

Compendium on Member States' Policies on Equality of Opportunity for People with Disabilities

Employment & social affairs



European Commission

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Social security & social integration

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be accessed through the Europa server (<http://europa.eu.int>)

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FOREWORD

The work of the High Level Group on Disability

Two years ago, the European Union made a crucial policy shift to a rights-based approach in the disability field. This new strategy was advocated by the Commission in its July 1996 Communication on the integration of people with disability and then politically endorsed in a Resolution of the Council of Ministers in December 1996.

While public policy in the past was aimed at accommodating people to their disabilities, integration rather than accommodation is now seen as the key to their inclusion in mainstream society. The new approach is based on the shared commitment of all Member States to identify and remove barriers to equal opportunities and to promote the full participation of disabled people in all aspects of life.

The Resolution now serves as a reference framework to stimulate the clarification of common goals and the identification of best practice in addition to the structured exchange of information and experience between Member States.

The adoption of the new strategy also led to the creation of a High Level Group of Senior Officials from the Member States who meet regularly to monitor the developments throughout the Union.

The High Level Group places a particular focus on the following guidelines set out in the Resolution adopted by government representatives of the Member States during the meeting of the Council of Ministers on 20 December 1996:

- ◆ empowering people with disabilities for participation in society, including the severely disabled, while paying due attention to the needs and interests of their families and carers
- ◆ mainstreaming the disability perspective into all relevant sectors of policy formulation
- ◆ enabling people with disabilities to participate fully in society by removing barriers
- ◆ nurturing public opinion to be receptive to the abilities of people with disabilities and towards strategies based on equal opportunities.

The High Level Group also shares experience with regard to the involvement of representatives of people with disabilities in the implementation and the follow-up of relevant policies and actions in their favour.

Purpose of the compendium

It is clear that each Member State has its own way to establish and shape the various programmes and services targeted at people with disabilities. A sound understanding of the present institutional diversity of disability policies at both a national and regional (local) level is therefore required. It is anticipated that such an understanding will both enhance the exchange of information, experience and expertise as well as providing encouragement for closer co-operation towards more effective strategies and policies promoting equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

The context of each national policy must therefore be taken into account before meaningful comparisons are made of the policies themselves. The challenge, in this respect, is to develop a common way of capturing these different contexts and, at the same time, stressing that - despite significant differences in the organisation of programmes and policies - all disability systems are faced with a set of key policy issues in implementing equal opportunities. Such is

the main purpose of this Compendium on Member States' policies for Equality of Opportunity for People with Disabilities.

It is important to note that the approach adopted for this work is fundamentally grounded on an equal opportunity model. It stresses that disability policy goes beyond the provision of social and medical services in order to reduce functional limitations and increase independence. A comprehensive equality of opportunity policy will also embrace, therefore, issues of accessibility, education, employment and social security, etc. The compendium underscores both the importance of protecting and promoting the rights of disabled people as well as the raising of society's awareness in respect of the issues relevant to people with disabilities. A focus is also placed on the co-ordinated involvement of disability organisations in the planning, implementation and monitoring of policy relevant to people with disabilities.

Structure of the compendium

This 'Compendium on Member States' policies on Equality of Opportunity for People with Disabilities' presents for each Member State:

Part I - Organisational Arrangements on Disability Policies

Part II - an Organigram

Part III - Action Plans

Part IV - Co-operation – Consultation Structures.

Part I of each national summary outlines the organisational arrangements on disability policies broken down as follows:

A. Co-ordination

B. Civil rights

C. Benefits

D. Services

E. Accessibility.

Part II reproduces the organisational arrangements in an organigram. For an explanation of the figures used, see hereafter. The organigram aims to enable the user to visualise the different links and relations which exist between the five subjects listed above and any centralised/decentralised dimensions impacting thereon.

Part III provides a summary of the action plans on disability policies for each Member State in pursuance of the points set out in Section II of the Resolution.

Paragraph IV focuses on the nature of the co-operation established to inform and/or consult disability organisations within each Member State.

Here after, under 'Organisational arrangements', on page 7 - 9, you will find an explanation of the terminology as used in the schemes and the organigrams.

INTRODUCTION

ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Explanatory note on schemes and organigrams

The main departments or bodies involved in policies on equality of opportunity for people with disabilities may be grouped, according to function, into five categories :

A. *Departments or bodies responsible for the co-ordination or assistance to governments in the overall policy formulation*

Since disability policy affects so many areas and since its implementation is the responsibility of several departments, many Member States recognise the need to have specific bodies or committees for the purposes of co-ordination in this respect.

Some of these are government bodies that co-ordinate programmes between different ministries (A1)¹, others are non-governmental bodies that advise governments on the needs and expectations of disabled people (A2).

B. *Departments or bodies responsible for civil rights policies*

This category includes departments or bodies primarily concerned with civil rights protection for disabled people and for the implementation of the relatively recent body of anti-discrimination legislation. Typical civil rights policy protects against discrimination in the context of employment or establishes the right to have free public education. Other measures in this category protect the rights of institutionalised people, including physically and mentally disabled people.

C. *Departments or bodies responsible for providing financial assistance to disabled people (benefits)*

This category includes bodies concerned with policy aimed at income maintenance. This policy may be embedded in social security provisions (C1), or social welfare programmes (C2)

D. *Departments or bodies responsible for service provision*

These services may be divided into the following areas:

- *Education* (D1): bodies administering special education or ensuring access to education
- *Vocational rehabilitation* (D2): bodies responsible for training or retraining services as well as providing financial support during rehabilitation
- *Employment* (D3): bodies in charge of placement services, financial incentives or subsidies, adaptation of the workplace, quota schemes or sheltered employment as well as labour regulations

¹ A1, A2 etc. = used codes

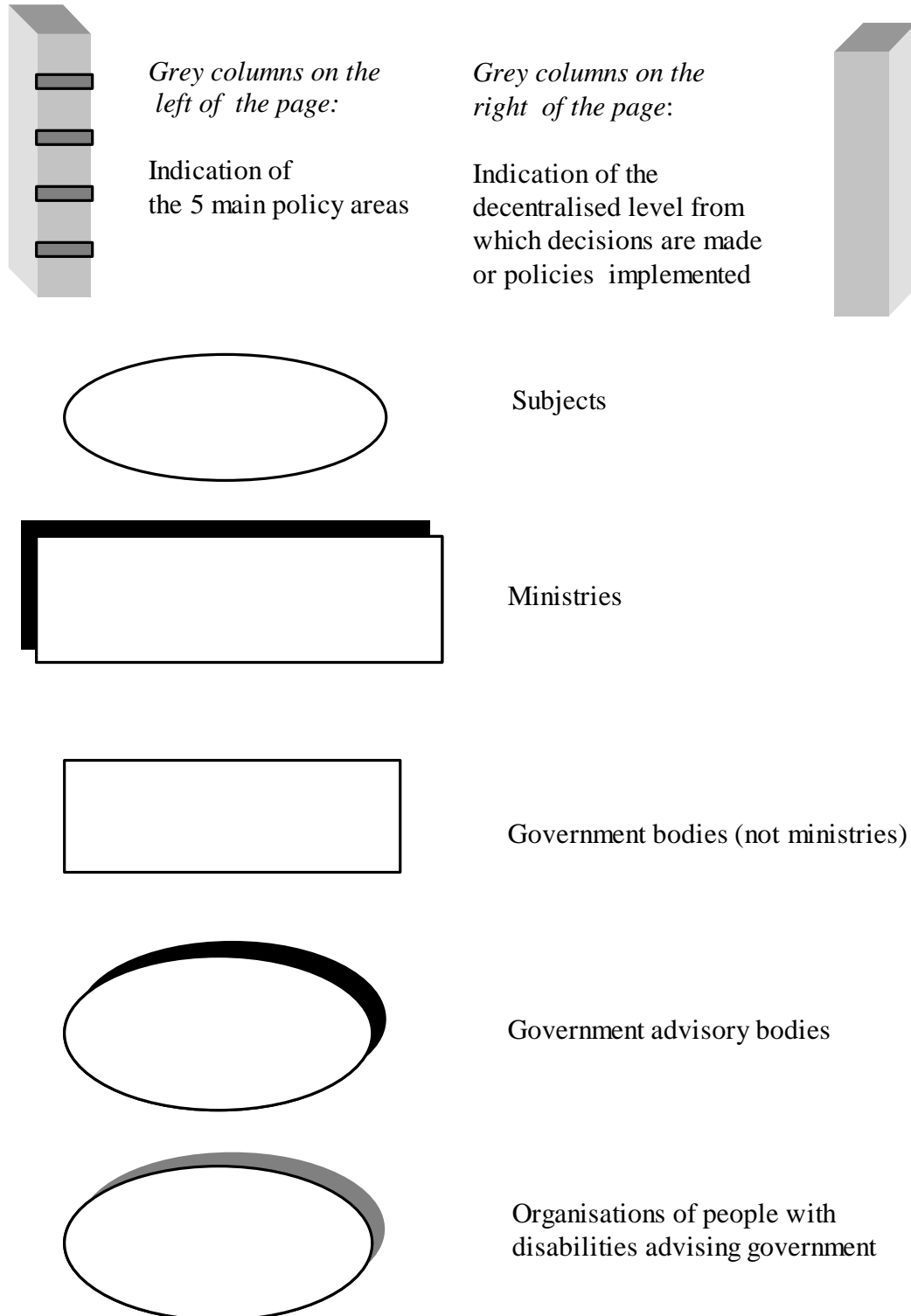
- *Health* (D4): bodies responsible for measures aimed at the prevention of disabilities or their early diagnosis and those ensuring access to public health services as well as providing medical rehabilitation or prosthetic appliances and assistive devices
- *Social integration* (D5): bodies responsible for measures such as care by attendants, respite care, core services and domestic help as well as social institutions or services related to leisure

E. *Departments or bodies responsible for barrier-free environment*

This category includes departments or bodies responsible for accessibility standards for building environment (E1), accessible transportation (E2) or housing (E3)

The organigram:

Explanation on page lay out and the figures and symbols used



BELGIUM

I. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

A. Departments or bodies responsible for the co-ordination or assistance of governments in the overall policy formulation

A1. Governmental Bodies

- Ministry of Social Affairs, Public Health and the Environment
- Higher National Council for Disabled People
- Community Inter-ministerial Equal Opportunities Committees

B. Departments or bodies responsible for civil rights policies

- Ministry of Justice
- Centre for Equal Opportunities and the Fight against Racism
- Communities and Regions (Ministers responsible for assistance for disabled people and for equal opportunities policy)

C. Departments or bodies responsible for the provision of financial assistance to disabled people (benefits)

C1. Social Security Provisions

- Ministry of Social Affairs, Public Health and Environment

C2. Social Welfare Programs

- Ministry of Social Affairs, Public Health and Environment

D. Departments or bodies responsible for service provision

D1. Education

- Communities

D2. Vocational Rehabilitation

- Communities

D3. Employment

- Minister for Employment and Labour
- Communities

D4. Health

- Ministry for Social Affairs, Public Health and Environment
- Communities

D5. Social Integration

- Communities

D6. Information Technology

- Minister for Science
- Communities

E. Departments or bodies responsible for a barrier-free environment

E1. Building environment

- Regions

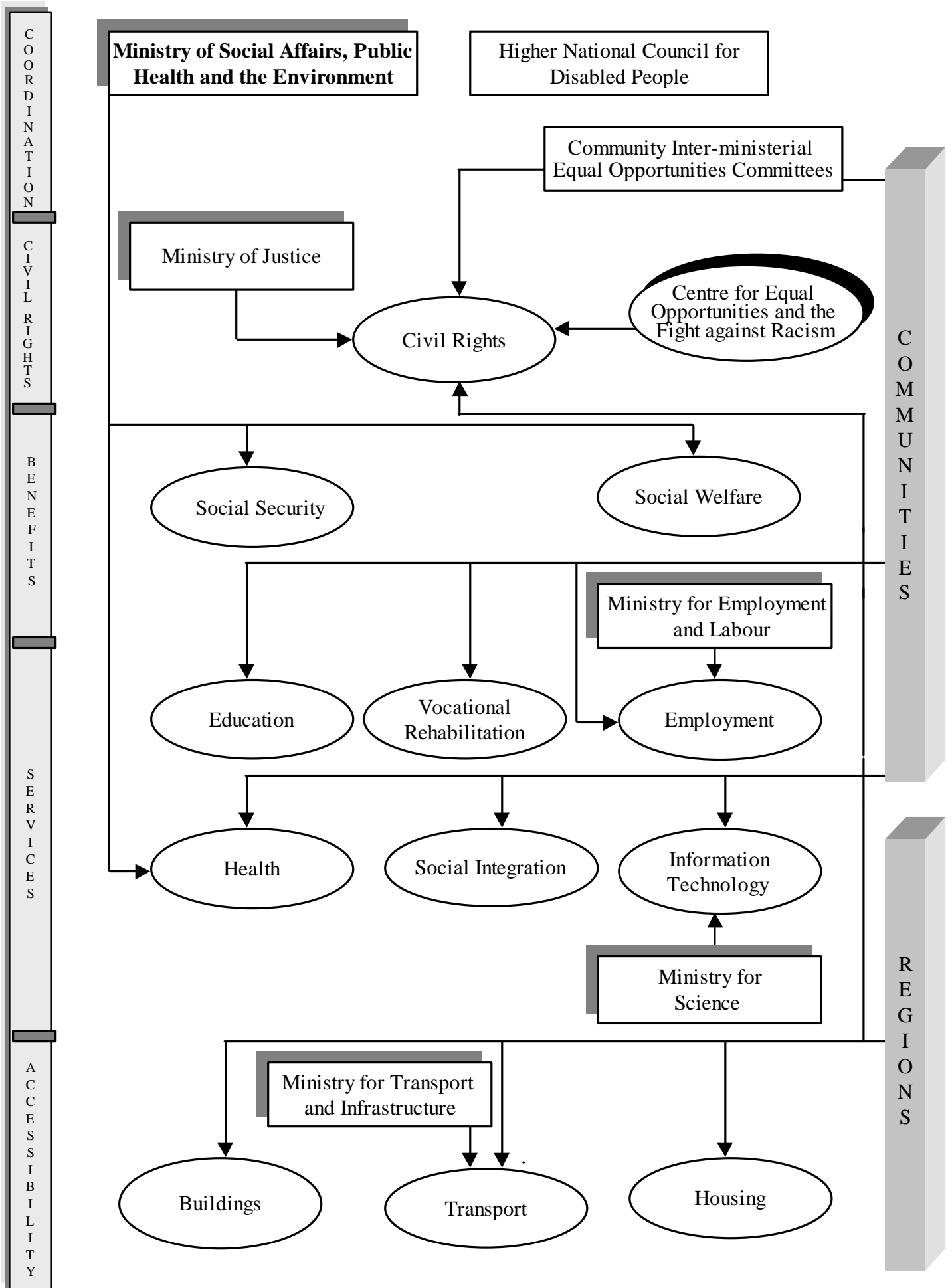
E2. Accessible Transportation

- Minister for Transport and Infrastructure
- Regions

E3. Housing

- Regions

II. ORGANIGRAM



III. ACTION PLANS

Co-ordination – Global Plan

In Belgium, the "personal" aspects of policy for people with a disability are the responsibility of the Communities and Regions which, at first sight, coincide with the different language areas.

However, the Federal Government is responsible for many aspects, particularly financial assistance for people with a disability.

Coordination at Federal level is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Safety, Social Rehabilitation and Environment, at the Ministry of Social Affairs, Public Health and Environment.

The 1998 policy document drawn up by the Secretary of State for Safety, Social Rehabilitation and Environment specifies that Federal policy for people with a disability should not be seen merely in terms of benefits, but as part of a more comprehensive scheme. The focus at Federal level will therefore be on qualitative improvements, such as the improvement of administrative procedures and medical examinations and shorter waiting times.

Equal opportunities policy for people with a disability is based on Council of Europe Recommendation R92/6 concerning a coherent policy for people with a disability, and on the principles of European Union policy on assistance for people with a disability.

The Communities and Regions have also taken steps to improve co-ordination. For example, in the Walloon region, the Decree of 6 April 1995 established co-operation between the Ministries of Social Affairs, Finance, Economic Affairs and Transport with the aim of improving the social integration of people with a disability.

In the Flemish Community, a global policy plan was drawn up for the period 1997 to 2000 on the integration of people with a disability. A comprehensive policy of this kind ensures the involvement of all Ministries concerned.

Education

Initiatives have been taken to help people with a disability to attend normal education. In Brussels, for example, a project has been launched to allow people with a disability to receive retraining or supplementary training in small and medium-sized undertakings, thereby improving their chances of entering or re-entering the labour market.

Social and labour market integration

The Communities' programmes focus on social integration, (re)entry into the labour market, the improvement of living conditions and greater independence for people with a disability through the removal of physical and technical barriers. Personalised budgets are also provided for.

Barrier-free environment

The Law of 17 July 1975 establishes rules concerning the accessibility of public buildings.

In the Flemish Community, the Minister for Equal Opportunities is responsible for co-ordinating measures to improve accessibility. The Flemish Fund allows people with a disability to obtain compensation for home conversions.

Steps have also been taken to include the specific problems faced by people with a disability in architects' training.

In the Walloon Community, the Ministers for Social Affairs, Town and Country Planning and Internal Affairs decided to investigate the requirements which need to be introduced for public buildings and their surroundings.

IV. CO-OPERATION – CONSULTATION STRUCTURES

The Higher National Council, an advisory body at Federal level, consists chiefly of representatives of organisations of people with a disability. The Chairman is also a member of an organisation of people with a disability.

The main job of the Council is to advise the Ministry of Social Affairs, Public Health and the Environment, either on request or spontaneously, on measures which should be taken to assist people with a disability. It is the Council's job to investigate any problems of a general nature concerning people with a disability within the national jurisdiction.

The Council's opinions are often put together by a working group.

The Minister responsible for financial assistance for people with a disability has to consult the Council on all Royal Decrees proposed in implementation of the Law of 27 February 1987 on benefits for people with a disability.

Advisory bodies have also been set up in the Communities, comprising representatives of organisations of people with a disability. They advise the Community Governments and public bodies responsible for implementing policy to assist people with a disability at Community level.

Such public bodies (or public interest entities) are established by law and their job is to promote the social integration of people with a disability.

The organisations of people with a disability are represented on the boards of these public bodies. Advisory bodies have been set up for specific areas, such as vocational rehabilitation and social integration.

Private initiative voluntary organisations for people with a disability play a major role in implementing policy for people with a disability in Belgium.

DENMARK

I. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

A. Departments or bodies responsible for the co-ordination or assistance of governments in the overall policy formulation

Note: According to the principle of sector responsibility all ministries and public authorities are responsible for the integration of disability policy into their own legislation when needed. There is no governmental body responsible for all areas of disability policy.

