



## Report on the employment of disabled people in European countries

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### Background:

The [Academic Network of European Disability experts](#) (ANED) was established by the European Commission in 2008 to provide scientific support and advice for its disability policy Unit. In particular, the activities of the Network will support the future development of the EU Disability Action Plan and practical implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.

This country report has been prepared as input for the *Thematic report on the implementation of EU Employment Strategy in European countries with reference to equality for disabled people*. The purpose of the report ([Terms of Reference](#)) is to review national implementation of the European Employment Strategy from a disability equality perspective, and to provide the Commission with useful evidence in support of disability policy mainstreaming. More specifically, the report will review implementation of EU Employment Strategy and the PROGRESS initiative with reference to policy implementation evidence from European countries, including the strategies addressed in the EU Disability Action Plan (such as flexicurity and supported employment).



## PART ONE: GENERAL EVIDENCE

### 1.1 Academic publications and research reports (key points)

The survey carried out by the [National Statistical Service of Greece \(NSSG\)](#): “[People with Health Problems or Disabilities](#)” (2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2002), constitutes the latest available measurement of employment rates with regards to disabled people, looking as well at the kind of assistance provided to disabled people at work. It is characteristic that this survey constitutes at the same time the most recent measurement of the population of people with disability or health problems in Greece in itself, while most recent household census regarding income and living conditions does not include data collection and analysis on the basis of disability.

According to the survey, 18.2% of the Greek population has a health problem or disability, half of which concerns people over 65. In comparison with the general population, the unemployment rate for people with health problems or disabilities was lower at 8.9%, compared to 9.6% of the general population in 2002. Nevertheless, the most recent labour force survey (2007) shows a general decrease of the unemployment rate in Greece at 8.3%, however no data collection was undertaken (within or outside this survey) to indicate any change or progress in the employment of disabled people.

The 2002 survey also showed that 84% of disabled people or people with health problems are economically inactive, compared to 54% of the general population. 40% of the economically inactive disabled people believe that they face social exclusion as a result, given insufficient benefits, unemployment and inadequacy of social services.

Over half of the people with disabilities that are economically inactive claim that they would or have encountered problems at work. A third claim that they would need some form of assistance at the workplace. The most commonly expressed form of assistance is support and understanding from superiors and colleagues.

The same piece of research recorded the types of assistance that disabled people receive at the workplace:

27.9 % receive assistance with the object of their work; 18 % receive assistance with the quantity of the workload; 1.5% with accessing work; 13.2% with mobility within and during work; 20.2% receive support and understanding; Other form of assistance 16.4%; 2.8% did not reply.

Although this statistical survey is important in identifying the percentage of employment among disabled people, it does not provide any further information on the characteristics of the groups of employed/unemployed/ economically inactive, such as education level/ qualifications, age, gender or type of impairment, nor does it provide any description of the different sectors or kinds of employment disabled people are engaged in. Furthermore, given the scope of the poll/ census, it fails to unpick qualitative elements for instance with regards to how people find employment, if there are any obstacles entering the market as well as inside the workplace, what are the obstacles perceived by unemployed/inactive people, who provides assistance at work and how.

A more recent [national study](#), undertaken by the [Ministry of Internal, Public Administration & Decentralization](#) (September 2006), aimed to identify the obstacles encountered by disabled

employees in the public sector and on that basis to provide guidelines for best practice. It was the first systematic data collection on the number of employees with disabilities that work within the public sector, carried out within the framework of improving the efficiency of public services through facilitation of human resources (enhancing employee rights and conditions of work).

885 public agencies responded to questionnaires, regarding the number of disabled people employed and the kinds of issues/ obstacles they encounter within their working environment. Out of those, **284** employ disabled people and **501** do not. This amounts to **2.232** employees with disability.

With regards to obstacles encountered by the employees, 19 public agencies reported issues occurring while carrying out their work, such as lack of accessible computers and software, inaccessible office space and telephone devices. 16 report obstacles concerning the accessibility of the workplace, such as lack of or inappropriate ramps to enter the building as well as within, such as lack of accessible WC, lack of parking for people with disabilities, and inadequately accessible elevators.

