related to the rehabilitation and employment of people with disabilities. Co-operation ensures that the results of these pilot programmes are channelled into mainstream policy-making and experiences are used for changing and improving measures.

The new Unizo (Flemish Federation of SME) service point promotes diversity plans which are a subsidy measure of the Flemish Community. Diversity plans encourage employers to review and adapt the traditional business policies in the field of recruitment, welcoming and training. The aim is to stimulate the work floor in its human resources management towards persons with disabilities, elderly people and persons with a different ethnical and cultural background. Furthermore, all questions about diversity management can be addressed to the 'diversity consultants' of the service point. The consultants also organise training for managers of SME's and translate the extensive literature on diversity management for the SME manager.

### **III.2 Priority areas in the new Employment Guidelines**

In the new guidelines, three priorities have been identified on which action should concentrate in order to address the policy objectives:

- Attract and retain more people in employment, increase labour supply and modernise social protection systems
- Improve adaptability of workers and enterprises
- Increase investment in human capital through better education and skills

The guidelines corresponding to these priorities bear a great potential for introducing the mainstream disability approach in policies and measures that will be formulated by Member States when addressing these guidelines. Following is an analysis of each of the guidelines in this respect with examples of Member States practices.

### **III.2.a Attract and retain more people in employment, increase labour supply and modernise social protection systems**

- *Guideline 17: Promote a lifecycle approach to work*

People with disabilities constitute a group which could offer **extra labour supply**. This becomes even more relevant since the share of the working-age population is decreasing due to demographic trends. In this context, it is important that policies target **both people with disabilities looking actively for a job as well as people with disabilities who have given up the job search**.

Policy makers and labour organizations should be aware that disabled women are at risk of double or multiple discriminations and therefore require special attention. Gender policies should take this element into account in order mutually **to reinforce** policies for disability mainstreaming.

As regards reconciliation of work and private life, the **provision of care services for people with disabilities should be available** in order to allow workers having a family member with a disability to continue to work. These provisions should be gender neutral in the sense that working men should also be encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities for leave or reduced working time to care for a relative with a disability.

Example:

The project "Developing entrepreneurship among women with disabilities in the Baltic States" managed by the Latvian Association of Disabled Women aims to promote the economic empowerment of women with disabilities in the Baltic States through the development of a small enterprise development strategy which specifically targets this group. The preliminary phase of the project involves the commissioning of a situation analysis on women with disabilities in small enterprises or those who wish to enter small enterprises in the selected countries. In addition to the situation analysis, case studies of successful women entrepreneurs with disabilities will be compiled.



- *Guideline 18: Ensure inclusive labour markets, enhance work attractiveness, and make work pay for job-seekers, including disadvantaged people, and the inactive*

In many Member States the benefit system provides few incentives for people with disabilities to start working due to the benefit trap and/or the risk of being excluded from the benefit system if they are not able to continue working. Therefore **disability benefit systems** should be reformed to **make work attractive** by for example continuing the payment of (reduced) benefits in case of work uptake. In addition, the disability benefit system should allow disabled people to return to disability pensions after a **trial work period**.

People with disabilities should also be able to **receive accurate information about the implications on their benefits status** if they pick up a job.

Examples:

Under the Irish "Back to Work Scheme" managed by the Irish Department of Social and Family Affairs, people on long-term illness and disability payments are allowed to retain a portion of their social security payment, in addition to their wages, when they move into full-time employment. The scheme is designed to provide a financial cushion to people getting long-term illness and disability payments who return to work for a minimum of 20 hours a week. In addition to their wage, participants can retain a percentage of their weekly social security payment for up to 3 years (75% in the first year, 50% in the second year and 25% in the third year). Secondary benefits may also be retained, subject to certain conditions. People taking up self-employment can retain their social security payment for a 4-year period (starting at 100% for the first year).

The UK has two particular programmes: the New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP) and a complementary programme called 'Pathways to Work'. Reforms have been introduced to provide more advice to incapacity benefits (IncapB) recipients with mandatory interviews and the appointment of personal advisors. The related pilot exercise 'Pathways to Work' is being rigorously evaluated and early indications are that in the pilot areas, there is improved job entry performance. New Jobcentre Plus offices are coming on line thus strengthening the capacity of the New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP).

The Danish 'Flex jobs' scheme permits disabled employees with reduced capacity to work to integrate into the labour market on an equal basis with non-disabled workers.

Although the disability perspective should be mainstreamed in employment policy and other relevant policy fields, **complementary disability-specific measures** are still needed to prevent any forms of discrimination and to break down barriers to the regular labour market as well as to provide support for people with disabilities who take part in mainstream programmes.

In addition to the transposition of the **EU directive on equal treatment in employment and training**, Member States should consider the opportunity to introduce more favourable provisions than those imposed by the Directive in order to eradicate discrimination. An example of more favourable provisions is the obligation for large organisations to draft an equality plan.

Awareness raising actions underlining the **benefits of a diversified society and workplace** should be intensively developed in order to reach all relevant actors.