A1. Governmental Bodies

- Ministry of Social Affairs
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs
- Ministry of Labour
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Housing Cities and Housing
- Ministry of Traffic
- Ministry of Culture
- Ministry of Industry
- Ministry of Research

A2. Non-Governmental Bodies

- The National Handicap Council
- The Equal Opportunities Centre for Disabled People
- The Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People

B. Departments or bodies responsible for civil rights policies

- Ministry of Justice

C. Departments or bodies responsible for the provision of financial assistance to disabled people (benefits)

C1. Social Security Provisions

- Ministry of Social Affairs

C2. Social Welfare Programmes

- Ministry of Social Affairs
- Ministry of Labour
- Counties
- Local Authorities

D. Departments or bodies responsible for service provision

D1. Education

- Ministry of Education

D2. Vocational Rehabilitation

- Ministry of Social Affairs
- Ministry of Labour

D3. Employment

- Ministry of Labour
- Ministry of Social Affairs
- Counties
- Local Authorities

D4. Health

- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Social Affairs

D5. Social Integration

- Ministry of Social Affairs
- Counties
- Local Authorities

D6. Information Technology

- Ministry of Research

E. Departments or bodies responsible for a barrier-free environment

E1. Building Environment

- Ministry of Cities and Housing

E2. Accessible Transportation

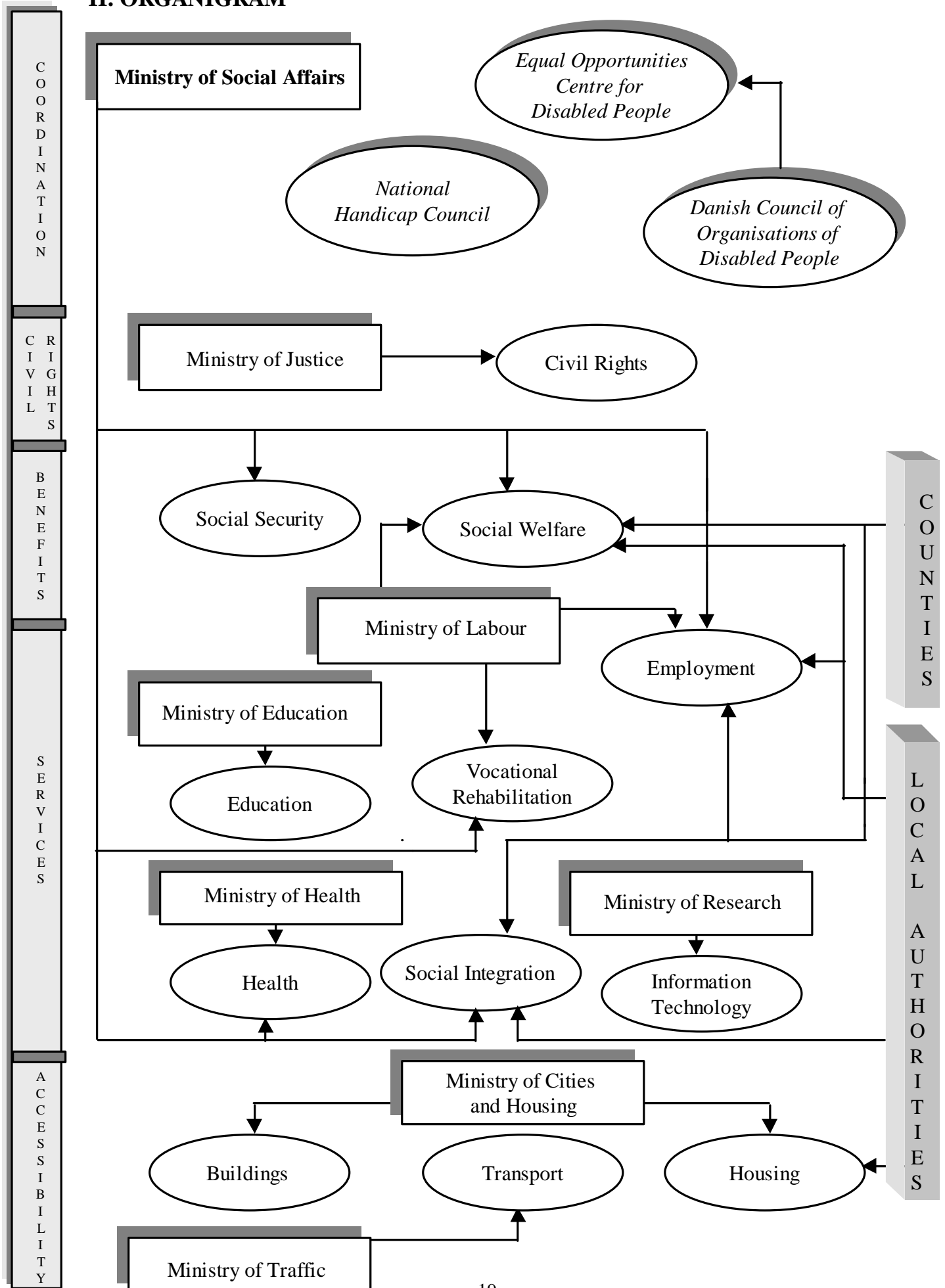
- Ministry of Traffic

E3. Housing

- Ministry of Housing and Cities
- Local Authorities

The main principle in Denmark is to integrate people with disabilities to ensure their equal treatment within Danish society. The legal philosophy is that legislation in general should protect the needs of disabled people through ordinary measures. A National Disability Council and an Equal Opportunities Centre for Disabled Persons have been established to guarantee an effective public service and fair treatment throughout all aspects of society for people with disabilities.

II. ORGANIGRAM



III. ACTION PLANS

Co-ordination - Global Plan

The National Handicap Council was set up in conjunction with the administrative reform in 1980 whereby social assistance and social service was decentralised from central government to the counties and local authorities. The composition of the Council reflects the principle of user influence on central policy planning and legislation. Disability policy is not just a matter of social services but of national policy decisions. Be that as it may, the difficulties faced by people with disabilities are to be solved in the various sectors in which they are encountered. One should note, therefore, that government ministries are only responsible for the development and implementation of legislation in this respect; it is the local authorities which are charged with the actual delivery of financial assistance and service provision to people with disabilities.

Implementation of the United Nations Standard Rules on Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities is given high priority in the Council's planning of activities.

The establishment of the Equal Opportunities Centre for Disabled Persons expresses the wish to focus on the practical implementation of this policy. The Centre works in an interdisciplinary manner that can cut across administrative and ministerial boundaries. It has two main objectives:

- to collect, promote and disseminate, nationally and internationally, necessary information and expertise regarding the conditions affecting people with disabilities as well as the effects of various types of disabilities, and
- to be aware of cases of discrimination against disabled people.

The Centre publishes an annual report which forms the basis of a statement delivered to the Danish Parliament by the Minister for Social Affairs on behalf of the government.

Education

The Ministry of Labour has prepared an action plan to make it easier for people with disabilities to access Adult Education Centres and to ensure participation of people with disabilities in labour market training and education.

Social Integration

The Ministry of Culture has published the "Report on Access of People with Disabilities to Cultural Activities" which includes a number of recommendations within an action plan. One element of this plan is to ensure that the buildings which accommodate cultural activities are accessible to people with disabilities. The plan also contains information initiatives to make it easier for people with disabilities to take part in cultural activities.

Information Technology

The Ministry of Research has established a reference group to ensure that the needs of people with disabilities are taken into account in the formulation of initiatives developing information technology.

Accessibility

An Inter-ministerial Committee under the Ministry of Cities and Housing has prepared a plan concerning physical accessibility. The plan contains forty five initiatives which will contribute to making the physical environment accessible to people with disabilities.

IV. CO-OPERATION - CONSULTATION STRUCTURES

The National Handicap Council

The National Handicap Council comprises equal numbers of representatives from organisations of people with disabilities, the counties, local and state authorities responsible for health services, social welfare services, education and culture. In addition a number of experts in the fields of housing, transport, telecommunications and employment are affiliated to the Council.

It is the task of the Council to both follow and evaluate conditions in society affecting the lives of people with disabilities. To this end, the Council may forward proposals and initiate the implementation of changes to areas affecting the living conditions of people with disabilities.

All administrative authorities may consult the National Handicap Council. It is now common practice for the various ministries to seek the advice of the Council on matters pertaining to disability.

Equal Opportunities Centre for Disabled Persons

During the spring of 1993, the Danish Parliament passed a resolution recommending that all public authorities and private enterprises comply with the principle of equal treatment for disabled and non-disabled citizens. At the same time, the Parliament decided to establish the Equal Opportunities Centre for Disabled Persons. The parliamentary resolution expresses the political viewpoint that rather than introduce special legislation for people with disabilities, the general level of awareness regarding their situation should be raised by increasing information and by co-operating with the public authorities and organisations of people with disabilities.

The Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People

The Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People is an association of 28 national disability organisations and the only umbrella organisation in Denmark in the disability field. The principal objective of the Council is to protect the common interests of its member organisations. Its tasks typically involve negotiations with national government on general questions of importance to all disability groups, e.g. questions such as education, the labour market, benefits and insurance. The Council is usually consulted or asked to designate suitable individuals to represent people with disabilities when the government or local authorities so desire.

The Council designates seven members to the National Handicap Council; a body established by the Danish Government. Furthermore, it designates members to a number of other public committees and commissions at national and local level.

Organisation: the Council has a regional branch in each of the 15 counties in Denmark. Each member organisation delegates one member to each county branch and two members to the national board of the Council. The chair and an executive committee are elected by the national board of the Council.

GERMANY

I. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

A. Departments or bodies responsible for the co-ordination or assistance of governments in overall policy formulation

A1. Governmental Bodies

- Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs
- The corresponding ministries at Federal-state level
- Federal and federal-state commissioners for people with disabilities

A2. Non-governmental Bodies

- Advisory Committee for the rehabilitation of people with disabilities
- Corresponding advisory committees at federal-state level

B. Departments or bodies responsible for civil rights policies

- The Federal Ministry of Justice (for general matters)
- The Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs (with particular reference to people with disabilities)
- Federal and federal-state commissioners for people with disabilities

C. Departments or bodies responsible for the provision of financial assistance to disabled people (benefits)

C1. Social Security Provisions

- Sickness insurance institution, accident insurance institution, pension insurance institution
- Federal Labour Office, long-term care insurance institution

C2. Social Welfare Programmes

- Local and supra-local social welfare institutions
- Institution responsible for youth welfare

C3. Benefits for which none of the social security nor the social assistance systems are responsible

- Institutions responsible for social compensation (in particular for war invalids, victims of violence and vaccine victims)

D. Departments or bodies responsible for service provision

D1. Education

- Federal Ministry for Education, Science, Research and Technology
- Corresponding ministries at federal-state level

D2. Vocational Rehabilitation

- Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs
- Corresponding ministries at federal-state level
- Federal Labour Office
- Other institutions with responsibility for vocational rehabilitation

D3. Employment

- Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs
- Federal Ministry for Health (for the area of social welfare, employment in sheltered workshops)
- Corresponding ministries at federal-state level

D4. Health

- Federal Ministry for Health
- Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs
- Corresponding ministries at federal-state level

D5. Social Integration

- Federal Ministry for Health (as regards social welfare)
- Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs
- Corresponding ministries at Federal-state level

D6. Information Technology

- Federal Ministry for Education, Science, Research and Technology
- Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs
- Corresponding ministries at federal-state level

E. Departments or bodies responsible for a barrier-free environment

E1. Building Environment

- Federal Ministry for Regional Planning, Housing and Urban Development
- Corresponding ministries at federal-state level

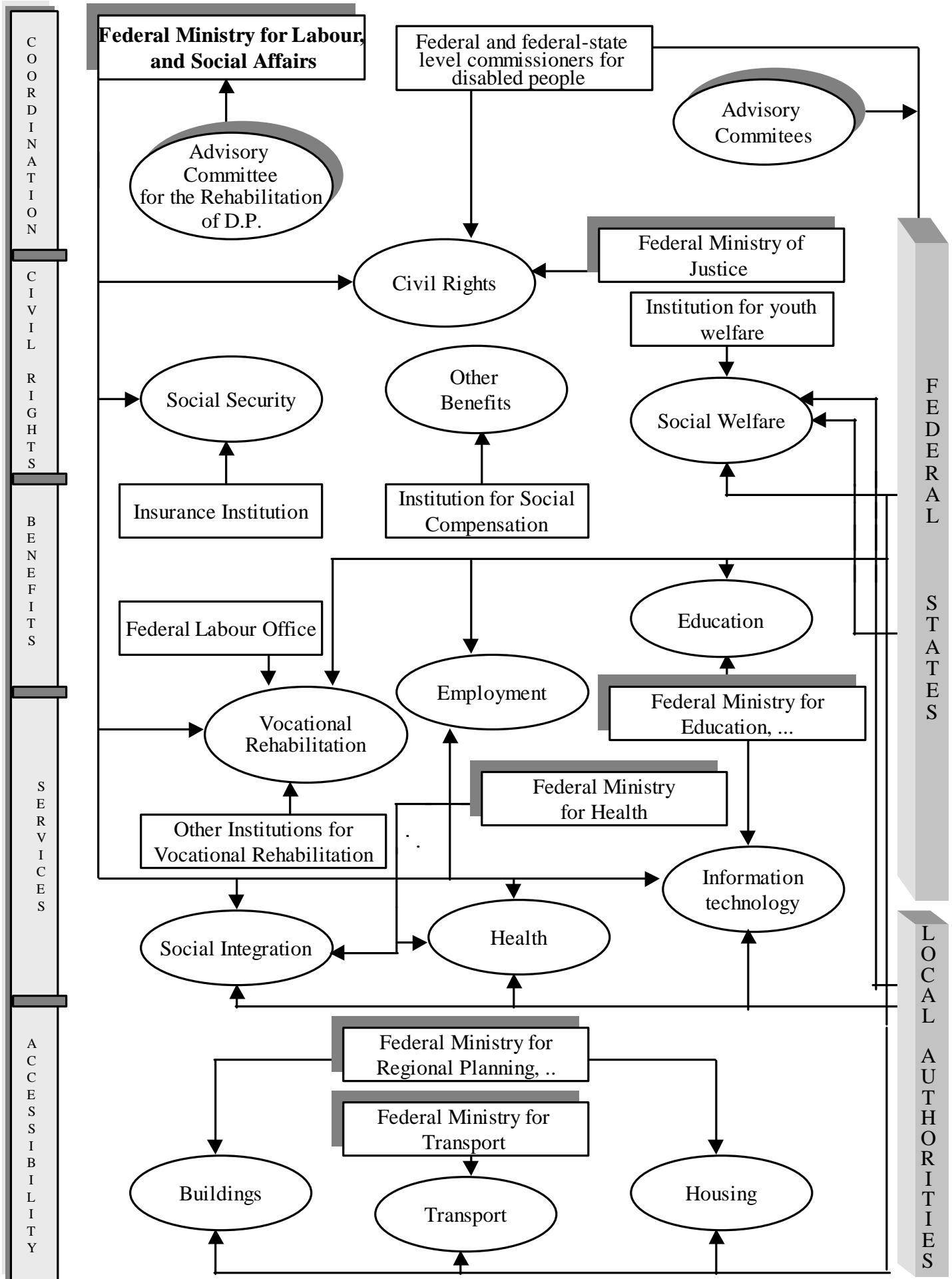
E2. Accessible Transportation

- Federal Ministry for Transport
- Corresponding ministries at federal-state level

E3. Housing

- Federal Ministry for Regional Planning, Housing and Urban Development
- Corresponding ministries at federal-state level

II. ORGANIGRAM



III. ACTION PLANS

Co-ordination – Global plan

The Federal Republic's Basic Law guarantees for every person, irrespective of the cause, nature or extent of any disability, the respect of the dignity of man, the right to life and freedom from bodily harm, the freedom of personal development, the principle of the social state and equal treatment by the powers of the state.

Co-ordination must ensure that planning/funding reflects demand and is consistent with the needs of people with disabilities. The principal instruments for co-ordination are public relations work, the work of the various committees and the co-operation with the various institutions, with particular emphasis being placed on the production and further development of plans for people with disabilities and their inclusion in regional social planning. Plans of this type, which relate to the needs of people with disabilities, also offer an opportunity to establish, jointly with disabled people's organisations, whether the specialised services and institutions available regionally for rehabilitation and integration are available in sufficient numbers and with the requisite expertise or whether further action is necessary.

In order to obtain a picture of the progress achieved in legal and political terms, the German Parliament (Lower House) called on the Federal Government in 1982 to present one report per parliamentary term describing the situation of people with disabilities and how rehabilitation was developing. The fourth report of this series, which was presented in December 1997, respects the wishes of the German Parliament by aiming to provide descriptions and presentations that are comprehensive and fully contextualised.

Civil rights

The general equal treatment requirement of Article 3(1) of the Basic Law, which guarantees that all people are equal before the law, was supplemented in November 1994 by a specific provision catering for people with disabilities, whereby Article 3(3) was extended to include a sentence to the effect that no person shall be disadvantaged on account of his or her disability. Although people with disabilities are protected by the Constitution against being disadvantaged by action taken by the state before this date, the extension of the Basic Law consolidated the position of people with disabilities because it contained the provision that it was the duty of the state to take steps to ensure that people with disabilities can participate in the life of society on an equal footing.

Vocational reintegration

Every person with a physical, mental or psychological disability, or who is at risk of acquiring one, is entitled, irrespective of the cause of the disability, to claim a social right to the assistance necessary to:

- prevent the disability, to remove it or to improve it, to prevent its deterioration
- or to attenuate the consequences and provide a place in society, in particular in working life, which is suited to his or her preferences and skills.

This “social right” is generally recognised to be not only a legal principle for determining and applying social legislation but also a guiding principle for Germany's rehabilitation and disability policy. To achieve this objective the Federal Republic has in place a comprehensive, differentiated but conceptually consistent social benefits system catering also and specifically for people with disabilities. Co-ordinating the benefits and ensuring that the whole operation runs smoothly are considered in Germany to be the key problems to be tackled in any attempt to secure effective rehabilitation at reasonable cost levels.

Social integration –

Barrier-free environment

To achieve the most comprehensive and effective integration in society for people with disabilities it will be necessary to extend the social benefits referred to earlier and any other assistance provided to include the following:

- primary attention to focus on the personal skills of the people who are disabled,
- the design of the physical conditions to make allowance for the problems that people with disabilities face and must come to terms with (for example as regards transport or communicating with other people),
- sufficient willingness on the part of the people with disabilities and on the part of society to do all in their power to achieve integration, plus
- a climate within society as a whole which is favourable to integration.

IV. CO-OPERATION – CONSULTATION STRUCTURES

With targeted co-operation on the part of the above mentioned competent institutions based on harmonised statutory provisions a structured system can create and safeguard scope for the effective integration for people with disabilities and people threatened by disability.

Advisory committees for the rehabilitation of people with disabilities

In keeping with the principle of mainstreaming measures for people with disabilities are the responsibility of the competent authorities in question. Where these authorities are public-sector bodies the competence's will differ depending on whether federal level, federal-state level or local level authorities are involved. At federal level the Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs has assumed responsibility for co-ordination – and this applies also to the federal states. In its work it is supported by the Advisory committee for rehabilitation of people with disabilities and other federal ministries are involved where appropriate.

The Advisory committee comprises representatives of employees, employers, disabled people's organisations, the federal states, the local self-governing bodies, the main welfare institutions, the Federal Labour Office, the statutory pension insurance scheme, the statutory accident insurance scheme, social welfare, voluntary welfare organisations and establishments with responsibilities for occupational rehabilitation. The committee meets as and when required but as a rule several times a year.

At regional level too there is a need to co-ordinate the various types of assistance available, in particular with a view to obtaining an overview of what can be provided, co-ordinating it and making it easy to recognise. In many local authorities this responsibility falls to the “co-ordinators for people with disabilities” and in others the co-ordination is ensured as part of existing administrative and co-operation structures or on the basis of initiatives by independent institutions. These co-ordination centres are the points of contact for associations and they maintain links with the rehabilitation institutions operating as a central focal point for people with disabilities.

