

Summary Table of Peer Country Comments Papers

Country	Situation of people with disabilities (PWD) in the peer country	Assessment of the policy measures	Questions
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 59 % of PWD entitled to special support are employed or self-employed (overall employment rate 15-64: 72.2%) • 22 % of employers fulfil the quota; of related 107,000 work places, 64 % are occupied by PWD • Unemployment rate of PWD amounts to 9.0 % (overall: 8.5%) • Unemployed with health constraints feature significantly longer unemployment spells 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reform of disability pension system: abolishment of temporary pensions for persons born after 1963; enforcement of "rehabilitation before pension" • Introduction of a counselling and secondary prevention service – fit2work – for employed and unemployed persons with disabilities, chronic diseases or other health problems • Measures related to the interface between education, training and labour market • Amendment of quota system and of special dismissal protection did not lead to higher employment rate of PWD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the specific difference between assessing the loss of work-capacity and assessing the remaining work-capacity? • Why is the quota system only planned for the public sector? • What is the regulation in terms of special dismissal protection of PWD and what changes are proposed by the employers? • What are the main reasons for the low employment rate of PWD?
Cyprus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PWD have traditionally had to function in a physical environment which limited mobility and a policy context which was fragmented. In 2011, the activity rate for individuals with 'Limitations to work' was 46.7% while that for those with no limitations was 77.3%. Also in 2011, the LFS unemployment rate for individuals with 'Limitations to work' was 11.3% while that for individuals with no limitations was 7.1%. • Since the 2011 ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its optional Protocol, a momentum has developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new, integrated, approach has only recently come into effect. Much will depend on the way in which the many programmes contained in it are implemented and on the capacity of the PES and other agencies to rise to the needs of these new challenges. Early results are very encouraging. • As these new approaches and programmes unfold, the macro economy is recovering, improving the capacity of the government to build further on these reforms. At the same time, structural reforms (e.g. to the national health system and the public service itself) are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data for Latvia in Annex 2 suggest that the percentage of 'Persons with disabilities' (column 2) to 'The number of people' (column 1) has increased over time from 6.95% in 2010 to 9.6% in 2017. Does this increase reflect strategic behaviour, given that the basic pension is augmented by over 50% in the event of certified disability – (Podzina, 2018, Annex 3)? Or is it the natural consequence of expanding the safety net for PWD? • If strategic behaviour is at play, does the structure of disability assessment in Latvia, which seems to rely entirely on medical issues, contribute to the increasing number of individuals classified as disabled – given that

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which has improved both the physical accessibility and the architecture of disability policies.

- The First National Strategy for Disabilities (2018-2018) and the accompanying Second National Action Plan for Disabilities (2018-2020) provide an integrated philosophy and action plan that better meets the needs of PWD, take special note of the needs of those disabled who are also recipients of the Guaranteed Minimum Income (noting the programme's requirement for active search and employment if one can work), and helps individuals with disabilities who wish to work to enter the labour market.
- Measures range from an employment quota in the wider public sector, to personalised counselling by the PES, training, and finite-duration employment subsidies.
- These developments have occurred during crisis years, limiting the fiscal capacity of the country to improve the lives of PWD even further.

still pending and remain important challenges which will impact on the capacity of the efforts noted above to enhance the lives of the disabled – as well as those in the rest of society.

the marginal cost of classifying someone as disabled is not borne by the Medical Commission?

- Would restructuring the Medical Commission to include professionals trained in ergonomics, speech and occupational therapy, and psychology, and renaming it to "Commission for the Assessment of Disability and Remaining Work Capacity" lead to more accurate assessments of disability and remaining work capacity?
- What would be the view in Latvia regarding hiring quotas? How would such a policy be rated, relative to other alternatives of helping PWD to work, such as hiring subsidies, training, or assistance in securing employment?
- How should the targeting of further disability services be structured, given that, in Latvia, a very large proportion of PWD is over 60 and/or in poor health and only 1 in 4 of the disabled work? Are further efforts to increase PWD employment likely to produce encouraging or meagre results?
- Does this low percentage of employment among PWD reflect a low employer 'demand' for labour (perhaps due to the difficulty of firing a PWD) or labour 'supply' behaviour (perhaps reflecting the fact that most disabled are elderly or sick)? What is the vacancy rate for disability jobs posted by employers? What is the unemployment rate among the disabled?

