

# HOW TO PUT REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION INTO PRACTICE

GUIDE OF  
PROMISING PRACTICES



**YOU HAVE  
RIGHTS**

#EUvsDiscrimination



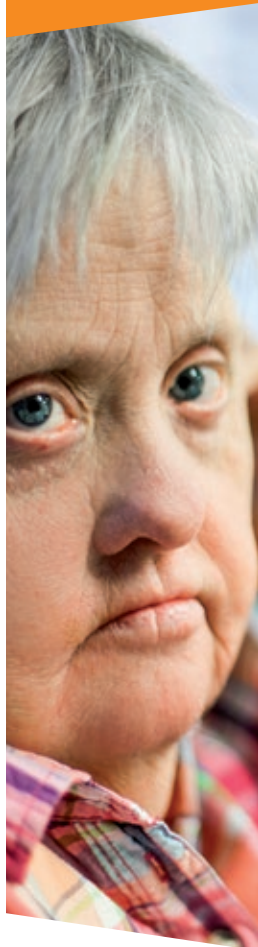
## DISCLAIMER

The information presented in this Guide was provided directly by employers at national level, through a questionnaire, developed for the EUvsDiscrimination campaign. The information on the employment practices, including the number of persons with disabilities employed, or the reasonable accommodation measures is therefore subjective and the European Commission is consequently not liable for the validity of the information.

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# TABLE OF CONTENT



|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>EUvsDISCRIMINATION CAMPAIGN</b>  | <b>06</b> |
| <b>BACKGROUND</b>   | <b>08</b> |
| <b>WHAT IS REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION?</b>  | <b>12</b> |
| <b>PROMISING PRACTICES OF EMPLOYING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE OPEN LABOUR MARKET</b>   | <b>14</b> |
| <b>A · EXAMPLES FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR</b>  | <b>15</b> |
| ▶ Hiring people with disabilities at Bruxelles Environment (Belgium)  | 16        |
| ▶ Employing persons with intellectual disabilities as civil servants at the Government of the Province of Biscay (Spain)  | 18        |
| ▶ Employing persons on the autism spectrum at the National Office for the Judiciary (Hungary)   | 20        |
| ▶ Diversity plan of the Fire Department and Urgent Medical Aid (SIAMU) in the Brussels Capital region (Belgium)   | 22        |
| ▶ The implementation of the diversity plan at the Commune of Uccle (Belgium)  | 24        |
| ▶ Adjusting a Public Employment Service Office for the needs of an employee with disability (France)  | 26        |
| <b>B · EXAMPLES FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR</b>   | <b>29</b> |
| ▶ Inclusive Accessibility Catalogue at Shell Global/Shell Bulgaria EAD (Bulgaria)   | 30        |
| ▶ Vocational rehabilitation as an HR service at E.ON Hungary Ltd. (Hungary)   | 32        |
| ▶ Package of benefits for employees with disabilities at ING Bank Śląski S.A. (Poland)  | 34        |
| ▶ Using design to support the employment of persons with intellectual disabilities at Restaurant Le Reflet Nantes (France)  | 36        |
| ▶ Training and employing persons with disabilities in a web developer start-up Domino Dizajn d.o.o. (Croatia)   | 38        |
| ▶ Involving persons with disabilities in all departments of “JSC SMILTANIS IR KO” paper factory (Lithuania)   | 40        |
| ▶ Social entrepreneurship at Etincelle o.s. to fight stereotypes and pave the way to employment in the open labour market (Czech Republic)                            | 42        |
| ▶ Successful social enterprise to train persons with disabilities for the open labour market at Grupo SIFU (Spain)  | 44        |
| <b>C · EXAMPLE FROM CIVIL SOCIETY</b>   | <b>46</b> |
| ▶ “Valueable Network” to promote the inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities in the hospitality sector (Italy, Spain, Portugal, Hungary, Germany, Turkey) | 47        |
| <b>WHO CAN HELP YOU TO ENFORCE YOUR RIGHTS?</b>   | <b>48</b> |

# EUvsDISCRIMINATION CAMPAIGN

In order to inform EU citizens of their rights not to be discriminated against, in May 2019, the European Commission launched the **#EUvsDiscrimination** campaign.

For the purpose of the campaign, a campaign website, a leaflet and videos have been produced in all official EU languages, and a social media strategy was also launched. The EU website provided citizens with details of their national equality bodies so they can have more information on how to enforce their rights.

Another strand of the campaign focused specifically on **reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities**. The European Commission therefore organised a set of events between May 2019 and February 2020 in Member States where the employment gap between persons with and without disabilities is among the biggest in the EU. The actions aimed to raise awareness among EU employers and citizens, who are not aware of the possibilities granted by EU legislation, to fight discrimination at the workplace.

These events provided a good opportunity to meet and discuss directly with employers the advantages of hiring persons with disabilities, as well as the experiences of providing them with reasonable accommodation.



BRUSSELS



BUCHAREST



WARSAW

The awareness-raising events took place in the following Member States:

15 MAY 2019



BRUSSELS

BELGIUM

7 JUNE 2019



BUCHAREST

ROMANIA

27 JUNE 2019



WARSAW

POLAND

UV  
ATION  
DIS  
#EU  
S

#EUvsDISCRIMINATION



**SOFIA**



**VILNIUS**



**ZAGREB**



**PRAGUE**



**BUDAPEST**

18 OCTOBER 2019



**SOFIA**  
BULGARIA

6 DECEMBER 2019



**PRAGUE**  
CZECH REPUBLIC

15 JANUARY 2020



**VILNIUS**  
LITHUANIA

24 JANUARY 2020



**ZAGREB**  
CROATIA

24 FEBRUARY 2020



**BUDAPEST**  
HUNGARY

SDI  
N #E  
CRIMINATI  
VSDISCRIMIN  
SCR  
NATION

# BACKGROUND

## ▶ **THE EU EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY DIRECTIVE (DIRECTIVE 2000/78/EC) BANS WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION ON THE GROUNDS OF AGE, SEX, DISABILITY, ETHNIC OR RACIAL ORIGIN, RELIGION OR BELIEF, OR SEXUAL ORIENTATION.<sup>1</sup>**

**Since 2000, equal treatment legislation at EU level has set out minimum levels of protection for everyone working in the EU.**

**The legislation requires employers not to discriminate at work and secures the right of employees not to be discriminated against.**

EU law therefore guarantees that people working in the EU are entitled to equal treatment in recruitment, working conditions, promotion, pay, access to vocational training, occupational pensions and dismissal.

All EU Member States have long transposed this Directive into national law. However, there are still too many people who are not aware of these rights and the protection it offers. In 2014, the Joint Report on the application of the Racial Equality Directive and the Employment Equality Directive concluded that “the main challenge now is to increase awareness of the already existing protection and to ensure its better practical implementation and application”.<sup>2</sup> According to a Special Eurobarometer on “Discrimination in the

EU in 2015”, almost half of the people would not know their rights in case of discrimination.<sup>3</sup> Surveys also show that around one in eight Europeans consider themselves part of a group at risk of discrimination because they are in a racial or ethnic minority, have a disability, or because of their sex, sexual orientation, age, religion and/or beliefs.

Discrimination, hate speech and attacks against minorities unfortunately remain a daily reality for many people in the European Union.

Notably, a significant gap of 24.2 percentage points still exists between the employment situation of persons with and without disabilities.<sup>4</sup> This means that **persons with disabilities are less likely to be employed than persons without disabilities** and the gap is even larger for persons with more severe disabilities. Having been traditionally excluded from the labour market has resulted in persons with

disabilities being subject to social exclusion and deprivation as well as put at higher risk of poverty and presented with significant barriers to their participation in society. Nevertheless, employment is key to achieve social inclusion, reduce poverty and inequalities across the Union.

Such persistent employment gap exists, despite the EU and all of its Member States ratifying the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD)**, which explicitly prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in the labour market and calls on States Parties to ensure **reasonable accommodation in the workplace.**

Reasonable accommodation means necessary and appropriate adjustments should be made to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment of their human rights. Providing reasonable accommodation improves the access of persons with disabilities to the open labour market.