GREECE

I. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

A. Departments or bodies responsible for the co-ordination or assistance of governments in the overall policy formation

A1. Governmental Bodies

- Ministry of Health and Welfare

A2. Non-governmental Bodies

- National Confederation of Disabled People
- Panhellenic Federation of Organisations of Parents and Guardians of Disabled Children

B. Departments or bodies responsible for civil rights policies

- Ministry of Health and Welfare in co-operation with other bodies

C. Departments or bodies responsible for the provision of financial assistance to disabled people (benefits)

C1. Social Security Provisions

- Ministry of Employment and Social Security

C2. Social Welfare Programmes

- Ministry of Health and Welfare

D. Departments or bodies responsible for service provision

D1. Education

- Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs

D2. Vocational Rehabilitation

- Ministry of Health and Welfare
- Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs
- Ministry of Labour (Organisation for the Employment of the Active Population)

D3. Employment

- Ministry of Labour (Organisation for the Employment of the Active Population)
- Ministry of Health and Welfare
- Tripartite Committee

D4. Health

- Ministry of Health and Welfare

D5. Social Integration

- Ministry of Health and Welfare

D6. Information Technology

- Ministry of Health and Welfare

E. Departments or bodies responsible for a barrier-free environment

E1. Building Environment

- Ministry of the Environment, Zoning and Public Works
- Ministry of the Interior, Public Administration and Decentralisation
- Ministry of Culture

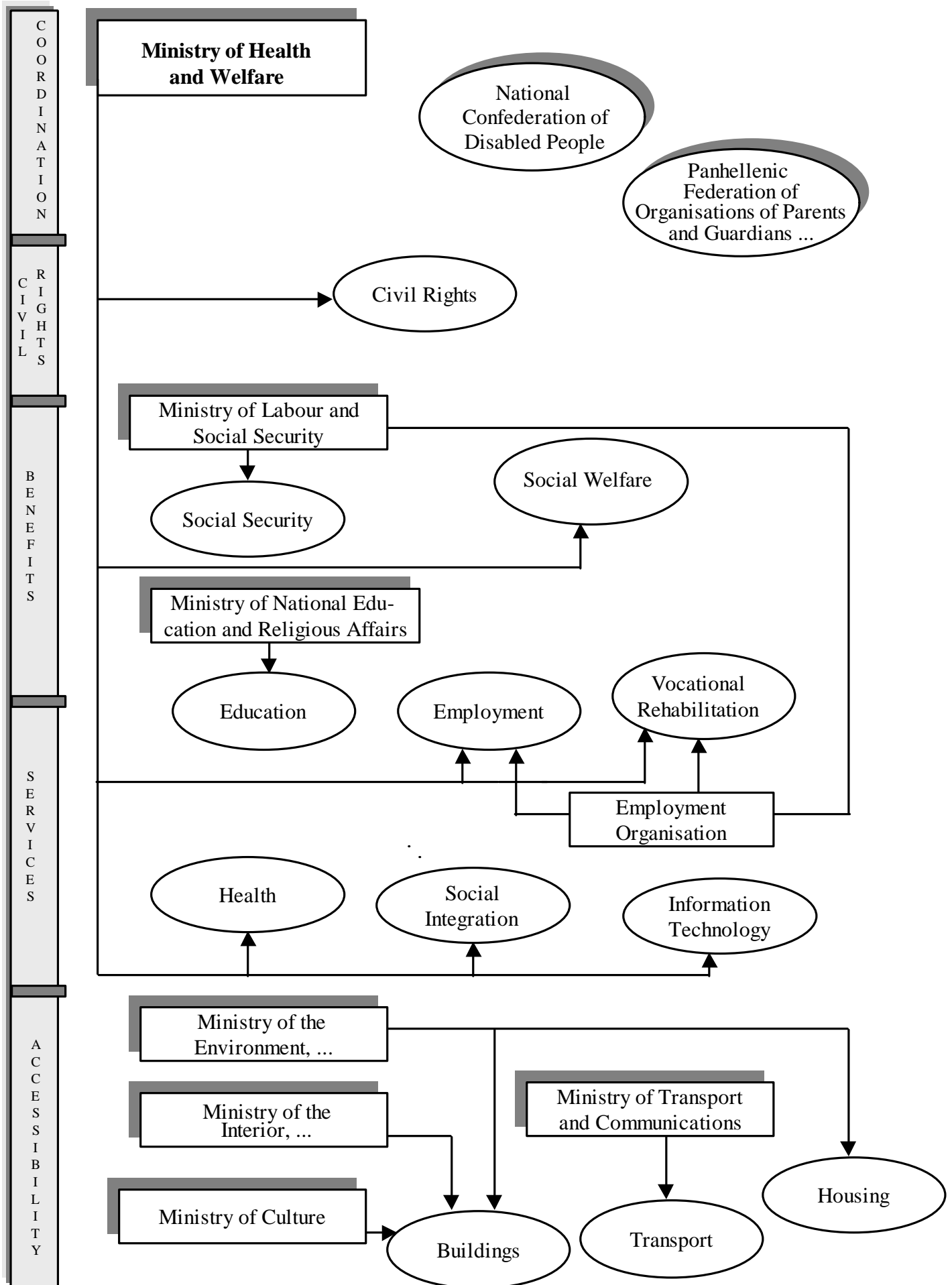
E2. Accessible Transportation

- Ministry of Transport and Communications

E3. Housing

- Ministry of the Environment, Zoning and Public Works

II. ORGANIGRAM



III. ACTION PLANS

Co-ordination – Global Plan

The Greek Parliament has ratified the United Nation rules concerning the World Action Programme (Act No 2430/1996). A multiparty committee has been commissioned to prepare the National Action Plan. This committee is chaired by the Secretary of State for Welfare. Besides, an inter-ministerial committee consisting of the Secretaries of State of various ministries and chaired by the Secretary of State for Welfare has been invited to prepare guidelines for the preparation and implementation of a global policy for people with a disability.

Social security and social welfare

Act No 2646 of 20 October 1998 on the establishment of a National Social Protection System better adapted to the needs of modern society, computerisation and the adaptation of benefits.

Education

A bill providing for the improved organisation of special education in order to provide disabled pupils with better general, technical and vocational education will shortly be tabled by the Ministry of National Education.

The Ministry of National Education is implementing a teacher training plan with a view to the better integration of disabled pupils.

Employment

Act No 2648 of 29 September 1998 on the more effective application of the quota system to the employment of people with a disability and other vulnerable social groups in the private and public sectors.

Publication of the Employment Organisation's new programme: measures designed to increase the number of workplaces for people with a disability (bigger grants for employers and young disabled businesspeople).

Social integration

Recent measures include:

- Presidential Decree No 210/10 of 10 July 1998 introducing the Invalidation Card, which will simplify procedures for access to the different benefits
- A decree establishing criteria for the creation and operation of structures designed to ensure autonomy
- Creation of a home care network.

In the context of the second Community Support Framework, a draft law has been prepared by the Ministry of Health and Welfare on the creation of 23 support centres for people with a disability and specialised centres for the support of people with autism.

Accessibility

The creation of inter-ministerial committees responsible for questions concerning accessibility to services and public buildings, transport and communications.

IV. CO-OPERATION - CONSULTATION STRUCTURES

Confederation of Disabled People

The Confederation of Disabled People is the government's social partner in matters pertaining to people with a disability.

On 3 December each year the Confederation submits a report on respect for the civil and social rights of people with a disability in Greece to the President of the Chamber. Besides:

- the Ministry of Health and Welfare takes into account the Confederation's opinion as regards the conditions and procedures for subsidising organisations of people with a disability;
- in applying the quota system at departmental level, placement of people with a disability is supervised by a tripartite committee on which the Confederation is represented. At national level, it is possible to appeal to a special committee.

Other organisations

A representative of organisations of people with a disability participates in most of the administrative boards of welfare agencies that provide services to people with a disability.

SPAIN

I. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

A. Departments or bodies responsible for the co-ordination or assistance of governments in the overall policy formulation.

A1. Governmental Bodies

- Royal Association for the protection and care of Disabled People
- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Institute for Migration and Social Services (IMSERSO)

A2. Non-Governmental Bodies

- Spanish Council of Representatives of Disabled People

B. Departments or bodies responsible for civil rights policies

- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

C. Departments or bodies responsible for the provision of financial assistance to disabled people (benefits)

C1. Social Security Provisions

- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. State Secretary of Social Security

C2. Social Welfare Programmes

- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. State Secretary of Social Affairs
- Autonomous Communities

D. Departments or bodies responsible for service provision

D1. Education

- Ministry of Education and Culture
- Autonomous Communities

D2. Vocational Rehabilitation

- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

D3. Employment

- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
- Autonomous Communities

D4. Health

- Ministry of Health and Consumer Affairs
- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
- Autonomous Communities

D5. Social Integration

- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. State Secretary of Social Affairs
- Local Authorities

E. Departments or bodies responsible for a barrier-free environment

E1. Building Environment

- Ministry of Public Works and Town Planning
- Local authorities
- IMSERSO. National Centre for Personal Autonomy and Technical Assistance

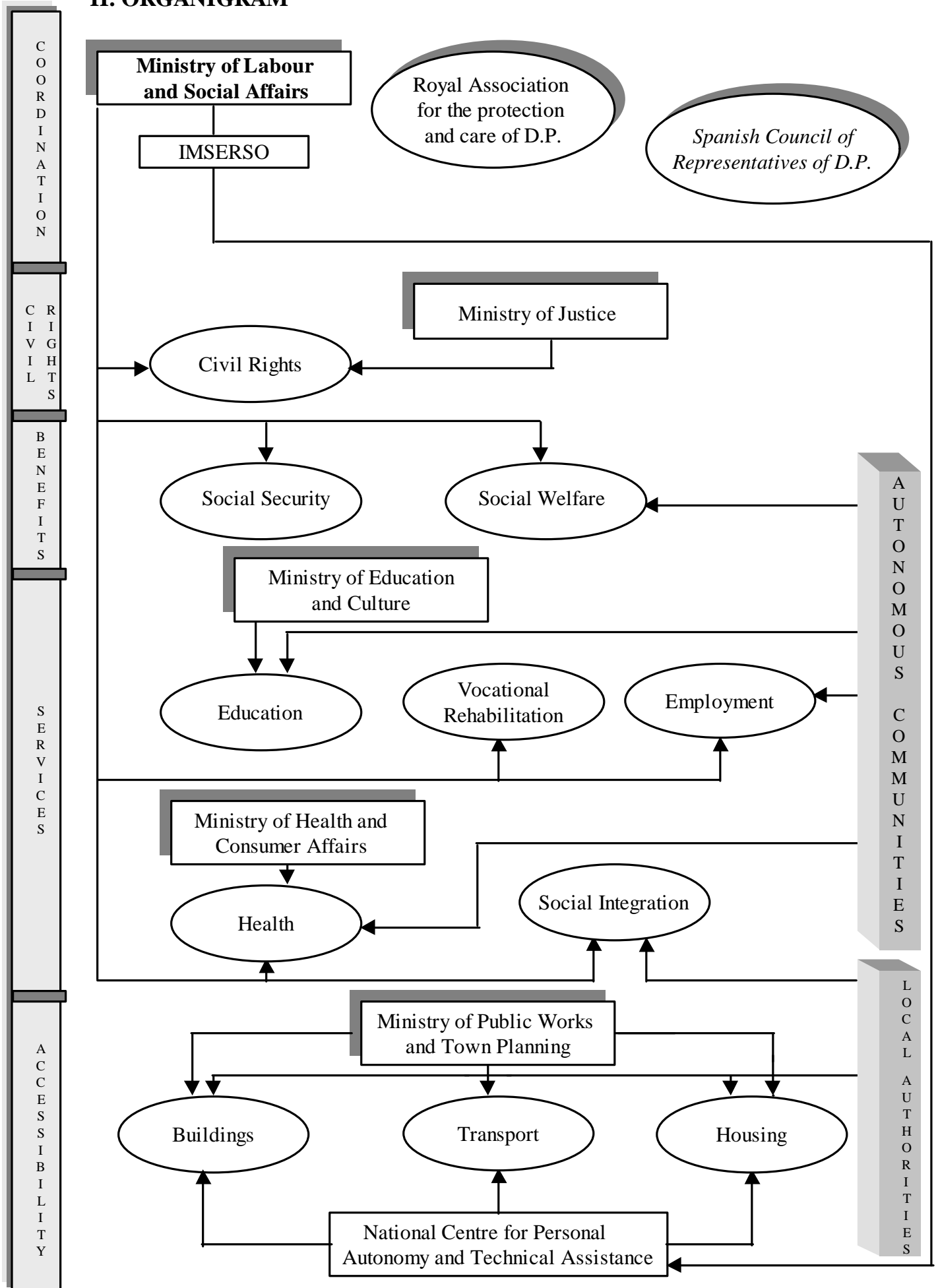
E2. Accessible Transportation

- Ministry of Public Works and Town Planning- Local administration
- Local authorities
- IMSERSO. National Centre for Personal Autonomy and Technical Assistance

E3. Housing

- Ministry of Public Works and Town Planning
- Local authorities
- IMSERSO. National Centre for Personal Autonomy and Technical Assistance

II. ORGANIGRAM



III. ACTION PLANS

Co-ordination – Global Plan

In 1996 the Action Plan for Disabled People was adopted in order to consolidate and develop the principles of Act 13/82 of 7 April 1996 on the Social Integration of Disabled People. The drive behind the Action Plan is to ensure that people with disabilities have access to an ordinary job and, when this is not possible, that they may either work at a Special Employment Centre or attend an Occupational Centre.

The Action Plan (covering the 1997 – 2002 period) is based on a threefold approach: a political compromise on the part of all groups represented in Congress; the active involvement of all competent authorities; and the responsible participation of organisations representing people with disabilities. It is regarded as a comprehensive plan in that it deals with all the competent authorities and organisations representing people with disabilities.

The principles of equal opportunity, integration and participation run throughout the lines of action and measures contained in the Action Plan. The latter is divided into five main Sectoral Plans, thus:

1. promotion of health and prevention of deficiencies;
2. health care and full rehabilitation;
3. educational integration and special education;
4. economic participation and integration;
5. community integration and independent lifestyles.

Employment

In January 1997, a Joint Committee of representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Spanish Council of Representatives of People with Disabilities was established in order to develop a Plan that would propose a series of measures designed to promote the employment of people with disabilities.

The work of the Joint Committee - the “Agreement between the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs and the Spanish Council of Representatives of People with Disabilities on the elaboration of a Plan of urgent measures to promote the employment of disabled people” - was completed and signed in October 1997. This agreement contains a whole range of measures divided into four main sections. The basic approaches and principles contained in each of these are:

- a. institutional participation;
- b. inter-mediation services;
- c. vocational training;
- d. recruitment and occupational integration.

Accessibility

In terms of accessibility, initiatives favouring people with disabilities are being developed in areas such as architectural design, transportation, and audio-visual communication. Co-operation agreements have been concluded between governmental bodies, public undertakings, and organisations of people with disabilities. There is also an Agreement between the Spanish Federation of Towns and Provinces, the National Organisation of Spanish Blind People and companies such as the State Rail Network.

Telefónica and Transmediterránea have provided their services to increase the number of town councils with integrated accessibility schemes to promote the adaptation of rail and sea transportation, the purchase of adapted buses and taxis, and the introduction of text-phones for the deaf.

Similarly, Radio Televisión Española (the state-owned radio and television company) has decided to adapt programmes for individuals with hearing impairments in an incremental manner.

IV. CO-OPERATION - CONSULTATION STRUCTURES

The Action Plan for Disabled People was drawn up thanks to consensus and co-operation between the relevant Ministries, the Autonomous Communities, the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, large organisations of disabled people, trade unions, employers' associations, and experts from various fields. It is anticipated that in order to co-ordinate services for people with disabilities the Action Plan will become a permanent forum for the participation of disabled people, their representative organisations, and both governmental and non-governmental authorities with responsibility for matters pertaining to disability.

The Spanish Council of Representatives of Disabled People (CERMI)

A Joint Committee of Representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Spanish Council of Representatives of Disabled People was established to develop a strategy for the employment of disabled people. The 'Institutional Participation' section of this Committee contains proposals to regenerate the involvement of governmental bodies and disabled people's organisations. These proposals include:

- more active involvement on the part of disabled people's consultative bodies;
- restructuring of the Royal Association for the protection and care of disabled people and the creation of a State Council for people with disabilities.
- the establishment of channels through which the interests and views of the Association may be passed on to other consultative bodies, such as the General Vocational Training Council and the Economic and Social Council.
- agreements with other authorities, such as the Autonomous Communities and the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, enabling the joint development of measures to promote the employment of disabled people.

The Joint Monitoring Committee

A Joint Monitoring Committee of representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Spanish Council of Representatives of Disabled People will be established in order to promote and implement measures such as those detailed above.

FRANCE

I. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

A. Departments or bodies responsible for the co-ordination or assistance of governments in the overall policy formulation

A1. Governmental Bodies

- Minister for Employment and Solidarity
- Inter-ministerial Representative for Disabled People
- Inter-ministerial Co-ordinating Committee
- National/Regional Health and Social Organisation Committee (CNOSS or CROSS)

A2. Semi-public Bodies

- National Advisory Committee for Disabled People (CNCPPH)
- Council for Occupational Rehabilitation
- National Technical Study and Research Centre on Disabilities (CTNERHI)

A3. Non-governmental Bodies

- Committee of Associations representing Disabled People and Parents of Disabled Children
- National Inter-federal Union of Private Health and Social Bodies (UNIOPSS)

B. Departments or bodies responsible for civil rights policies

- State Council
- individual ministers.

C. Departments or bodies responsible for the provision of financial assistance to disabled people (benefits)

C1. Social Security Provisions

- National sickness insurance fund for persons in paid employment
- National family allowances fund
- National old age pension fund for persons in paid employment
- Fund for special schemes

C2. Social Welfare Programmes

- National sickness insurance fund for persons in paid employment
- National family allowances fund
- National old age pension fund for persons in paid employment
- fund for special schemes
- General Council, Département Directorate for health and social affairs

D. Departments or bodies responsible for service provision

D1. Education

- Minister for National Education
- Minister for Employment and Solidarity
- (Département) Committee on special education (CDES)

D2. Vocational Rehabilitation

- Fund for the occupational integration of disabled people (AGEFIPH)
- Occupational retraining centre
- Technical guidance and occupational rehabilitation committee (COTOREP)
- Adult vocational training association (AFPA)
- General delegation for employment and vocational training (DGEFP)
- Regional Council

D3. Employment

- Minister for Employment and Solidarity
- Fund for the occupational integration of disabled people (AGEFIPH)
- National or Local Employment Agency

D4. Health

- State Secretariat for Health
- Regional Council

D5. Social Integration

- National family allowances fund
- Communal Centre for Social Action

D6. Information Technology

- Individual Ministers in liaison with the Minister for National Education, Research and Technology

E. Departments or bodies responsible for a barrier-free environment

E1. Building Environment

- Minister for Housing
- (Département) Committees on safety and accessibility

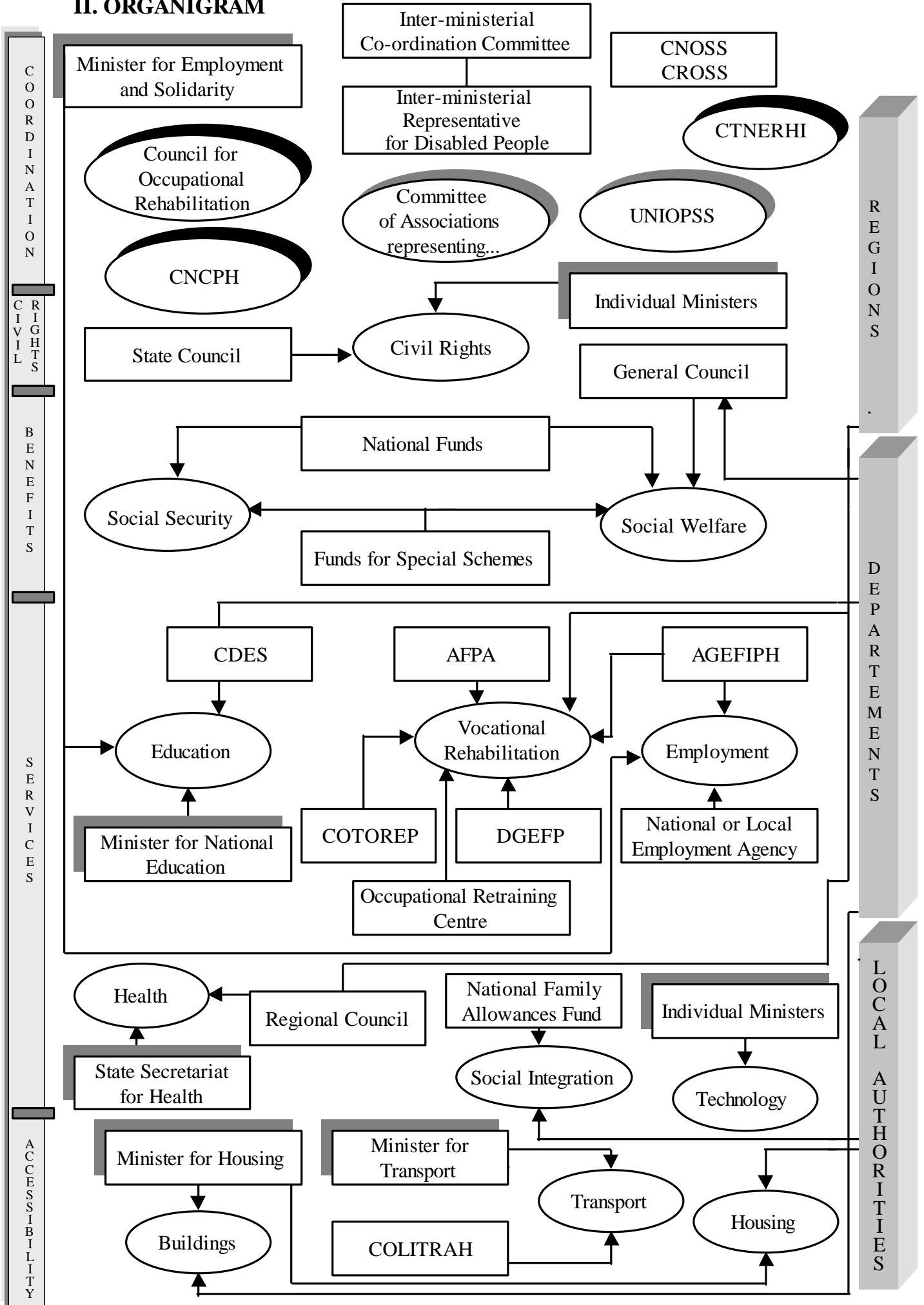
E2. Accessible Transportation

- Minister for Transport
- Liaison Committee on transport for disabled people (COLITRAH)

E3. Housing

- Minister for Housing
- Communal Centre for Social Action

II. ORGANIGRAM



III. ACTION PLANS

Co-ordination - Global Plan

The Inter-ministerial Representative for Disabled People, appointed in 1995, is responsible for co-ordinating measures by the various ministries to promote the occupational and social integration of people with a disability, particularly in the fields of educational integration, enabling them to remain in their homes, accessibility, employment and vocational training.

