



Report on the employment of disabled people in European countries

Country: Malta

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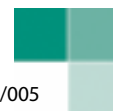
Background:

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

No new quantitative data in relation to disabled people and employment exists for the period 2008-2009.

New policy changes

Local policy

There have not been any new policies specifically related to disabled people and employment. However, the government adopted a tele-working policy in February 2008 aimed at enabling those working part-time or full-time to perform part of their work duties (where possible) from their home. Although the policy was mainly aimed at increasing the employment rate of women, it can also help disabled people participate in employment by providing more flexible working arrangements (Department of Employee Relations¹). However, there is also the risk of increasing disabled people's physical isolation since they will remain at home.

National policy

The National Commission Persons with a Disability (KNPD) at the time of writing has issued a draft policy document on employment and disabled people. The main recommendations of this policy are to:

1. Ensure that anti-discrimination vis-à-vis employment is enforced and implemented.
2. Increase working opportunities and choices available to disabled people while increasing the current quota from 2% to 4% but making it voluntary (provided there are valid reasons for non-compliance).
3. Introducing a comprehensive assessment of disabled people to better identify their strengths and weaknesses and to address the needs of each prospective disabled employee.
4. Reform present structures, such as educational institutions and providers of vocational training, to better prepare disabled people for the world of work.
5. Restructure day care services and set up sheltered workshops within mainstream settings for individuals who cannot work within the open labour market.
6. Increase disabled people's employment opportunities in self-employment, working from home, flexible hours and forming cooperatives.

KNPD is currently reviewing the feedback it has received from various stakeholders (unions, government agencies, employers, NGOS, ETC) and is in the process of publishing its final policy.

UN Convention

The Maltese government is still in the process of ratifying the UN Convention. In relation to Article 27, Malta has agreed that there should be an exemption in the case of employment of disabled people within the armed forces.

New research evidence

The most recent research on a nationwide scale that can give us an indication of the situation of disabled people within employment is the analysis of the data collected from the National Census conducted in 2005 by the National Statistics Office in Malta (KNPD 2009). This survey revealed the following facts:

- The employment rate of disabled people is much lower than that of non-disabled people with only 14.6% (3,295) of disabled people in employment compared to 48% (150,188) in the non-disabled population.

¹ http://www.mpo.gov.mt/info_downloads.html [Accessed 26 August 2009]

- Of disabled people currently in employment, a significant rate is involved in elementary occupations with a rate of 20.5% (689) in such occupations compared to 11.3 (16,958)% in the non-disabled population.

Differences between disabled people based on gender and type of impairment also emerge:

- Disabled women are least likely to be in employment with 7% (799) being in employment compared to 22.5% (2,496) of disabled men in employment. Moreover, disabled women involved in the care of the family or household remains the occupation most likely to be performed by disabled women with 34.6% (3,974) of employed disabled women doing this compared to 1% (115) of disabled men.
- The impairment group most likely to be in employment are those with a visual impairment with 23.1% (819) in employment. On the other hand, people with multiple impairments are least represented with 6.8% (248) of this group in employment.
- People with an intellectual impairment are the group most likely to perform elementary occupations with 66.2% (80) within those employed in this group performing such duties. In addition, people with a mental health condition also have a high representation in elementary work with 33.5% (65) doing this type of work.
- Representation of disabled people in high earning jobs remains low with occupations such as that of legislators, senior officials and managers comprising 7.5% (251) of the total disabled population.

The economic crisis

In a news release issued by the National Statistics Office (NSO 4/08/09²) in June 2009, it was reported that there was a significant increase in the unemployment rate. Compared to June 2008 when the number of registered unemployed stood at 5861, the number registered for June 2009 rose to 7273 – an increase of 6.16%.

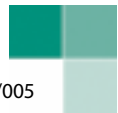
The same report indicates an increase in the rate of disabled people seeking full-time employment with 312 registering in June 2008 compared to 413 in June 2009 – marking an increase of 32.37%. It must be noted that this is only an indication since a number of disabled people may be in part-time employment. It should also be noted that it is not clear whether the increase has been the result of disabled people who were employed losing their jobs or the result of formerly inactive disabled people now registering for work.