Furthermore, 16 public bodies refer to lack of option for flexible working hours, and 11 to demands for more special leave, annual leave, leave for doctors' appointments, and sick leave. 11 report other issues, such as earlier retirement, working closer to home, and difficulty in travelling to and from work in periods with really high temperatures.

The study concludes with recommendations for policy given the issues that arise. The Ministry of Internal affairs urges all public agencies/ services to comply with anti-discrimination legislation regarding reasonable adjustments in employment. There is however no mention of how such efforts can be enhanced through governmental measures.

There is furthermore, established policy that allows for employees to choose the most suitable working hours for them (number ΔΙΑΔΠ/Γ2γ/οικ. 1692/27-6-06). Directors and managers are requested to consider and allow for further individual requests. There is similarly entitlement of disabled people to special leave, according to public employee code of practice.

The lack of in-depth consideration of guidelines for improvement is an evident shortcoming of the study, particularly as inadequate implementation of law prevents improvement in the first place. Reciting back is of questionable real effect. In depth qualitative research into the organization, directors approaches, interactions with staff and the experience of disabled people would provide a better starting point for exploring reasons and factors that affect implementation of the law, so as to provide more detailed, practical and persuasive guidelines.

The report by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (2007) follows-up the level of compliance of public services with their duty to submit on a yearly basis plans for promoting accessibility of public buildings, within specific timeframe, and under monitoring by the state. [The study is based on the case of public services in the municipality of Larisa](#). The limited sample of the study is a considerable drawback in monitoring implementation of the legal duty, firstly, and secondly in appreciating the extent of inaccessibility of public services.

The majority of the public buildings assessed have partial accessibility, which ends most of the times with the placement of a ramp. The elevators, grails, stands, parking spaces and WC accessible to disabled people exist only in few public services, where they do not always



match to given standards of accessibility.

Furthermore, most of the services, despite their shortcomings in terms of accessibility, do not have specific action plans for the necessary adjustments. Despite legislative regulation (article 28 of Law 2831/2000) that requires measures to secure accessibility, public buildings are not suitably adjusted.

Moreover, the public services assessed did not operate a distinct unit to oversee implementation of accessibility standards as required by law (article 12 Law 3230/2004 (Official Journal of the Hellenic Republic 44/A/11-2-2004) or the units were not operating properly due to lack of staff and strategic planning.

The recommendations laid out in the study involved the mobilization of the ministerial units responsible for accessibility issues to provide constant information to the relevant units within public services regarding this, through internal flow of information but also through information campaigns. Furthermore, they are urged to participate in the planning of the necessary adjustments to the buildings falling under their jurisdiction. They should initiate actions but also penalties for public services failing to comply.

Turning to the private sector, a recent survey by MDA Hellas under the partnership “ε-ΠΙΜΕΝΩ” (“I-insist”) (2007), presented a picture of employment of disabled people in the open market.

According to Greek legislation private companies with more than 50 staff are required to employ disabled people at the percentage of 8% of the total staff. Nevertheless, the fact that only 20% of the surveyed companies with more than 50 staff employed disabled people shows that the law is not implemented.

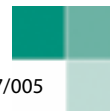
Only 20% of private businesses had ramps inside their building and another equal percentage provided accessible toilets.

Furthermore, 60% of the companies that do not employ disabled people stated that they would do so only under the condition that the salary of the disabled employee was co-funded or entirely paid by the state. This is indicative of negative perceptions of disabled people as employees, or disbelief about their skills. The change of attitudes and culture is crucial here in overturning employment only under “special conditions” to employment on equal terms.

A poll carried out by an independent research company ([VPRC](#)) between 8/12/2003 and 16/01/2004, confirms equally low levels of employment of disabled people in the private sector. Among 360 businesses that were surveyed, with 32,929 staff in total, there were only 67 disabled employees (0.2%). When asked the reasons why companies employed disabled people, 38% of the companies replied that they did so as they were required by the law, 33.3% as according to their own policy with regards to Corporate Social Responsibility, 9.5% because they entrusted the high performance of the employee, and 9.5% for random reasons.

Even though 55% of the companies of the sample were aware of specific funding programs for the employment of disabled people in the private sector, only 14.6% had considered to employ a disabled person.