He is supported by the Inter-ministerial Co-ordinating Committee on Adaptation and Rehabilitation, established under the terms of Article 1 of the Act of 30 June 1975 on guidance for people with a disability. This committee comprises representatives from all the ministries involved.

Civil rights

The rights of people with a disability are laid down in two basic texts, namely the Act of 30 June 1975 on guidance for people with a disability and the Act of 10 July 1987 on the promotion of employment for disabled people. Each ministry is responsible for establishing these rights within its own area of competence.

The principle underlying French law nowadays is priority for integration into an ordinary environment, whether in terms of educational or occupational integration or of being able to remain in one's own home. Specialist intervention is regarded as a palliative for those whose disability is too serious or specific to permit integration. Application of these rights in the event of individual discrimination is guaranteed by means of common-law dispute procedures; on the other hand, a special procedure guarantees application of specific measures (allowances, specialist guidance).

There is a basic text which concerns all groups. This is the Act of 30 June 1975, relating to social and medico-social institutions, which is currently being updated to take account of developments in needs and responses to those needs over the last 20 years.

Employment

The Act of 10 July 1987 reflects the legislator's will to "promote access to employment for people with a disability taking into account the economic constraints on employers and involving them fully in the policy proposed to them". The Act's ground rule is that firms are now subject to an obligation as to results rather than as to means.

The Fund for the Vocational Integration of People with Disabilities focuses on "17 measures for the employment of people with a disability". The programmes have set themselves four principal objectives:

- to improve vocational qualifications; developing training for people with a disability and improving the training on offer;
- to mobilise the economic players (employers and workers); long-term actions aim to improve the receptiveness of managers, and awareness-raising measures are organised and then led by employees' trade unions for their members;
- to increase access to employment and the ability to hold down a job;
- to address the technical obstacles encountered by people with a disability.

Social integration

In France today, most specialist services are run by associations. These services must benefit from authorisation for two reasons: to ensure quality of care, and because in most cases they receive public funds.

Accessibility

France has a range of texts establishing obligations to make public buildings, new housing and transport accessible.

Specifically, all building permits are subject to the opinion of a safety and

accessibility committee operating at Département level and bringing together civil servants from the public works department, firemen and representatives of the associations. This covers new constructions and significant renovations.

With regard to transport, the Minister for Transport has a liaison committee on transport for people with a disability, which is consulted on any developments in public transport. It brings together civil servants, public bodies and associations.

IV. CO-OPERATION - CONSULTATION STRUCTURES

National Advisory Committee for Disabled People and Council for Occupational Rehabilitation

When drawing up policy proposals, ministers consult either the National Advisory Committee for Disabled People or the Council for Occupational Rehabilitation, depending on the subject. Provided for under the Act of 30 June 1975, the National Advisory Committee includes representatives of users' associations and of the public- and private-sector bodies involved. Its opinion is sought on the drafts of ministerial texts concerning people with a disability.

The Council for Occupational Rehabilitation, is a consultative body responsible for informing the Minister for Labour on the promotion of public and private measures relating to rehabilitation, retraining and vocational training, rehabilitation and occupational placement and the organisation of sheltered employment.

National Regional Health and Social Organisation Committee

The National/Regional Health and Social Organisation Committee is responsible at national or regional level respectively for evaluating requirements and issuing an opinion on the usefulness of creating or converting establishments or services in the health or social field.

Committee of associations representing disabled people

The Committee of associations representing disabled people and parents of disabled children is an informal group bringing together national associations of people with a disability, parents and services. Its main task is to study the problems encountered by people with a disability, publicise their difficulties and act with the authorities to try to provide solutions, particularly when new legislation is in preparation.

National Inter-federal Union of Private Health and Social Bodies

National Inter-federal Union of Private Health and Social Bodies has the task of:

- assisting and co-ordinating proposals and initiatives from associations in the health and social fields;
- providing all partners with a forum for discussion;
- representing associations in the health and social fields in dealings with national and local authorities;
- providing technical support for health associations by developing their managerial capabilities.

National Technical Study and Research Centre on Disabilities

The National Technical Study and Research Centre on Disabilities, a semi-public body, is a forum for ministries, associations, field workers, undertakings and study and research bodies. Its task is to carry out studies and research and to organise and disseminate information on disability.

Liaison committee on transport

A Liaison committee on transport for people with a disability is consulted on any developments in public transport. It brings together civil servants, public bodies and associations.

Other

In France today, most specialist services are run by associations. The strategy of the Fund for the occupational integration of disabled people was established by a large number of players from the associations, the authorities, employers and trade unions involved in implementing the Act of 10 July 1987. Also, at Département level, Integration Programmes bring together all partners responsible for occupational integration.

At Département and local authority level, there are the Regional Council and General Council. These are important in the everyday life of people with a disability. The Regional Council is responsible for vocational training, regional planning, culture and social life, health and social intervention.

The General Council is responsible for social assistance, home help, foster care, hostels, meals at home, support for children and accommodation.

IRELAND

I. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

A. Departments or bodies responsible for the co-ordination or assistance of governments in the overall policy formulation

A1. Governmental Bodies

- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
- Inter Departmental Task Force
- National Disability Authority

A2. Non-Governmental Bodies

- Irish Council of People with Disabilities

B. Departments or bodies responsible for civil rights policies

- Legal Aid Board, under the aegis of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
- Director of Equality Investigations, under the aegis of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform

C. Departments or bodies responsible for the provision of financial assistance to disabled people (benefits)

C1. Social Security Provisions

- Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs
- Revenue Commissioners
- Communities

C2. Social Welfare Programmes

- Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs
- Department of Health and Children
- Regional Health Boards
- Communities

D. Departments or bodies responsible for service provision

D1. Education

- Department of Education and Science

D2. Vocational Rehabilitation

- Department of Health and Children
- National Rehabilitation Board
- Regional Health Boards

D3. Employment

- Department of Health and Children
- Regional Health Boards
- National Rehabilitation Board
- Equality Authority

D4. Health

- Department of Health and Children
- Regional Health Boards
- General Medical Service

D5. Social Integration

- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
- Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs
- Regional Health Boards

E. Departments or bodies responsible for a barrier-free environment

E1. Building Environment

- Department of the Environment and Local Government
- Local Authorities

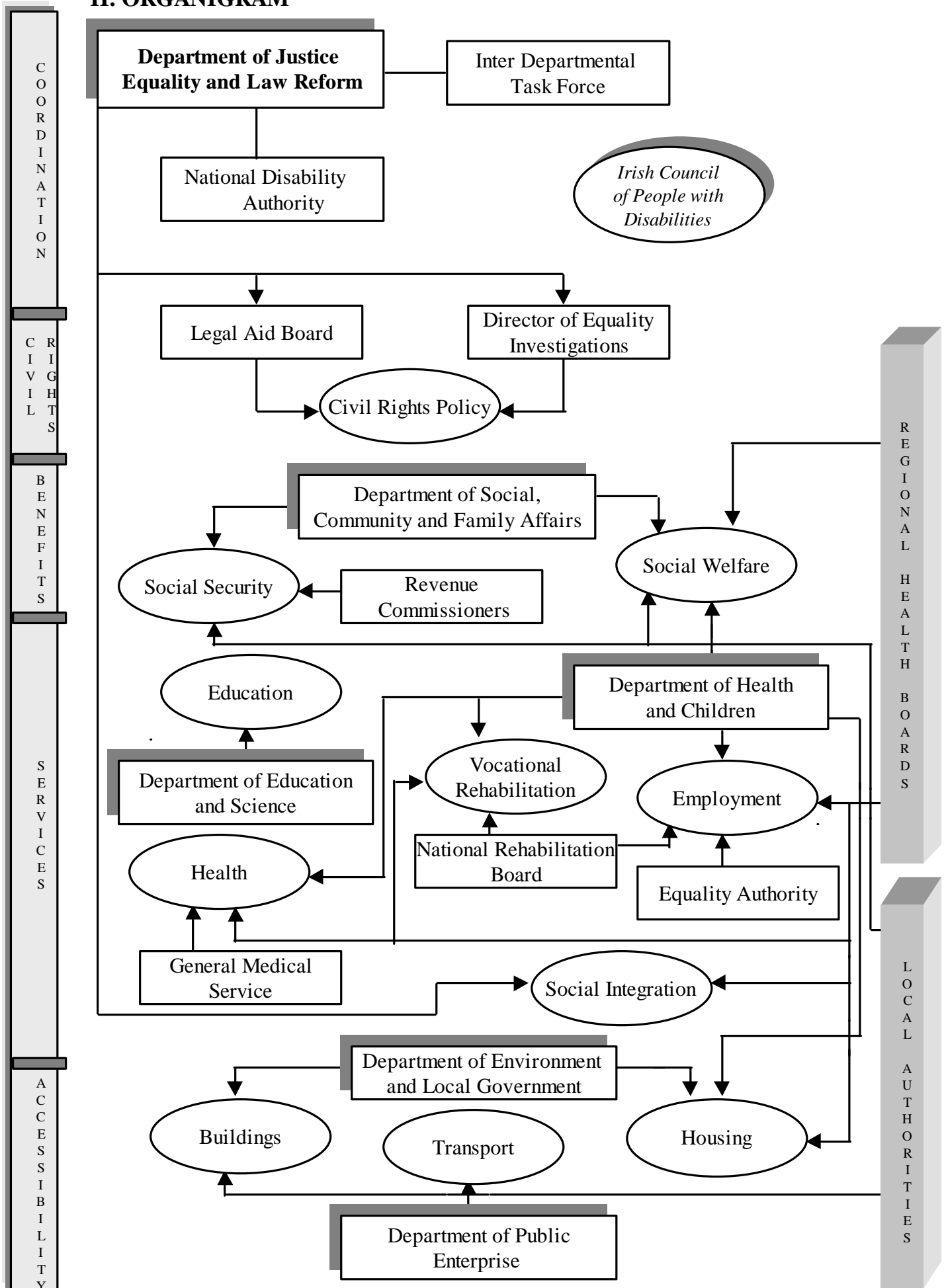
E2. Accessible Transportation

- Department of Public Enterprise

E3. Housing

- Department of the Environment and Local Government
- Department of Health and Children
- Regional Health Boards

II. ORGANIGRAM



III. ACTION PLANS

Co-ordination - Global Plan

Since 1993, the Irish Government has undertaken a number of important initiatives geared towards promoting equal opportunities for people with disabilities, including the establishment of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities and the facilitation of the setting up of the Irish Council of People with Disabilities.

On 18 November 1997, the Irish government announced its intention to establish a National Disability Authority and a Disability Support Service. An Establishment Group was set up to draft proposals for the Government on these issues and to make recommendations on the future location of departmental responsibility for the employment of people with disabilities. The Group reported in June, 1998 and at the end of July, the Government appointed members of the National Disability Authority which is due to start operating in January 1999. The Government also announced that a disability Support Service would be established under the aegis of the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs and that responsibility for the employment of people with disabilities would be transferred from the Department of Health and Children to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. A programme of initiatives to curb marginalisation and to ensure full expression of equality for people with disabilities is being undertaken.

Civil Rights

The Department of Equality and Law Reform, now the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, was established in January 1993. The Minister has responsibility for promoting and implementing through institutional, administrative and legal reforms, equality

of treatment for persons experiencing disability, disadvantage or discrimination.

The Minister established the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities at the end of 1993 to make recommendations aimed at ensuring that people with disabilities could exercise their rights to participate, to the fullest extent of their potential, in economic, social and cultural life. The Commission presented its Report in November 1996. The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform chaired an Inter-Departmental Task Force established to draft a Plan of Action on the rights of people with disabilities, based on the Report.

The Minister is pursuing a major programme for reform of family law, the rights of women and of disabled people. The Minister has responsibility for administering, through the Legal Aid Board, a system of civil legal aid to ensure equal access to the law, regardless of income.

Employment

The Government have undertaken to introduce a Disabilities Act setting out the rights of people with disabilities together with a means of redress for those whose rights are not upheld. Two pieces of anti-discrimination legislation went through the Irish Parliament in 1996. These were the Employment Equality Bill which prohibits discrimination in the workplace and the Equal Status Bill which may prohibit discrimination in the supply of services. People with disabilities are among the groups covered by these Bills. Since the Supreme Court found both Bills to be unconstitutional, the Government is drafting a new Equal Status Bill, along the lines of the Bill struck down in the Supreme Court Judgement.

The Employment Equality Act, 1998, was signed into law on 18 June 1998.

The Bill describes discrimination as the treatment of one person in a less favourable way than another person is, has been or would be treated. Discrimination is outlawed on nine distinct discriminatory grounds, among which is the ground of disability. The Bill covers employees in both the public and private sectors, as well as applicants for employment and training. It outlaws discrimination in employment and allows positive action for disabled people specially geared towards integration into employment. An employer must do all that is reasonable to accommodate the needs of a person with a disability, unless the employer can show that there is a cost to him other than a nominal cost.

A new Equality Authority, which is being established under the Act, is charged with a statutory duty to work towards the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment, also for disabled people.

New codes of practice will be developed, given statutory effect by the Minister. The codes of practice will be admissible in evidence and taken into account in determining any relevant case.

A new statutory office of Director of Equality Investigations is established in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The Director will operate as the main locus for redress under the Bill. The Director will investigate each case submitted to him and will issue a decision. The decision is binding and enforceable through the Circuit Court.

The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform has a significant legislative programme. Insofar as it operates as a service provider directly to the general public, it does so mainly via the organisations under its aegis, the Legal Aid Board, the Employment Equality Agency, now replaced by the Equality Authority, and the Director of Equality Investigations.

IV. CO-OPERATION - CONSULTATION STRUCTURES

Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities

The Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities was established on 29 November 1993. Its main terms of reference were to advise the Government on practical measures necessary to ensure that people with a disability can exercise their rights to participate, to the fullest extent of their potential, in economic, social and cultural life; to examine the current situation of people with disabilities and the organisation and adequacy of existing services to meet their needs; to make recommendations setting out necessary changes, in legislation, policies, organisation,

practices and structures to ensure that the needs of people with disabilities are met in a cohesive, comprehensive and cost effective way.

The Commission engaged in the most comprehensive examination of the situation of people with disabilities in the history of the State. It held 30 public "Listening Meetings" at accessible locations throughout the State where people with disabilities, families and carers were given an opportunity to give their views of the issues affecting their lives and received over 600 written submissions. Its Report was published on 18 November 1996.

Monitoring Committee on the Report of the Commission.

The Monitoring Committee which oversees the implementation of the Commission's recommendations was established in April 1997. It comprises organisations representing people with disabilities, people with disabilities, their families and carers as well as service providers, social partners and government departments.

Its terms of reference are:

- to advise the Inter-Departmental Task Force on the prioritisation of the recommendations of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities;
- to provide any assistance and support required by the Task Force to facilitate the preparation of the Action Plan on the Rights of People with Disabilities;
- to advise and make proposals to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform;
- to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities which have been accepted by Government.

Inter-Departmental Task Force

Following the publication of the Report, the Inter-Departmental Task Force was established, chaired by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, to draw up a Plan of Action on the rights of people with disabilities, based on the Report. The Task Force is comprised, in the main, of those Government Departments on whom the Report mostly impacts. It is also considering the Report of the Review Group on Health and Personal Social Services for People with Physical and Sensory Disabilities, which was published by the Department of Health in December 1996, in conjunction with the Health recommendations of the Commission.

The Irish Council of People with Disabilities (formerly Council for the Status of People with Disabilities)

On 6 April 1995, the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform set up the Ad Hoc Establishment Group to facilitate the establishment of a Council for the Status of People with Disabilities.

The work of the Ad Hoc Group came to fruition with the launch of the Interim Irish Council of People with Disabilities on 11 March 1997, funded by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform. It is expected that the Council will be established in 1999.

ITALY

I. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

A. Departments or bodies responsible for the co-ordination or assistance of governments in the overall policy formulation.