# LOOK AT THE BUSINESS CASE

## SOME ADVANTAGES OF EMPLOYING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- ▶ Gives the opportunity to recruit from a broader pool of talent
- ▶ Reduces staff turnover
- ▶ Reduces costs of occupational health
- ▶ Reduces staff absences
- ▶ Improves staff morale
- ▶ Improves understanding of customers leading to more customers
- ▶ Positive impact on corporate image
- ▶ Minimises legal risks
- ▶ 1.48 Euros return on every 1 Euro spent
- ▶ Increasing requirement of partner organisations
- ▶ Growing market size as 1 in 3 people acquire a disability between age 50 and 65

<sup>1</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32000L0078>; <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32000L0043>

<sup>2</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A52014DC0002>

<sup>3</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/SPECIAL/surveyKy/2077>

<sup>4</sup> EUROSTAT EU SILC analysed by ANED: <https://www.disability-europe.net/downloads/1045-europe-2020-data-people-with-disabilities-tables-eu-silc-2017>

## EMPLOYMENT RATE BY DISABILITY STATUS AND MEMBER STATE (AGE 20-64)

# 2017

Data source:  
EU SILC 2017 as analysed by ANED.

|    | DISABILITY |         |                            | DISABILITY |         |                            |      |
|----|------------|---------|----------------------------|------------|---------|----------------------------|------|
|    | YES<br>%   | NO<br>% | Gap<br>(percentage points) | YES<br>%   | NO<br>% | Gap<br>(percentage points) |      |
| AT | 56,3       | 76,9    | 20,6                       | IE         | 32,2    | 74,3                       | 42,2 |
| BE | 42,5       | 74,4    | 31,8                       | IT         | 51,8    | 65,5                       | 13,7 |
| BG | 39,5       | 73,7    | 34,2                       | LT         | 47,3    | 79,2                       | 31,9 |
| CY | 47,3       | 71,0    | 23,7                       | LU         | 53,0    | 68,9                       | 16,0 |
| CZ | 49,4       | 79,1    | 29,7                       | LV         | 61,8    | 78,9                       | 17,1 |
| DE | 51,8       | 79,4    | 27,7                       | MT         | 37,2    | 73,6                       | 36,5 |
| DK | 57,7       | 80,8    | 23,1                       | NL         | 58,5    | 81,5                       | 23,0 |
| EE | 62,2       | 83,0    | 20,8                       | PL         | 42,5    | 74,5                       | 32,0 |
| EL | 36,7       | 59,7    | 23,0                       | PT         | 56,1    | 75,0                       | 18,9 |
| ES | 40,1       | 67,6    | 27,5                       | RO         | 43,7    | 74,3                       | 30,6 |
| FI | 54,4       | 74,4    | 20,0                       | SE         | 52,6    | 83,5                       | 30,9 |
| FR | 55,5       | 74,0    | 18,6                       | SI         | 53,7    | 73,5                       | 19,8 |
| HR | 33,8       | 65,9    | 32,2                       | SK         | 57,7    | 80,0                       | 22,4 |
| HU | 46,7       | 76,1    | 29,5                       | UK         | 52,9    | 83,4                       | 30,5 |

## Employment rate in the EU



### DISABILITY

| YES<br>% | NO<br>% |
|----------|---------|
| 50,6     | 74,8    |

Gap (percentage points)

# 24,2

The aim of this Guide is to **improve the general understanding on what reasonable accommodation means and how to put it into practice.** The Guide focuses specifically on reasonable accommodation and disability and will highlight some of the benefits of employing persons with disabilities in the open labour market. To some extent, it will serve as a myth buster to tackle the most common stereotypes and misconceptions about the costs, or complications of providing reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities.

The Guide showcases promising practices from across the EU of committed public and private employers who already support the labour market inclusion of persons with disabilities through various measures and a great vision of creating a diverse and flexible working environment. All of them agree on one thing: having persons with disabilities in their offices and companies is a win-win situation for everyone. Finally, the Guide will hopefully inspire other employers to hire more persons with disabilities and find solutions to provide them with reasonable accommodation.





## ▶ WHAT TYPES OF WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION EXIST?

### SEVERAL SITUATIONS ARE COVERED BY EU LAW:

- ▶ **Direct discrimination** is when an employer treats you worse than someone else in a comparable situation, on the grounds of age, sex, disability, ethnic or racial origin, religion or belief, or sexual orientation. *An example would be to refuse to recruit someone because they are over 50 years old.*
- ▶ **Indirect discrimination** is where a practice, policy or rule that applies to everyone has a negative effect on some people. These measures seem neutral at first sight, but actually discriminate against certain people. *For example, implementing rules that are unfavourable for part-time workers may indirectly discriminate against women as most part-time workers are women.*
- ▶ **Harassment** is another form of workplace discrimination. This is unwanted conduct, bullying or other behaviour that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. *For example, if a boss or colleagues tell jokes based on sexual orientation to one of their gay/lesbian colleagues.*
- ▶ **Instruction to discriminate** is when a person incites another to discriminate against someone else. *For example, if an employer asks a temporary work agency to find only workers aged under 40.*
- ▶ **Victimisation** is where people suffer negative consequences in reaction to a complaint about discrimination. *For example, if someone has been dismissed or refused promotion because they filed a discrimination complaint against their boss.*

# ▶ WHAT IS REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION?

**Reasonable accommodation** is any change to a job or a work environment that is needed to enable a person with a disability to apply, to perform and to advance in job functions, or undertake training on an equal basis with others. The purpose of reasonable accommodation is to enable persons with disabilities to have access to, participate in, or advance in employment. Employees with disabilities thus could achieve the same work outputs and have equal opportunities as non-disabled employees, by doing things a bit differently.

Reasonable accommodation is aimed at any employee with a disability. The right to reasonable accommodation extends to all work-related activities covered by EU law, from the job application process through termination, and includes working conditions and fringe benefits. If you have a disability and believe you need adjustments to your job or workplace, you can request reasonable accommodation.

## WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY?

Under the **EU's Employment Equality Directive**, employers have to provide reasonable accommodation to **employees** with disabilities, to **the extent that doing so would not impose a disproportionate burden on the employer**. This sets reasonable accommodation duties, which may include technical solutions like providing equipment. According to the Directive, reasonable accommodation means that:

“ Employers shall take appropriate measures, where needed in a particular case, to enable a person with a disability to have access to, participate in, or advance in employment, or to undergo training, unless such measures would impose a disproportionate burden on the employer. This burden shall not be disproportionate when it is sufficiently remedied by measures existing within the framework of the disability policy of the Member State concerned.  
(Article 5, Council Directive 2000/78/EC)

Reasonable accommodation is also an obligation under the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)**, to which the EU and all its Member States are parties. The Convention defines reasonable accommodation as:

*“Necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.” (Article 2, UNCRPD).*

## ▶ WHAT ACCOMMODATION CAN BE OFFERED?

The main types of reasonable accommodation include technical solutions, working arrangements, training measures and awareness raising measures.

The **technical solutions** might include:

- ▶ Installing elevators or ramps.
- ▶ Putting office furniture at an appropriate height.
- ▶ Installing computer software such as screen readers, screen magnifiers or speech, recognition software, etc.
- ▶ Providing Braille terminals.
- ▶ Installing real time interpretation via telecommunications.

It is important to note that **reasonable accommodation complements accessibility measures** and when accessibility is already guaranteed, the arrangement of reasonable accommodation, in relation to technical devices is much simpler and less expensive.

Other cases of reasonable accommodation might relate to:

- ▶ Working arrangements, like providing flexible working hours, teleworking, leave, relocation to a new office or redeployment to a different job if requested by the employee.
- ▶ Training to support employees to use assistive technology when at work and mentoring to enable employees to overcome any barriers they encounter in the workplace.
- ▶ Modifying procedures and policies, like centralising the system through which employees can request accessibility support.
- ▶ Awareness raising measures so that persons with disabilities can perform their job in a supportive working environment.

### MYTHS ABOUT REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

- ▶ It is usually expensive.
- ▶ It is complicated to provide the accommodations to employees with disabilities.
- ▶ Specialist expertise is always needed to plan and offer reasonable accommodation.
- ▶ It is not a priority for the top leadership of the company to employ persons with disabilities.
- ▶ Employing persons with disabilities would increase health and safety risks.



### CHECKBOX: WHAT IS 'REASONABLE'?

- ▶ Will it work? Does it address the particular needs of the employee with a disability?
- ▶ Is it practical?
- ▶ Will it result in unsustainable direct and indirect costs to the employer?
- ▶ If costs are incurred, are external resources (money subsidies & expertise) available to support employers?
- ▶ Will it disrupt other employees from being able to do their jobs?
- ▶ Can it be done without health and safety implications?

# ▶ PROMISING PRACTICES OF EMPLOYING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE OPEN LABOUR MARKET





**This section of the Guide presents the promising practices received as part of the #EUvsDiscrimination campaign, following the lively discussions with employers during the national awareness-raising events.**

It was an important aspect during the selection process to feature employers from both the public and private sectors. These are committed employers, who hired persons with disabilities in the open labour market and have already showed great leadership in how to successfully provide reasonable accommodation to employees with disabilities in different working environments.

Reading through these promising practices, it is clear that several employers are already committed across Europe to creating an inclusive workplace by making some necessary adjustments, because they consider the recruitment of persons with disabilities improved the working environment and performance of their businesses.

