



## **Report on the social inclusion and social protection of disabled people in European countries**

**Country:** Italy

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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 Social Inclusion and Social Protection Strategies 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 open method of coordination in Social inclusion and social protection, and in particular the National Strategic Reports of member states from a disability equality perspective, and to provide the Commission with useful evidence in supporting disability policy mainstreaming.



## **PART ONE: SOCIAL INCLUSION PLANS (GENERAL)**

### **1.1 Please describe how and where disabled people are included in your country's published plans for social inclusion and protection?**

### **1.2 In reality, what major actions has your country taken and what are the positive or negative effects on disabled people? (policy or practical examples)**

Politics does not include disabled people completely; sector organisations and associations have just an advisory power, never a decisional one. Art. 5 of the 328 Act of 2000 in reality would oblige to agreement among the parts, but that is punctually not applied.

There are some cases in which the offices succeed in realizing a common policy, reaching superlative outcomes, such as the case of scholastic inclusion in which there is a collaboration among ASL (Local Sanitary Agency), Ministry of Public Education (for what concerns didactics), local public transport company, social services, etc.

Generally we can assert that people with disabilities do not have equal access to resources, rights and services. These services are very often lacking. However, people with disabilities can have access to most expensive services, such as the railway system service in which there is assistance only on the most expensive train and only in big stations.

### **1.3 What is the most recent research about disabled people's equality and social inclusion in your country?**

There are numerous publications on social equality and inclusion thematic both on paper and available electronically.

Among them can be found the Erickson editions; the Erickson Study centre works on problems of social rehabilitation and of social inclusion of people with disability, it is interested in research, consulting, training of operators and administrators of social and scholastic services, its publications (books, magazines, didactics software and on-line services) particularly concerning integration of disable people thematics, learning difficulties, help, psychology and social work.

Another important centre of study, research and experimentation which works on educational, system welfare and personal services is the foundation Emanuela Zancan. This foundation has been operating for over 40 years and carries out its activities thanks to the collaboration of many Italian and foreign scholars and experts, it collaborates with state bodies, regions, provinces, sanitary agencies, municipalities, universities, Italian and international study centres and private subjects. The books of the collection "Documentations on social services" are very relevant, they are published periodically and they deal with various topics: working and social placement of people with disabilities, social services operative instruments, local service unit, education, civil protection and voluntary service, integrate domestic assistance, integration of professionalisms, civil service, welfare continuity.

Finally there is a rich sitography with references to web sites which work on general information and which publish specific researches on disabilities.

The key results, which can be deduced from a big mass of publications, confirm the tendency towards a policy even more of mainstreaming and towards a better social inclusion inside the community, especially for what concerns the school (with the 517/77 Act) and the work environment (with the 68/99 and 104/92 Acts).

Another important aspect is the problem in regards to double discrimination: the person is discriminated both on the base of his/her disability and on the base of other factors (gender, age, sexual orientation, origin, religion, etc.), but it is often difficult to disclose because of the lack of words for expressing and denouncing it. In regards to this, some actions are taken by the association DPI (Disabled People International).

Within the projects financed by the European Programme Daphne “Measures to combat violence against children, young people and women”, the problems of multiple discrimination faced particularly by women with disabilities, are brought to light: most notably the dual discrimination of their being disabled and also a woman. DPI Italy has, in the past years, taken part in initiatives and organized activities to promote education and advocacy of disabled women.



## PART TWO: INCOMES, PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

### 2.1 Research publications (key points)

Italia Lavoro S.p.A. operate as a public instrument of the Ministry of Welfare, for the promotion and management of the actions in the fields of labour, occupation and social inclusion policies. Based on the last report ILO 2008 (International Labour Office) "The right to decent work of persons with disabilities", published in occasion of the international day of disabled people, there is emphasis that the disabled people (as a group) feel the effects of disproportionate levels of poverty and unemployment.

Afterwards It is necessary to understand that promoting the rights and dignity of people with disabilities means to enrich individuals, society and economies. Meanwhile, in the reality of daily work, disabled people have to face difficulties of various kinds and entities: low qualifying and low income jobs and the impossibility to enter into the highest level of the carrier. People with disabilities also face several logistic difficulties: in transportation (to reach work places) and in the office (prejudices among colleagues and the paradoxical risk to lose some "benefits", such as inability allowance) as soon as they start the job.