Overall, there has been apparent lack of systematic research with regards to the employment of disabled people. Research so far has also been overwhelmingly quantitative, limited therefore to the mere identification of the percentage of disabled people at work, and a list



of obstacles or kinds of assistance within the workplace. The nature of the research has not allowed an open exploration of the experience of disabled people expressed directly by them. In-depth understanding of employment conditions, experiences and obstacles in the labor market from the point of view of disabled people themselves, as well as in-depth analysis of the point of view of employers/ public sector managers would allow in turn more concrete and powerful recommendations for good policy and practice.

## 1.2 Employment statistics and trends (key points)

As far as the General Greek Population is concerned, according to the [EUROSTAT](#), in 2005, total employment rate amounted to 60.1%. Thus the target set in the National Reform Programme 2005–2008 was achieved, whilst the upward trend in 2006 (61%) is a positive step towards achieving the targets of 62.5% in 2008 and 64.1% in 2010. This increase stems from an increase in the employment of persons over 25 years old and an increase in the employment of women. Regarding women, their employment rate improved, increasing from 46.1% in 2005 to 47.4% in 2006. However, it continues to be lower than the corresponding rate of men (74.6% in 2006 compared to 74.2 in 2005).

In 2006 the activity rate of the population aged 15-64 was 67%, showing a small increase in relation to 2005 (66.8%). The activity rate of men was 79.1%, slightly less in relation to 2005 (79.2%). The activity rate of women was 55.0%, higher than 2005 (54.5%), but much lower than the corresponding rate of men.

The employment rate of older workers (aged 55-64) improved and amounted to 42.3% in 2006 compared to 41.6% in 2005. The employment rate of women in this age group (26.6% in 2006, 25.8% in 2005) was also very low compared to the corresponding rate of men (59.2% in 2006, 58.8% in 2005).

The steady downward trend of unemployment continued in 2006 and reached 8.9%, compared to 9.8% in 2005. The downward trend continues through 2007, approaching 8.1% in the 2nd quarter of the year, compared to 8.8% in the corresponding quarter of 2006, according to the latest available data of the National Statistical Service of Greece (NSSG). Specifically, in 2006 male unemployment rate in Greece was 5.6%, lower than the corresponding rate in 2005 (6.1%) and it is further reducing to 5.0% according to data of the 2nd quarter of 2007 (2nd quarter 2006: 5.6%).

Women's unemployment rate dropped to 13.6% in 2006, from 15.3% in 2005 and it is further reduced to 12.6% according to data of the 2nd quarter of 2007 (2nd quarter 2006: 13.4%). It should be noted that the drop in unemployment, particularly that of women, is larger than expected. The structure of unemployment per age group shows higher rates of unemployment among young people aged 15 – 24. The unemployment rate of young people in 2006 was 25.2%, down from 26% in 2005.

In respect of the disabled employees in Greece, according to the latest research of the [National Statistical Service of Greece](#) (NSSG) about "People with Health Problems or Disabilities", that took place during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2002 (unfortunately, there is no updated research available at the moment), the 18.2% of the country's population has a health problem or a disability, and more than half of these people are over 65 years old. The rate of unemployment for these people is smaller than the corresponding percentage of the general population (8.9% against 9.6%).

Moreover, 84% of those individuals are economically inactive, against 58% of the general population.

The individuals that participated in this research were the 77,451 members of the 30,057 households that belonged to the sample of the workforce research.

This research aimed at consolidating information about the status of the people with disabilities within the labour market, the cause of their disability and/or health problem (illnesses or accidents within the workplace, road accidents, etc.), the consequences of those disabilities to the employee's ability to work, the necessary type of aids that are required in order for a disabled employee to be included within the labour market, and, finally, it examines the reasons for which those people face social exclusion. Half of the people mentioned above, face some kind of occupational problem, while the 40% of them believe that they face social exclusion problems, such as the usual phenomenon of insufficient benefits, unemployment and social services' insufficiency. One third of those people who are unemployed or economically inactive indicate that they need some kind of assistance within their workplace (including the support and comprehension on behalf of their colleagues and employers).

As it shows, the percentage of men with disability is lightly smaller than the respective percentage of women: 16.8% of men have a disability, while 19.6% of women have a disability; while the percentages of people with disabilities increase significantly as we proceed to older ages.

