

Report on the employment of disabled people in European countries

Country: Greece
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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).

The first version of the report was published in 2008. This is the second version of the report updated with information available up to November 2009.

Summary of changes since 2008

New quantitative data:

An update on unemployment figures by the National Statistical Service has shown that unemployment reached 9.3% by the end of the first quarter of 2009. The percentage for the corresponding period in 2008 was 8.3%. There has not been any new quantitative data regarding employment/ unemployment rates for disabled people specifically, and in particular there has not been any update since National Labour Force Survey 2002.

New policy changes:

L. 3731/2008 par. 8, art.30, published in the Official Journal of Government 263A on 10th February 2009, extended disability categories eligible for reduced working hours (by one hour, with pay) for public sector employees with disability. The law update included people with last stage kidney failure, as well as parents with children with 67% disability and over. Previously, the policy for reduced working hours for public sector employees was restricted to people with visual impairments and paraplegia/tetraplegia, while the percentage of disability of children for eligible parents had to be over 67% (i.e. excluding those with 67%). It remains that spouses of people with disability can also benefit from reduced hours when the spouse has 100% disability.

On 1st April 2009 the Presidential Decree 37 was published in the Official Journal of Government 54/A, updating the law 3648/2008 (O.J.G338/29.2.2008) regarding entitlement to licenses for kiosks. This was previously restricted to disabled people identified as war victims, and has now been extended to all disabled people with 67% disability or over.

Furthermore, 2008-2009 marked the implementation of policies regarding the employment of disabled people. In 21st November 2008, on the basis of L. 2643/98 promoting placement of people with disability, the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection published a call for the employment of 5714 disabled people and people with 3 children and over in the private sector, operated through the Greek Manpower Employment Association (OAED) (Official Journal of Government 2371/B/21-11-2008). Similarly, the last call for the placement of disabled people in the public sector was published in 27th May 2008, (Official Journal of Government 981/B).

Finally, the Ministry of Education announced the employment of 50 educational staff with disability in Primary and Secondary education for the school year 2009-2010, on the basis of Law 3699/2008 article 26. (Protocol Number 67953 / Γ6, 12-6-2009).

New research evidence:

Research carried out by the Equal national thematic networks (2nd Cycle) in June 2008 in the private sector regarding “managing difference in the workplace” has been recently published. http://www.equal-greece.gr/e_details_2.asp?ethd=1&aa=8

The survey was conducted on a sample of 98 companies employing in total 18.487 people. The findings show that only 1.17% of all staff belong to any of the 14 vulnerable group categories (among them disabled people, immigrants, drug rehabilitated people, ex-prisoners and long-term unemployed). In particular, 72,4% of employers said they would not employ a person with mental health problems, while 32.7% would not employ people with physical impairments. In theory, however, 96% of companies believe corporate social responsibility would serve better the goals of the company for development and profit, while 96% also believe that people from vulnerable social groups should be given more opportunities for employment. In particular, 88.8% believe that the private sector is as responsible as the state for promoting the social and economic inclusion of people from excluded social groups.

The research findings give a concrete view of the difficulties disabled people, among other social groups, face in accessing employment. Although companies seem to recognise the role of private sector in promoting social inclusion, the reluctance they show in employing staff themselves seems to stem from a deep rooted disbelief regarding the knowledge and skills of employees from particular social groups (80% of companies believed this), as well as their ability to adjust to work environment and culture (70.4%). Employers also seem to think that employees from such backgrounds would be frequently absent from work, due to health or family problems (65.3%).

The economic crisis:

There is no available quantitative data to evidence the impact of the economic crisis on disabled people. In general, unemployment has risen by 1% within the last year, placing Greece in a less affected position in comparison with other European countries, while active labour policies for vulnerable groups have gone ahead. At the same time, on 22nd July 2009, the Ministerial Council approved a plan of action for the next three years for the provision of incentives for employment of disabled people specifically. The proposal addresses companies in the private sector as well as local authorities and plans to fund up to 75% of wages for the first year of employment. It also covers funding for adjustments in the workplace and for personal assistance/ support at work. The budget is up to 1million Euros for the period 1/8/2009 until 30/9/2013. <http://news.disabled.gr/?p=24641>

It remains to be seen if and how this will be implemented, in view of Government Elections on 4th October 2009 announced by the Prime Minister one month ago.