A1. Governmental Bodies

- Ministry of Social Affairs
- Interdepartmental Standing Committee on Disability
- Standing Committee on Relations between the State, the Regions and the autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano (Permanent Conference)
- Standing Committee on Relations between the State and the Cities

A2. Non-Governmental Bodies

- Council of Associations of People with Disability and of their families

B. Departments or bodies responsible for civil rights policies

- Every Minister
- The Regions

C. Departments or bodies responsible for the provision of financial assistance to disabled people (benefits)

C1. Social Security Provisions

- Minister of the Interior
- Regional, provincial and municipal authorities

C2. Social Welfare Programmes

- Regional, provincial and municipal authorities

D. Departments or bodies responsible for service provision

D1. Education

- Minister of Education
- Minister for Universities, Scientific and Technical Research
- Provincial Director of Education

D2. Vocational Rehabilitation

- Minister of Employment and Welfare
- Regional Authorities

D3. Employment

- Minister of Employment and Welfare
- Regional Authorities

D4. Health

- Minister of Health
- National Health Service
- Local Health Authorities

D5. Social Integration

- Minister of Health
- Minister of Social Affairs
- Regional, provincial and municipal authorities

D6. Information Technology

- Minister of Telecommunication Services

E. Departments or bodies responsible for a barrier-free environment

E1. Building Environment

- Minister of Public Works

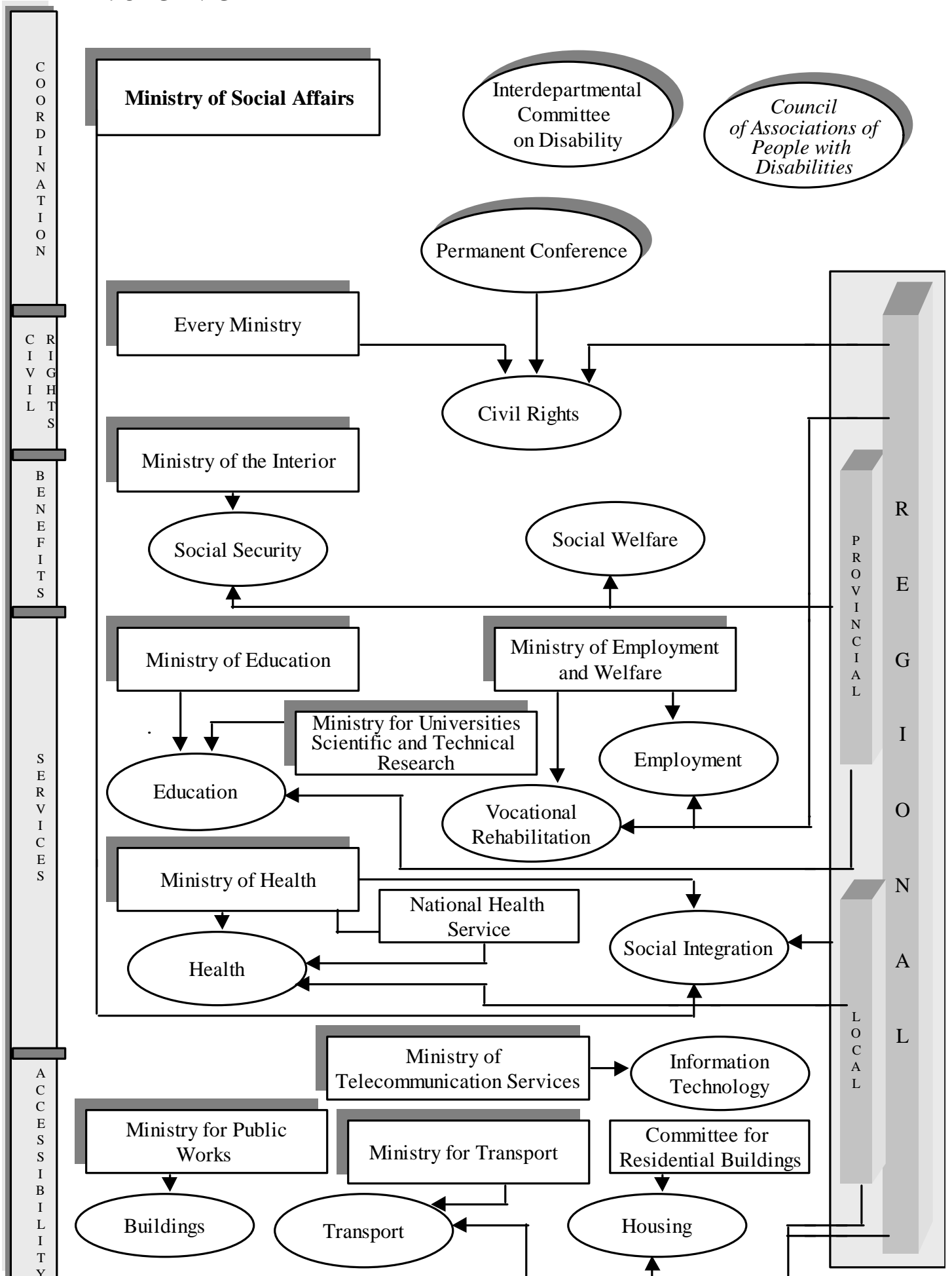
E2. Accessible Transportation

- Minister of Transport
- Regional and municipal authorities

E3. Housing

- Regional and municipal authorities
- Committee for residential buildings

II. ORGANIGRAM



III. ACTION PLANS

Co-ordination - Global Plan

Law 104/92 entitled 'Framework Law on the care, social integration and rights of disabled people' is a statement of policy and strategy on people with disabilities. This provision encompasses matters relating to prevention and diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation, domestic and personal assistance, the right to education as well as the right to educational, vocational and social integration. Certain specific measures promoting the 'total integration into the world of work' as well as access to buildings and transport are also included.

In relation to integration, the law covers a broad range of measures including:

- personal care services
- accessible education, vocational training and technical equipment
- vocational training and individualised employment schemes
- day-time social, recreational and educational centres
- adaptation of educational and sports equipment and facilities
- direct intervention to overcome architectural obstacles
- access to public transport, special transport and assistance with private transport

In essence, this law aims to remove obstacles, improve access and generally make it possible for disabled people to enjoy mainstream services and facilities available within wider society. Uniform enforcement of the Framework Law is sought throughout the country.

The Minister of Social Affairs, by virtue of the above Framework Law, has the responsibility for co-ordinating and promoting support for people with disabilities and for assessing and supervising the implementation of legislation in this field.

The Directorate for co-ordination and monitoring of disability policies and the Office for matters relating to people with disabilities, the family, the elderly and the marginalised (located within the department of Social Affairs) play an important role in the implementation of policies for people with disabilities.

In this respect, the Minister of Social Affairs has been pursuing a number of objectives which include, *inter alia*, the following:

- ongoing assessment of all laws concerned with disability issues;
- strengthening co-ordination activities;
- improvement of the implementation of disability policies, especially in relation to:
 - competencies of the Regions and Local Authorities;
 - co-operation with organisations of people with disabilities;
 - EU initiatives.

The Standing Committee on Relations between the State and the Cities whose tasks include the monitoring, consultancy, study and draft of proposals concerning disability policies, is established by departmental order and composed of representatives from all departments concerned with the application and implementation of the above Framework Law.

In performing its functions, the Standing Committee is assisted by the Interdepartmental Standing Committee on Disability. The latter is made up of one representative from the Ministries of Social Affairs, Public Administration, the Interior, Finance, Treasury, Education, Health, Employment and Welfare, Universities, Scientific and Technological Research, as well as representatives from the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

The Permanent Conference is responsible for co-ordinating the relationship between the State, the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano. The conference identifies, at institutional level, the extent of the problems faced by people with disabilities while at the same time strengthening the links between disability policies which require integrated and co-ordinated action by the State and the Regions.

Social Security and Social welfare

Italy is currently in a transitional stage, in redefining Welfare State. Within this context, inability and disability assessment is being reformulated and common tools and methods are under investigation. In addition the new structure of personal assistance and rehabilitation centres, and the new organisational and funding arrangements have resulted in wider decentralisation of functions within the community and improved quality of assistance to people with disabilities. This process requires action within the community services networks.

According to the recent economic and financial planning document adopted by the Government, the Minister for Social Affairs will play a more incisive, co-ordinating role, aimed at innovative measures, support and incentives for the management of social projects answering the needs of all citizens all throughout the country.

A new social policy is planned, therefore, with special resources to ensure:

- a guaranteed minimum level of subsistence
- tax reductions for families with disabled members
- a better quality of life for people with several disabilities
- effective intervention in the fields of prevention, rehabilitation and the reshaping of the community services network.

Future developments include:

- a Social Fund at the Department of Social Affairs
- a fund devoted to non self-sufficient people
- funds for new vocational training initiatives.

Education

The Minister of Education is responsible for the training of teaching staff so that they have the requisite knowledge to ensure the integration of people with disabilities in schools and universities. He will take decisions in agreement with the Ministers for Social Affairs and Health and with the Minister for Universities, Scientific and Technological Research.

IV. CO-OPERATION - CONSULTATION STRUCTURES

The Standing Committee on Relations between the State and the Cities

The Standing Committee on Relations between the State and the Cities is assisted by Representatives of the Italian Municipalities Association, the Local Autonomies League, the Italian Provinces Union, the Regions' and Provinces' Presidents' Conference, the Social Partners, experts, research institutions and organisations, consultants and NGOs. The Committee meets at the request of the Minister of Social Affairs.

The Council of Associations of People with Disabilities and of their families

The Council of Associations of People with Disabilities and of their families is established by departmental order. It has 30 member associations each of which have been appointed by the two National Disability Councils of the Federations.

Working Groups on education

To achieve integration in schools, every provincial education department has to set up a working group consisting of a specialised Inspector (appointed by the Director of Education), an educational expert, two experts appointed by the local authorities, two local health authority experts and three experts appointed by the associations of disabled people which are most representative at provincial level.

LUXEMBOURG

I. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

A. Departments or bodies responsible for the co-ordination or assistance of governments in the overall policy formulation

A1. Governmental Bodies

- Minister for Disabled People (Ministry of the Family)
- Council for Disabled People

A2. Non-governmental Bodies

- Info-Handicap

B. Departments or bodies responsible for civil rights policies

- Minister for Disabled People.

C. Departments or bodies responsible for the provision of financial assistance to disabled people (benefits)

C1. Social Security Provisions

- Ministry of Social Security (health insurance, dependants' insurance)

C2. Social Welfare Programmes

- Ministry of the Family / National Solidarity Fund

D. Departments or bodies responsible for service provision

D1. Education

- Special Education Department, under the Minister of Education and the Minister for Disabled People

D2. Vocational Rehabilitation

- Disabled Workers Department, under the Minister of Labour and Employment and the Minister for Disabled People

D3. Employment

- Disabled Workers Department under the Minister of Labour and Employment and the Minister for Disabled People

D4. Health

- Minister of Health
- Minister for Disabled People

D5. Social Integration

- Minister for Disabled People

E. Departments or bodies responsible for a barrier-free environment

E1. Building Environment

- Minister for Disabled People
- Ministry of Public Works

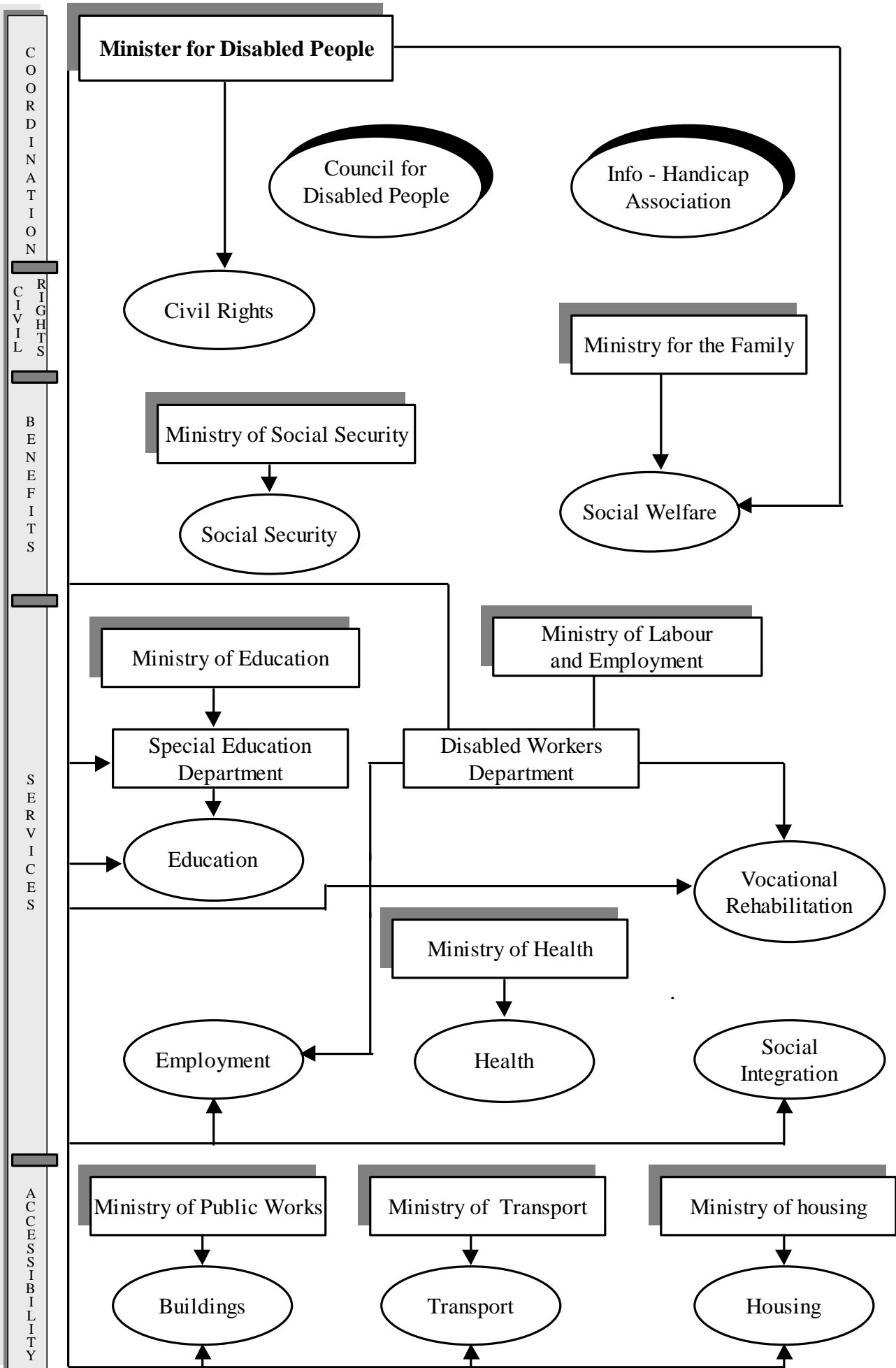
E2. Accessible Transportation

- Minister for Disabled People
- Ministry of Transport

E3. Housing

- Minister for Disabled People
- Ministry of Housing

II. ORGANIGRAM



III. ACTION PLANS

Co-ordination – Global Plan

Policies governing people with a disability are co-ordinated, on an inter-ministerial basis, under the auspices of the Minister for Disabled People. The Department for Disabled People is responsible for ensuring that the policies of the ministerial departments are co-ordinated.

The Minister for Disabled People proposes co-operation with the relevant people in the following priority areas:

Education

The aim is the educational integration of children with special needs and the combination of mainstream and special classes, on the basis of an educational scheme for each child. There is, furthermore, a plan to reorganise the basic and continuing training of educational staff to take into account the education of children with special needs.

Vocational training and employment

Preparations are being made to transfer training structures to the working environment and guarantee free choice in training for people with a disability.

Various amendments to the legislation are required to ensure that the Disabled Workers Act of 12 November 1991 makes an effective contribution to the integration of people with a disability into working life.

The need for special facilities for people with a disability who want to take official qualifying examinations has also become apparent.

Sheltered employment needs to be extended and local sheltered workshops made available.

Social integration

Decentralisation of the large specialist institutions to give priority to individual housing in an ordinary environment with the necessary services.

Accessibility

A bill is being drawn up on improved accessibility to State and municipal buildings open to the public.

IV. CO-OPERATION - CONSULTATION STRUCTURES

Council for Disabled People

The Council for Disabled People is the only advisory body for policies on people with a disability. The Council was set up by the Regulation of 13 December 1985 issued by the Ministers of Health and Family.

The task of the Council is to study the general problems of people with clinical disabilities, give opinions on questions submitted by the Government and present, at its own initiative, any relevant proposals to the Government.

The Council consists primarily of representatives of the ministries and five representatives of associations for people with clinical disabilities.

The Council is to be reorganised so that the majority will be representatives of associations of and for people with a disability.

Info-Handicap

Info-Handicap is a non profit-making organisation founded by 16 organisations working actively on disability matters. It has an agreement with the Ministry of the Family. There are at present 39 member associations. In 1994 Info-Handicap was asked to set up and run a national information centre as a forum on disability.

NETHERLANDS

I. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

A. Departments or bodies responsible for the co-ordination or assistance of governments in the overall policy formulation

A1. Governmental Bodies

- Minister for Health, Welfare and Sport
- Inter-ministerial Committee on a Coherent and Co-ordinated Policy for people with a disability and/or chronic illness
- National Sickness and Invalidity Insurance Board
- Social and Cultural Policy Council
- Social and Cultural Policy Commission

A2. Non-Governmental Bodies

- "The private initiative":
- Netherlands Disability Forum – matters relating to physical/sensory disabilities
- Federation of Parents' Associations – matters relating to mentally disabled people
- Foundation for providers of services to people with disabilities
- Association of Organisations for the Chronically Ill

B. Departments or bodies responsible for civil rights policies

- Minister for Internal Affairs
- Minister for Public Health, Welfare and Sport
- Minister for Justice

C. Departments or bodies responsible for the provision of financial assistance to disabled people (benefits)

C1. Social Security Provisions

- Minister for Social Affairs and Employment
- Administrative bodies

C2. Social Welfare Programmes

- Minister for Social Affairs and Employment
- Municipalities

D. Departments or bodies responsible for service provision

D1. Education

- Minister for Education, Culture and Science
- Municipalities
- Schools

D2. Vocational Rehabilitation

- Minister for Social Affairs and Employment
- Vocational training centres for people with disabilities
- Administrative bodies

D3. Employment

- Minister for Social Affairs and Employment
- Municipalities
- Employment offices
- Administrative bodies

D4. Health

- Minister for Health, Welfare and Sport
- Health Care Inspectorate
- National sickness and invalidity insurance board
- Health care insurers
- Municipalities

D5. Social Integration

- Minister for Public Health, Welfare and Sport
- Minister for Social Affairs and Employment
- Municipalities
- Administrative bodies

D6. Information Technology

- Minister for Education, Culture and Science

E. Departments or bodies responsible for a barrier-free environment

E1. Building Environment

- Minister for Housing, Physical Planning and Environment
- Minister for Transport and Public Works
- Municipalities

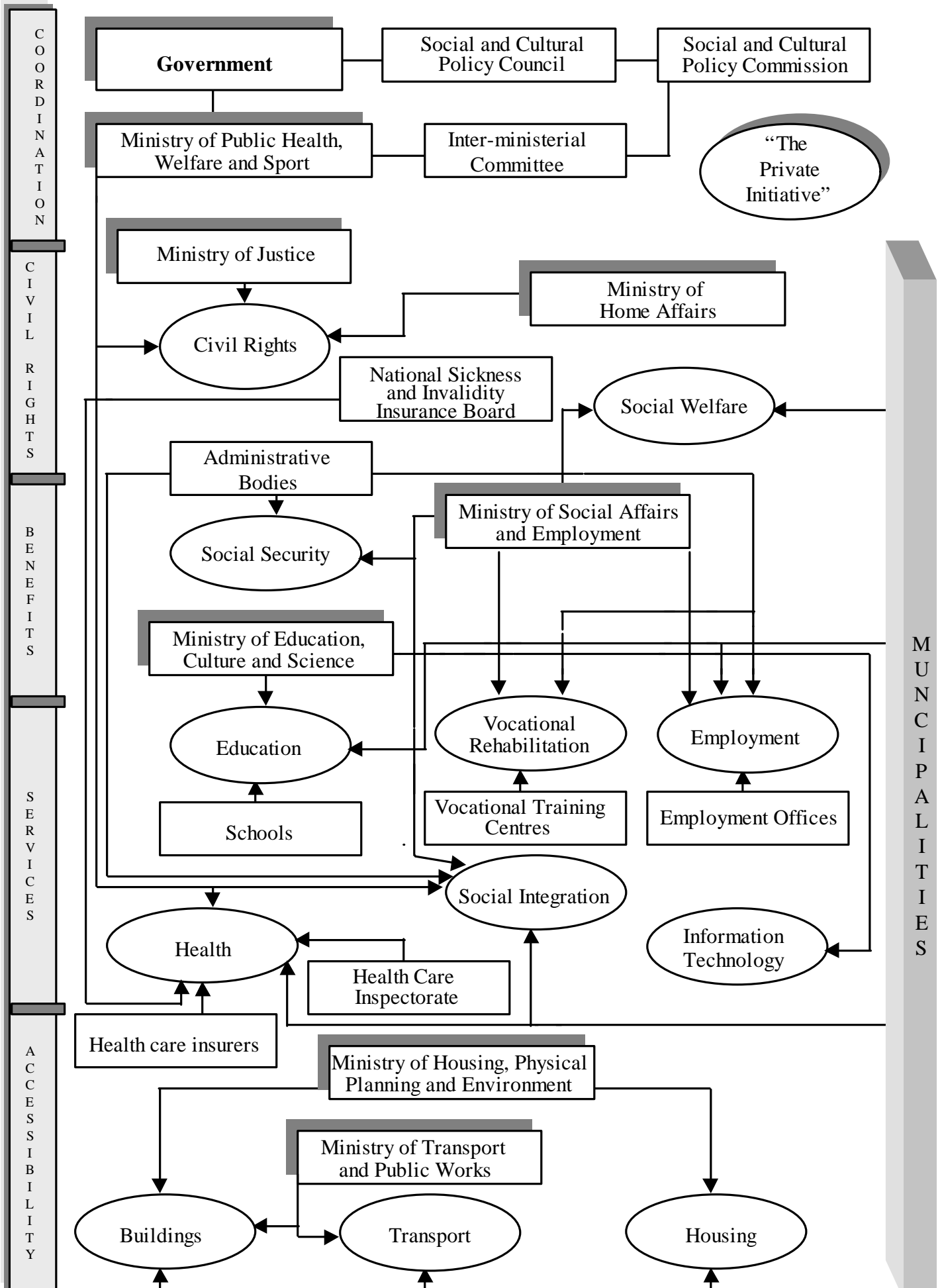
E2. Accessible Transportation

- Minister for Transport and Public Works
- Transport companies
- Municipalities

E3. Housing

- Minister for Housing, Physical Planning and Environment
- Municipalities

II. ORGANIGRAM



III. ACTION PLANS

Co-ordination – Global plan

The Secretary of State to the Minister for Public Health, Welfare and Sport is responsible for co-ordination of policy for people with a disability. An inter-ministerial committee was set up in 1968 to develop and improve policy in this area. It is now known as the "Inter-ministerial Committee on a Coherent and Co-ordinated Policy for people with a disability and/or chronic illness".