Moreover, there is an important difference between the percentages of individuals with disability, depending on their occupational conditions. In particular, the economically inactive people amount up to 83% of the disabled population, towards 58% that occurs on general population. On the contrary, the rate of unemployment for the individuals that have disabilities is 8.9% (lower than the 9.6% which characterize the general population).

Among persons (reporting disability) who are in work, differences are also visible according to the profession. The highest percentage of workers with disability (14.6%) is presented among farmers, cattle-breeders, etc. – the age effect may also interfere in this, as the workers of this category are considerably older.

In addition, according to the 36.8% of people who face chronic illness or disability conditions, the most common situations are those of cardiological problems, hypertension and blood circulation. Those problems occur more often to men (40.6% men, 33.7% women). Problems of arthritics and rheumatisms follow with 14.3%, while diabetes and respiratory problems cover 6.6%.

Finally, the percentages of people who were disabled from birth and those who were later in life are shown below:

Illness or disability from birth: 3.5%; Injury at work: 1.2%; Road accident or injury not related to work: 0.9%; Injury at home or during sports and vacations (not related to work): 1.1%; Illness related to work: 3.6%; Illness not related to work: 75.1%; No answer: 14.6%.

### **1.3 Laws and policies (key points)**

Employment law and policy with regards to disability in Greece is one of the most active fields of action for social inclusion of disabled people. The law involves both mainstream approaches and special activation policies for the employment of disabled people, although the former has only recently been a reality by transposing EU directives for equal treatment





and accessibility at work. Activation policies can similarly be argued to promote social inclusion/ employment in mainstream sectors, however such legislation remains within the discourse of “protection of vulnerable groups”, which can prove problematic in making a real impact in mainstream employment of disabled people on equal terms.

The most important Greek law on the field of Employment is the Law 2643/98 (Official Journal of the Hellenic Republic 220/A', published: 28/09/1998), which defines the quota scheme for the private and the public sector: “[Provision for the employment of special social groups and other clauses](#)”.

This law forecasts the obligatory placement of individuals from protected social groups to companies of private sector, public enterprises and organisations, but also in public services and local-government bodies, via objective criteria of placement based on age, familial & economic conditions, formal qualifications and percentage of disability.

(Note: The “disability percentage” is an official tool intended to represent the extent of disability which also corresponds to different disability entitlements. The percentage is decided by statutory commissions within social security bodies on the basis of medical information for each individual case.)

According to this law, in the Greek private sector the enterprises which have more than 50 employees are obliged to cover 8% of their staff with employees with disabilities and other socially sensitive groups. In the public sector, the corresponding percentage is 5%. The hiring process is coordinated by OAED, which is the Greek Manpower Employment Organisation and is responsible for the improvement of the vocational skills of the manpower through training and employment programmes. OAED acts as chief spokesman and executive of the Ministry of the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection in respect to the sector of Employment.

The individuals with minimum disability percentage 50% -provided that they are registered in OAED's records of the unemployed- are included in the categories of persons that are protected under the Law 2643/1998, for which is forecasted special hiring process.

Changes in Law 2643/1998 were enacted with a series of newer laws, that re-defined the distribution of working places for people with disabilities – by adding more favourable provisions (e.g. Law 2956/2001, Law 3051/2002, Law 3227/2004).

Moreover, in 2005, the principle of equal treatment was finally legally entrenched in Greece (according to the European Directive 2000/43/EK and the Directive 2000/78/EK). In particular, the Equality Law 3304/2005 (Official Journal of the Hellenic Republic 16/A', published: 03/02/2005): “[Equal treatment irrespective of racial or nationality origin, religion, disability, age or sexual orientation](#)”, adjusts the general frame that concerns the anti-discrimination, as follows:

The Law 3304 forbids any direct or indirect discrimination due to:

- a) racial or nationality origin, providing protection in the field of employment, vocational training, social insurance, education, sanitary care, as well as access to goods and services, and
- b) religion, disability, age or sexual orientation, providing protection in the field of employment and vocational training.

Based on this law, the offense and every other insulting action, as well as the assignment of a discriminating action, are also considered as discriminations. The law also foresees reasonable adjustments at the workplace in order to accommodate accessibility requirements of disabled employees.