Example:

As part of the activities of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (BMBWK) for the EU Year of Persons with Disabilities (2003), department II conducted a survey in November 2003 on the topic of “vocational training for young people”. The aim of this survey is to hold a public discussion between school and extra-school partners on the existing possibilities in educational establishments and enterprises for providing disabled young people with the skills they need in order to exercise an occupation. A panel discussion will give social partners, representatives of schools and school authorities, organisations representing disabled people and ministries the opportunity to air their views on how models of choosing an occupation, vocational training and placement can help to improve the chances of disabled young people on the labour market. These models will be presented in more detail and discussed with a group of experts from education and business circles in the ensuing study groups.

In York (UK) the vocational training project 'MATES' financed by the ESF is helping to place disabled people into employment with the support of trained job coaches. The latter train colleagues to become workplace mentors for the disabled worker so that support is maintained when the job coach withdraws.

- *Guideline 19: Improve matching of labour market needs*

**Employment services** should in a **proactive way** take into account the heterogeneous needs of people with disabilities and be accessible for them. This means that employment offices and services should be fully accessible and moreover that their **information and communication actions** should be adapted to disabled jobseekers. When necessary, **personal support** should be available. In addition, in order to ensure that these services take into account the needs of people with disabilities, it is necessary to develop **disability awareness training for both staff and managers**.

It is also important that employment **measures are regularly assessed** from a disability perspective and that the **impact** of the measure on the situation of disabled workers is evaluated.

**Indicators** to assess the impact on disabled people should be put in place. A good indicator could be the percentage of disabled participants in a particular employment scheme as well as the inflow rate into employment compared to inflow rate of non-disabled participants after finishing an employment scheme. The data collection should be done in a systematic way.

Examples:

A 9-day course for training employment consultants in the Czech Union for supported employment organized by the Training and Information Centre of the Czech Union for supported employment aims at improving the skills and competences of employment consultants in counselling disabled people.

The Irish public employment service FAS manages a grant scheme for job seekers who are deaf or who have a speech impairment and are attending job interviews. These job seekers may apply for funding to have a sign language interpreter to attend the interview.

**Mobilisation of local communities** in increasing employment is crucial. Local authorities and organizations operating at the local level are best placed to translate national and regional strategies into action on the ground. Local actors can also best understand local conditions, aspirations and needs regarding the situation of people with disabilities. Moreover, it is at the local level that most services are provided to help integrate people with disabilities into the labour market and into society. Therefore the principle of mainstreaming should be considered as a key priority for organizations active at the local level.

The **social economy** is an important generator of employment and can provide many employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Employment in the social economy often allows greater flexibility and individualised support, which contribute to eliminating barriers to employment for disabled persons.

Examples:

Hungarian labour centres can launch so-called integrated labour market programmes based on local needs and promoting the employment of disadvantaged groups, including people with disabilities. These programmes build upon a synergy of employment services and other active measures, and allow for a flexible combination of training, subsidised employment and psycho-social support services adapted to the needs of the target group.

The recently adopted Lithuanian law on social enterprises aims to improve employment opportunities for persons from disadvantaged groups. 40% of employed workers in social enterprises should be persons from disadvantaged groups such as lone parents, older people, disabled people, long-term unemployed, etc. The wage compensation is 50% of the gross salary and 60% for people with severe disabilities. This support is limited to one year except for people with disabilities who may receive it for longer periods. Social enterprises with no less than 50% of disabled workers can have the status "social enterprise for disabled" and in this case can receive additional State financial support, notably for the adaptation of work premises, for administrative expenditures and transport costs and for personal assistance.

### **III.2.b Improve adaptability of workers and enterprises**

- *Guideline 20: Promote flexibility combined with employment security and reduce labour market segmentation, having due regard to the role of social partners*
- *Guideline 21: Ensure employment-friendly labour cost developments and wage-setting mechanisms*

Initiatives at workplace level for flexible, **individual based solutions** in terms of working hours, work place adaptation and access to technological assistance, all facilitate employment for disabled people. In many cases, these adaptations lead to no or only few additional costs.

It should be underlined that the EU directive on equal treatment in Employment and Training obliges employers to provide **reasonable accommodation**. Taking into account the disability perspective **as from the conception of a project**, will reduce the need for further adjustments. Training measures on accessibility targeted at architects and engineers would in this perspective be very useful.

The above-mentioned initiatives should be implemented in **cooperation** between the employers and employees. The **social partners** have therefore a crucial role to play in increasing the adaptability of the workplace.

**Corporate social responsibility** often includes actions in favour of disabled people and provides a positive contribution to breaking down barriers in access to the labour market for people with disabilities and in changing the attitudes of employers and co-workers. CSR initiatives should receive the necessary attention and be followed on a **large scale** in order to use their full potential.

The **fight against accidents at work** should be further increased. It is also important to pay more attention to situations where the safety of a person may be in danger due to her/his disability.

**Job retention** schemes are important for people who become disabled during their working life. **Innovative and flexible forms of work organisation** can contribute to achieve this goal.

Examples:

A special grant is available from the Irish public employment services FAS for employers in the private sector to re-train workers who acquire a disability in the course of their working lives so that they can continue to work in the same company. The grant is supported by a significant national media advertising campaign.

