

SUPPORT FOR THE EMPLOYABILITY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Peer Review “Work-Capacity Assessment For Persons With Disabilities”

Host Country Discussion Paper – Latvia

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Riga (Latvia), 26-27 April 2018

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Overall situation in Latvia

■ Disability assessment

- *182 048 people with disabilities or 9.3 % of the population*
- *For 16 917 persons aged 18+ years disability was determined for the first time*

■ Employment of persons with disabilities

- *Employed 42 813 persons with disabilities (24.88 %)*
- *1 778 persons with disability found a job (692 - after receiving a support from Public Employment Service)*
- *Established 553 subsidised workplaces*

■ Unemployment of persons with disabilities

- *Registered 8164 unemployed persons with disabilities*

■ Additional information

- *Minimum monthly salary - EUR 430*
- *Average old-age pension – EUR 289.40*
- *Average disability pension – EUR 164.14*

Legal framework

- The Labour Law
- The Support for Unemployed Persons and Persons Seeking Employment Law
- The Disability Law
- The Social Enterprise Law
- The Law On Social Services and Social Assistance

Support for persons with disabilities

- Support measures provided by the Public Employment Service
 - *Support for registered unemployed person, person seeking employment and person subject to the risk of unemployment (mainstreaming principle)*
 - *Support measures for persons with disabilities*
 - ✓ Subsidised workplace
 - ✓ A support person at work for unemployed with mental health issues
 - ✓ Motivational programmes for job search and social mentor services for long-term unemployed persons with disabilities
 - ✓ Open Doors Day for persons with disabilities
- Social enterprises
- Specialized workshops

Difficulties and constraints (I)

- Targeted services for persons with disabilities
 - *Low income level of persons with disabilities, but rarely used available employment support services*
 - *Need for more personalised services, but insufficient staff experience and knowledge*
- Availability of sensitive data
 - *No requirement to indicate disability and/or type of functional impairment, but more targeted services are needed*
- Monitoring and supervision of services for persons with disabilities
 - *a range of available support services, but not in one package*

Difficulties and constraints (II)

■ Work-incapacity *versus* work-capacity

- *Changes in disability assessment – determination of work-incapacity*
- *Two ways to assess work – incapacity*
- *Not clear further direction*
- *No interest from NGOs representing persons with disabilities*

Difficulties and constrains (III)

■ Employers' attitude

- *A lack of good examples*
- *Main Challenges*
 - ✓ Workplace adjustment
 - ✓ Higher expenses than for other employees
- *The dominant view*
 - ✓ Labor Law restrictions

Success factors and transferability

- Close cooperation between the Ministry of Welfare and the NGOs representing persons with disabilities
 - *Working groups, consultations regarding policy planning documents and legislative enactments*
 - *As example - a motivational programme and a social mentor service for persons with disabilities*

Key findings and conclusions

- Need for a transparent and understandable system for determining disability, work-incapacity or remained work-capacity
- Importance of having a monitoring and supervisory system of services
- Better trained staff with expertise on issues related to the specific requirements of persons with disabilities in order to provide a more targeted, person-oriented service
- Further changes required in relation to:
 - *Tax initiatives which would promote employment in the open labor market*
 - *The procedure of payment of sickness benefit*

Issues that need to be resolved

- How and which working abilities should be assessed in the case of a disability – the remaining or lost work-capacity?
- How to motivate a person with disability to stay in work or return to work?
- How to motivate employers to retain a person with disability or recruit a person with disability?

Thank You!

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