In addition, a very important Greek law is the L.3488/2006 (Official Journal of the Hellenic Republic 191/A', published: 11/09/2006) which regards the "[Equal treatment irrespective of gender regarding accessibility in the field of employment, vocational training & evolution, terms & conditions of work and other relevant clauses](#)".

Finally, the new [Greek Employee Code](#) protected by the Law 3528/2007 (Official Journal of the Hellenic Republic 26/A', published: 09/02/2007), aims at the establishment of equitable rules that concern the hiring process and the occupational conditions of the public administration employees according to the principals of equality, meritocracy and social solidarity, and the need of ensuring the maximum of their work performance. Moreover, in Article 7 is mentioned that the employees are being hired based on whether their health enables them to perform the implementation of the duties of the corresponding place. The lack of physical abilities does not prevent the hiring process, provided that the employee, having the suitable and justified technical support, can fulfil the duties of their place. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that in Article 153 of the current law, the employee loses their job after the decision of the official council, if a physical or intellectual disability occurs, according to articles 100, 165 and 167 of the Code. The employee does not lose their job if their disability allows them to exercise other kind of duties.

According to the National Reform Programme 2005-2008 of Greece ([Implementation Report 2007, October 2007](#)), and with respect to the promotion of women's employment, in all regulatory public administration deeds (concerning the implementation of vocational training programmes, counselling, supporting services or employment promotion programmes) there is a quota of 60% in favour of women in all interventions carried out through the O.P. "Employment and Vocational Training".

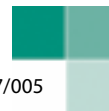
A special integrated intervention has been designed and is being currently implemented, combining counselling on how to enter into the labour market by either acquiring work experience, subsidization of an employment position, or setting up an independent business activity. By this special programme, a total number of 3,880 women will be benefited. In addition, women's participation is promoted with increased incentives and specific quotas in all of OAED's programmes. It is worth mentioning that in all New Self-Employed Programmes, women who have children under 6 years old, or who take care of relatives with disabilities, are given the option of using their own residence as the headquarters of their enterprise. As a result, a total number of 40,500 women benefited from the employment and self employment programmes during the period 1.1.2006 – 30.4.2007.

#### **1.4 Type and quality of jobs (summary)**

It is hard to pinpoint or compare the proportions of disabled people employed in different types of employment as no data exists to clarify this. This is an attempted estimation on the basis of available employment activation policies for disabled people, also weighted against traditional dominance of sheltered or supported employment and training vs "real" jobs.

With regards to activation policies for employment in the public sector Law 2643/1998, all public services, or procured agencies, are obliged to reserve 5% of available vacancies for vulnerable groups at any time these are publicised. It is worth pointing out that disabled people are here considered among other groups such as women, single mothers, young people, long-term unemployed and families with more than 3 children. The number of positions for disabled people is announced each time. However, the inadequacies of the law





were discussed in a parliamentary meeting reviewing the particular law in July 2007, where it was pointed out that out of 500 vacancies available for disabled people exclusively that year, only 300 were filled.

Further to this policy, there is entitlement to 1/5 of all vacancies of clerks, night guards, cleaners, door keepers, gardeners and bank officers for disabled people and relatives of disabled people, as well as families with more than 3 children (L. 1285/1982).

There is furthermore legislation that involves the obligatory employment of disabled people for 8% of available places in any company with over 50 staff. As research has shown, however, this is only implemented by 20% of companies in 2007.

Policies are not orientated to any certain sector, although there are separate programs for qualified science graduates, but place exceptions usually on sectors concerning night entertainment, temporary work, in some cases setting up businesses from home or businesses without a physical structure.

Schemes are also accompanied by support and counselling services relating to employment. There are six (6) specialized employment services for vulnerable groups in six main cities of Greece, and 3 specialized training units run under OAED, in addition to support services run in all OAED offices for the general population.

There is finally a new draft policy (January 2008) regarding the entitlement of all disabled groups to be provided with and run kiosks, which was previously limited only to disabled from war or relatives of victims of war.

In none of the above cases is there any distinction regarding the type of disability, however where disability is prioritised, a certain "percentage" of disability may be required, which may differ from time to time.