The government's approach to employment and the recession has been to preserve existing jobs while investing in new initiatives that ensure employment.

As far as the employment of disabled people is concerned, as mentioned earlier, KNPD is proposing a revised policy from the "National Employment Policy for Persons with Disability" document drafted in 1996 in light of the new economic and social realities Malta is facing. Moreover, government agencies have also benefited from EU funding to establish programmes aimed at increasing the participation of disabled people in employment. Examples include:

1. The ME2! programme aims to provide disabled people with increased training and working opportunities. The project is managed by Agenzija Sapport, KNPD and the Employment Training Corporation (ETC). The project assists disabled people by identifying their strengths and weaknesses, developing their skills and finding employment for them. At the same time, beneficiaries can use the services of Agenzija Sapport, such as day services and social work services. This project also has a UK partner, Brandon Trust.

² http://www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_view.aspx?id=2490 [Accessed 9 Sept 2009]



2. The Employment Aid Programme (EAP) managed by the ETC offers financial assistance to employers by subsidising 75% of the wage of the disabled employee for the first year and 60% of the wage for 2 other years. In addition, the EAP subsidises 50% of employers' national insurance contributions for disabled employees.



PART ONE: GENERAL EVIDENCE

1.1 Academic publications and research reports (key points)

Key Findings

Recent studies dealing with employment and disabled people, include:

- A 2003 National Statistics Office (NSO) study entitled “Persons suffering from a Long-standing Health Problem or Disability: a Perspective”.
- A 2004 study carried out by Dr. Gordon Cordina entitled “The Economic Dimensions of Independent Supported Living for People with Disability”.
- A 2004 study carried out by KNPD entitled ‘Research on the Major Concerns of Persons with Disability and their Families’
- A 2005 ETC Study entitled “Job search and Persons with Disability - Results of a study among persons with disability and employers” A 2009 study, entitled ‘The Quality of Life of Disabled People in Malta: some answers from the 2005 Census’, related to the data gathered in the 2005 National Census, which also includes indications on the employment situation of disabled people when compared to non-disabled people, and contains data relating to differences among disabled people on the grounds of age, gender, district where they live and type of impairment.

The **2003 NSO Study** aimed at drawing a picture of the situation of disabled people in Malta. The information was compiled from the June 2002 Labour Force Survey. The survey showed that:

1. A large number of people with long-standing health problem or disability were inactive (63.9% of people with long-standing health problems or disability surveyed in 2002). The number of people with long-standing health problems or disability employed at the time stood at 32.2% whilst the number of unemployed was of 4.0%. In addition, women were more likely to be fall into the category of inactive than men.
2. Of people with long-standing health problem or disability who were in employment, 20.2% occupied elementary occupations (such as maids or messengers). This was followed by craft, or related work (including carpenters or electricians). The manufacturing industry was the highest employer of people with long-standing health problems or disability, with 16.3% working in this sector. The next largest economic activity of people with long-standing health problem or disability was in wholesale or retail, with 15.2% working in this sector.
3. Of registered unemployed people with long-standing health problems or disability, the number of males exceeded that of females with 72.1% of the total unemployed being men.
4. In addition, 28.5% of job seekers with long standing health problems or disability had been unemployed for 6 to 11 months. The unemployment rate of persons with a long-standing health problem or disability stood at 11.0%.
5. 17.1% of persons with a long-standing health problem or disability reported that they were significantly limited in the type or amount of work that they could carry out, or in their mobility to or from the place of work. On the other hand, a large number or 67.1 %, stated that their condition did not pose any limitation.
6. The majority of people with a long-standing health problem or disability reported that they did not need any assistance or special equipment to work. In fact, this was expressed by 76.6% of the respondents. The remaining 23.4% stated that special working arrangements would be welcome. It should be noted that 19.1% of people stating they needed assistance reported having emotional, nervous or mental health problems.

The **2004 Cordina report** on the financial dimension of independent living was commissioned by the Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Diżabilità (KNPD) (the National Commission Persons with a Disability). This report aimed to examine the economic impact of the entry of disabled people into employment.