# A. EXAMPLES FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR

-  Hiring people with disabilities at Bruxelles Environment (Belgium)
-  Employing persons with intellectual disabilities as civil servants at the Government of the Province of Biscay (Spain)
-  Employing persons on the autism spectrum at the National Office for the Judiciary (Hungary)
-  Diversity plan of the Fire Department and Urgent Medical Aid (SIAMU) in the Brussels Capital region (Belgium)
-  The implementation of the diversity plan at the Commune of Uccle (Belgium)
-  Adjusting a Public Employment Service Office for the needs of an employee with disability (France)



## BELGIUM

# HIRING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AT BRUXELLES ENVIRONNEMENT (BELGIUM)

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PROMISING PRACTICE

Since January 2018, *Bruxelles Environnement* has sought to recruit persons with disabilities for all kinds of positions (e.g. field workers, administrative staff, management, non-management etc.) under different contracts (permanent contracts, fixed-term contracts etc.). They have introduced a number of concrete measures to ensure the successful recruitment and integration of employees with disabilities:

- ▶ A clear statement and checkbox is included in the job application forms, emphasising that *Bruxelles Environnement* wants to recruit people from diverse backgrounds without discrimination and that persons with disabilities can ask for reasonable accommodations;
  - ▶ The recruitment process can be adapted to meet the needs of persons with disabilities (e.g. sign language interpretation, test adaptations);
  - ▶ A comprehensive accessibility audit in their offices resulted in carrying out necessary adaptations for the smooth integration of employees with disabilities;
  - ▶ Exchanged experiences with other public administrations to expand and improve their inclusive employment policy;
  - ▶ All staff members received written communication about the inclusive employment policy of the organisation and about 50 employees participated in an internal awareness-raising event.
- Bruxelles Environnement* recognised that there is a real professional interest in recruiting persons with disabilities. When hiring someone with a disability, the organisation wants their integration to be

### AREA OF ACTIVITY

- ▶ Environment/  
Public administration

### NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES EMPLOYED:

- ▶ 5

### CONTACT

[www.environnement.brussels](http://www.environnement.brussels)

as smooth as possible in a non-discriminating, reassuring and attentive environment.

The management of the organisation is committed to provide stable financial support to employ persons with disabilities and provide them with reasonable accommodation (e.g. in 2018, the cost of sign language interpretation was € 30 000). Awareness of the staff is key to include employees with disability in the team, so when a deaf gardener was recruited on an open-ended contract, *Bruxelles Environnement* organised 4 half-day French sign language classes for his direct colleagues during working hours in collaboration with a specialised association.



## ▶ LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

Persons with disabilities are usually underrepresented among applicants. Therefore, Bruxelles Environment collaborates with associations of persons with disabilities and service providers at the regional level to find suitable candidates. Nevertheless, the human resources team had to be carefully prepared to judge candidates with disabilities only on their skills, without any prejudice towards their impairments.

There are also a number of administrative challenges. For instance, Bruxelles Environment wants to employ persons with disabilities on a special contract, but it is difficult to combine such arrangements with the specificities of their own administration. Public procurement can also make it difficult to provide

reasonable accommodation, for example if a sign language interpreter needs to be contracted on a short notice for the recruitment process.

Fighting stereotypes and changing mentalities is a long process that should take place at different levels. Awareness-raising should continue even several years after the recruitment of a person with a disability, or members of any other vulnerable groups.

Staff members need to understand that reasonable accommodation is not about favouring one candidate over another, but it is a measure to ensure candidates would have the same opportunities to deliver the same output.

“ It is important to emphasise that employing someone with a disability is not a charity project for Bruxelles Environment, but brings a real added value to the organisation.

The project will further develop in the near future, through better collaboration with other regional administrations, greater cohesion between different support services, internal investment in this area (both in human and financial terms) and through continued awareness-raising.





# SPAIN

## ▶ EMPLOYING PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES AS CIVIL SERVANTS AT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF BISCAY (SPAIN)

### ▶ DESCRIPTION OF THE PROMISING PRACTICE

The Government of the Province of Biscay has had a longstanding commitment and experience in employing persons with disabilities, except for persons with intellectual disabilities. Thus, in 2017, the Government approved an offer of public employment for five service staff places targeting persons with intellectual disabilities.

#### AREA OF ACTIVITY

▶ Public administration

#### NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES EMPLOYED:

▶ 5

#### CONTACT

<https://web.bizkaia.eus/>

The call aimed to recruit five civil servants through a standard, but adapted, multi-stage recruitment process. The overarching goal was to support the social and labour market inclusion of the most disadvantaged people. The specificity of this call required the Government to adopt new ways of working, including more flexible arrangements. Political commitment played a fundamental role in making this initiative successful. The Government received a total of 281 applications, of which five people were recruited and 146 people were added to a job bank, for further potential openings.







## ▶ LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

The recruitment process had four distinct phases, each playing a key role in achieving positive results:

- 1. Understanding the needs of persons with intellectual disabilities:** Elimination of existing prejudices and stereotypes, training to HR staff on how to prepare documentation in easy-to-read in relation to the call, internal awareness-raising trainings, involvement of persons with intellectual disabilities in the whole process.
- 2. Organising the recruitment process in an accessible way:** A standard recruitment process was used to comply with all legal requirements for entering a public employment post, but it was adapted to the needs of persons with intellectual disabilities. Besides providing information in accessible format, it was also important to ensure safeguarding and mentoring throughout the whole process, as well as to provide a calm and safe environment (e.g. choosing an exam centre that is bright and easy to access by public transport).
- 3. Providing adequate support:** A partnership agreement was signed with third party entities to support the successful candidates with job coaching and mentoring.
- 4. Taking up employment and induction training:**  
The selected candidates could take part in several visits, together with their families and the job coaches to learn about the workplace and attend training sessions. A point of contact was designated for each of them in their respective departments to provide direct support. During the induction meeting, all appointed candidates signed the necessary documents to enter civil service, prepared in easy-to-read format.

To date, the five recruited persons with intellectual disabilities successfully perform their tasks and integrated well in their teams. The project therefore marks the beginning of taking a different and truly inclusive approach towards providing employment opportunities as civil servants for all persons with disabilities.

The initiative of the Government of the Province of Biscay has already received several awards and prizes for their cooperation with the third sector and for the promotion of the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities in Spain. It is a successful model, recommended to other public authorities to adopt it.

The main challenges during the implementation of the project were mostly operational and attitudinal. Existing stereotypes, the lack of protocols to accommodate the needs of persons with intellectual disabilities, as well as the complexity of creating a calm and friendly recruitment process were the major issues to tackle.

For the long-term sustainability of this initiative, it is important to maintain close connection with the media, to disseminate results and showcase that persons with intellectual disabilities can be fully integrated in public administration jobs. They also aim to further improve the process, based on the evaluation results and to open further positions at different levels of the administration, not only at lower level.





# HUNGARY



## ▶ EMPLOYING PERSONS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM AT THE NATIONAL OFFICE FOR THE JUDICIARY (HUNGARY)

# JUDICIARY (HUNGARY)

### ▶ DESCRIPTION OF THE PROMISING PRACTICE

In 2013, following the establishment of the National Office for the Judiciary in Hungary, the management had a clear goal to involve highly qualified members of a disadvantaged group in the work of the Office. After thorough consideration, they contacted AURA Association (<https://www.auraegyesulet.hu/>), a bottom-up NGO, with vast experience in supporting the social and labour market inclusion of persons on the autism spectrum.

The aim was to find suitable candidates, with the help of AURA for specific tasks, including filing, archiving, managing archived documents, digitalisation of documents and in-house delivery service, among others. These tasks are generally considered repetitive; thus, it has always been challenging to find staff members with the necessary educational background (minimum high school degree) and motivation to stay on this job. The selection, assessment and training of the candidates on the autism spectrum was carried out by AURA. Mentors from AURA attended the job interviews and supported the selected candidates to settle into their new positions. They also advised the Judiciary on how to create an accessible, autism-friendly working environment, for instance by creating special workstations.

#### AREA OF ACTIVITY

▶ Magistracy

#### NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES EMPLOYED:

▶ 7

#### CONTACT

<https://birosag.hu/en>



◀ Staff member on the autism spectrum in the Registry court of Budapest, together with his line manager and his mentor. ©AURA Association

## ▶ LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

The involvement of an expert NGO was key for the quality assurance of the project. AURA also acted as a mediator in situations that required conflict resolution between the employer and the new staff members. In the experiences of AURA, the lack of adequate reasonable accommodation measures often led to the job loss of people on the autism spectrum. However, in most cases, there are easy ways to resolve misunderstandings and provide people with the necessary support. Reasonable accommodation measures in this project included more flexibility regarding the starting of the working day or allowing more regular breaks for employees to rest.