With regards to full time/ part time employment, it is generally the case that the availability of part-time work in Greece is very low compared to European countries, while part-time work is at the same time considered to indicate lower status. In 2007, 94.8% of all employees was in full time work, compared to only 5.2% part-time. In reply to the reasons asked for working part-time, out of the total 229,200 people in part-time work, 3,200 said that they were employed part-time because of disability or illness. It is difficult however to assume this is the total percentage of disabled people in part-time work, as disabled people may have also fallen in categories that replied that they could not find full-time work, did not want full time work, or were at the same time engaged in education.

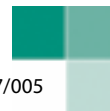
Against the backdrop of employment activation policies in the public and private sector, Sheltered Workshops run in most municipalities of Greece under the 2646/1998 law and the Jurisdiction of the National System for Social Care. The workshops are developed as alternative but viable forms of employment. They are in the majority of the cases orientated in making and selling small craft, such as gifts, jewellery, handmade rugs, candles, etc.

Within the field of mental health, legislation (L.2716/99) has enabled the operation of sheltered workshops for people with mental health problems into social enterprises, which run like productive and commercial units at the same time as being Mental Health units for the support, therapy and inclusion of people with mental health problems. The enterprises run with national and EU funds, donations, as well as income from sales, can be active in any

industrial sector, while members retain limited legal responsibility. There is no official record of the number of social enterprises running in Greece, however the National Centre for Vocational Orientation mentions nine (9) examples of such social enterprises across Greece, most of which are orientated in selling small craft, and one active in gardening, bakery and in running a restaurant.

Finally, there are more than 50 Centres of Vocational Training, and more than 20 Specialized Centres of Vocational Training for disabled people across most municipalities of Greece, established by law (2648/98). The Centres are services under the jurisdiction of the Institute of Social Protection and Solidarity, established by the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity as an agency for research, evaluation, and specialized implementations in the field of social policy.

The Centres aim to promote employment, through vocational training that corresponds to particular needs of the current labour market. They include social support and counselling to encourage the entrance or re-entrance of long-term unemployed and vulnerable groups to the labour market. Furthermore, the Centres implement programmes co-funded by the Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity and EU, with regards to employment and vocational training. Within the period 2004-2006, 23,000 unemployed benefited, among which 5,695 were disabled people. Vocational Training programs lasted between 150 hours to 400 hours and were orientated towards professions in health and welfare, finance and administration, informatics, tourism, farming sector, and technical professions. Disabled participants received 4.99€/hour, compared to 3.52€/hour that the general population received.



## PART TWO: SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

### 2.1 Reasonable accommodation in the workplace

Unfortunately, Greece has not yet come far regarding specific support provisions for making employment more accessible for the disabled employees.

Nevertheless, OAED, the Greek Manpower Employment Organisation ([www.oaed.gr](http://www.oaed.gr)), implements National Policy programmes for promoting the employment of disabled people through funding:

- a) businesses for creating new places of employment by employing a person with disability for a 4-year period; the first 3 years employers are funded (full-time: 25Euros/working day, part-time: 15Euros/working day) + 1 year which the business is required to sustain the employee within its workforce without being funded),
- b) necessary adjustments in the workplace up to 90% of cost; with max total cost 2,500Euros for each one of the adjustments (e.g. ramps, accessible toilets, accessible work-tables, etc.), and
- b) disabled people that are self-employed to create small businesses (2 years). There are similar activation policies for the whole unemployed population, which disabled people can also apply for.

In addition, according to the Circular of the Ministry of Internal, Public Administration & Decentralization (September 2006, "Data regarding the number of employees with disabilities that work within the Greek public sector – Problems in exercising their duties – Guidelines for dealing with the problems"), the public bodies and services are obliged to create the suitable working conditions for the employees with disabilities. Particularly, workplaces have to be accessible for wheelchair users (e.g. workstations with adjustable dimensions, accessible toilets), special technological equipments have to be available when needed (e.g. computers with special software & hardware, voice dictation systems, screen readers, special telephone operators for employees with vision problems), and work environment is important to be bright enough for facilitating employees with vision difficulties or deaf people who communicate by sign language or are "lips-readers).