The report concluded that if disabled people were provided with financial support to purchase their own transport or personal assistance to enter the world of work, the long-term effect to the economy would be to recoup any expenditure involved in launching such a scheme. In addition, this report suggested that a serious disincentive for disabled people's entry into the labour market was the 'benefits trap'. In other words, disabled people who enter work may lose any state support or benefits whilst gaining little profit in return from their actual employment. The report also concluded that financial support for entry into the labour market would benefit even people with high support needs.

The results of the **2004 Major Concerns** study illustrated a low participation rate among disabled people in the labour market in Malta. The results are based on data gathered through a structured interview with 599 disabled people registered with KNPD. Through comparisons with the results of the NSO's Labour Force Survey of June 2002, the discrepancies between disabled and non-disabled people were also highlighted.

The economic activity of the respondents was as follows:

- 16.4% of respondents were students (compared to 26.1% of the general population);
- 11.5% were employees (compared to 36.5%);
- 17.7% were housewives (compared to 21.9%);
- 7.7% were registered as unemployed (compared to 21.9%);
- 15.4% were inactive (compared to 2.1%);
- 29.4 % were retired (compared to 10.3%);
- 2% did not respond.

The results indicated that, in many areas, disabled women are more disadvantaged than disabled men. This is most noticeable in the fact that:

- 22.6% of disabled women were employed, compared to 50.7% of disabled men;
- 1.8% were registered as unemployed, compared to 4.5% of men

Another main finding was that, of those who work, many are employed in low paying jobs, when compared to the general population. The following statistics give an indication of this situation:

- 34.3% of disabled people were in elementary occupations, compared to 12.7% of the general population;
- 22.9% were employed as clerks, compared to 11.6%.

Here it is worth noting that:

- 17.4% of disabled women were in elementary occupations compared to 42.6% of disabled men;
- 39.1% were employed as clerks compared to 14.9% of disabled men.

At the other end of the employment scale:

- 7.1% of disabled people were professionals, compared to 10.1% of the general population;
- 2.9% were legislators, high officials or managers, compared to 9.4%.
- In the 'professionals' category, disabled women were outnumbered by disabled men (4.3% compared to 8.5%)
- In the 'legislators, high officials or managers' category, disabled women outnumbered disabled men (4.3% compared to 2.1%).



This research also indicates that:

- 80% said that they were happy with their job;
- 47.1% said that they earned a good wage;
- 74.3% said that they would find it difficult to find a new job;
- 22.8% said that they have good prospects for promotion;
- 38.6% said that they have the possibility of on-the-job training.

Unlike the two previous studies, the **2005 Employment and Training Corporation (ETC)**'s study involved a qualitative paradigm. The ETC is the state-run agency tasked with assisting job seekers to enter employment. In this study, the ETC interviewed a sample of disabled people who were on the ETC's register of disabled job seekers, as well as a select number of employers.

Disabled job seekers and those who had found a job reported:

1. That they perceived attaining gainful employment as an opportunity to be financially independent, as well as a chance to socialise more.
2. Those who were in employment reported that it was a positive experience for them. However, many complained that it was difficult to find a job as employers tended not to answer their requests. In fact, a number of disabled people still on the ETC Disabled Persons' Register had been there for more than a year.
3. A number of disabled people also pointed out that conditions in their place of work, such as low levels of access, or little support, made their job experiences more difficult.

On the other hand, employers reported that:

1. They were unaware of what employing a disabled person would entail in real terms.
2. Although many employers expressed openness to employing disabled people, many complained that the majority of disabled applicants were not sufficiently qualified, or did not possess the necessary work experience to fulfil their duties.
3. While employers were open to employing disabled people with mild to moderate impairments, they were less willing to employ disabled people with severe impairments.
4. Employers were also less willing to invest their own profits into making their places more accessible, or to provide disabled employees with reasonable support provisions.
5. Employers who did not employ disabled persons generally held negative ideas about disabled workers, including the fear that disabled people would be less productive, or that the provision of any adaptations would involve them (the employers) in unreasonable costs.