Staff members of the judiciary also attended a series of training sessions to prepare them for welcoming the new colleagues and break down any existing stereotypes. Since their recruitment,

special attention has been paid to fully involve staff members on the autism spectrum in the social activities of the Office too (e.g. Christmas celebrations, team building days etc.).

Since the beginning of the project, member organisations of the National Office for the Judiciary, such as the Registry Court in Budapest, or the Central District Court in Buda, also joined the initiative and now employ in total seven persons on the autism spectrum. The project helped participants to acquire a stable, well-paid job in the public sector, become tax-payers and afford to live independently.

The National Office for the Judiciary considers their project a promising practice and believes that persons on the autism spectrum could also contribute to the work of other public administration offices in Hungary. Several workshops have been organised to engage with the management of various public authorities, as part of their corporate social responsibility. The Judiciary recommends other public employers to identify for which specific tasks they need new staff members and assess if there is a specific group of persons with disabilities that could be trained and employed for that role. The involvement of an expert NGO is a guarantee for smooth recruitment, training and induction. The positive attitude of existing staff is also important to ensure good integration in the teams.



# BELGIUM

## ▶ DIVERSITY PLAN OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT AND URGENT MEDICAL AID (SIAMU) IN THE BRUSSELS CAPITAL REGION (BELGIUM)

### ▶ DESCRIPTION OF THE PROMISING PRACTICE

Since 2013, the Fire Department and Urgent Medical Aid (SIAMU) has a diversity plan in place to break stereotypes about persons with disabilities (renewed every 2 years).

The SIAMU Diversity Charter was the first step to establish company values that respect diversity and differences. Today, in SIAMU 10 out of the 250 administrative staff have either a federal and/or regional disability recognition. Furthermore, 4 of the firefighters also have a disability and a new reassignment procedure will make it possible to better support firefighters with disabilities.

The organisation believes that what helps breaking stereotypes the most is to start working with persons with disabilities. A committed Diversity Manager plays a key role in the successful inclusion of persons with disabilities, as well as the involvement of both internal and external stakeholders and services.

Furthermore, the diversity plan of SIAMU includes measures to raise the awareness of residents of Brussels with disabilities about the evacuation procedure when they attend public events.

Several measures supporting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the work of SIAMU have been taken:

- ▶ Continued engagement with persons with disabilities within the administrative and technical framework of SIAMU;
- ▶ Provision of accessible infrastructure for persons with disabilities (lifts, parking, sanitary facilities, door openings etc.);
- ▶ Providing employees with disabilities with various forms of reasonable accommodation;
- ▶ Ensuring good integration through awareness raising among staff members;

- ▶ Collaboration with the external support service for persons with disabilities (Diversicom) based on an annual agreement;
- ▶ Inclusion of diversity, gender and disability mainstreaming in different annual plans of the SIAMU departments and services.

#### AREA OF ACTIVITY

- ▶ Urgent medical aid (ambulance transport) and fight against fire

#### NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES EMPLOYED:

- ▶ 10 administrative staff and 4 firefighters

#### CONTACT

[be.brussels/siamu/a-propos-du-siamu](https://be.brussels/siamu/a-propos-du-siamu)



## ▶ **LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE**

For SIAMU, a key element is to already create a supportive environment during the recruitment process, through which staff members feel encouraged to share whether they have a disability, including invisible disabilities (e.g. mental health problems). Knowing the individual needs of new staff members and raising awareness of the Human Resources team facilitates the employment of this group.

Nevertheless, it is essential to continue making the built environment of SIAMU offices fully accessible. It is also necessary to better inform all staff members about the various recognition and assistance rules, especially for those who are not aware of being disabled, or who do not know that they would have access to recognition or assistance.





# BELGIUM

## ▶ THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DIVERSITY PLAN AT THE COMMUNE OF UCCLE (BELGIUM)

### ▶ DESCRIPTION OF THE PROMISING PRACTICE

**Following a regional ordinance, the Commune of Uccle was obliged to create a Diversity Plan in order to eliminate any discrimination within the administration. Since February 2017, public administrations in Belgium are also obliged to meet a 2.5% quota to hire employees with disabilities.**

As a first step, the Commune of Uccle undertook an internal awareness-raising action to sensitise all employees and prepare them to welcome colleagues with disabilities. As part of the European campaign “Duoday”, persons with disabilities began by taking part in a short internship programme (length between 1 and 20 days) to get a first impression of working in one of the departments of the Commune, together with a dedicated tutor.

There was strong collaboration between the Commune of Uccle and Phare (Regional body for persons with disabilities in Brussels) to identify which job profiles could be open for candidates with disabilities and which type of adjustments are needed. Through Phare and its members (e.g. Bataclan, InfoSound, Le Gué, Sisham), the Commune of Uccle can reach potential candidates much easier for specific job profiles and contract them for an

internship programme. Following the internship, candidates may be offered a 1-year Professional Adaptation Contract (CAP) which can be renewed for another year. The problem with CAP is that persons are not entitled to any paid leave, nor paid sick leave during the duration of their contracts.

Since the beginning of the programme, 2 people received a regular contract, upon completion of the internship programme and the 2-years of CAP. At the moment, 4 people are taking part in the internship programme and 8 employees with disabilities have a CAP contract. In the last 3 years, there has been significant change in the mentality among all employees of the Commune, now acknowledging colleagues with disabilities for their skills and contribution to the municipality. Persons with disabilities proved to be valuable team members and are enthusiastic about the job they carry out.

#### AREA OF ACTIVITY

▶ Public administration

#### NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES EMPLOYED:

▶ 18

#### CONTACT

<http://www.uccle.be/>

A constant dialogue between an appointed mentor and the employees was important to ensure smooth settling into their new positions. Nevertheless, it remains a challenge for the Commune of Uccle to find persons with disabilities for certain positions without positive discrimination, but with the provision of reasonable accommodation. There is no preferential treatment, or reserved places for persons with disabilities at the Commune, but the aim is to hire people, based on their training and skills, under the same rules applied to everyone else.



▲  
Sergio, hired under a fixed-term contract after his integration into the Mail service. @Commune of Uccle

## ▶ **LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE**

The integration pathway is quite long (at least two years) and there is no guarantee that everyone will be offered a regular contract. Since people are trained for specific job profiles, it is not easy to offer them a contract in another department, within the same municipal administration office. The Commune of Uccle would support the creation of a regional platform, bringing together candidates who completed their professional integration cycle to make them available for other administrations seeking for trained employees in those specific job profiles.



# ▶ ADJUSTING A PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICE FOR THE NEEDS OF AN EMPLOYEE WITH DISABILITY (FRANCE)

FRANCE

## ▶ DESCRIPTION OF THE PROMISING PRACTICE

**The Public Employment Service Office in Céret, a small town in Southern France employs a person with a physical disability, who previously worked for local unemployment services in different parts of France, since 2009. Throughout those years, she has built a successful career in public service.**

As an employment counsellor at the Public Employment Service, her job is to help unemployed people with registering in the French unemployment system and to inform them about the services of the agency. More specifically, she informs people about their file status, manages their demands, accelerates, and updates the compensation files of customers and she is also acting as the fraud referent of the office. She is managing the files of 350 unemployed people in the community.

In order to enable her to carry out the job, several reasonable accommodation measures were introduced in the Céret office. She met with an ergonomist, who planned carefully the most suitable office space for her (e.g. large desk fitted to her wheelchair). She also received financial support to make her car door opening system automatized and personalise the accelerator and

the brake, placed on her wheel. As the manager of the Employment Service described:

“ She worked really hard to prove to anyone, that persons with disabilities can do better work. She is very passionate about helping people getting a new job, a true fighter against unemployment.

The increased awareness within the Employment Service also led to improvements in the reception area to welcome clients with disabilities. For instance, computers are set at a lower height, so unemployed people with wheelchairs can also use them to search vocational training opportunities on the job centre's data basis.

### AREA OF ACTIVITY

▶ Public administration

### NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES EMPLOYED:

▶ 1

### CONTACT

[www.pole-emploi.fr/annuaire/votre-pole-emploi/ceret-66400](http://www.pole-emploi.fr/annuaire/votre-pole-emploi/ceret-66400)





## ▶ **LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE**

This example shows that persons with disabilities can also be employed in smaller administrations, or companies with less available resources. The Public Employment Service in Céret is convinced that such success stories should be widely shared, therefore they support their employee to go to awareness-raising events in schools and companies where meeting with employers can directly contribute to breaking stereotypes.

Colleagues at the Employment Service became also more open towards job seekers with disabilities as they saw themselves that disability is not an obstacle and someone can build a successful career. Up to now, the French Public Employment Service employed 4200 people across the country (9% of employees).