This Inter-ministerial Committee co-ordinates the measures taken by the various ministries to assist people with disabilities. As well as the Ministry of Public Health, Welfare and Sport, the Ministries of Social Affairs and Employment, Transport and Public Works, Housing, Physical Planning and Environment and Education, Culture and Science are all represented on the Inter-ministerial Committee. The Ministries of Home Affairs, Justice and Defence are represented as and when necessary and the Ministry of Finance attends as an observer. The Chair and secretariat are provided by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

The Inter-ministerial Committee focuses primarily on housing, education, labour, mobility and health care.

It advises the ministries and Cabinet, through the Social and Cultural Policy Council, and regularly sets up committees to examine particular topics or to draft advice. Some of these committees are permanent, such as the Central Co-ordination Point for the Promotion of Accessibility and the Information, Monitoring and Research Committee. Others are set up on an ad hoc basis, such as the Working Group on Equal Opportunities for Disabled People and the Sign Language Committee.

The Inter-ministerial Committee consults, on a regular or ad hoc basis, organisations

for the physically and mentally disabled, the "Private Initiative": the Netherlands Disability Forum for matters relating to those with a physical or sensory disability, the Federation of Parents' Associations for matters relating to mental disability, the Foundation for providers of services to the disabled and the Association of Organisations for the Chronically Ill.

In 1995, the Multiannual Inter-sectoral Programme on Policy for the Disabled (1995-1998) - "Beyond limitations" was drawn up. It outlines the Government's plans on the following basic principles:

- equal rights, equal obligations and equal treatment;
- integration and participation;
- where necessary: protection and compensation.

These principles were established on the basis of four aims:

1. to improve the problem-solving ability of people with a disability and/or chronic illness, by, for example, introducing a personalised budget;
2. to encourage the integration and participation of people with a disability or chronic illness in all sectors of society (especially education and the labour market);
3. to develop a better understanding of the most vulnerable categories;
4. to encourage the sector to organise itself in order to improve quality, to gear measures more to the needs of the disabled and to achieve a standardised, objective policy with regard to establishing degree of disability.

The Multiannual Programme was updated in 1996 and again in 1997.

Civil rights

The Minister for Internal Affairs is responsible for civil rights policy.

The Secretary of State for Health, Welfare and Sport is responsible for drawing up anti-discrimination legislation for people with a disability or chronic illness.

On 31 March 1998, the Cabinet submitted a bill to Parliament on the prohibition of unjustified discrimination on the basis of disability or chronic illness. The Health Care Inspectorate, organised by the Minister for Health, Welfare and Sport, is responsible for supervising care and (enforced) hospital admittance of psychiatric patients and mentally handicapped people.

Education

The Minister for Education, Culture and Science is responsible for education policy. A new experimental system is to be launched, giving parents of children with a disability the choice of sending their child to a special or normal school. Each child will be allocated a budget to provide extra facilities. The "Going to school *together*" policy introduced in 1992 is to be continued in an effort to break down the barrier between normal and special education and encourage integration and co-operation.

Vocational rehabilitation

The Vocational (Re)integration of Disabled People Act, for which the Minister for Social Affairs and Employment is responsible, came into force on 1 July 1998. Its aim is to improve co-ordination between existing measures aimed at the vocational rehabilitation of people with a disability. It introduces new policies such as a rehabilitation budget for employers.

Health

The Minister for Health, Welfare and Sport is responsible for public health policy. Research in the field of prevention is subsidised and an "Institute providing genetic information" is attached to all university hospitals. The National Sickness and Invalidity Insurance Board is an important advisory body for the government and is also competent to decide on (financing of) facilities in the field of public health, such as financing of guide dogs for the blind and training in and the use of sign language.

Social integration

The Minister for Public Health, Welfare and Sport is responsible for the Exceptional Medical Expenses Act which provides for compensation for costs relating to a disability. These costs may relate to medical aids or admittance to a hospital. The Facilities for the Disabled Act, for which the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment is responsible, provides for reimbursement of the costs of non-medical aids, such as conversion of a home or private transport. The municipalities are responsible for implementation of this Act. As far as possible, efforts are made to adapt care to individual needs and the interests of people with a disability and their families, with home care playing a major role. It is possible to receive a personal budget.

Social integration policy focuses on smaller-scale accommodation and the separation of living, work/daytime activities and leisure time. Efforts are also being made to develop a standardised approach to establishing the degree of disability. Municipalities and the social services play an important role in the implementation of this policy.

Barrier-free environment

The Minister for Housing, Physical Planning and Environment introduced rules under the Building Decree on the accessibility standards which public buildings and new housing must meet.

The Minister of Transport and Public Works has established guidelines on the ally out of built-up areas and their infrastructure. The Government is promoting the idea of “design for all”.

IV. CO-OPERATION - CONSULTATION STRUCTURES

The involvement of people with a disability and their representatives in the establishment, implementation and follow up of policy measures is reflected in various negotiating structures existing between the government and umbrella organisations for people with a disability and their representatives, the "Private Initiative". Examples are the permanent consultations between the Inter-ministerial Committee and the umbrella organisations, and the Regular Formal Meetings between the Secretary of State for Public Health, Welfare and Sport and the above representative bodies.

In addition, bilateral negotiations take place between the ministries and organisations for people with a disability on an ad hoc basis. As part of the procedure for introducing measures and legislation in the field of policy for people with a disability, organisations of people with a disability may be asked for their opinion on proposal

AUSTRIA

I. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

A. Departments or bodies responsible for the co-ordination or assistance of governments in the overall policy formulation

A1. Governmental Bodies

- Federal Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Affairs

A2. Non-governmental Bodies

- Federal Advisory Committee on Disability
- Central Federation of Austrian Associations for People with Disabilities

B. Departments or bodies responsible for civil rights policies

- Office of the Federal Chancellor (G¹): protection under the constitution for people with disabilities
- Federal Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Affairs (G/V): protection against discrimination at work
- Federal Ministry for Education and Cultural Affairs (G/V): School integration
- Federal Ministry for Justice (G/V): legal trustee for people with mental handicaps, legal representative for mentally handicapped people in institutions

C. Departments or bodies responsible for the provision of financial assistance to disabled people (benefits)

C1. Social Security Provisions

- Federal Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Affairs (G) /
- Social security institutions (V): invalidity pensions, occupational invalidity pensions and incapacity for work pensions, accident pensions payable in the event of industrial accidents or occupational diseases

C2. Social Welfare Programmes

- Federal states (G/V) /
- Local authorities (V): cash benefits to meet cost of living (social welfare, assistance for people with a disability)

C3. Benefits which are not the responsibility of the social security institution or the social welfare system:

- Federal Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Affairs (G and V) /
- Social security institutions (V) /
- Federal states (G and V): attendance allowance
- Federal Ministry for the Environment, Youth and the Family (G): higher family allowance where there are children with disabilities

D. Departments or bodies responsible for service provision

D1. Education

- Federal Ministry for Education and Cultural Affairs (G/V) /
- Federal states (G/V) / and to some extent local authorities (V)

D2. Vocational Rehabilitation

- Federal Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Affairs (G/V)
- Labour market service (V)
- Social security institutions (V)
- Federal states (G/V)

D3. Employment

- Federal Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Affairs (G/V): system of quotas, financial assistance (for example, wage cost subsidies, workplace adaptation), integrating undertakings, special protection against dismissal for assisted people with disabilities, labour law, placement service
- Labour market service (V): placement service, financial assistance
- Social security institutions (V): financial assistance
- Federal states (G/V): financial assistance

D4. Health

- Federal Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Affairs (G/ partly V) /
- Social security institutions (V): hospitals, medical rehabilitation, prophylactic medical examinations, accident prevention, mother-child passport, provision of orthotic and prosthetic components, technical aids
- Federal states (G/V) / local authorities (partly V): hospitals, medical rehabilitation, provision of orthotic and prosthetic components, technical aids, care in the home for the sick

D5. Social Integration

- Federal states (G/V) / local authorities (partly V): social services, transport, leisure facilities, sheltered workshops and occupational therapy

E. Departments or bodies responsible for barrier-free environment

E1. Building Environment

- Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs: Austrian standards (Ö-NORMEN) for barrier-free buildings provide only recommendations
- Federal states (G/V) / local authorities (V): construction and housing

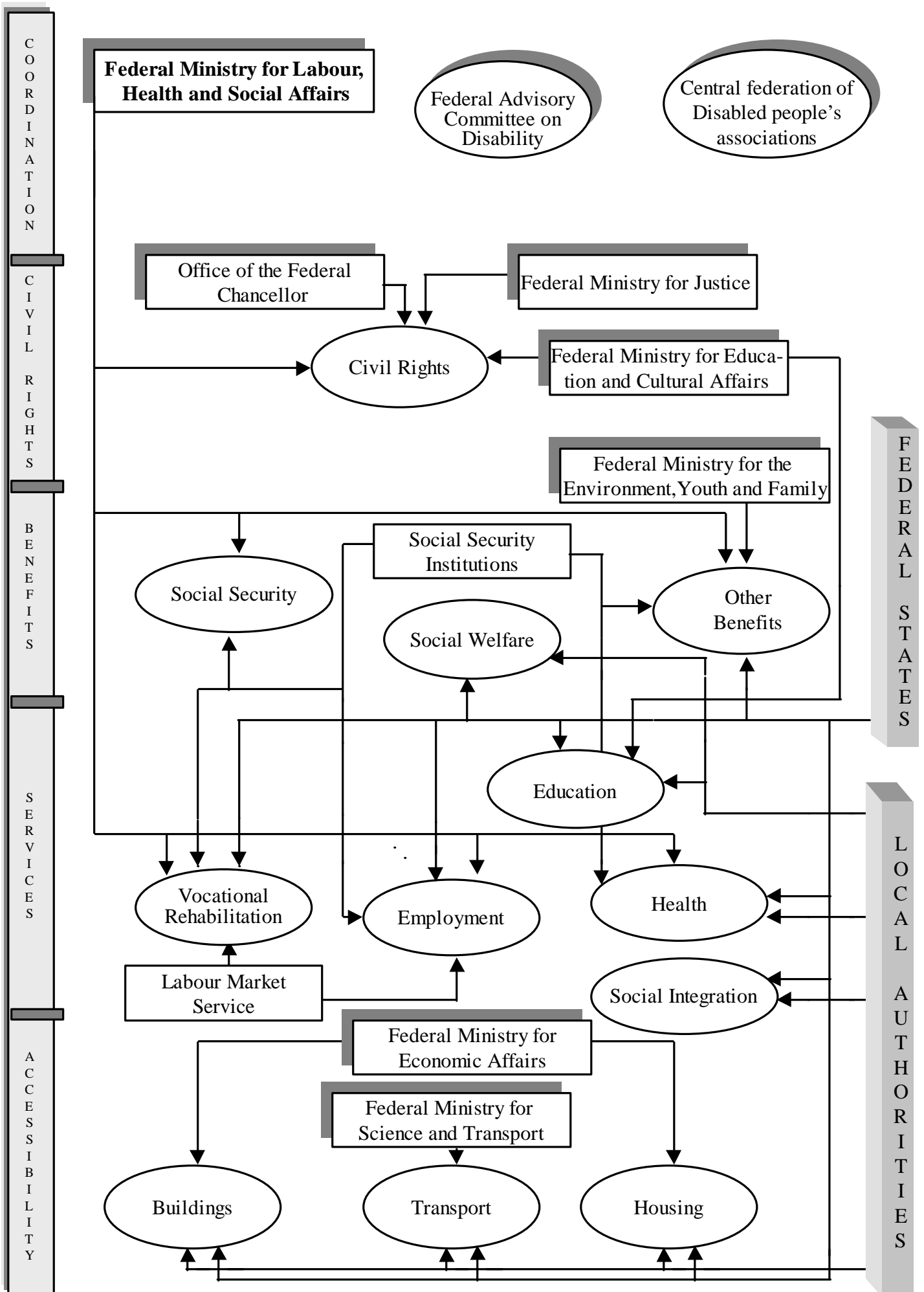
E2. Accessible Transportation

- Federal Ministry for Science and Transport (G)
- Federal states (G/V) / local authorities (V)

E3. Housing

- Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs: Austrian standards (Ö-NORMEN)
- Federal states (G/V) / local authorities (V): construction and housing

II. ORGANIGRAM



III. ACTION PLANS

Co-ordination – Global plan

The Austrian Government's policy statement on disability, which dates from 1992 and was produced by the Federal Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Affairs jointly with the Central federation of Austrian associations for people with disabilities, is based on the premise of a comprehensive definition of what constitutes policy for disability. Accordingly, policy and administration must take full account of the interests of people with disabilities in all sectors. The concept of mainstreaming therefore already forms an integral part of the policy statement.

Civil rights – The decision in favour of equal opportunities

The Federal Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Affairs defends the interests of people with disabilities by ensuring that statutory provisions are suitably vetted.

In July 1997 Article 7 of Austria's Federal constitution was extended to include the prohibition of discrimination. Article 7 of the constitution also includes a national objective in the form of a commitment by the Republic to ensure that people who are disabled are treated in the same way as people who are not disabled in all aspects of daily life.

Provision for long-term care

In 1993 the provision for long-term care was reformed. The Federal Attendance Allowance Act and the Federal-state Attendance Allowance Acts introduced a graded, need-specific attendance allowance to which entitlement exists irrespective of income or resources and irrespective of the cause underlying the need for long-term care. The attendance allowance is intended as a lump-sum contribution to meet the additional expenditure due to the need for long-term

care so that persons in need of such care can whenever possible secure the attendance and assistance they require and improve their scope for leading a life which they can style by themselves and which is geared to their needs. More than 300 000 people are receiving the attendance allowance.

An agreement between the federal and federal-state authorities was also concluded whereby the federal states undertook, among other things, to provide a comprehensive coverage of social services which satisfy certain minimum requirements.

The working party on provision for long-term care, which was also set up in 1993, was mandated in particular to produce recommendations and proposals and to submit an annual report on the provision for long-term care.

Education

In December 1996 there was an education reform package which represented a further important step in the educational mainstreaming of children with disabilities. The 1996 education reform bill introduced integration for children in school grades 4-8 so that with immediate effect children with disabilities and aged between 6 and 14 can avail themselves of the scope for integrated teaching.

In a number of the federal states the legal bases for setting up integrated kindergarten groups have been established. For 1997 the Federal authorities have made available funds for projects to integrate children with disabilities in centres providing childcare.

Employment

With the aid of European Social Fund resources innovative employment projects for people with disabilities have been increasingly sponsored, in particular in connection with the development of assisted employment.

Barrier-free environment

Low-floor buses are now virtually the only models being purchased for inner city transport.

IV. CO-OPERATION - CONSULTATION STRUCTURES

The 1990 Federal Disability Act created the Federal Advisory Committee on Disability to act in an advisory role on matters of policy for the disabled. The remit of this committee is as follows:

- to advise the Federal Minister for Labour, Health and Social Affairs on all fundamental issues relating to policy for the disabled;
- to produce expert opinions and recommendations on all major topics of relevance to the interests of people with disabilities;
- to support the Federal Minister for Labour, Health and Social Affairs in co-ordinating statutory and other measures relating to assistance for people with disabilities.

The voting members of the Advisory Committee are

- the Federal Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Affairs (Chair)
- a member for each of the political parties represented in parliament
- members to represent the Federal Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Affairs, the Federal Ministry for Finance and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Youth and the Family. When the committee considers matters, which are the responsibility of other government departments a representative of the ministry, in question also attends the meetings.
- two members for each federal state

- one member to represent Austria's social security institution.
- three members each to represent employers' associations and trade unions
- seven members to represent disabled people's associations.

The secretarial work of the Advisory Committee is handled by the Federal Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Affairs. The Advisory Committee on Disability meets at least once very year.

In a number of the federal states there are similar bodies providing advice for the governments of the federal states or who are consulted on important matters (Advisory Committee on Disability, bodies representing the interests of people with disabilities).

A mention should also be made of the individual advisory committees established by the various pieces of legislation on social security to represent the interests of specific groups of insured persons (for example, persons in need of long-term care) and they can insist on being consulted on important matters.

Organisations representing disabled people are represented on these advisory committees and they represent the interests of the recipients of attendance allowance. Members of disabled people's organisations are also represented in the working party on provision for long-term care.

In accordance with Article 15a of the Federal Constitution Act the federal and federal-state authorities may conclude agreements on matters relating to their respective areas of responsibility. In terms of the provision for long-term care there is already an agreement of this type on joint measures by the federal and federal-state authorities on behalf of persons in need of long-term care.

The Central federation of disabled people's associations is consulted by all Federal ministries seeking expert opinions. In a number of federal states there is already statutory provision for disabled people's organisations to claim a right to participate in procedures.

¹ "G" indicates " Authority to legislate"
"V" indicates "Executive authority"

PORTUGAL

I. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

A. Departments or bodies responsible for the co-ordination or assistance of governments in the overall policy formulation.