The 2009 study on 'The Quality of Life of Disabled People in Malta' based on the results of the 2005 National Census provided an indication of the employment situation of disabled people on a nationwide scale. The study of this Census 2005 results covered other areas apart from employment, including education, housing conditions and participation in sports. In this way, the Census report can provide us with a broader picture of the employment situation of disabled people in Malta. Moreover, the fact that data could be disaggregated according to age, gender, type of impairment and locality meant that variations within the disabled population could also be identified (For further information on this Census report, please refer to Malta's ANED report on social inclusion and protection).

Lessons for Good Policy and Practice

These research studies show the persistent and widespread exclusion of disabled people from the labour market.

The 'Major Concerns' study provides useful statistics that indicate that disabled people are at a disadvantage when compared to the non-disabled population.



It also shows they tend to have low-paying jobs, little prospects for promotion, for finding a new job, or for receiving on-the-job training. Policy makers therefore need to keep sight of the fact that, for disabled people, it is not just a question that having any job would do, but rather of having one, which offers reasonable remuneration together with good prospects for promotion and further training.

The ETC study highlighted the need for employers to be better aware of the valid contribution that disabled people can make to their companies or organisations, thus fostering a more positive attitude in employers and providing disabled people with better access to meaningful employment. It also clearly highlighted the need for workplaces to be made more accessible.

Cordina's study focused on the 'benefits trap', which remains one of the main obstacles that disabled people encounter when trying to access the labour market. Therefore, Cordina the proposes a benefits system that would raise disabled people out of this trap, that is, through the provision of a grant covering impairment-related expenses, for disabled people who begin working. This proposal has been discussed with the relevant authorities, and while there seems to be some agreement on the level of principles, the recommendations themselves have not yet been put into action.

New research

The 2005 Census Report (see above), confirmed many of the findings reported in the Major Concerns study and in Cordina's report. In fact, the Census Report revealed how disabled people were disadvantaged in education and employment when compared to non-disabled people. Moreover, this report also indicated that disabled people tended to have less access to the internet and lived in poor quality housing.

In addition, the Census Report exposed differences within the disabled population based on age, gender, type of impairment and place of residence. In this sense, the study can be used to spur further research aimed to delve deeper into issues that affect groups within the disabled community which might experience additional barriers in accessing employment, such as disabled women and individuals with intellectual impairments and mental health issues. For an overview of the main findings, please refer to Section 1.2.

In the light of new economic realities, KNPD has also revised the National Employment Policy relating to the employment of disabled people published in 1996. This draft policy, divided into five sections, looks at the current situation; existing local, European and international legislation; the guiding principles of the policy; the policy proper with practical recommendations and examples of practice from 5 other EU member states.

The section concerning the present situation revealed that a significant number of students currently attending mainstream education had an intellectual impairment or a psychological impairment. Moreover, the findings revealed that the number of disabled people working in the public sector fell short of satisfying the set quota of 2% stipulated by the Disabled People Employment Act passed in 1969. In addition, the report highlighted a serious need to review current practice in the provision of vocational training, proper assessment services and a need for a more coordinated effort between service providers and government departments, especially those engaged in education and employment.

The recommendations found in the third section of the policy are aimed at increasing the employment rate of disabled people within employment while improving the services being provided. At the same time, the policy report includes recommendations to set up new structures and introduce procedures to improve on the working opportunities of disabled people. Given that this policy's vision is inclusive of all disabled people throughout the life course, groups of people who are unable to work are included as part of the policy. For more details regarding this draft policy, please refer to Section 1.3.



1.2 Employment statistics and trends (key points)

The ETC maintains statistical information on the number of disabled people who are seeking employment. However, given that registration is voluntary, this source of information may not provide a very accurate picture of the issue as a whole.