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Finland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PWDs have a significantly lower employment rate than those without disabilities. • Figures depend on view point; Based on self-assessment, 600 000 people report problems with work capacity; the PES reports 35 700 job seekers with reduced working capacity. Disability benefit recipients: 51% have been out of work the past two years, only 400 people with mental disability in paid work when 3000 would be able to. • Fragmented system of measures and various qualification criteria: PES, Vocational rehabilitation, Occupational health, Social rehabilitation and services by NGOs • Medical assessment by a physician is always the starting point for determining disability benefits, pension and/or rehabilitation services. Doctor's role is central in qualifying candidates for services as services are not open for all. • New reform in all national social and health care services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocational rehabilitation measures most successful, when in earnings-related services. Results are poorer with people with mental health illnesses and those who have a longer history of being out of work. • People with more severe disabilities tend to fall in-between services for they don't always meet the eligibility criteria. • New Return-to-work -coordinator training and professionals have promising results in helping people return to work. • Job coach service implemented following the IPS-model seem to have good results, but this is not mainstream. • RATKO-method to develop new assignments and assess both capabilities of the job seeker and the requirements of the new assignment has been successful method to work with employers. • More attention should be paid in the future to the employers and work communities to support inclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the support person work with employers and what are the most common support needs of the person with mental health problem and the work community? • When in motivation programme or in social mentor service, how is the relationship with possible open market jobs created? What are the ways these services work with employers? • What is the academic qualifications of PWD in Latvia? Are all children attending the same schools? Do all get the opportunity for vocational and/or higher education? Does the PES or other actors support further education of PWD, especially young people?
France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.7 million working age individuals with disabilities (15-65 years old). • Disadvantaged labour market conditions: 33% employed against a national average of 64%; an 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over years, France has developed an extensive toolbox to promote the employment of PWD: from subsidized contracts to protected environments or employment quotas in private companies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The motivation program seems particularly interesting for France at a time when PES is rethinking services to be offered to disabled jobseekers. Would it be possible to know more

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unemployment rate twice than the national average; and lower educational attainment (30% with no diploma or limited education against a national average of 16%).

- Numerous barriers exist to employment of PWD including cultural ones.
- Since the founding law of disability policy in France (1975) several laws have recently (2015 and 2016) modernized the general framework to take better account of the actual support needs of the target population (both disabled workers and potential employers).
- In particular, a new promising program called "Supported Employment" provides long term and qualitative cross-sectoral support to individuals to ensure job-market access as well as better job retention in companies.

- The existing dedicated PES have been recently assessed and are to be strengthened (a new experiment started in April 2018).
- These measures produce positive results but are insufficient to significantly impact on the rather low employment rate of the target group.
- Improving the integration conditions of disabled individuals should start at school age. This is the only way to impact mentalities and contribute to change our perceptions on disability as potential colleagues or employers of disabled people.
- Providing medical, social and professional support to disabled people is likely to increase their chances to access the job market, however improving their level of qualification should also be a priority. Hence vocational training should be made more accessible to the target group (cost, information, curriculum, registration process, learning materials: all these different aspects should be reviewed for adjustment).
- Prevention of dismissals/resignations due to changes in health condition needs to be improved and better coordinated between medical and HR services.
- Non-profit organizations and social entrepreneurs that have developed a solid expertise in the area of disabled

about the funding and implementation conditions of the program?

- In France, our work (in)capacity assessment is also primarily medically oriented. What would be the criteria to use for assessment while transitioning towards a more social approach?

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	<p>individuals' integration should be consulted and better included in the reform processes.</p>		
Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility for services for PWD is shared across a range of government departments and agencies. • 46% of PWD in the 15-64 age group are in the labour market and of those, 73% are employed. • There has been a significant evolution in the organisation of employment services for PWD including three reforms since 1990. • Comprehensive assessment and establishment of the work capacity of previously employed PWD, is conducted mainly in the context of Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) benefit. This is based on the social insurance contributions made by the person with disabilities while in employment. • The main cohort of working age PWD are in receipt of a means-tested disability allowance. This is not based on social insurance contributions and is subject to the person with disabilities demonstrating an income level or means below a certain nationally set baseline figure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A major difference between Latvia and Ireland is that the three roles of labour market orientated medical assessment, the PES and the social insurance agency are incorporated into one body, the Department of Employment and Social Protection (DEASP). • The emphasis in Ireland is on job seeking and providing extra supports to enable PWD to gain employment. A good example of this is the 'Employability' programme that is based on the international Supported Employment model. • Two measures described in the host paper, the social mentor initiative and the motivation programme appear to be similar to the Irish Employability programme and a job club approach. • Other employment related support measures available in Ireland are similar to many other European countries • There have been a number of significant policy developments in Ireland since 2014, in relation to PWD and their access to the labour market. • A common thread through all the recent reviews and initiatives for PWD in Ireland is the importance of the PES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the roles of the social mentor in Latvia? • How will the proposed social entrepreneurship model impact on employment of PWD? • How successful has the PES profiling and self-assessment approach been for the placement into work of people with disabilities? • Are there any preliminary draft findings from the OECD review regarding the PES services for PWD?