The HR team is engaged in implementing a comprehensive disability policy with a budget of € 3.1 million, with four main axes:

- ▶ An active network of regional focal points, in charge of disability to collaborate closely with the agents;
- ▶ An IT department dedicated to digital solutions and accessibility;
- ▶ Disability specific actions, such as reasonable accommodation at workplace, access to training etc.;
- ▶ Implementation of awareness-raising actions targeting managers and workers in different sectors.

The Public Employment Service in Céret will continue to work towards eliminating all forms of discrimination at the workplace for their staff, as well as their clients.



# B. EXAMPLES FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR

-  Inclusive Accessibility Catalogue at Shell Global/Shell Bulgaria EAD (Bulgaria)
-  Vocational rehabilitation as an HR service at E.ON Hungary Ltd. (Hungary)
-  Package of benefits for employees with disabilities at ING Bank Śląski S.A. (Poland)
-  Using design to support the employment of persons with intellectual disabilities at Restaurant Le Reflet Nantes (France)
-  Training and employing persons with disabilities in a web developer start-up Domino Dizajn d.o.o. (Croatia)
-  Involving persons with disabilities in all departments of "JSC SMILTANIS IR KO" paper factory (Lithuania)
-  Social entrepreneurship at Etincelle o.s. to fight stereotypes and pave the way to employment in the open labour market (Czech Republic)
-  Successful social enterprise to train persons with disabilities for the open labour market at Grupo SIFU (Spain)





# BULGARIA



## ▶ INCLUSIVE ACCESSIBILITY CATALOGUE AT SHELL GLOBAL/SHELL BULGARIA EAD (BULGARIA)\*

\* This promising practice was submitted by Shell Bulgaria, but it represents an initiative of Shell Global.

### ▶ DESCRIPTION OF THE PROMISING PRACTICE

**Shell's Global Workplace Accessibility (WPA) service enables employees to request physical adjustments in order to remove barriers at their workplace.**

The initiative was launched between 2016 and 2018 in 36 countries across Europe, Asia, and the Americas, covering around 50 000 staff members in 83 Shell locations. Shell Bulgaria introduced this service for their 70 employees recently. WPA was established through strong partnership and cross-sectoral collaboration between the IT, Real Estate, Health and HR departments.

A key feature in the service is a comprehensive Accessibility Catalogue of furniture, accessories, IT hardware and software, from which employees can directly order. The catalogue is user friendly and provides clear information on each available item. The main advantage of this catalogue is that it was designed in an inclusive way, thus employees do not need to prove their disability status. They can order directly from this catalogue, without the approval of their line managers, as

the items are financed from the central or site-level budgets. This shifted away from a medical towards a trust-based, person-centred approach regarding disability and individual needs in general. With this single point of entry, staff members can quickly resolve accessibility issues at the workplace.

An Accessibility Centre is also set-up to provide information and advice to all employees by senior HR advisors. They also play a key role during the hiring of new staff members, together with the disability focal points (designated in different Shell locations) to ensure that needs are adequately assessed and addressed by the time people take up their new role. Shell also finds it important to constantly communicate (e.g. through internal newsletters, staff meetings etc.) about this service and country organisations often remind and encourage employees to use it.

#### AREA OF ACTIVITY

▶ Energy (Downstream and Upstream)

#### NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES EMPLOYED:

▶ n.a

#### CONTACT

<https://www.shell.bg/>

To date, the WPA service received more than 1500 adjustment requests via the online platform and the Accessibility Centre (50% in Europe). Employees who already used the service provided positive feedback, such as a staff member in the Bulgarian office:

“ I was very happy with this service and the agent was able to offer a suitable product which arrived in a timely manner. The product has made a huge difference in my ability to work in a painless manner and I am grateful for the introduction of this service. I consider it as a great success.



## ▶ **LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE**

Shell is convinced that providing an accessible and inclusive working environment is the right thing to do and makes good business case. Employees appreciate a workplace without any barriers and their engagement will boost the performance of the whole company.

“ Shell is proud to be one of the first multinationals to develop a truly global process in addressing workplace adjustments for employees. It is important to highlight how our accessibility service aims to be all-inclusive, through a de-medicalised, trust-based process.

Shell is ready to share their model of the standard workplace accessibility service with other employers around the world.

**CAN I GET YOU ANYTHING?**

**YOU DON'T HAVE TO SEARCH FAR - EVERYTHING IS IN ONE PLACE**

- Visit the [HR Online Workplace Accessibility Page](#) if you need tools, services or equipment to make your workplace more accessible.
- Contact the [Accessibility Centre](#) for advice and support.

**WORKPLACE ACCESSIBILITY**  
EMPLOYERS & ABBEY NATIONALS

**ONE SINGLE SERVICE TO REQUEST WORKPLACE ADJUSTMENTS**

Visit the [HR Online Workplace Accessibility Page](#) to:

- Request workplace adjustments.
- Contact the accessibility centre for advice.

**LET US HELP YOU SET UP YOUR WORKPLACE**

**THAT'S WHY WE'VE LAUNCHED A NEW SERVICE FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE**

- Visit the [HR Online Workplace Accessibility Page](#) if you need tools, services or equipment to make your workplace more accessible.
- Contact the [Accessibility Centre](#) for advice and support.

**WORKPLACE ACCESSIBILITY**  
EMPLOYERS & ABBEY NATIONALS





# HUNGARY

## VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AS AN HR SERVICE AT E.ON HUNGARY LTD. (HUNGARY)

# E.ON HUNGARY LTD. (HUNGARY)

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROMISING PRACTICE

**E.ON Hungary takes an inclusive approach to recruitment, meaning that there are no dedicated positions, but all openings are available for persons with disabilities.**

The company is willing to provide reasonable accommodation for new employees. Since 2012, E.ON Hungary has been running a strategy to increase the number of employees with disabilities at the company, with two main focus areas:

1. Providing equal opportunities for persons with disabilities during the whole recruitment and selection process.
2. Providing occupational rehabilitation service for employees with disabilities run by the Human Resources Department.

E.ON Hungary maintains close collaboration with more than 20 advocacy and service provider NGOs, active in the disability field who helped with the evaluation of the recruitment process and gave concrete suggestions on how to eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities. Thanks to this collaboration, E.ON Hungary offers hearing loops, mentoring, sign-language interpreters, if necessary, for any candidates. The online recruitment platform is also regularly tested to ensure accessibility for persons with visual impairment.

The occupational rehabilitation service encompasses all aspects of vocational rehabilitation, including status

#### AREA OF ACTIVITY

▶ Power delivery

#### NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES EMPLOYED:

▶ 105

#### CONTACT

<https://www.eon.hu/>

measurement, personal recovery/rehabilitation plan, job-matching, workplace adjustment, team support and support for managers. As part of this service, psychological and social services can be consulted, if needed, and a personal budget (at a value of €850) is also available (e.g. for accessibility tools, external training fee, supplementary nutrition). Since 2012, in total 109 employees required rehabilitation support and most of them retained at the company (75%).

The main goal of the rehabilitation service is to support a colleague in keeping their current position, but if it is not possible, the HR Department always tries to find alternative job profiles.



## ▶ **LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE**

E.ON does not just hire persons with disabilities, but also takes responsibility towards employees who acquire disability, after being employed. This approach also helps the better integration of newly hired persons with disabilities. Furthermore, E.ON firmly believes in the value of supporting employees and their wellbeing. The company appreciates the important skills and capacities of staff members with disabilities who make an important contribution to the company.





POLAND

## ▶ PACKAGE OF BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES AT ING BANK ŚLĄSKI S.A. (POLAND)

### ▶ DESCRIPTION OF THE PROMISING PRACTICE

#### Sustainability and diversity are inherent to the business concept of ING Bank Śląski S.A.

The Polish branch of the multinational bank is currently implementing a new Sustainability Strategy 2019-2021, formulating their mission as:

“ The Bank for enterprising, the Bank of equal opportunities, the Bank of green investment projects and the Bank which is eco-aware.

ING is committed to promote diversity at work. They believe it helps the company to develop new ideas and solutions, which is key to success. As part of the bank's Diversity Strategy, since early 2019, concrete measures are in place to create an inclusive and barrier-free working environment and to make their banking services accessible for clients with disabilities. Prior to making the final decision on the type of support measures, the management consulted with employees with disabilities to understand what their needs are. Involving the voice of employees with disabilities in the whole process helped to offer support that meets their expectations. They offer a package of benefits and services for employees with

disabilities and to employees who raise a child with disabilities. The package includes:

- ▶ Monthly permanent allowances, financed from the in-house Social Benefits Fund for
  - a) employees with moderate or severe disabilities (114 employees benefitted so far);
  - b) employees raising children with disabilities (156 employees benefitted so far).
- ▶ Extra leave for
  - a) employees with a disability certificate are entitled to an additional 3 days of paid leave per year (8 employees used it so far);
  - b) employees raising children with disabilities are entitled to an additional 5 days paid leave per year (10 employees used it so far);
  - c) employees providing informal care to their spouses/partners/parents/parents-in-laws/grandparents with disabilities are entitled to an additional 2 days paid leave per year (62 employees benefitted so far).