A good source of data that can provide us with a snapshot of the employment situation of disabled people in Malta is the Census Report recently issued by KNPD. As explained in Section 1.1, the Census Report analysed the results of the 2005 National Census. The Census study helped in providing a better picture of the employment situation while highlighting which groups of disabled people are most prone to be excluded from employment. The main findings of this study, in relation to employment, are the following:

- Disabled people are less likely to be in employment with only 14.6% (3,295) of disabled people employed compared to 48.0% (150,188) of non-disabled people.
- The highest rate of disabled people's employment is in elementary occupations with 20.5% (689) occupying this position.
- Disabled people are most poorly represented in higher earning positions of legislators, senior officials and managers with only 7.5% (251) in these occupations.
- Disabled people tend to retire earlier than the retirement age of 60 with 58 disabled people retiring between ages 40-49 and 505 retiring at ages 50-59 as reported in 2005. The age range 50+ also shows a significant increase of people who cannot work due to disability or illness.
- Disabled men are more likely to be in employment than disabled women with an employment rate of 22.5% (2,496) amongst men and 7.0% (799) for women.
- The area where disabled women outnumber disabled men is when it comes to family or house care with 34.6% (3,974) active in this area opposed to 1.0% (115) of disabled men. People with an intellectual impairment and a mental health issue are less likely to be in employment with employment rates of these impairment groups being 9.2% (103) AND 8.3% (153) respectively. Moreover, people with an intellectual impairment tend to be most active in elementary occupations with 66.2% (80) active in this area.
- Disabled residents living on the district comprising the islands of Gozo and Comino have the lowest employment rates with 9.2% (163) in employment. In addition, this district also has high rates of disabled people active in elementary occupations with 34.9% (55) employed in this area. It must be noted that this district has the highest rate of retired disabled people with 47.4% (843).

1.3 Laws and policies (key points)

The 1969 Employment Disabled Persons Act, also known locally as the 'Quota Act' was aimed at increasing the number of disabled people in the workforce by insisting that local companies employing more than 20 people shall ensure that 2% of their workforce are taken from among those disabled people whose name appears on the ETC's register of disabled unemployed persons. However, over the years this law has proved to be unenforceable and in fact it has had little positive effect for disabled people - at least on a sectorial level - although a few individuals do owe their jobs (particularly in government departments) to the implementation of this piece of legislation.

On the other hand, the Equal Opportunities Persons with a Disability Act (2000) made it unlawful for employers to discriminate against disabled people on the basis of their impairments. Employment was one of the areas covered by this act, which also obliged employers to make 'reasonable accommodation' when employing disabled people.

Reforms in the 2007 Invalidation Pensions Act were aimed to discourage those who could still work to apply for benefits through social security.



This reform included the setting up of a medical board to vet claims and define eligibility parameters. The reform is already having an effect as the number of claims to an invalidity pension have already dropped or been refused.

The Maltese Government has prioritised the creation of employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups, among them disabled persons in all its strategic documents, namely Operational Programmes I and II (in both the Priority Axes and the Horizontal Priorities), the National Reform Programme, the pre-budget document 'A better quality of life'(2006-2010)' and the budget speech 'Families growing stronger '(2008), the 'National Strategic Reference Framework', and the 'National report on strategies for social protection and inclusion (2006-2008)'. These documents refer to the need for developing strategies and implementing actions aimed towards promoting the inclusion of disabled people in society in general, and in the world of work in particular.

As explained in Section 1.1, KNPD has revised the National Employment Policy that was originally published. This decision was taken as KNPD is aware that new economic realities require fresh approaches. Thus, the draft policy recommends that:

1. Discrimination is eliminated in both public and private sectors, in line with local and European legislation, while disabled people are given more opportunities to work. The establishment of work incentives for employers and disabled people seeking self-employment are also proposed.
2. Educational institutions at all levels should better prepare disabled people for the world of work and remove any form of illegitimate discrimination in higher institutions.
3. Disabled people should receive a comprehensive assessment to establish their strengths and weaknesses to enter employment. Moreover, this comprehensive assessment aims at identifying and addressing disabled people's need to enter employment. This assessment should be a right of every disabled person and be periodically reviewed.
4. Disabled people should have access to vocational training during their formal schooling and access to mainstream training (wherever possible) in their adult life.
5. National services providing support in the employment sector should provide disabled people with equal treatment in service provision, such as in recruitment, promotions and training.
6. Sheltered employment within mainstream work structures should be considered as an alternative form of employment geared to those who need a transition period before entering open employment and for people who cannot work in the open labor market due to their high support needs.
7. Present day care services should be restructured to help clients develop their independent living skills. Moreover, a comprehensive assessment of clients might help identify those who can work in open employment, with or without support, or in sheltered settings when they are set up.
8. Cooperatives with a majority of disabled people should be considered as an employment alternative for disabled people.
9. A coordinated effort by the government , employers, unions and civil society to increase the employment rate of disabled people should be undertaken.