In Spain, income tax credits are granted to disabled workers.

Many disabled people are helped to work by other people in their daily life. Given the tax and benefits structure, these jobs are often not declared. Tax and benefit systems should therefore provide incentives **to transform these jobs into regular employment**. Regular employment does not only provide an increased social protection, but often leads also to more training opportunities for the employees concerned, which would also be beneficial for disabled people.

Sheltered work and other employment aids can create more and better job opportunities for disabled people. Nevertheless, it is important that at the same time **measures facilitating the transition from sheltered employment to mainstream employment** are also developed.

Some disabled people prefer setting up their own company given the difficulties of finding a job. Although entrepreneurship **grants** for disadvantaged groups to create their own businesses are available in most Member States to disabled people, these do not always take into account the **specific needs** of disabled people, and in particular the extra costs linked to their disability (transport, accessibility of ICT equipment...).

Example:

The Greek public employment service OAED provides subsidies for new self employed persons. The amount of the subsidy is increased for persons with disabilities.

### III.2.c Increase investment in human capital through better education and skills

- *Guideline 22: Expand and improve investment in human capital*
- *Guideline 23: Adapt education and training systems in response to new competence requirements*

People with disabilities should have better access to education and special measures should be taken to enable disabled children to attend **mainstream education**.

Life long learning initiatives should **systematically include a special focus on the needs of people with disabilities** and training providers should look proactively for potentially interested disabled people and widely advertise their activities to them. In some cases, greater flexibility in the organisation of training activities should be provided. Furthermore, the EU directive on equal treatment in employment and training is relevant in this context and obliges training providers to foresee **reasonable accommodation** for people with disabilities.

**Distance learning** can be useful for people with disabilities, but should complement and **not replace** initiatives to make **training accessible**. Making transport and buildings accessible to people with disabilities would be a better option in most cases and makes the people concerned more familiar with the labour market environment and increases their social inclusion.

Equal development partnerships have shown that 90% of people underestimate their own competences upon initial assessment. **Validation of existing skills including non-formal and workplace learning** can also be a good tool to empower people with disabilities and promote their integration into society.

Examples:

In Germany, the joint initiative "**JOB – Jobs ohne Barrieren**" ("jobs without barriers") has been launched. The German Government, employers, trade unions, disability associations and organizations, institutions responsible for rehabilitation and other institutions and authorities at the regional and national level cooperate to promote the training and employment of people with disabilities.

In Sweden, 'folk high schools' arranged 'adjustment courses' to provide social and practical skills training for disabled adults and 'activation courses' in cooperation with disability organisations. The Swedish National Agency for Special Educational Support provides annual funding for the folk high schools and higher educational establishments. This is supplemented by grants for disabled students and a special programme 'Added Value' which is a Development Partnership with EQUAL funding: it deals with all disadvantaged groups but gives particular attention to disabled people. Under this scheme, social enterprise workplaces are created to provide work-related experience to enhance

employability.

In Hungary, the normative state support of adult training for people with disabilities is twice as high as the general normative support. Accredited training institutions that design and organise training courses for disabled persons can apply and receive this state support. The Ministry of Education organises each year a communication campaign to increase the number of students with disabilities taking part in higher education.

Ergonomic improvements have been incorporated in the new certification system for vocational training centres in Greece (responsible authority: Greek Ministry of Employment and Social Protection). The objective here is to meet the requirements of today's vocational training needs and in particular to implement the mainstreaming principle for people with mobility problems and disabilities of the sensory organs in accordance with the Ministry of Environment's regulation on "Designing for all". In addition, the allowance for people with special needs is 5€ compared to 3.5€ for other unemployed job seekers.

#### IV. Conclusions

It has been demonstrated that almost all employment policies and measures are relevant for the situation of people with disabilities. A systematic incorporation of a disability perspective is therefore a very powerful approach to improve the integration of disabled people in the labour market.

However, mainstreaming is still rarely applied. Many responses to the questionnaire pointed out measures and small-scale projects which target in a rather isolated manner disabled persons, but which are not linked to larger employment policy strategies. It seems that the concept of disability mainstreaming is still not yet well enough known to key policy makers and that consequently it is not applied. . It might therefore be important to stress the link between mainstreaming and anti-discrimination, the latter being a legal obligation, and to increase guidance in this respect for policy making institutions in order to ensure a genuine implementation of the mainstreaming principle.

The new Employment Guidelines give to Member States and Social Partners the opportunity to take a fresh look at these issues and to improve disability mainstreaming. Member States should ensure that their policy priorities identified in relation to the Employment Guidelines addressing the integration of disabled people into the labour markets will be reflected in their future strategic orientations for the use of the European Social Fund. The reinforced process of mutual learning will allow them to learn best practice from each other, in continuation of the exchange of best practices in previous peer reviews at EU level<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Previous peer reviews covered the subjects of "Support for the integration of Disabled People into the Labour Market through the *Arbeitsassistenz*-Programme" (Austria, 2001) and "The use of new technology in the employment of disabled people" (Spain, 2003).