#### AREA OF ACTIVITY

▶ Banking sector

#### NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES EMPLOYED:

▶ 143

#### CONTACT

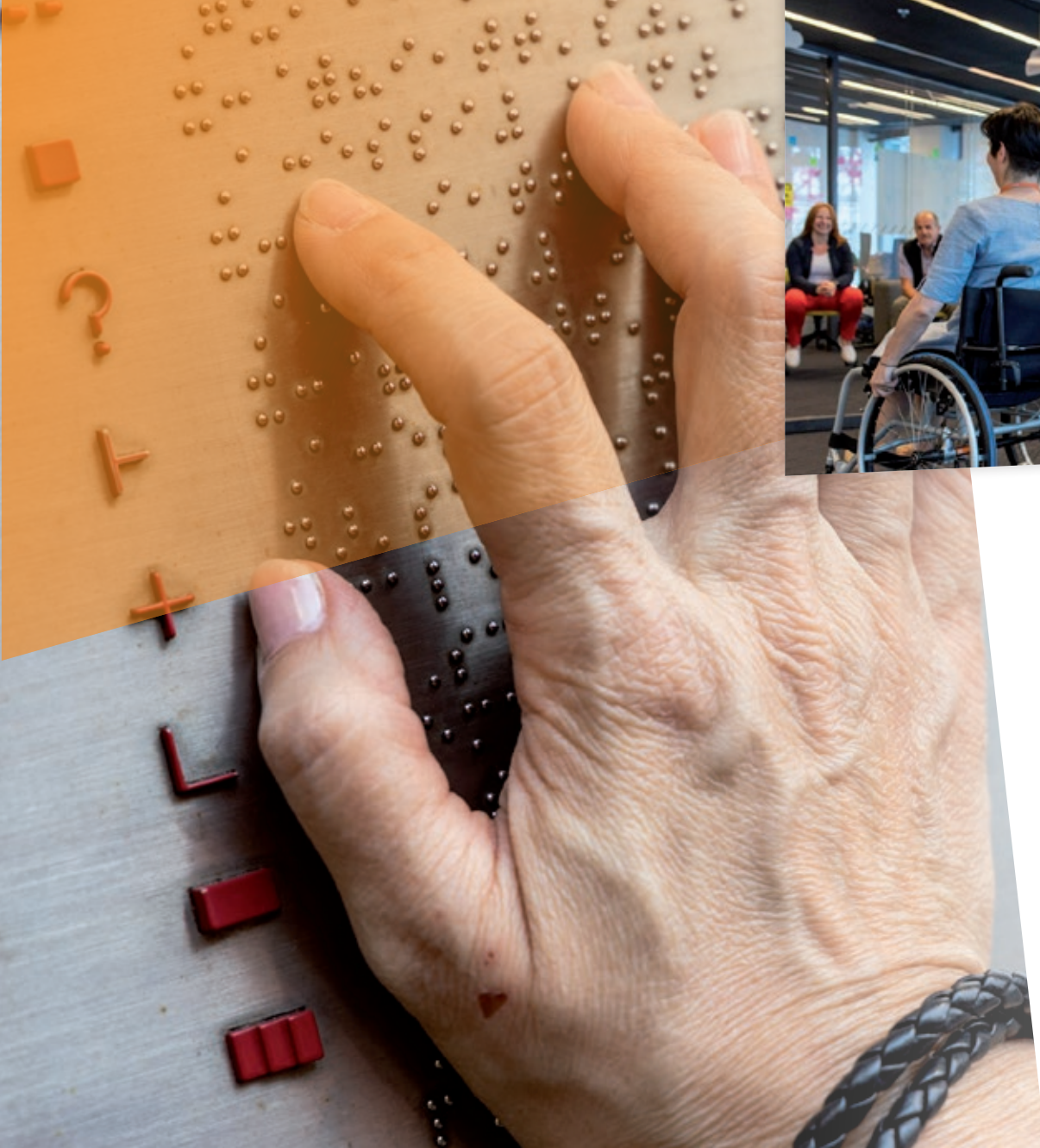
<https://www.ing.pl/>

ING Bank Śląski S.A. also established close collaboration with non-governmental organisations (Integration Foundation, Activation Foundation) that train and support persons with disabilities in job seeking and through the recruitment process. They published together guides and booklets to foster the successful application of candidates with disabilities in the banking sector.

In 2019, the company also launched an initiative to tackle discrimination and mobbing of employees, including a mandatory e-learning training for employees on how to recognise and act when they experience or witness inappropriate treatment or behaviour.

The support and commitment of members of the Management Board was crucial to implement these measures and to organise company-wide awareness-raising events, such as the Diversity and Inclusion week in 2019.





©ING Bank Śląski S.A.

## ▶ LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

An important factor in this project is that ING Bank Śląski S.A. built on the needs and recommendations of its employees with disabilities on how to further improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of the working environment. The company organises regular chats between employees and board members, where ideas can be raised and discussed in an open way.

Having adequate resources secured for the costs of reasonable accommodation is another asset. Providing reasonable accommodation also requires changes in the working regulation and flexibility from both the management and employees.





FRANCE

# ▶ USING DESIGN TO SUPPORT THE EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES AT RESTAURANT LE REFLET NANTES (FRANCE)

# NANTES (FRANCE)

## ▶ DESCRIPTION OF THE PROMISING PRACTICE

**Flore Lelièvre decided to open a restaurant where persons like her older brother with Down-syndrome could work, like everyone else. The aim was to create a place in the heart of Nantes, which by its architecture and design could create jobs and respond to the needs of persons with intellectual disabilities.**

Besides job creation, an important social goal was to break down stereotypes and promote the social inclusion of persons with disabilities in the wider public. After a year of fundraising, the Restaurant Le Reflet opened its doors, employing 7 persons with intellectual disabilities with permanent work contracts and an ordinary salary. The restaurant runs a traditional French kitchen, is open from Tuesday to Friday for lunch, and from Thursday to Saturday also for dinner. They offer a set menu of freshly produced meals, changing every 2-weeks.

The novelty of this project lies in the use of design solutions to enable persons with disabilities to carry out their jobs in the kitchen, but also as waiting staff. For instance, the order taking system has been adapted to staff with reading, writing or memory difficulties. Customers are provided with order cards, where they can simply stamp their choices of meals and drinks. Since the grip and palmar creases of

many persons with Down-syndrome differ from other people's, ergonomic plates were designed where a handprint is moulded under the plate. This gives more stability and assurance for waiting staff with Down-syndrome. Adapted placemats help staff members to visualise the place of cutleries. In the kitchen, a special workstation has been set up and many ergonomic tools and utensils are used to support employees. Furthermore, various visual aids and pictograms have been created for each employee to improve their skills and autonomy in the job.

The main difficulties during the project implementation derived from administrative burdens. Since the opening, Le Reflet has been featured more than 120 times in various media channels and the reviews of customers is excellent, both in terms of the food quality, as well as the atmosphere and overall experience. The restaurant received several awards too.

## ▶ LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

Le Reflet is proud to have developed a control system which could be used as a flagship tool for catering companies who would like to employ persons with intellectual disabilities or persons with memory difficulties. The success of the project lies in the multi-stakeholder collaboration with experts from different fields. The restaurant already expanded and opened a new location in central Paris.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>AREA OF ACTIVITY</b>                              | ▶ Gastronomy  |
| <b>NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES EMPLOYED:</b> | ▶ 7   |
| <b>CONTACT</b>                                       | <a href="https://www.restaurantlereflet.fr/en/">https://www.restaurantlereflet.fr/en/</a> |





CROATIA



# ▶ TRAINING AND EMPLOYING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN A WEB DEVELOPER START-UP DOMINO DIZAJN D.O.O. (CROATIA)

# DOMINO DIZAJN D.O.O. (CROATIA)

## ▶ DESCRIPTION OF THE PROMISING PRACTICE

**Domino Dizajn d.o.o. is small Croatian company specialised in design and IT.**

With the financial support of the Croatian Institute for Expert Evaluation, Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of People with Disabilities (ZOSI), they launched a project in 2018, to employ initially two persons with disabilities (1 deaf person and 1 person with a physical disability) for the development and marketisation of a web application.

The aim of Domino Dizajn is to create an independent company where persons with disabilities and people without disabilities work together, and the company has sufficient income to ensure its functioning and growth towards the planned direction.