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](#)’ (2nd quarter of 2002), constitutes the latest available measurement of employment rates with regards to disabled people, looking also at the kind of assistance provided to disabled people at work. Although some years old, this survey provides 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 relates to people aged 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. By 2008 there was a general decrease of the unemployment rate in Greece at 8.3% (Labour Force Survey 2008) , while most recent figures (2009) demonstrate rise of unemployment to 9.3%. However no data collection has been 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 were economically inactive, compared to 54% of the general population. 40% of the economically inactive disabled people believed that they faced social exclusion as a result, given insufficient benefits, unemployment and inadequacy of social services.

Over half of the people with disabilities who are economically inactive claim that they would or have encountered problems at work. A third claim that they would need some form of assistance in 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 nature 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/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 survey, 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, 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 employed disabled people and 501 did 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 reported obstacles concerning the accessibility of the workplace, such as lack of or inappropriate ramps to enter the building as well as within, 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 disabled employees to choose the most suitable working hours for them (number DIADP/G2g/oik.1692/27-6-06). Directors and managers are requested to consider and allow for further individual requests. There is similarly entitlement for 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. Merely recording problems without proposing respective recommendations and measures is of questionable real effect in enabling implementation of law. 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 amounts, in most cases, to the placement of a ramp. Elevators, handrails, stands, parking spaces and WC accessible to disabled people exist only in few public services, where they do not always match given standards of accessibility. 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' ('Insist') (2007), presented a picture of the 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 an equal percentage provided accessible toilets. Furthermore, 60% of the companies that did 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.

Finally, research carried out by the Equal national thematic networks (2nd Cycle) in June 2008 in the private sector regarding 'managing difference in the workplace' has been recently published (2009).

The survey was conducted on a sample of 98 companies employing in total 18,487 people. The findings show that only 1.17% of all staff belong to any of the 14 vulnerable group categories (among them disabled people, immigrants, drug rehabilitated people, ex-prisoners and long-term unemployed). In particular, 72,4% of employers said they would not employ a person with mental health problems, while 32.7% would not employ people with physical impairments. In theory, however, 96% of companies believe corporate social responsibility would better serve the goals of the company for development and profit, while 96% also believe that people from vulnerable social groups should be given more opportunities for employment. In particular, 88.8% believe that the private sector is as responsible as the state for promoting the social and economic inclusion of people from excluded social groups.

The research findings give a concrete view of the difficulties disabled people, among other social groups, face in accessing employment. Although companies seem to recognise the role of private sector in promoting social inclusion, the reluctance they show in employing staff themselves seems to stem from a deep rooted disbelief regarding the knowledge and skills of employees from particular social groups (80% of companies believed this), as well as their ability to adjust to work environment and culture (70.4%). Employers also seem to think that employees from such backgrounds would be frequently absent from work, due to health or family problems (65.3%).

Overall, there has been an 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 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 could be complimented by 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)

Latest unemployment figures by the [Labour Force Survey 2nd quarter 2009](#) carried out by the National Statistical Service has shown that unemployment of general population reached 9.3% by the end of the first quarter of 2009. The percentage for the corresponding period in 2008 was 8.3%, marking a halt in gradual decrease in unemployment achieved in previous years.

According to the [EUROSTAT](#), in 2005, the 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). However, there is no corresponding data concerning disabled people.

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 2nd 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: 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 intervention. The law involves both mainstreaming approaches and special activation policies for the employment of disabled people, although the former has only recently become 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 outlines 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 and economic conditions, formal qualifications and percentage of disability¹. According to this law, in the Greek private sector enterprises with 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%.

¹ 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.

The hiring process is coordinated by OAED, the Greek Manpower Employment Organisation, which 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. Individuals with a minimum disability percentage of 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 whom special hiring process are applied. 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).

The latest implementation of Law 2643/1998 occurred in the period 2008-2009. On 21 November 2008, the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection published a call for the employment of 5,714 disabled people, and people with 3 or more children, in the private sector, operated through the Greek Manpower Employment Association (OAED) (Official Journal of Government 2371/B/21-11-2008). Similarly, the latest call for the placement of disabled people in the public sector was published in 27th May 2008, (Official Journal of Government 981/B/27-5-2008).