This policy document was circulated among stakeholders who have a role to play in the employment sector. Representatives from education institutions, the Employment and Training Corporation (the (national employment agency), *Agenzija Sapport* (state provider of personal assistance services), unions, government, NGOs, KNPD's Consultative Committee of Persons with Intellectual Disability, and employers participated in the consultation process. KNPD has also discussed the feedback received from the different contributors and will carry out the final consultation during a national conference to be held on the International Day of Disabled People (3 December).



In light of the economic recession, the government affirmed that securing employment was one of its highest priorities, since Malta's economy remains largely dependent on human resources. In the first six months of 2009, the government sought to invest in creating new jobs. However, the recession left a mark on the employment sector as the number of registered unemployed in June 2009 increased to 7273 compared to the 5861 people registered during the same period in 2008 – an increase of 6.16%. The rate of unemployment among disabled people registered under Part I (full-time) of the unemployment register also showed an increase.

Malta's position on the united nations convention article 27

Malta is signatory of the UNCRPD but it is still in the process of ratifying this Convention. An inter-ministerial committee has been set up to examine the implications of the UN Convention on Maltese legislation and policy. Malta has accepted the principles set forth by Article 27 but is asking for an exemption to its application in relation to employment in the armed forces.

1.4 Type and quality of jobs (summary)

According to data of the NSO 2005 Census analyzed in the Census Report, of those disabled people who work, a significant number work in elementary occupations (20.5%), followed by work in craft or trade work (14.7%) those working in service or shop sales work (14.7%) and as clerks (12.6%). However, the census revealed that there are some gender differences when it comes to main occupation.

In fact, disabled males tend to be employed in elementary occupations (27.7%), in craft and related trades work (19.1%), as service workers and shop or sales workers (12.1%), as clerks (11.5%) and as technicians or as associated professionals (10.2%). On the other hand, disabled women tend to be represented as service workers and shop or sales workers (27.8%) technicians or associated professionals (19.1%), as clerks (16.4%) in elementary occupations (13.4%) and as professionals (12.1%).



PART TWO: SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

2.1 Reasonable accommodation in the workplace

Legally, places of work need to be accessible to all unless making the necessary changes to the work environment are deemed unreasonable because of valid financial or technical reasons. The National Commission Persons with a Disability was appointed by MEPA to act as a consultant on physical access before approving building plans. Even if places of work are not exempt from conforming to access guidelines, employers may appeal to KNPD on the grounds of the reasons outlined above. It is rare for KNPD to exempt workplaces but in cases when the business is cannot afford to make such adjustments (as evidenced by audited accounts of the enterprise) or technically difficult (evidenced by building plans vetted by an architect working for KNPD) the Test of Reasonableness Board – which takes the final decision – may deem such adaptations unreasonable and issue an exemption.

At the same time, employers are protected against discrimination when seeking a job. However, the fact that disabled people still find problems finding a job as evidenced by the ETC 2005 study described earlier demonstrates that legislation alone may not be yielding the desired results.

2.2 Other activation policies

The government agency responsible for employment and training (ETC) also offers support to disabled people seeking employment through such schemes like the Bridging the Gap scheme, which offers disabled people with the opportunity of entering the labour market through supported employment measures.

Through this scheme, disabled people can gain experience on the job, have more employment opportunities, receive a weekly wage (80% of the minimum wage). On the other hand, employers choose and interview the client, can assess the progress of the employee, are not bound to pay national insurance, wages or sick leave benefits for the first 156 weeks of employment. It is a new scheme called Employment Aid Scheme and is being funded by the ESF) whilst employers can benefit from the support of ETC officials during the scheme.