A1. Governmental Bodies

- Secretary of State for Social Integration / Ministry of Solidarity and Social Security
- National Secretariat for the Rehabilitation and Integration of People with Disabilities / Ministry of Qualification and Employment

A2. Non-Governmental Bodies

- National Council for the Rehabilitation and Integration of People with disabilities
- Dialogue Group

B. Departments or bodies responsible for civil rights policies

- Ministry of Solidarity and Social Security

C. Departments or bodies responsible for the provision of financial assistance to disabled people (benefits).

C1. Social Security Provisions

- National Secretariat for the Rehabilitation and Integration of People with Disabilities
- Minister of Solidarity and Social Security

C2. Social Welfare Programmes

- National Secretariat for the Rehabilitation and Integration of People with Disabilities

D. Departments or bodies responsible for service provision

D1. Education

- Ministry of Education

D2. Vocational Rehabilitation

- Institute for Employment and Vocational Training
- National Secretariat for the Rehabilitation and Integration of People with Disabilities

D3. Employment

- Ministry of Qualification and Employment
- Institute for Employment and Vocational Training

D4. Health

- Ministry of Health

D5. Social Integration

- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Solidarity and Social Security
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Culture, Sport and Recreation

E. Departments or bodies responsible for a barrier-free environment

E1. Building Environment

- Ministry of Town Planning and Housing

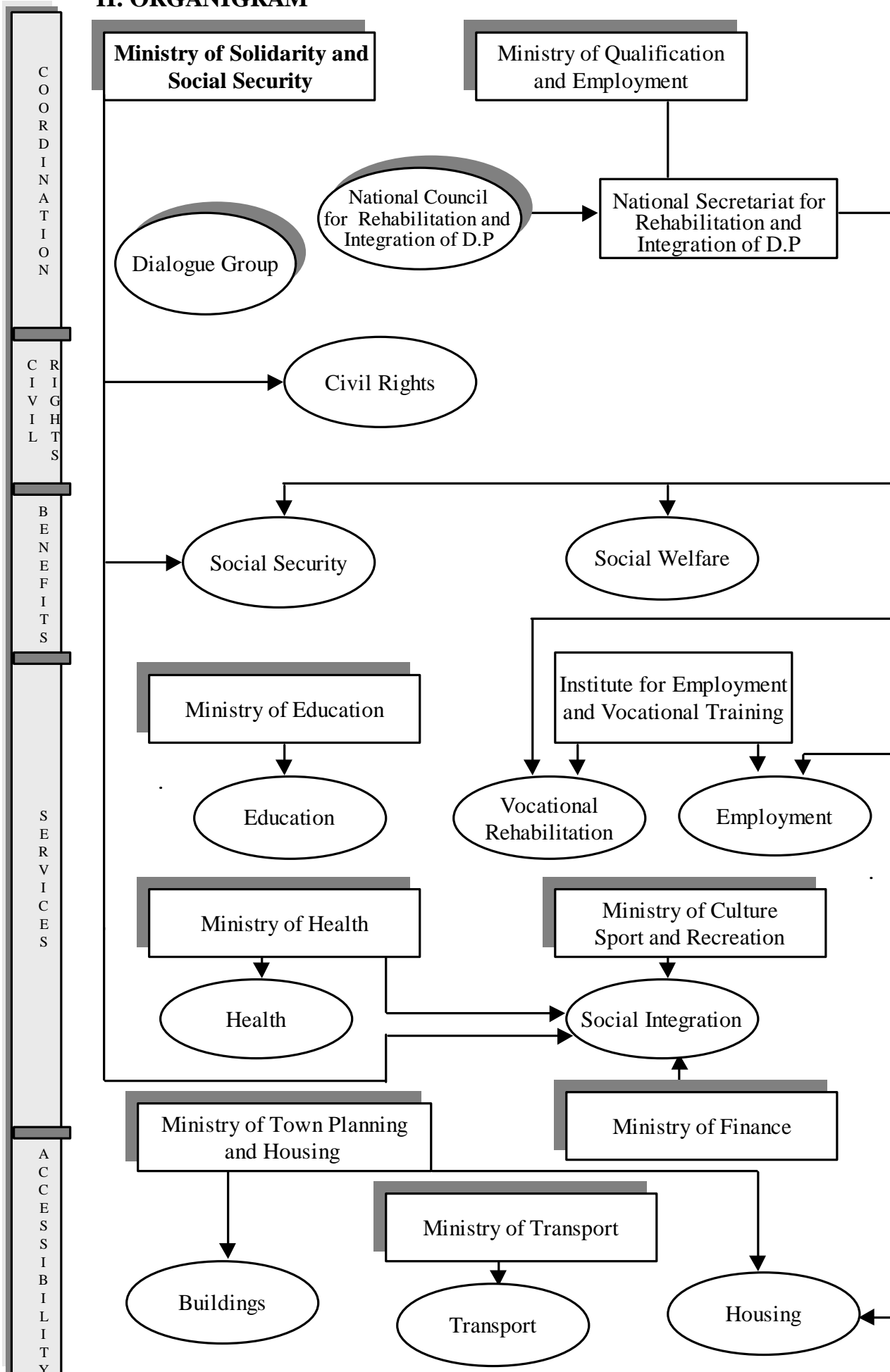
E2. Accessible Transportation

- Ministry of Transport

E3. Housing

- National Secretariat for the Rehabilitation and Integration of People with Disabilities
- Ministry of Town Planning and Housing

II. ORGANIGRAM



III. ACTION PLANS

Co-ordination - Global Plan

The main objective of the National Secretariat for the Rehabilitation and Integration of People with Disabilities is to guarantee an effective link between the sectoral measures to be implemented and to provide genuine complementarity between the initiatives promoted by both the public and the private sector. The National Secretariat aims to achieve this objective primarily through the reinforcement of its co-ordination capacities.

Vocational Rehabilitation

It is intended to establish a coherent and integrated medium-term plan which details the rehabilitation activities to be put into practice at national level by all the sectors concerned. Moreover, support and encouragement will be afforded to NGO's involved with disability and rehabilitation to provide for the necessary technical and financial conditions conducive to NGO performance. Such conditions will support NGO activities, promote dialogue, improve the quality of their operations and generally enhance their participatory role in developing and co-ordinating national rehabilitation policy.

Accessibility

The action plan aims to improving accessibility to the built environment and transportation through the elimination of technical barriers (including design, education, information and training of all operators and professionals concerned). Where technical aids are concerned, this will require reformulation of the current rules and financial system to guarantee easier and more extensive access to such facilities.

Social integration

The National Rehabilitation Policy is to be defined in close co-operation with the National NGO's developing studies and drafting proposals designed to meet the particular needs of people with disabilities. An emphasis is placed, in this context, upon the autonomy and social integration of disabled people.

A programme already operating in close co-operation with NGO's concerned with sport, leisure and cultural activities is also to be continued.

Raising awareness of and fostering change in society's attitudes towards disability issues generally is also envisaged within the action plan. The methods employed should encompass the provision of information to people with disabilities and their families, associations, private institutions and the public, as well as improving the abilities of NGO leaders and professionals in the disability field.

Information Technologies

Technical and scientific information in the disability and rehabilitation fields requires the support and development of a specialised documentation system available to all interested parties. This documentation system will comprise the collection, handling, and dissemination of statistical data supported by evidence of a qualitative and quantitative nature in the field of rehabilitation.

Moreover, investment is required for research and innovative programs, projects and studies. Such investment should also promote exchange activities concerning knowledge and experiences emanating from projects in the scientific, technological and methodological areas.

At international level, the intention is to increase co-operation with the European Union, the Council of Europe, agencies of the United Nations and other relevant international organisations in addition to those African countries where the Portuguese language is spoken.

III. CO-OPERATION - CONSULTATION STRUCTURES

The nature of the co-operation structure set up for the purposes of informing and/or consulting organisations of people with disabilities is set out in Law No. 35.96, of 2 May 1996, which establishes the overall structure of the Ministry of Solidarity and Social Security.

Under Article 4 of Law No. 35.96 the Minister of Solidarity and Social Security responsible for the development and implementation of policies relating to the rehabilitation and integration of people with disabilities.

The National Council for the Rehabilitation and Integration of People with Disabilities advises the Minister.

The composition and duties of the National Council will be laid down by

Regulatory Order subject to examination and approval by the Council of Ministers.

As an advisory body, the National Council – together with the national disability NGO's - will serve as a consultative partner for the Government and a bilateral information instrument relating to both the development of disability policies and the identification of solutions to ensure equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

In accordance with the guidelines of international bodies aiming to encourage participation by organisations of people with disabilities, a 'Dialogue Group' was set up in 1992.

FINLAND

I. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

A. Departments or bodies responsible for the co-ordination or assistance of governments in the overall policy formulation

A1. Governmental Bodies

- Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
- National, Provincial and Local Councils on Disability
- The Advisory Board for Rehabilitation
- Council on Public Transport

A2. Non-Governmental Bodies

- The Organisation for Co-operation of the Organisations of Disabled Persons

B. Departments or bodies responsible for civil rights policies

- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Labour (discrimination in employment)
- Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
- Office of the Equality Ombudsman

C. Departments or bodies responsible for the provision of financial assistance to disabled people (benefits)

C1. Social Security Provisions

- Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
- Social Insurance Institution

C2. Social Welfare Programmes

- Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
- Social Insurance Institution
- Local Authorities

D. Departments or bodies responsible for service provision

D1. Education

- Ministry of Education, Science and Culture
- Educational authorities

D2. Vocational Rehabilitation

- Ministry of Social Affairs and Health: Insurance Department
- Social Insurance Institution
- Local Authorities

D3. Employment

- Ministry of Labour
- Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
- Social Insurance Institution
- Local Authorities

D4. Health

- Ministry of Social Affairs and Health:
 - Department for Social Affairs and Health
 - Insurance Department
 - Department for Promotion and Prevention
- Local Authorities

D5. Social Integration

- Ministry of Social Affairs and Health: Department for Social and Health Services
- Ministry of Education, Science and Culture
- Local Authorities

E. Departments or bodies responsible for a barrier-free environment

E1. Building Environment

- Ministry of Environment
- Local Authorities

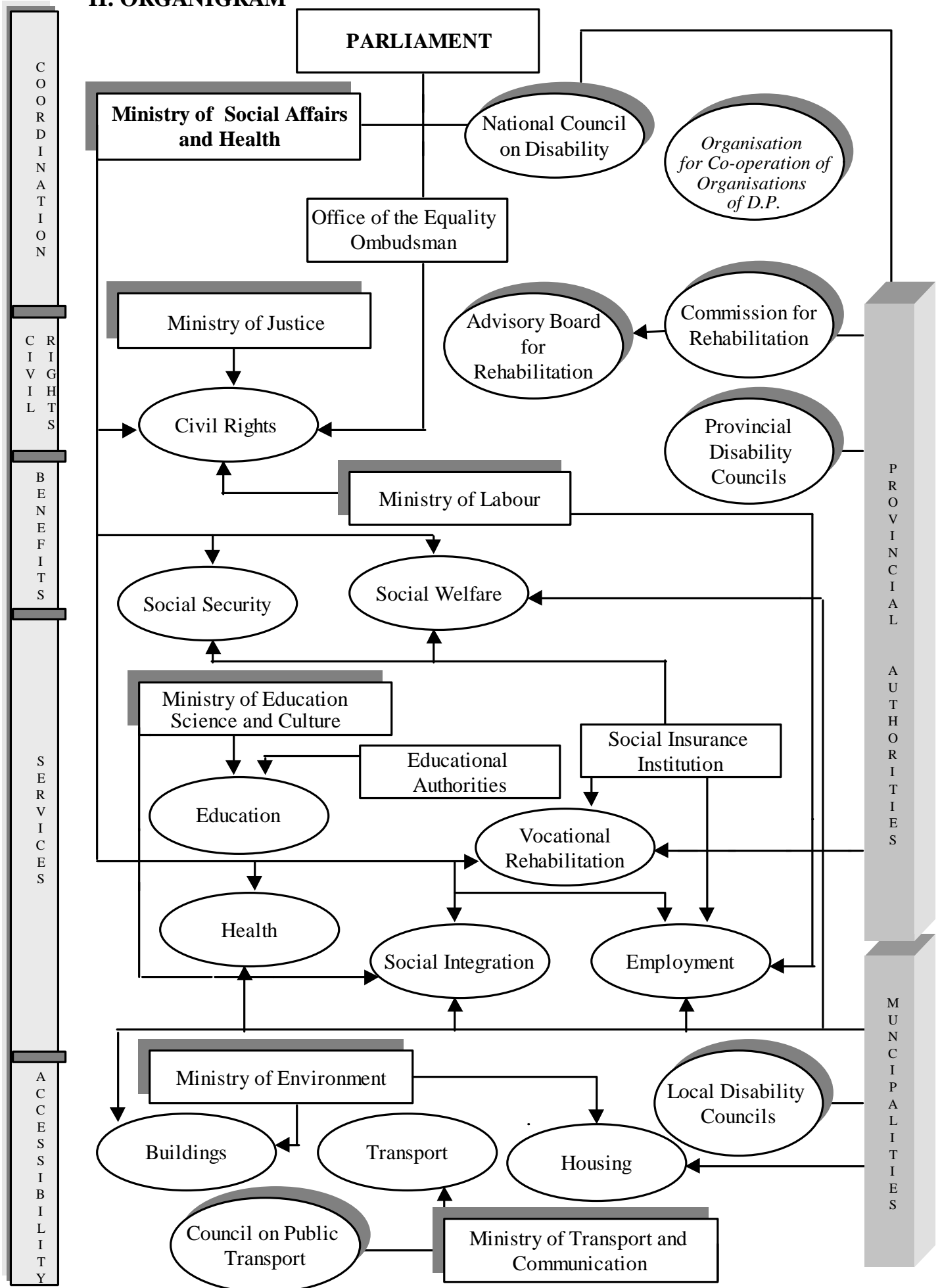
E2. Accessible Transportation

- Ministry of Transport and Communication
- Council on Public Transport

E3. Housing

- Ministry of Environment
- Local Authorities

II. ORGANIGRAM



III. ACTION PLANS

Global Plan

In 1996 the National Council on Disability published a national disability programme entitled: 'Towards a Society for all'. The programme focuses on an inclusive society and considers issues such as the empowerment of disabled people, their involvement in policy making, the removal of obstacles to accessibility, communication, and the development of positive attitudes towards their full participation in society.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is entrusted with the main responsibility in the field for co-ordinating national disability policy although all (sector responsible) ministries are required - under the mainstreaming principle - to take the needs of disabled people into account throughout their decision-making process. Municipalities are also invited to launch their own action plans on the basis of the national disability programme.

Social Welfare and Social Integration

In 1996 the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health appointed a Working Party on Disability. In its report the Working Party concluded, *inter alia*, that the basis and content of social welfare for people with disabilities should be updated. The Working Party also made proposals concerning the definitions, development and clarification of policies relating to the payment of social welfare and health care services, tax allowance increases, utilisation of information and other technology to help disabled people, the development of a living environment without obstacles and the promotion of employment for people with disabilities. The key words of the report are: policy for disabled people, services for disabled people, benefits for disabled people, rehabilitation and the ability to cope and work.

The Ministry of Justice appointed a Working Group in 1996 to both assess and secure the legal status of sign language users.

In 1995 the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health appointed a Working group to follow the shifting balance in the care of people with a mental disability. This particular working group completed its deliberations in 1997.

Education

In 1995 the Ministry of Education appointed a committee to examine the situation relating to physical exercise for groups with special needs and to draft a new national development programme.

In 1996 the National Board of Education carried out a comprehensive evaluation of special education in Finland.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment

In 1997 the Advisory Board for Rehabilitation published a national programme of action for vocational rehabilitation and employment of disabled people entitled: 'From Disability to Ability'. The programme is a handbook for all those involved in the implementation of effective measures to achieve the objectives of equality and full participation of disabled people in social life. The areas of consideration within this programme include the promotion of vocational training, the improvement of labour market skills and the prevention of exclusion from the labour market.

In June 1998 the Council of Ministers sent a proposal to Parliament for the promotion of employment, training and education, it was based upon the report of the Working Party on Disability.

IV. CO-OPERATION - CONSULTATION STRUCTURES

The National Council on Disability

The National Council on Disability is attached to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. It is made up of representatives from disabled people's organisations and administrative officials from different ministries. The aim of the Council is to combat discrimination and to reduce prejudice against people with disabilities in addition to promoting equality of opportunity for people with disabilities and their full integration into mainstream society.

About 220 municipalities (out of 450 municipalities) have Local Councils on Disability. The Local and Provincial Councils on Disability employ the same policy basis of co-operation as that of the National Council on Disability.

Other ministries and governmental bodies have established various working groups and advisory bodies on people with disabilities.

Advisory Board for Rehabilitation

The Advisory Board for Rehabilitation represents the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, labour market organisations and organisations of people with disabilities. The board advises the government on vocational rehabilitation and employment.

The Council on Public Transport

The Council on Public Transport is attached to the Ministry of Transport. Several ministries, the Finnish Federation of Municipalities, organisations of people with disabilities and different transport suppliers are represented on this council.

SWEDEN

I. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

A. Departments or bodies responsible for the co-ordination or assistance of governments in the overall policy formulation.

A1. Governmental Bodies

- Ministry of Health and Social Affairs
- National Board of Health and Welfare
- Office of the Disability Ombudsman

A2. Non-Governmental Bodies

- Disability organisations

B. Departments or bodies responsible for civil rights policies

- Ministry of Justice

C. Departments or bodies responsible for the provision of financial assistance to disabled people (benefits)

C1. Social Security Provisions

- Ministry of Health and Social Affairs
- National Social Insurance Board

C2. Social Welfare Programmes

- Local Authorities

D. Departments or bodies responsible for service provision

D1. Education

- Local authorities
- Ministry of Education

D2. Vocational Rehabilitation

- Regional Insurance Offices
- Public and private employers
- Employability Institutes

D3. Employment

- Ministry of Labour
- National Labour Market Boards
- County Labour Boards

D4. Health

- Ministry of Health and Social Affairs
- County Councils
- Local Authorities

D5. Social Integration

- Ministry of Health and Social Affairs
- Local Authorities

E. Departments or bodies responsible for a barrier-free environment

E1. Building Environment

- Ministry of the Interior
- National Board of Housing, Building and Planning
- Local Authorities

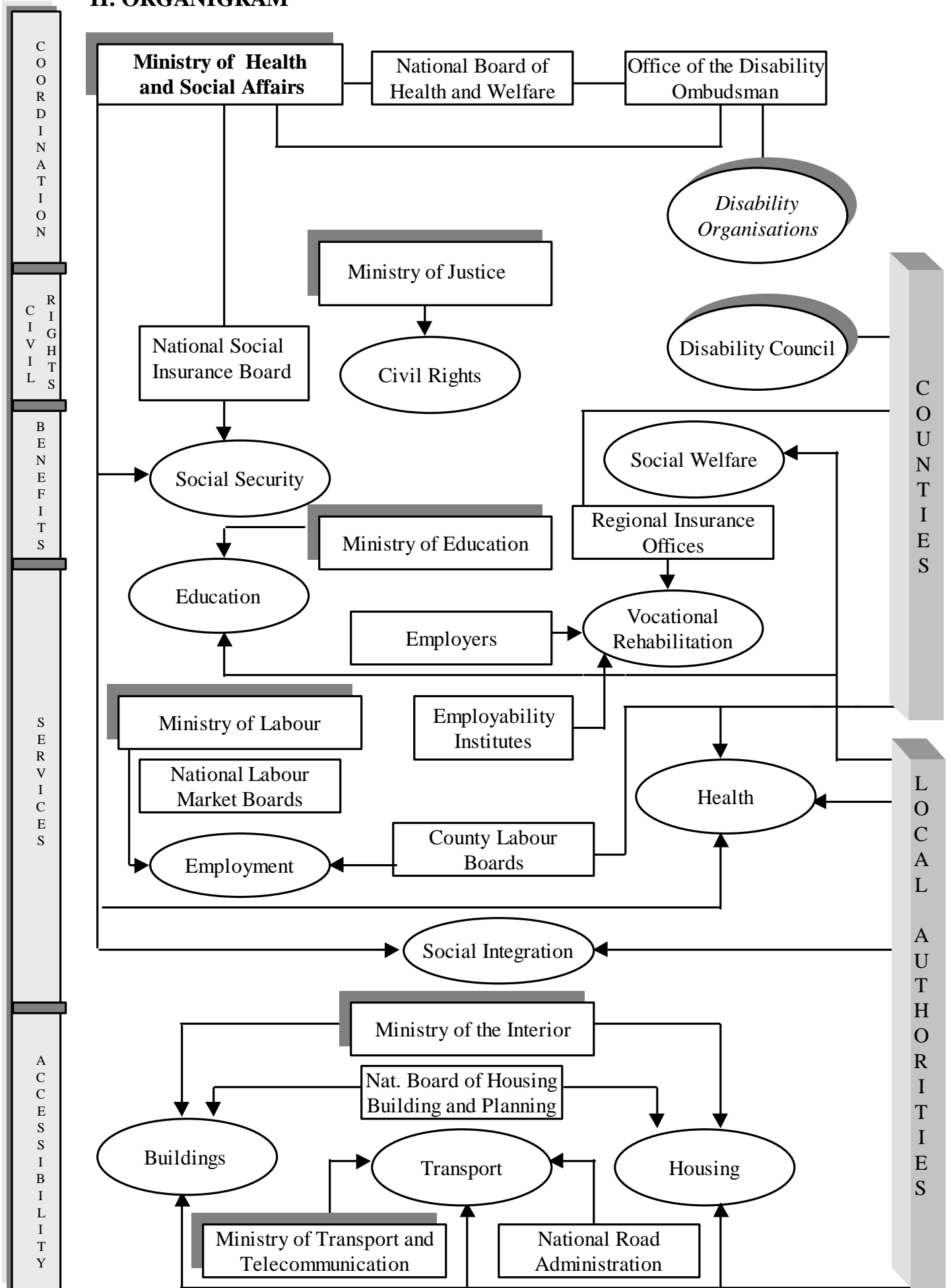
E2. Accessible Transportation

- Ministry of Transports and Communication
- National Road Administration
- Local Authorities

E3. Housing

- Ministry of the Interior
- National Board of Housing, Building and Planning
- Local Authorities

II. ORGANIGRAM



III. ACTION PLANS

Co-ordination – Global Plan

The Government's policy in respect of people with disabilities builds upon an overall strategy where the main focus is aimed at creating possibilities for the state, the municipalities, the county councils and other organisations, to improve accessibility in a broad sense across the different sectors of society. This policy also focuses on actions to ensure equality of opportunity for people with disabilities to participate in all areas of mainstream society. Municipalities, in particular, have an important role in co-operating with local organisations of disabled people, concerned authorities, and other interested parties. Accessibility issues encompass (for example) matters relating to transportation and information technology.