Article 2 of Law 3699/2008 regulating educational matters (O.J.G 267/A/ 20.11.2003) prioritises additionally the placement of qualified educators with 67% disability or over, as well as parents of disabled children, in special education units and inclusion classes in mainstream education.

An additional policy enabling employment of disabled people was published on 1st April 2009 in the Official Journal of Government 54/A (Presidential Decree 37), updating the law 3648/2008 (O.J.G38/A/29.2.2008) regarding entitlement to licenses for kiosks. This was previously restricted to disabled people identified as war victims, and has now been extended to all disabled people with 67% disability or over.

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:

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, offense and any other insulting action, as well as the assignment of a discriminating action, are also considered as discriminations. The law also foresees reasonable adjustments in 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](#)'.

Furthermore, 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. Article 7 notes that the employees are hired based on whether their health enables them to perform the implementation of the duties. The lack of physical abilities does not prevent the hiring process, provided that the employee, having the suitable and justified technical support, can fulfill the duties of their position.

Nevertheless, it is important to mention that under 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.

In addition, Article 50 outlined policy for reduced working hours (by one hour, with pay) for public sector employees with visual impairments and paraplegia/tetraplegia, as well as parents of disabled children with over 67% disability (excluding those with 67%) and spouses of disabled people with 100% disability. This provision was updated with Law 3731/2008 par. 8, art.30, published in the Official Journal of Government 263/A on 10th February 2009, extending disability categories eligible for reduced working hours for public sector employees with disability. The law update included people with last stage kidney failure as well as parents with children with 67% disability (and over).

According to the National Reform Programme 2005-2008 ([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'. The [2008-2010 National Reform Programme](#) made reference to disability and disabled people in three sections of the report, dealing with e-accessibility, education and social cohesion. There were few references to disability issues in the [2009 Implementation Report](#). In the context of the economic crisis and social cohesion, the needs of disabled people were noted in relation to support for self-employment, support for families and, briefly, education.

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. Under this special programme, a total of 3,880 women will benefit. 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 systematic 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 versus '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.

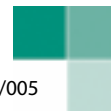
With regards to full time/ part time employment, it is generally the case that the availability of part-time work in Greece is very low compared to other European countries, while part-time work is at the same time considered to indicate lower status. In 2007, 94.8% of all employees were in full time work, compared to only 5.2% part-time. In reply to the reasons 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 operate 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.

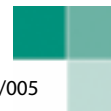
Within the field of mental health, legislation (L.2716/99) has enabled the operation of sheltered workshops for people with mental health problems as social enterprises, which operate as productive and commercial units at the same time as being Mental Health units for the support, therapy and inclusion 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 operating in Greece but the National Centre for Vocational Orientation mentions nine examples, most of which are orientated in selling small crafts, 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 for other participants.



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), implements National Policy programmes for promoting the employment of disabled people through funding:

- a) businesses for creating new employment by employing a person with disability for a 4-year period; the first 3 years employers are funded (full-time: €25/working day, part-time: €15/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 a maximum total cost of €2,500 for each adjustment (e.g. ramps, accessible toilets, accessible work-tables, etc.), and
- c) disabled people who 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'), public bodies and services are obliged to create 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 and 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 until the end of their shift.

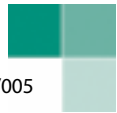
2.2 Other activation policies

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

In addition, according to the law 3230/2004, parents who work as public employees have the right to be moved to 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 (3rd level education), b) it is not possible for the child with disability to be transferred to a corresponding department of 3rd 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 and 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 states, 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.

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 recognised with the award of 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, more 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 cases are left to their own means.