The sixth report edited by Caritas and by Zancan Foundation is entitled "Vite fragili, Rapporto 2006 su povertà ed esclusione sociale in Italia" (Fragile life, Report 2006 on poverty and social exclusion in Italy). This report focuses on thematic of discomfort and social alienation in Italy. It dwells upon situations of fragility and the social vulnerability of children in earliest years and of their families, focusing particularly on specific discomforts (for difficulties linked to others countries origins, for disability conditions, school integration problems, etc.). The report analyses the actual state of services and, for every problem examined, it presents proposals and solutions based on public involvement.

### 2.2 Type and level of benefits (key points and examples)

There are different forms of pensions or benefits:

*Monthly benefit (allowance):*

This was instituted by article 13 of the 30 marzo 1971, n 118 Act and successively re-defined by 23 november 1988, n. 509 Decree (art.9).  
2008 Amount: 246,73€ for 13 months.

Conditions of entitlement:

- between 18 and 65 years of age;
- being an Italian citizen living in Italy or being a foreigner having a document of permission;
- having acknowledgement of invalidity from 74% and 99%;
- having an annual income not exceeding 4.238,26 Euros
- Being unemployed

The allowance is not compatible with other invalidity allowances supplied by other institutions, nor is it compatible with war, work and service allowances.

Also, by the 31<sup>st</sup> of march of each year the holders have to produce a periodical declaration relative to the subsistence of law requirements.



### *Frequency indemnity:*

It has been instituted by the 11 October 1990, n.289 Act. to help minors  
Amount 2008: 246,73 € per month.

#### Conditions of entitlement:

- up to 18 years of age
- being an Italian citizen living in Italy or being a foreigner having a document of permission;
- having been recognized as a “minor with persistent difficulties to carry out own function typical of the age” (L. 289/90) or a “minor with a hearing loss more than 60 decibel in the best ear”;
- frequency in a rehabilitation centre, or in professional training centres, employment centres or in every order or grade school;
- having a personal amount less than 4.238,26 Euros per year

This indemnity is supplied for the entire length of the attendance to courses, schools or rehabilitation cycles and it is not compatible with the accompanying indemnity.

### *Accompanying indemnity:*

Instituted by 11 February 1980, n.18 Act.  
Amount 2008: 465,09 € for month and for 12 months a year

#### Conditions of entitlement:

- It is supplied independently of the age;
- being an Italian citizen living in Italy or being a foreigner having a document of permission;
- having a total invalidity recognized, not being able to walk about in autonomy or without the help of a companion or to do with autonomy the normal life movements;
- not being recovered in an institute with the fee paid by the State.

Accompanying indemnity is not compatible with the carrying on of a job; it is supplied only for handicap, not considering the person's incomes and his/her age.

Within the 31st March of every year the entitled people have to write a periodical declaration relative to the subsistence of law requirements.

### *Social invalidity allowance:*

Instituted by art. 12 of the 30th March 1971, n.118 Act.

Amount 2008: € 246,73 per month for 13 months.

The only exception for what concerns the amount is represented by absolute blind people, for whom the invalidity allowance is € 266,83.

#### Conditions to be entitled for:

- age between 18 and 65 years;
- being an Italian citizen living in Italy or being a foreigner having permission paper;
- having a recognition of 100% invalidity;
- having a personal annual amount less than € 14.466,67.

It is compatible with the accompanying indemnity recognized to civil invalids not able to walk or not able to complete acts of daily life; but it is not compatible with other allowances granted for the same handicap caused by war, service or work.



### *Social allowance:*

Instituted by 355/1995 Act.

Amount 2008: € 395,59 per month for 13 months.

At the conclusion of 65<sup>th</sup> year the invalidity allowance and assistance allowance are changed into social allowance.

Besides the allowances above, people with disabilities benefit from tax relief for purchases and adjustments of goods like vehicles, technical, technological, information and computer help, on house adjustments and for the elimination of physical barriers etc.

The approximate number of recipients is about 11-12% of Italian population.

*More detailed information can be found at:*

- [www.handylex.org](http://www.handylex.org) collects and explains every Act regarding allowances and indemnities due to disability
- [www.inps.it](http://www.inps.it) through their circulated letters, this company makes annual adjustments, where necessary, to the monthly allowance amounts.