They are convinced that:

“ Persons with disabilities are valuable and loyal, and a good resource for any business that has the smart mind to allocate them to jobs that they can fully carry out (or with some adjustment) and show their full potential there.

Before the project implementation started, Domino Dizajn acquired all necessary equipment, made adjustments to the workplace, recruited employees with disabilities, and provided them with a year-long training on IT.

Technology helped a lot to provide reasonable accommodation and also to power and operate the machines by computers, managed by staff.

The employees have integrated well in the team and the job had a positive impact on their lives and financial situation.

### AREA OF ACTIVITY

▶ Design and IT

### NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES EMPLOYED:

2

### CONTACT

<https://domino-dizajn.hr/>



## ▶ **LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE**

This project is considered successful, because it is designed to function in the open labour market and shows that it is also possible for small enterprises to recruit persons with disabilities.

Given the company's plans to further develop the implementation of high-tech projects, it is therefore important to recruit people who have the right technological skills.

By end 2020, the company will be able to employ another person with disability and have stable revenues and a realistic opportunity for growth and development.





# LITHUANIA



## ▶ INVOLVING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN ALL DEPARTMENTS OF JSC SMILTANIS IR KO PAPER FACTORY (LITHUANIA)

### ▶ DESCRIPTION OF THE PROMISING PRACTICE

**In 2008, after some positive experiences with workers with disabilities, the Lithuanian company “JSC SMILTANIS IR KO” decided to apply for a status of Social Enterprise under Lithuanian Law.**

The aim was to include more persons with disabilities in the work of the company, beyond production, also in the sales, marketing, and accounting departments. Currently, more than 50% of the total number of employees are persons with different types of disabilities, having full-time contracts.

The company provides tailor-made reasonable accommodation measures to all employees who need it. For instance, a personal assistance is supporting a staff member with Down-syndrome. About 10% of the employees are deaf people, which raised initially some challenges in communication. Supervisors participated in some training to learn the basic signs, so they can interact with their employees directly. Sign language interpreters are contracted to support during company-wide meetings, or company trips. Before hiring persons with physical

impairments, the entrances, bathrooms were made accessible and customised workspaces were created. Staff members with disabilities are fully integrated in the company and attend trainings and various social events, just like any other employees. A common challenge with employees with disabilities was that most of them worked a bit slower, so the company now plans with longer production time when they take on new orders.

The commitment of the General Manager was indispensable in creating an inclusive and supporting working environment for all. One of the positive outcomes of the project is that there is very low fluctuation among workforce as people feel appreciated and they like their job in the factory, which also pays them a decent wage.

#### AREA OF ACTIVITY

- ▶ Paper and office supply production

#### NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES EMPLOYED:

45

#### CONTACT

<https://www.smltart.com/>



## ▶ **LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE**

The promising practice of “JSC SMILTANIS IR KO” shows that employing persons with disabilities does not hinder the company’s success in any way, but rather can contribute to its growth.

Persons with disabilities can be committed and loyal workers and can be employed in different departments and roles, with the necessary support.





## CZECH REPUBLIC

# ▶ SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AT ETINCELLE O.S. TO FIGHT STEREOTYPES AND PAVE THE WAY TO EMPLOYMENT IN THE OPEN LABOUR MARKET (CZECH REPUBLIC)

### ▶ DESCRIPTION OF THE PROMISING PRACTICE

**Fifteen years ago, Etincelle started off as a vocational education and training centre. They soon realised that despite persons with disabilities successfully completed the training programmes, no employers wanted to hire them, due to persisting stereotypes in society.**

Therefore, Etincelle decided to become a social enterprise and directly create jobs for persons with disabilities in the gastronomy and cleaning sectors. The initial project was supported by the European Social Fund. By now, they are financially independent and run ten cafés, six cleaning groups and a farm, employing in total almost 150 persons with intellectual disabilities.

Nevertheless, building on these experiences, Etincelle is shifting its focus back again on supporting persons

with disabilities to find jobs in the open labour market. They offer cooperation to employers who have no experience in hiring persons with intellectual disabilities. Etincelle created a truly innovative, social franchise concept of their café “Mezi Řádky” that can be easily adopted and set up with employees with disabilities. A methodological programme accompanies this initiative targeting job assistants and trainers who are in direct contact with employees with disabilities (e.g. in the kitchen).

#### AREA OF ACTIVITY

▶ Gastronomy, cleaning services

#### NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES EMPLOYED:

148

#### CONTACT

<http://etincelle.cz/>

During the last fifteen years, 80% of the over 700 Etincelle employees were persons with disabilities, acquiring skills, job experience and financial independence. Many of them left the company to pursue a career in the open labour market.

“ We think it's crucial to take human potential seriously and help grow anyone who wants to. ”





## ▶ LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

In the beginning, Etincelle experienced plenty of distrust among customers towards visiting a café where freshly baked goods and meals are prepared by persons with disabilities. Therefore, they decided not to highlight the inclusive nature of the place but wanted customers to appreciate their products for what they are. This model seemed to work, with all their cafes operating in a successful way.

Etincelle is convinced that a strong, enforceable non-discrimination legislation is necessary to incentivise employers in the open labour market to hire persons with disabilities. Employers should receive support to be able to provide reasonable accommodation and make it work.





# SPAIN

## ▶ SUCCESSFUL SOCIAL ENTERPRISE TO TRAIN PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES FOR THE OPEN LABOUR MARKET AT GRUPO SIFU (SPAIN)

### ▶ DESCRIPTION OF THE PROMISING PRACTICE

**Grupo SIFU was founded in Barcelona in 1993 as an inclusive company, at a time when the Spanish labour market did not offer any opportunities to persons with disabilities. Over more than 20 years, the company has expanded its professional activity in more than 30 offices across Spain and set up its first international office in France in 2018.**

They employ about 4500 persons with disabilities in Spain, of which 35% are considered persons with high support needs. As a social enterprise, they offer facility services to companies who are outsourcing these tasks, including:

- ▶ Cleaning services
- ▶ Facility management
- ▶ Supplies & services
- ▶ Maintenance
- ▶ CSR consulting

In 2019-2020, Grupo SIFU launched an inclusive employment programme to foster the access of persons with disabilities to the open labour

market. In order to improve their employability in the open labour market, over 30 000 hours training were provided to more than 1300 people. In 2019, they helped over 100 employees in their transition to the open labour market.

Furthermore, the Grupo SIFU Foundation is a non-profit association, running awareness-raising and sensitivity trainings for companies in the open labour market to convince them of the advantages of hiring persons with disabilities.

In 2020, Grupo SIFU also won the business category of the 'Employment for All' Awards of the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities.

#### AREA OF ACTIVITY

- ▶ Facility services

#### NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES EMPLOYED:

- ▶ 4500

#### CONTACT

<https://www.gruposifu.com/>



## ▶ **LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE**

In Spain, anti-discrimination legislation imposes a 2% quota for companies to include persons with disabilities in their workforce and favour the services provided by socially inclusive enterprises, whenever possible. In case, a company cannot meet the 2% quota, it is possible to fulfil their obligations by contracting social enterprises that employ persons with disabilities for various services. However, in Spain 81% of private companies do not meet their legal obligations. According to Grupo SIFU, there are still persistent stereotypes and a lack of knowledge in society that present obstacles for persons with disabilities to find a job in the open labour market. Their mission is therefore to show through high-quality services that employing persons with disabilities can be a successful business model.

# C. EXAMPLE FROM CIVIL SOCIETY

- ▶ **“VALUEABLE NETWORK”**  
TO PROMOTE THE INCLUSION OF PERSONS  
WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN THE  
**HOSPITALITY SECTOR**

Valueable  
NETWORK

CIVIL SOCIETY

#### AREA OF ACTIVITY

▶ Hospitality sector (hotels, restaurants, cafes)

#### NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES EMPLOYED:

▶ 75

#### CONTACT

<https://www.valueablenetwork.eu/>



## ► DESCRIPTION OF THE PROMISING PRACTICE

**The “Valueable Network” is created within a project, co-funded by the European Commission, through the Erasmus+ Programme and was launched in December 2016. It covers 6 European countries: Italy, Spain, Portugal, Hungary, Germany and Turkey.**

The aim of the project is to enhance the Corporate Social Responsibility by promoting the labour market inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities through targeted placement in the hospitality sector.

There are already over 100 committed partner companies in the “Valueable Network” (hotels, restaurants, and cafes), offering internships, or paid employment in the open labour market to 226 persons with intellectual disabilities in total. 75 people have been employed with a temporary or permanent work contract. Since the beginning of the project, tutors support persons with intellectual disabilities in finding a new job, manage appointments, accompany candidates to the new workplace and to accomplish their

tasks and integrate in the team. A protocol for the collaboration with hotel chains and e-learning courses for Vocational Education and Trainings providers were also developed.