It is recognised that disability issues concern all areas of society, not just those relating to welfare and health. These issues must, therefore, be taken into consideration in all policies relating to: education, employment and the labour market, the economy, housing, traffic and transportation. In essence, the governmental body concerned must take responsibility within its area to ensure that these questions are fully incorporated within its particular portfolio. At the same time, it is important to maintain a global perspective in respect of disability issues.

The National Board of Health and Welfare is the government's central expert and supervision authority for, *inter alia*, disability issues.

The main tasks of this body includes the supervision of medical, health and welfare activities regarding the quality and security of the individual's civil rights, their development and evaluation, transfer of knowledge, education and training, and the co-ordination of statistics.

Civil Rights

The Office of the Disability Ombudsman is a government authority which monitors the civil rights and special interests of people with disabilities, through the provision, *inter alia*, of legal advice. Within its jurisdiction, the office is able to hear complaints from and provide advice to both public and private bodies or organisations. It should be noted, however, that the Ombudsman has no means (or right) to take action before the court.

In addition, the Disability Ombudsman has been designated with the task of evaluating measures adopted to fulfil Sweden's obligations under the United Nation's Standard Rules on the equalisation of opportunities for people with a disability.

Finally, the Ombudsman serves as a knowledge and fact collector. For example, it has recently conducted a survey relating to disability discrimination and the labour market. To this end, an activities report is presented to the government once a year by the Office of the Disability Ombudsman

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment

It is intended to achieve greater equality in the labour market shall be through a proposal aiming to encourage disabled employees to remain in employment. In this respect, subsidies may be provided to employers who have incurred costs formaking the necessary adjustments or accommodation for the disabled employee. In addition, special research relating to the design of legislation prohibiting disability based discrimination in the labour market will be launched in the near future.

The purpose of the National Labour Market Board is to provide state guidelines, aims and objectives for the County Labour Boards. It also allocates resources and evaluates the performance of the County Labour Boards. A special delegation within the national board is concerned with work-related rehabilitation and labour market measures for disabled people, the so called YR-delegation. This delegation has a consultative function which both follows and supports the development of measures facilitating the employment of people with disabilities. The county labour boards head up and co-ordinate employment offices at regional level.

Social Integration

The government will continue to support the activities of the United Nations in respect of disability issues and will express Swedish opinions on this policy area in the context of the European Union.

Accessibility

The National Road Administration is a central authority that looks after the needs of disabled people within the entire public transportation system and co-ordinates the measures concerning the integration of people with disabilities throughout the public transport structure. The primary purpose of this administration is to increase the number of people with disabilities that can use the road transportation system.

The National Board of Housing, Building and Planning is a central authority responsible, *inter alia*, for the planning of natural resources and the environment in rural areas. It administers the state housing subsidies and issues building regulations on matters concerning health, safety and accessibility.

IV. CO-OPERATION - CONSULTATION STRUCTURE

In order to determine problems and provide solutions in the area of disability policy, it is important for the government to co-operate with organisations of and for people with disabilities at all times. In this respect, the State Secretary Group co-ordinates the government bodies dealing with issues relating to disabled people and also functions as a forum for dialogue with disability organisations and, temporarily, as a co-ordination committee. Organisations of disabled people meet representatives of the Government regularly. In this group, the organisations meet the Minister of Health and Social Affairs and departmental

ministers at least once a year. The Office of the Disability Ombudsman, as mentioned above, is the initiator of issues relating disabled people's rights and interests. It also observes that the United Nation's Standard Rules are followed. Under the Standard Rules states are responsible for establishing national co-ordination committees or similar bodies in order to safeguard the co-ordination of disability issues. Towards the end of its first three years of operation, the Office of the Disability Ombudsman will be assessed and suggestions made with a view to its future operational remit.

UNITED KINGDOM

I. ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

A. Departments or bodies responsible for the co-ordination or assistance of governments in the overall policy formulation

A1. Governmental Bodies

- Inter-Departmental Group on Disability

A2. Non-Governmental Bodies

- National - and Northern Ireland Disability Council
- Disability Rights Task Force
- Advisory Committee for Disabled People in Employment and Training (ACDET)
- Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC)

B. Departments or bodies responsible for civil rights policies

- Department for Education and Employment

C. Departments or bodies responsible for the provision of financial assistance to disabled people (benefits)

C1. Social Security Provisions

- Department of Social Security
- Benefits Agency
- Social Security Agency (Northern Ireland)

C2. Social Welfare Programmes

- Department of Health
- Local Authorities (direct payments)

D. Departments or bodies responsible for service provision

D1. Education

- Department for Education and Employment
- Department for Education and Employment - Welsh Office
- The Scottish Office
- Department of Education for Northern Ireland
- Northern Ireland Education and Library Boards
- Local Education Authorities
- Further- and Higher Education Funding Councils

D2. Vocational Rehabilitation

- Department for Education and Employment. Employment Service
- Training and Enterprise Councils (England and Wales)
- Local Enterprise Companies (Scotland)

- Department of Economic Development (Northern Ireland)
- Training and Employment Agency (Northern Ireland)

D3. Employment

- Department for Education and Employment. Employment Service
- Department of Economic Development (Northern Ireland)
- Training and Employment Agency (Northern Ireland)

D4. Health

- Department of Health
- Department of Health (Welsh Office)
- The Scottish Office
- Department of Health and Social Services (Northern Ireland)
- The National Health Service and the National Health Service in Scotland
- Health and Social Services Trusts (Northern Ireland)
- Local health authorities

D5. Social Integration

- Department of Health
- Department of Health (Welsh Office)
- The Scottish Office
- Department of Health and Social Services (Northern Ireland)
- Local Authority Social Services Departments.
- Health and Social Services Trusts (Northern Ireland)

E. Departments or bodies responsible for a barrier-free environment

E1. Building Environment

- Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions
- Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (Welsh Office)
- The Scottish Office
- Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland
- Local Authorities

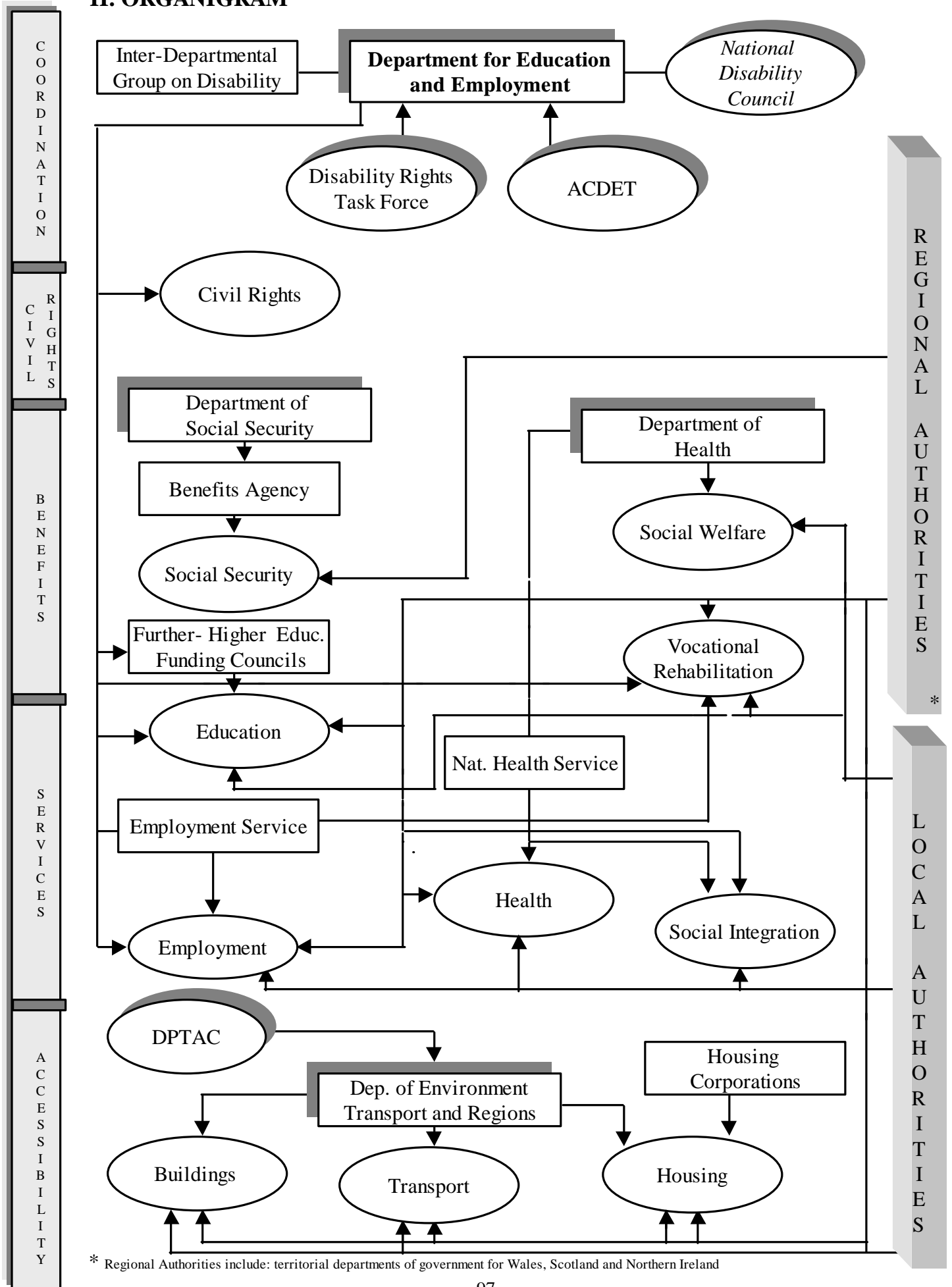
E2. Accessible Transportation

- Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions
- Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (Welsh Office)
- The Scottish Office
- Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland

E3. Housing

- Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions
- Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (Welsh Office)
- The Scottish Office
- Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland
- Local Authorities and Housing Corporations

II. ORGANIGRAM



* Regional Authorities include: territorial departments of government for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

III. ACTION PLANS

Co-ordination - Global Plan

The objective of UK policy is to enable disabled people to participate fully in society. Whilst concerns and requirements differ between different disabled people there are common themes: equal opportunities in education, training and employment including the opportunity to work; the need to ensure access to goods, services, buildings and other facilities; better co-ordinated services and access to proper care and support arrangements where necessary. The objectives and policies of many government departments therefore contribute to the global plan.

The Inter-Departmental Group on Disability is a forum in which representatives of departments meet regularly. It assists in co-ordination of disability policy across Government.

Civil Rights

Ending discrimination is a key policy objective. The UK Government is committed to supporting comprehensive and enforceable civil rights for disabled people and has adopted a three-point strategy for achieving this objective. It has established a Ministerial Task Force to undertake wide consultation on how to implement civil rights for disabled people. It is moving to establish a Disability Rights Commission and it is going ahead with the implementation of the later rights of access to the goods and services provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995¹. The Disability Rights Task Force was established in December 1997 under the Chairmanship of the Minister

for Disabled People. Its remit is to consider how best to secure comprehensive, enforceable civil rights for disabled people within the context of the UK's wider society and to make recommendations on the role and functions of a Disability Rights Commission. The Task Force will provide a report of its recommendations on wider civil rights issues, (such as who should be protected from discrimination, the definition of disability and what areas of disabled people's lives should be covered by legislation), no later than July 1999. A White Paper setting out the Government's proposals for a Disability Discrimination Act, based on the Task Force's recommendations, was published for consultation in July 1998. It suggested that the Disability Rights Commission's key functions would be to: provide a central source of information and advice; assist individuals in securing their rights; manage and monitor a conciliation service in the areas of access to goods, facilities, services and premises under Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act; and undertake formal investigations and research. Legislation establishing the Disability Rights Commission will be introduced as soon as Parliamentary time allows.

In the meantime further implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act is in progress. From October 1999, service providers will have to take reasonable steps to change practices, policies or procedures which make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to use a service (for example, restaurants

¹The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 introduced measures to make it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people in the following areas: employment, access to goods, facilities and services and the sale and letting of premises.

In addition the Act required schools, colleges and universities to provide information for disabled people; allowed the Government to set minimum standards so that disabled people can use public transport vehicles and set up the Disability Councils to advise Government on discrimination against disabled people.

will have to change a 'no dogs' policy to accommodate guide dogs). Service providers, where reasonable, will have to provide auxiliary aids or services if it would enable disabled people to use their service (for example providing communicators for deaf people). And there will be a duty on service providers to overcome physical barriers by providing their service by a reasonable alternative method. This may involve home visits or some other appropriate measure. From 2004, service providers will have to take reasonable steps to remove, alter or provide reasonable means of avoiding physical features that make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to use a service.

The Disability Access Rights Advice Service, established under powers in the Disability Discrimination Act, provides expert advice, by telephone and in writing, to assist organisations which advise disabled people and service providers on the access to goods, facilities and services provisions of the Act. It also provides detailed information packs and bulletins, and training to these organisations to help them develop expertise. Conciliation can be arranged through the Disability Access Rights Advice Service, to assist disabled people and service providers in dispute to settle the case without the need for court action. Disability Access Rights Advice Service is under contract to, but is independent of, Government.

Social Security

The Government also seeks to help those who could work to get back in touch with the labour market by removing potential disincentives for them to do so. Reforming the tax and benefit systems forms part of this strategy. For example, the social security rules for disabled people on long-term incapacity benefits have been reformed to make it easier for them to take up employment by guaranteeing that if their job does not

work out because of their illness or disability, they will be able to return to their previous level of benefit up to a year later. The 16 hours a week limit on voluntary work has been abolished also.

Employment

The employment provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act apply to employers with 20 or more employees. The provisions protect disabled employees and job applicants from discrimination and place a duty on employers to make reasonable adjustments if their premises or working arrangements substantially disadvantage a disabled person. From 1 December 1998, these provisions will be extended to employers employing 15 or more people. The Disability Rights Commission, after it has been established, will be asked to monitor progress in this area with a view to making any further recommendations.

The UK's employment policy in respect of disabled people recognises that practical help to overcome the barriers to employment is also necessary. There is a wide range of mainstream and specialist services and employment and training programmes to help disabled people to obtain and retain employment. For example in addition to its mainstream services and programmes (which are able to help the majority of disabled people), the Employment Service's Disability Employment Advisers provide specialist help for people who have severe problems in getting or keeping work through, for example, the Employment Rehabilitation and Access to Work programmes. Access to Work provides assistance to disabled people such as help with additional costs in travelling to work, adaptations to premises, special equipment and the cost of providing support at work. The Supported Employment Programme provides meaningful employment for over 22,000 severely disabled people. Training programmes are structured and funded to

allow disabled people to take part in mainstream provision wherever possible and adults with disabilities have immediate access to training without having to satisfy the six months of unemployment criteria that non-disabled people have to meet. Residential training for unemployed adults is available through 15 specialist providers. Corresponding arrangements are in place in Northern Ireland.

In addition to the services and programmes outlined above, the Government has brought forward a new £195m programme (the New Deal for Disabled People) which is intended to find better ways to support those many people on incapacity benefits who wish to work and could work given the right support and to assist those in work who are at risk of moving onto benefits because of illness or disability. The programme will involve: Innovative Schemes to explore how best to help people move into or stay in work; Personal Advisers to help disabled people and those with a long term illness to overcome barriers to work; an Information Campaign to improve knowledge of existing help available to help people into work and to change attitudes of benefit recipients, employers and the public; and, a programme of Research and Evaluation.

There will be two tranches of Innovative Schemes, the first (10 projects) will be operational before the end of 1998. Tenders for the second tranche closed on 9 October 1998. The Personal Adviser service will be piloted in 12 areas, covering over a quarter of a million people on incapacity benefits. The first six, run by the Employment Service, started on 28 September 1998. Tenders for the remainder close on 25 November and they will start in early 1999. National implementation will be considered from April 2000.

Education

The Education Act 1996 requires that any child with special educational needs including those with disabilities is to be educated in mainstream primary and secondary schools if that is what his or her parents wish, providing that this is suitable for the child's needs and consistent with the efficient education of other children and the use of resources. Similar arrangements apply in Northern Ireland under the Education (NI) Order 1996. Proposals for improving provision for children with special educational needs, including those with disabilities were published for consultation in October 1997 and the Government will publish an Action Programme for special education needs in November 1998.

Social Integration

With regard to Community Care, Local Authority Social Services Departments work with the National Health Service and other agencies to provide a range of services for disabled people to help an individual disabled person live as independently as possible, preferably at home. The Royal Commission on the funding of long term care for older people which was announced on 4 December 1997 and will report by the end of 1998, has been asked to weigh the implications of its recommendations for younger age groups. It has established 4 working groups looking at: demographics and levels of need in the future; models of provision; paying for provision; implementation. It has also initiated a reference group which includes charities and other organisations representing people who may find themselves in long term care, the financial services sector, the National Health Service, local government and other service provider bodies and representatives of the major faiths in the UK.

Accessibility

In the sphere of the built environment, in March 1998 the Government announced that Part M of the Building Regulations is to be extended to include new dwellings. Part M - Access and Facilities for Disabled People - currently requires the needs of disabled people to be taken into account in the construction of, and certain extensions to, non-domestic buildings. The new measures will include level entry to the main or suitable alternative entrance, an entrance door wide enough for wheelchair access; WC on the entrance level or first habitable storey. The measures will mean increased convenience, accessibility and sociability for disabled people and for the elderly and people with young children in prams and pushchairs.

The powers in the Disability Discrimination Act allow the Government to set minimum standards to assist disabled people to use public transport. The first accessibility regulations will apply to all new rail vehicles entering service from 1 January 1999. Consultation exercises have also been undertaken on the Government's proposals for taxis, buses and coaches, which suggested implementation from 2002 to 2012 (taxis) 2000 to 2015 (large single deck buses) and 2002 to 2017 (double deck buses). These proposed dates are based on the useful economic life of vehicles.

Access to stations and other transport infrastructures are covered by Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act.

IV. CO-OPERATION CONSULTATION STRUCTURES

The Government is committed to the principle of consultation with relevant interest groups both formally and informally. There are a wide variety of consultation mechanisms: Advisory bodies (see below); written consultation exercises from wide ranging public consultation on Green and White Papers on policy issues and proposals to small scale consultation with specialist groups on minor or technical matters; opinion surveys; focus groups; user panels; regular and ad hoc meetings between Ministers/officials and interested parties which includes organisations of employers, organisations of workers and organisations of and for people with disabilities.

The National Disability Council

The National Disability Council is an independent statutory advisory council established by the Disability Discrimination Act. Its remit applies to Great Britain. The Northern Ireland Disability Council was established under the same Act to provide advice in Northern Ireland. The National Disability Council's power to consult and advise is wide ranging and crosses departmental boundaries. For example, it may choose to advise on discrimination issues relating to employment, education, health care, transport etc. Before giving advice to Government, it must consult with other bodies set up by Ministers to advise on disability issues, where its advice impinges on their areas of responsibility. Membership is drawn from disability organisations and business and over half its members are themselves disabled.

The Advisory Committee for Disabled People in Employment and Training

The Advisory Committee for Disabled People in Employment and Training (ACDET) has been established to replace the previous statutory advisory council (the National Advisory Council on Employment of People with Disabilities) which had considered a broader range of issues some of which had been overtaken with the establishment of the National Disability Council. The Committee has 12 members drawn from employers, professional and workers associations, providers of supported employment and training.

The Disability Rights Task Force: see Action Plan

The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee

The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) was set up under the Transport Act 1985 to advise the Secretary of State for Transport on issues affecting the transport and mobility needs of disabled people. The Committee has 20 members, the majority of whom are required by Statute to be disabled. Membership also includes experts in different transport modes.

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