The government has also encouraged employers to recruit disabled people by making changes to the Social Security Act to the effect that employers employing a severely disabled person or a visually impaired person will have their national insurance for the first 156 weeks of employment refunded.

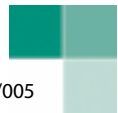
In addition, accessible transport used during working hours is partly subsidised by the government. However, such services are still expensive when compared to regular public transport and there are long waiting lists to use this service.

2.3 One example of best practice

The ME2! project, launched in June 2009, aims to provide disabled people with increased training and working opportunities. The project is being coordinated by Agenzija Sapport in collaboration with KNPD and the Employment Training Corporation (ETC).

The project, funded through ESF, aims to help disabled people to enter employment by assessing their skills and addressing their weaknesses to identify suitable jobs that can help them fulfill their maximum potential. Project participants are also supported by a job coach who will assist them during working hours.

The project will benefit 60 residents of *Agenzija Sapport's* day centres who will receive training and support to enable them to enter the world of work.



A further 130 disabled people will receive community-based services while 40 severely disabled people will be assisted in sheltered employment settings.

Source: <http://www.sapport.gov.mt/pressreleases.asp?ID=47>



PART THREE: SUMMARY INFORMATION

3.1 Conclusions and recommendations (summary)

Undoubtedly, the employment opportunities of disabled people have increased over the years. However, disabled people still remain largely under-represented in the labour market, with disabled women being more excluded than disabled men with only 7% employed compared to 22.5% of males (NSO Census, 2005). Indeed, both quantitative and qualitative data suggest that disabled people seeking work find problems ranging from lack of access, to negative response from employers. In this sense, problems related to accessing the place of work, lack of transport services and negative attitudes prevent disabled people from entering the labour market. Added to that, if the remuneration for working does not justify the time spent working, disabled people may prefer not to work. They may also be afraid to take the plunge into employment if it would mean forsaking the relative security of the disability pension, however limited it is.

Disabled people who work may also find that they are never promoted in their career course but may be unwilling to change jobs due to difficulties in finding a new job. Moreover, although personal support is given during the first few months of on the job training, people with severe disabilities may require such support throughout their working life to be fully included at the place of work.

Indeed, there should be better coordination and communication between the ETC, employers and *Agenzija Sapport* on the provision of factual information related to what employing disabled people entails in real terms (such as on assistive technology and other support requirements) and in the use of personal assistance during working hours.

Additionally, Cordina's recommendation of providing financial grants for disabled people to better access the labour market should be seriously considered. Such financial assistance could help disabled people gain a higher degree of independence on their life/work options whilst providing employers with greater incentive when considering the employment of disabled people.

However, whilst removing physical obstacles and addressing disabling attitudes might be a solution for most disabled people, other groups of disabled people need to be considered. In particular people with severe or complex disabilities might experience difficulties in working in the open market since they may require levels of support that may not be accommodated in the open market. This applies to people with mental health issues as well. The following models might be considered:

- Support in the place of work – a severely disabled person is provided with the services of a job coach or personal assistant throughout the course of their working career within a mainstream setting.
- Severely disabled people working as Part of an enclave of no more than 6 disabled people and provided with a job coach in a mainstream setting.
- A group of about 6 severely disabled people may work as part of a mobile crew travelling around to provide a particular service. A number of job coaches help by driving the crew around where needed and through helping out in the organisation of work tasks.
- Tasks can be assigned to a number of job coaches.
- Self-employment – severely disabled people may be guided in pursuing a career through the assistance of a support agency which can provide the services of a job coach to aid in transport and personal assistance so that the severely disabled person can perform his or her job.

Even if work in the open market or through supported employment may be a solution that helps a larger number of disabled people, there are a small group of people who can be only included in the world of work by operating in sheltered employment settings.



In Malta, no such facilities yet exist, which means that a few disabled people who could contribute in a more secure setting because of their impairments, cannot do so.

Increasing the participation of disabled people within the labour market should involve coordination between ETC, support agencies and employers. Moreover, emphasis on training and increasing educational opportunities for disabled people will invariably increase the employability of disabled people.