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Italy

- In 2012, the share of PWD over the population aged more than 15 years was lower in Italy (14.5%) than in Latvia (23.6%).
- Disability represents a barrier in accessing the labour market in both Italy and Latvia (as shown by the 'disability gap' in employment, unemployment and inactivity rates).
- In Italy, the share of fixed-term contracts over the total recruitment of PWD is quite high, thus reflecting a high turnover of people with disabilities in the workplace
- In Italy, the enactment of Law No. 68/1999 marked a shift from "compulsory hiring" to "targeted employment" for people with disabilities. However, the obligation placed upon the employer to hire disabled workers – alongside the administrative sanctions for non-compliance – has remained unscathed.
- The main difference with the Host country is that in Italy the targeted employment is based on a compulsory employment quota system.
- Furthermore, the inclusion of PWD in companies in Italy focuses on the assessment of their actual skills and work abilities rather than just the residual work-capacity as in Latvia.
- The Italian model of social cooperatives could be interesting for Latvia, because of their long-standing tradition and successful experiences in the employment of people with disabilities (not only in the targeted employment framework).
- Despite Law 68/1999 has encourage positive developments, there is still the need to support more effectively the placement at work and the retention of people with intellectual and psychic disabilities as well as to increase the awareness of public and private employers about disability.
- Three Latvian measures are particularly interesting for Italy namely: 'support person at work for those unemployed with mental health issues', 'motivation programme for job search and social mentor services for long-term unemployed people with disabilities' and 'Open Doors Day for people with disability'.
- How do the different actors involved in the support of PWD in Latvia interact between them?
- What is the definition of mental disabilities adopted in case of provision of a support person at work for the unemployed with mental health issues?
- What are the results from 'motivation programme for job search and social mentor services for long-term unemployed people with disabilities' on the integration of people with intellectual and psychic disabilities?
- How the "Open Doors Days" for PWD are organised in practice?

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Serbia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The general situation in the labour market in Serbia in 2017 indicates an improvement in relation to 2016. Activity and employment rates increased, while unemployment and inactivity rates decreased. Despite the improvements, situation in the labour market in Serbia is still unsatisfying, especially for PWD and other marginalised social groups. Economic and social status of PWD, including their position in the labour market, remains unequal compared to general population. Further progress is needed both in the active labour market policies and the social welfare system reforms. There is no comprehensive official data on disability and employment. Work-capacity assessment is not mandatory for PWD, but it is a requirement for eligibility to use different support measures provided by the NES for PWD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support person at the workplace for unemployed persons with mental health issues – very good measure, since persons with mental health issues are usually stigmatized and discriminated against, especially in the context of employment. Concerns – availability of support persons and their willingness to apply for this job due to the required level of education and prescribed cost of the service. Motivation programme for job search and social mentor services for long-term unemployed PWD – good approach to have smaller groups of people if some of them have mental health issues, it enables both social mentors and PWD included in the programme to have more time for individual needs and concerns of every person in the group. It is not clear why persons with mental health issues have special support measures. Cooperation between different public authorities and NGOs is very beneficial for both sides. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you ensure that PWD remain employed after the expiration of the measure? Do you plan to align your legislation with the CRPD requirements in regard to the social model of disability, bearing in mind that the work capacity is still assessed by the Medical Commission? If yes, could you please elaborate how? Why do you have a special measure for persons with mental health issues? Is this measure based on some research/needs assessment? Is this measure also available for persons with intellectual disabilities? If not, do you have any measure for them? In many countries persons with disabilities are still at risk of deprivation of legal capacity. What is the current situation in Latvia? Is there a procedure for deprivation of legal capacity? If yes, please explain whether person deprived of legal capacity has work capacity (i.e. can that person work).
Slovakia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Slovakia, the labour market participation of PWD remains far below the employment rate of total population, although in the last few years, the situation has been slightly improving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slovakia offers a variety of measures to support the labour market participation of PWD. Most disability specific ALMPs focus on subsidies to employers. Support to PWD in finding and maintaining a job remains underdeveloped. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What experience does Latvia have in promoting supported employment as a way to foster labour market participation of people with severe disabilities? Is there any experience with outsourcing services of supported employment to non-public providers?