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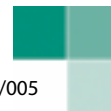
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Annex 1: quantitative data on the employment of disabled people

Year:	Absolute? (N)	Percentage (%)	Change (from previous year)
Disability rate	Not available	18.2%	last available data: National Statistical Service ' People with Health Problems or Disabilities ' (2 nd quarter of 2002)
Employment rate of disabled people	Not available	7.1%	last available data Nat.Stat.Service 2002, ibid.
Activity rate of disabled people	Not available	16%	last available data Nat.Stat.Service 2002, ibid
Inactivity rate of disabled people	Not available	84%	last available data Nat.Stat.Service 2002, ibid
Employment in open labour market	4.485.758 (general population)	53.5% (general population)	(Labour Force Survey 2nd quarter 2009 Nat.Stat.Service)
Employment in sheltered workshop	Not available	Not available	No available data
Reason for leaving the labour market due to disability or long standing health problem	Not available	2.5% (please note this corresponds to people leaving employment due to Work Accident. This is out of in total 1.8% cases of work accidents in 2007)	Nat.Stat.Service 2007 ' Work accidents '

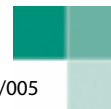
Year:2009	% Permanent	% Temporary
Permanent contracts vs. short term contracts	64% (whole population, Labour Force Survey 2nd quarter 2009 Nat.Stat.Service)	11.3% (whole population, Labour Force Survey 2nd quarter 2009 Nat.Stat.Service)

Year: 2009	% Full-time	% Part-time
Full time vs. part time jobs		6.1% (whole population, Labour Force Survey 2nd quarter 2009 Nat.Stat.Service)

Year:	Public sector	Private sector	(e.g. comment or give % employers meeting obligations?)
Fulfilment of employment quota (if it exists)	No available data on quota fulfilled even though active labour policies were implemented in 2008-2009	No available data on quota fulfilled even though active labour policies were implemented in 2008-2009	



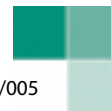
Participation in training of disabled people	14.5% (total percentage of all adult population engaged in training) (Nat. Stat. Service 2007 Training of Adults)	(e.g. comment or give number of people participating in vocational or work-related employment)
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Annex 2: 2008-9 laws and policies on the employment of disabled people

Name of law:	L. 3731/2008 par. 8, art.30
Date of entering into force:	10 th February 2009 Official Journal of Government 263/A
Objective:	Extension of reduced working hours policy to employees in the Public sector who are disabled or have children with disability
Impact assessment (positive/negative):	The rationale of the policy is to enable employees to support their family members through reduced working hours. When disabled employees have a non-disabled spouse they are not entitled to reduced working hours, as the spouse is deemed able to care for the children of the family. A criticism by disabled people is that the policy does not allow flexible/reduced working hours for reasons of disability per se (in cases other than paraplegia, vision impairment and kidney failure). In addition, other non-eligible informal carers (such as siblings, spouses of disabled people with less than 100% disability, or children of disabled parents) are excluded from the rationale, but in practice most care for their disabled family members.

Name of law:	Presidential Decree 37
Date of entering into force:	4 th April 2009 Official Journal of Government 54/A
Objective:	Provision of Licence for Kiosks to People with Disability
Impact assessment (positive/negative):	The responsibility for providing licences for kiosks lies with regional authorities as and when licenses become available. Disabled people, people with 3 children or more, as well as army officers who fought in national wars may apply. Candidates are assessed according to a system of evaluation. The effect of this law on the employment of disabled people is not as yet clear.



Annex 3: 2008-9 research/evaluation on the employment of disabled people

Publication details (author, date, title, etc):	Equal National Thematic Network 'Management of Difference in the Workplace' June 2008
Key findings from the research:	72,4% of employers in private sector said they would not employ a person with mental health problems. 32.7% would not employ people with physical impairments. Only 1.17% of the labour force in the survey belonged to any of the 14 identified vulnerable social group categories. Yet, 88.8% of employers believed that the private sector has major responsibility in promoting social and economic inclusion of excluded groups.
Comment or assessment:	The research findings give a concrete view of the difficulty disabled people, among other social groups, face in accessing employment. The reluctance of private sector employers in employing staff from so-called 'vulnerable social groups' seems to stem from deep rooted disbelief regarding the knowledge, skills and competence of employees from certain backgrounds. The findings suggest therefore that in order to accelerate employment of disabled people, there needs to be a real change of perception of disability. Active labour policies and monetary incentives seem inadequate in mainstreaming employment of disabled people on equal terms, if this is not accompanied by more qualitative measures such as awareness raising and equality training.