### **2.3 Policy and practice (summary)**

Earning money, and the issue of benefits, are not important political issues for disabled people. These issues are very marginal. And, when it comes to the annual financial Act it is often just for budget reduction or limitation; however, there has been a national fund recently instituted, for non self-sufficiency (even if the fund has a very limited budget).

In Italy, there have been important changes and modernizations in policies, EU directives and the UN convention, which have all resulted in cultural and political changes. Changes and modernization are very different from region to region, on the base of autonomies and regional disposals.

The Government is working towards the mainstreaming of policies, so that specific acts do not have to exist for disabled people; but there must be laws for everyone.

In general, there is not any encouragement for disabled people to have a job; people with disabilities are regarded more as an expense than a resource inside the community.

Today, allowance and benefits provided by laws do not permit autonomous life. Recently there is a discussion in Parliament of an Act which could grant an increase of invalidity allowances, to about € 580

The financial system cannot cope with eventual increases in the number of disable people or level of pensions.



## SECTION THREE: CARE AND SUPPORT

### 3.1 Recent research publications (key points)

The project brought on by “Agenzia per la Vita Indipendente” (Agency for Independent Life) of Lazio Region is very important; it was born after the actuation of the 162/98 Act, which provides the possibility to realize an assistance service self-managed by disable people, through projects in advance agreed with territorial services of Municipality and ASL. The main intent is to favour the developing of an integrated system of services to non self-sufficient disabled people, and to their families. It would be a system that is able to realize synergies among all the parties involved, a system which operates with different typologies of assistance that are available to the disabled party. It would be a unitary and articulate system whose final aim is to promote the developing of the culture of active and responsible citizenship of disabled people, by their progressive involvement into the designing of their way of life.

The project pre-establishes educational actions which aim to qualify and re-qualify the skills of ten operators (members and voluntary people). Other relevant activities are carried out, with actions dedicated to management analysis activity and to the re-setting of the organisations, in coherence with internal needs (workers and people satisfaction) and in line with the market demand (clients and operator/assistants satisfaction; disable people/employer).

The project underlines the necessity of the centrality of the disabled person, who can independently decide his/her life path and the allocation of essential services.

### 3.2 Types of care and support (key points and examples)

Nowadays the situation is defined by 328 Act of 2000, which marked a great cultural change in politics for people with disabilities. According to the current law, the services to person should be established with an individual life project written by an integrated evaluation unit, made up of: ASL, Municipality of residence, social operators and the disabled person, on the basis of residual abilities, evaluated according to the ICF and taking into consideration environmental factors as well.

They work on the whole territory in order to provide even more self-integrated services, to realize complete services which take into account the real need of each disable person.

Normally the disabled person should have the possibility to chose if he/she can ask for personal assistance at home, besides having the possibility to use rehabilitation services at home, or to use special structures like R.S.A. (Residenza Sanitarie Assistite) (Sanitary Assisted Residence) in which he/she can obtain specific services suitable to his/her kind of disability. Other structures are represented by Dopo di Noi, according to the 162 Act of 1998 which has modified the *104/92 Act*, which is possible to rely on when none of the relatives can directly care for the disabled person.

The services provided are very different depending on the region, which freely dictates their guidelines; but in general, according to national laws the public office should supply services to the person, everyone on the basis of its budget.

When specific typologies of services are not available and, in any case, are provided by the individual life-project, the public office provides a budget so that the disabled person can pay for the service needed amount.

The current system of care and support limit disabled people’s choices about where they live. Some care services can be supplied only by fixed modalities and that is especially due to regional autonomies provided by Italian law.



In theory, disabled people can choose to manage their own finance for care and support. However, the general point of view of public office is to supply services to the disabled person; the disabled person can freely choose how they spend their budget. In regards to buying services (which is an exception), this comes when the service cannot be supplied by the same public office or in case of experimental projects.

The quality care and support depends a great deal on the financial resources of the individual disabled person or their family, because the allowance and indemnity provided by the current financial law are not enough to cover the expenses that a disabled person must endure.



## PART FOUR: SUMMARY INFORMATION

### 4.1 Conclusions and recommendations (summary)

Over the last few years the situation is getting better thanks to the introduction of 328/00 Act, in which, for the first time, we find the concept of the personal life project. This Act puts the person with a disability and his/her family in the middle of service planning and of the real need of evaluation. So, the disable person becomes an active subject who decides on his/her own need(s) and he/she is also the crux of life project definition.