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Annex 1: quantitative data on the employment of disabled people

| Year: 2005 | Absolute? (N) | Percentage (%) | Change (from previous year) |
|--|---------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Disability rate | 23848 | 5.89% | No data |
| Employment rate of disabled people | 3,295 | 2.15% | NA |
| Activity rate of disabled people | No data | No data | No data |
| Inactivity rate of disabled people | No data | No data | No data |
| Employment in open labour market | No data | No data | No data |
| Employment in sheltered workshop | No data | No data | No data |
| Reason for leaving the labour market due to disability or long standing health problem | 4,370 | 56.17% | NA |

| Year: | % Permanent | % Temporary |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Permanent contracts vs. short term contracts | No data | No data |

| Year: | % Full-time | % Part-time |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Full time vs. part time jobs | No data | No data |

| Year:2007 | Public sector | Private sector | The current quota is set at 2% and applies to employers employing 50+ employees and applies to public/private sector employment. |
|---|---------------|----------------|--|
| Fulfilment of employment quota (if it exists) | 347 | Not known | |

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| Participation in training of disabled people | 110 | This figure only presents the number of disabled people receiving training within NGOs. Since disabled people may receive training within the mainstream, the real figure may be higher. |
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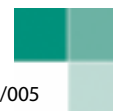
Annex 2: 2008-9 laws and policies on the employment of disabled people

* No laws were passed between 2008-9 related to this area.

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|--|--|
| Name of law: | |
| Date of entering into force: | |
| Objective: | |
| Impact assessment (positive/negative): | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Name of law: | |
| Date of entering into force: | |
| Objective: | |
| Impact assessment (positive/negative): | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Name of law: | |
| Date of entering into force: | |
| Objective: | |
| Impact assessment (positive/negative): | |



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

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| Publication details (author, date, title, etc): | Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni v'Dizabilita (2009) "Draft Employment Policy", Malta: KNPD. |
| Key findings from the research: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled people are still facing difficulties in accessing employment. • The 2% quota set by the 1969 Disabled Persons Employment Acct (CAP 210) appears not to be reaching its objectives neither in the public or private sectors. • There is a serious need to explore new working structures and revise current practice of assessment and support services • There are a significant number of people with intellectual and psychological impairments within mainstream schools. |
| Comment or assessment: | This report containing data and policy recommendations reveals that disabled people are still under-represented in employment. One of the main problems identified here are the lack of assessment services and coordinated support structures. In addition, this report highlights the need for provision for disabled people across all impairment groups and work / work experience opportunities to complement open employment. Since this policy addresses the whole spectrum of the disabled population, it includes reference to day care centres, and to the importance of preparing disabled people to enter employment throughout the life course. |

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| Publication details (author, date, title, etc): | Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni v'Dizabilita (2009 forthcoming) "The Quality of Life of Disabled People in Malta: some answers from the NSO Census 2005", Malta: KNPD. |
| Key findings from the research: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled persons are nearly 3 times less likely to be employed than non-disabled persons and if employed, nearly twice more likely to have an elementary employment. • Disabled men are 3 times more likely than disabled women to be employed, while disabled women are 34 more times than disabled men likely to take care of the household or the family. • Persons with an intellectual impairment and mental health condition are less likely to be employed. If they are employed they are more likely to be in elementary employment, especially people with an intellectual impairment. • Persons with a visual impairment tend to be more employed than persons with other impairments. |
| Comment or assessment: | The findings obtained from the NSO Census 2005 clearly show that disabled people are disadvantaged in employment when compared with the mainstream population. In addition, the report reveals how certain disabled people, particularly women, people with an intellectual impairment and people with a mental health issue, tend to have fewer opportunities in employment. However, the disadvantages extend beyond employment |



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| | and the report also demonstrates how disabled people's low employment rate can be attributed to the lack of educational opportunities and lack of access to a good standard of living when compared with that of non-disabled people. |
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| Publication details (author, date, title, etc): | |
| Key findings from the research: | |
| Comment or assessment: | |