Finally, employees with disabilities are given the choice of a flexible working timetable, as well as special facilitations when weather conditions do not allow them to come to work, arrive on time, or stay till the end of their shift.

### 2.2 Other activation policies

Employees with disability that have familial obligations are allowed of certain facilitations based on the current legislation. In particular, a parent with a minimum disability percentage 67%, is allowed extended duration of a decreased working timetable or work permit.

In addition, according to the law 3230/2004, the parents -of individuals with disability- who work as public employees have the right to be moved in public services or local authorities in the cities where their disabled child studies, given the existence of the following conditions:

- a) the disabled student studies in a higher education department (3<sup>rd</sup> level education), b) it is not possible for the child with disability to be transferred to a corresponding department of 3<sup>rd</sup> level education in the city where the parent works.



### 2.3 One example of best practice

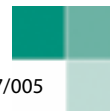
[COCO-MAT](#) is a Greek private company founded in 1989 in Athens and was originally involved in the production of bed mattresses made of natural raw materials. It now has 23 outlets throughout Greece and 8 more internationally, including China, Cyprus, Spain, the Netherlands, and Belgium. COCO-MAT's factory is settled in the industrial area of Xanthi, a picturesque and historic Greek town at the north of the country.

The vision of the founders of COCO-MAT has been to attain the top position worldwide in the manufacture of natural sleep products and to achieve a working culture of sustainability, embracing all types of human activity – giving equal chances to everybody irrespective of their nationality, colour, religion, or physical disability.

COCO-MAT's policy is based on sustainable development and is focused on four main areas: natural quality product, customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, social contribution.

Nine nationalities & 7 religions come together in COCO-MAT's personnel, as a colourful mosaic that produces new ideas. People with disabilities (mobility and cognitive disabilities), or refugees from former countries of the Balkans and Soviet, no matter where they come from (Greece, Holland, Spain, China, Belgium, Kurdistan, China, India, Russia, France, etc) they can always come together for a dinner in order to exchange their knowledge and their ideas. COCO-MAT's most expensive investment is this personnel that fulfils the dream of equal possibilities in the work in our days.

In addition, COCO-MAT has implemented contemporary management methods (EFQM Excellence Model), which aim to give people a better working environment and provide their customers with the best possible value and quality. They try to operate as a model of efficiency for employees and follow the written procedures of the Systems of Quality Management & Environmental Management. They place special emphasis on people, continuously processing the information gathered in relation to customer opinion, which is then communicated to employees. It is important to mention that the Director of the Total Quality Management of the department in Athens is a young active woman with a severe mobility disability. Moreover, the company has been awarded as the best European Total Quality Management model under her supervision.



## PART THREE: SUMMARY INFORMATION

### 3.1 Conclusions and recommendations (summary)

Concluding this report, it is important to mention again the most important law (2643/98, “[Provision for the employment of special social groups and other clauses](#)”), which defines the quota scheme for the private and the public sector of the Greek Labour Market. In particular, the quota of 3% is to be filled by registered disabled people and applies to any organisation operating in Greece with more than 50 employees. (In 1995, an administrative penalty was introduced against employers not respecting the law.)

Moreover, an act on Employment and Vocational Training (Law 1836/1989) provides the creation of sheltered workshops but as yet there are no decrees to implement the act and allow for a legal recognition and subsidy of sheltered workshops. The labour market, health and social authorities have been working together to plan an institutional framework for sheltered workshops, known in Greece as productive special centres (PEKE). Funding must be provided from the national budget. Nevertheless, no special rehabilitation measures or benefits are available; only preferential employment for certain categories of disabled people (e.g. the blind).

Overall, research is needed to evaluate the impact of policies and funding programmes intended to promote employment for disabled people. Data is needed to record the number of disabled people benefiting from these policies, the sectors they are employed in, the type (part-time/ full time) and position of employment, the kind of assistance funded within the workplace, how long they are retained by private businesses after the end of funding, what kind of businesses disabled people set up, and how many disabled people are employed as a result of vocational training. Sheltered workshops/ social enterprises also lack evaluation and potential for improvement, while it seems they are forgotten or ignored by social policy and in most of the cases are left to their own means.

### 3.2 References

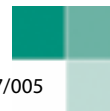
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