Still, the necessity is to realize the integrated services so that the project does not have problems in regards to external coordination.

At the moment, the most felt problem is surely multiple discrimination, which affects disabled people because of their disability and their being women, immigrants, gays, Muslims and so on.

The entire community and the policies must still work to produce necessary and urgently needed changes. A very vibrant wish, is that the disabled person and his/her family are put at the centre of social and welfare policies, and that they are seen as active subjects in society; that their societal contribution can be, and is, extremely enriching.

Besides it is necessary to give more protection and support to specific groups of people- those affected by multiple discriminations and particularly to women with disabilities, who remain not visible enough in their daily life, and who do not enjoy the same opportunities reserved to other women and to other disabled men. Also, the presence of deeply rooted prejudices which make them “unsuccessful women” is the engine which ignites violent actions towards disabled women without causes (on this important theme you could see the research brought on by DPI Italia on “Gender Identity and Disability”).

### 4.2 One example of best practice (brief details)

An important experience for Italy in the field of social inclusion is represented by the project “Consulenza alla Pari: un metodo per progettare una vita autonoma” (Peer Consultancy: a method to project an autonomous life). It has been financed by European Union, within the Programme “Action to favour peer opportunities of disable people”. With this project they wanted to enlarge the field of competencies of the people with disabilities working in Handicap Information and Documentation centres or at Information desks of organisations. In these contexts, the contact with other disabled people has brought up the necessity to promote services able to answer to the complexity of their needs of autonomy. The project is based on the belief that it is very important for the person to revise his/her life about disability in order to develop his/her life paths autonomously. The project realised an educational path for peer consultants for 24 disabled people with disabilities (20 scholar and 4 tutor), coming from 4 Centre and South Italy Regions (Lazio, Campania, Calabria and Sicilia). The participants came from conditions in which disabled people live in the most discriminated and social excluded contexts, where the nonexistence, or lack of services, makes it very difficult for a disabled people to have a chance to experiment with self-sufficiency and independent living. The aim of the project was to develop the empowerment process by peer consultancy methodology, in order to support autonomous and independent life of people with disabilities.

Not all scholars have reached skill levels required to become a “peer counselor”; in fact only 50% of them have obtained the right certification. However, all of them have built an individual autonomous life project. During the years DPI Italia has promoted the spread of this methodology inside organisations of disabled people and of their relatives, structures and services providing orientation and work placement of people with disabilities. Their methodology has also been disbursed inside universities.

The most significant example of best practice, and perhaps also the most unique, is at “Università della Calabria”, where for years the peer consultancy activity is inserted into the disabled student's services, provided by 17/99 Act. Trough this service the University continually aims towards the progression of the students’ social inclusion, paying close attention to their potentialities, transforming every limit into a stimulus to project, and make evident, the development of individual capacities.

### 4.3 References

General Information and specific publications on disabilities web sites:

[www.erickson.it](http://www.erickson.it)  
[www.superando.it](http://www.superando.it)  
[www.disabili.com](http://www.disabili.com)  
[www.superabile.it](http://www.superabile.it)

[www.fondazionezancan.it](http://www.fondazionezancan.it)  
[www.italialavoro.it](http://www.italialavoro.it)  
[www.unicef.it](http://www.unicef.it)

Web sites which collect experiences of good practices, in the sector of disability as well:

[www.osservatorionazionalefamiglie.it](http://www.osservatorionazionalefamiglie.it)  
[www.abcsardegna.org](http://www.abcsardegna.org)  
[www.lechiavidiscuola.it](http://www.lechiavidiscuola.it)

Web site of organisations of disabled people which collect personal life projects:

[www.dpitalia.org](http://www.dpitalia.org)

You should look at the publication of a DPI Italia project

Barbuto R., Ferrarese V., Griffo G., Napolitano E. e Spinuso G. (2006) Consulenza alla pari. Da vittime della storia a protagonisti della vita. Comunità Edizioni.

[www.vitaindipendente.net](http://www.vitaindipendente.net)

Law web sites:

Siti di carattere legislativo:

[www.handylex.org](http://www.handylex.org)  
[www.inps.it](http://www.inps.it)  
[www.lavoro.gov.it](http://www.lavoro.gov.it)