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- The main purpose of the medical assessment of reduced work capacity is to determine the eligibility of a person for invalidity pension.
- The assessment is conducted by the Social Insurance Agency and it is based on medical reports, and the face-to-face meeting of a claimant and an assessment doctor.
- It is not compulsory for people assessed as disabled to register with the PES. Still, if they get employed, this does not affect the duration or the amount of invalidity pension.
- The border between sheltered workshops and the open labour market seems unclear.
- Among the latest developments, in accordance with the newly adopted Act on Social Economy and Social Enterprises, integrative enterprises can be set up to employ people with disabilities.
- One of the measures supports the costs of work assistants. Work assistance can be provided to any employed PWD, and it has no time limit.
- More and more employers who have an obligation to meet the disability quota prefer direct employment of PWD to buying goods / services from sheltered workshops or paying the levy. It is not clear however, whether this is a case for all types and degrees of disability.
- It is difficult to conclude what type of measures is in Slovakia the most efficient, for these measures are not regularly evaluated.
- Currently, the action plan on the transition from sheltered workshops to the open labour market is under preparation in Slovakia.
- Non-public providers are going to be more involved in the provision of support services for PWD, and the co-operation between the PES and non-public providers is going to be strengthened.
- Does the assessment of the degree of functional limitation and the determination of the loss of work-capacity in Latvia also determine which PWD can work at sheltered workshops and how long?
- Does the assessment contain information on type of disability? If not, what assessment takes place to determine whether a job-seeker has intellectual disability, and is eligible for a support person at work for unemployed with mental health issues?
- Which potential risk factors are foreseen in Latvia when considering introduction of tax reductions?

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- On grounds of the recommendation of the UN Committee, Slovakia should also reform its disability assessment scheme and incorporate a human rights based approach to disability. However, it is not clear at this moment, how this would be done. Non-public providers are going to be more involved in the provision of support services for PWD, and the co-operation between the PES and non-public providers is going to be strengthened.
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Sweden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 15% (app. 900 000) of the population aged 16-64 report disability. Among PWD, 68% estimates that disability reduced their work capacity, which corresponds to more than 600,000 people. • The proportion of unemployed persons with disability is currently about 10% compared to 7% for the general population. • The employment rate among persons with disability is 62%, and slightly lower (58%) among persons with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no program in the Public Employment Service that in its entirety corresponds to the support measures for employment of PWD in Latvia. • In the Swedish labor market policy, so-called "place and train" methods have been used increasingly since the mid-1990s, where evidence-based methods, Supported Employment (SE) and Individual Placement and Support (IPS) have served as starting points for the design of support. Evidence shows that these kinds of methods are more effective on labour market integration of PWD than other methods used in this area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large proportion of the unemployed with disabilities in Latvia are older - what is the reason for this? Are there no younger PWD or are they just older persons who are officially registered in the assessment process?
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reduced work capacity, compared to 79% in the population.

- At the end of 2017, 169 944 persons with disabilities were registered at the PES. This corresponds to 27% of all registered.
- Two different authorities, the Public Employment Services (PES) and the Social Insurance Agency (SIA) perform assessments of work capacity. The assessment follows a medical-functional methodology.
- The Swedish work capacity assessment focuses on capacity, rather than incapacity. In the work capacity assessment, rehabilitation specialists at the PES use evidence-based assessment methods and instruments which increase the conditions for fair assessments and equity.
- There is no common system for assessment of disability in Sweden and no common access to different support systems exists in cases when a person with disabilities is in need of support from several different authorities or service providers.
- To meet the Europe 2020 employment goals, the Swedish government has taken several lines of action intended to strengthen the labour market situation of young people and people in long-term unemployment. The lines of action are in theory applicable to disabled persons as well (as they could be both young and long-term unemployed), but disability is not explicitly mentioned, which creates a risk that the needs of people with disabilities are not seen and no measures are taken to improve their situation.