By now, the “Valuable – handing opportunities” is a trademark that partner companies in the network can use to reflect their commitment at three levels: Bronze, Silver and Golden. The Golden version is granted employers who recruit at least one worker with intellectual disabilities and act as ambassadors of the trademark. These placements in the open labour market supported persons with intellectual disabilities to become more independent at work, but also in their personal life, due to many new skills they developed and thanks to the income they make.

## ► LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

The increasing number of hotels, restaurants and other companies involved in the “Valuable Network” shows that the hospitality sector is committed to the labour market inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities and see them as reliable workforce, if provided with reasonable accommodation measures. The project contributed to a more supportive and effective working environment at the companies and raised awareness in the wider public. One of the challenges were that persons with disabilities often lack the necessary training or ambition to seek employment in the open labour market, due to long-lasting stigma and social exclusion. The project will need sustainable financing, in order to provide a stable, reliable perspective for persons with intellectual disabilities to find jobs in the hospitality sector.

# ▶ WHO CAN HELP YOU TO ENFORCE YOUR RIGHTS?

## ▶ CONTACTS FOR INFORMATION AND SUPPORT IN THE CASE OF DISCRIMINATION

### NATIONAL EQUALITY BODIES

Equality Bodies are public institutions fighting discrimination at the national level and mandated to promote, analyse, monitor and support equal treatment in the national context.

#### **BELGIUM**

- ▶ Belgian Institute for the Equality of Women and Men
- ▶ Unia (Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities)

#### **BULGARIA**

- ▶ Commission for Protection against Discrimination

#### **CZECH REPUBLIC**

- ▶ Public Defender of Rights

#### **DENMARK**

- ▶ Board of Equal Treatment
- ▶ Danish Institute for Human Rights

#### **GERMANY**

- ▶ Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency

#### **ESTONIA**

- ▶ Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner

#### **IRELAND**

- ▶ Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

#### **GREECE**

- ▶ Greek Ombudsman

#### **SPAIN**

- ▶ Council for the Elimination of Racial or Ethnic Discrimination
- ▶ Institute of Women and for Equal Opportunities

#### **FRANCE**

- ▶ Defender of Rights

#### **CROATIA**

- ▶ Office of the Ombudsman
- ▶ Ombudsperson for Gender Equality
- ▶ Ombudswoman for Persons with Disabilities

#### **ITALY**

- ▶ National Equality Councillor
- ▶ National Office against Racial Discrimination - UNAR

### **CYPRUS**

- ▶ Office of the Commissioner for Administration and the Protection Human Rights

### **LATVIA**

- ▶ Office of the Ombudsman

### **LITHUANIA**

- ▶ Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson

### **LUXEMBOURG**

- ▶ Centre for Equal Treatment

### **HUNGARY**

- ▶ Equal Treatment Authority
- ▶ Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights

### **MALTA**

- ▶ Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability - CRPD
- ▶ National Commission for the Promotion of Equality - NCPE

### **NETHERLANDS**

- ▶ Netherlands Institute for Human Rights

### **AUSTRIA**

- ▶ Austrian Disability Ombudsman
- ▶ Ombud for Equal Treatment

### **POLAND**

- ▶ Commissioner for Human Rights

### **PORTUGAL**

- ▶ Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality
- ▶ Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment
- ▶ High Commission for Migration

### **ROMANIA**

- ▶ National Council for Combating Discrimination

### **SLOVENIA**

- ▶ The Advocate of the Principle of Equality

### **SLOVAKIA**

- ▶ National Centre for Human Rights

### **FINLAND**

- ▶ Non-Discrimination Ombudsman
- ▶ Ombudsman for Equality

### **SWEDEN**

- ▶ Equality Ombudsman

# DIVERSITY CHARTERS

**By signing a diversity charter, an organisation commits to promoting diversity and equal opportunities for its staff.**

## **BELGIUM**

The Brussels-Capital Region diversity charter was launched in December 2005 and includes over 162 organisations. The charter is run by the Ministry for Employment and Economy, in collaboration with the Union of Enterprises in Brussels (UEB) and the Ministry of the Brussels-Capital Region.

## **BULGARIA**

Charter to be established in 2020.\*

## **CZECH REPUBLIC**

The [Czech diversity charter](#) was launched in November 2014 and has 21 signatories, including some of the biggest multinational organisations in the country.

## **DENMARK**

The [Danish diversity charter](#) was launched in 2011. The Association New Dane established the Danish Charter for Diversity with support from the Danish Ministry for Children, Gender Equality, Integration and Social Affairs.

## **GERMANY**

The [German Charta der Vielfalt](#) was launched in December 2006 and has more than 2,900 signatories. Similarly, to the French charter, it covers 9 fields of discrimination.

## **ESTONIA**

The [Estonian diversity charter](#), Eesti Mitmekesisuse Kokkulepewas, was launched in November 2012. It is run by the Estonian Human Rights Centre.

## **IRELAND**

The Diversity Charter Ireland was launched in October 2012 and is run by eleven organisations, representing the broader business community and including IBEC, the group that represents Irish business.

## **GREECE**

The [Greek Diversity Charter](#) was launched in May 2019 and is supported by the Greek General Secretariat for Gender Equality of the Ministry of Interior, by the Economic and Social Council of Greece, by the Federation of Municipalities in Greece and by Hellenic Federation of Enterprises. It has over 140 signatories.

## **SPAIN**

The [Spanish diversity charter](#), Fundación Diversidad – Charter de la Diversidad en España, was launched in March 2009 and is signed by more than 650 companies from both the public and private sector. The charter was launched at the initiative of the European Institute of Diversity Management and the Alares Foundation with the support of the Spanish Ministry of Equal Opportunities.

## **FRANCE**

The [French diversity charter](#) was launched in October 2004 and is hosted by Les Entreprises pour la Cité (previously IMS-Entreprendre pour la cite), an organisation working to promote corporate social responsibility. There are currently more than 3,200 signatories, mostly small and medium-sized businesses, but it also includes public institutions.

## **CROATIA**

The [Croatian Charter](#) was launched on 4 October 2017 in Zagreb, co-funded by the Justice Programme of the European Union. By the end of 2017, the charter had 38 signatories.



## ITALY

The [Italian Charter for Equal Opportunities and Equality at Work](#) was launched by the Ministry of Labour. The charter is supported by the Italian Minister of Labour and the Minister of Equal Opportunities and was launched by the National Counsellor for Equal Opportunities of the Ministry of Labour, Fondazione Sodalitas and a steering committee promoting the charter. About 895 private enterprises, including around 450 SMEs and 160 public authorities, with over 700,000 employees, have signed the charter.

## CYPRUS

Charter to be established in 2020.\*

## LATVIA

The [Diversity Charter Latvia](#) was launched in February 2019 by association Open Centre.

## LITHUANIA

The [Diversity Charter Lithuania](#) was launched in October 2018 by Diversity Development Group and SOPA and was signed by 25 companies.

## LUXEMBOURG

Launched in September 2012 by IMS Luxembourg (Institut pour le Mouvement Sociétal), the [Diversity Charter Lëtzebuerg](#) has gradually grown its signatories base to 188 in 2019, with both private and public actors.

\* [https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/tackling-discrimination/diversity-management/diversity-charters-eu-country\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/tackling-discrimination/diversity-management/diversity-charters-eu-country_en)



## HUNGARY

The [Hungarian diversity charter](#) was launched in October 2016 by the Hungarian Business Leaders forum (HBLF), in partnership with mtd Consulting, and supported by the Hungarian Ministry of National Economy.

## MALTA

Charter not yet established.

## NETHERLANDS

The [Dutch diversity charter](#), Charter Diversiteit, was launched in July 2015 initially with 22 employers from the public and private sector.

## AUSTRIA

The [Austrian Charta der Vielfalt](#) was launched in November 2010 and has over 230 signatories from private and public sectors. The charter is run by the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and the Vienna Economic Chamber.

## POLAND

The [Polish diversity charter](#), Karta Różnorodności, was launched in February 2012 and has over 270 signatories. The charter was launched by the Responsible Business Forum in collaboration with the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment and the Office of the Polish Human Rights Defender.

## PORTUGAL

The [Portuguese diversity charter](#), Carta Portuguesa para a Diversidade, was launched in March 2016.

## ROMANIA

The [Romanian Diversity Charter](#) was launched in April 2018 in Bucharest, with 80 signatories. It is one of the outcomes of a project I.D.E.A.S. (Innovation. Diversity. Economy. Awareness. Success.) The implementation of the Charter was co-funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union.

## SLOVENIA

The [Slovenian Diversity Charter](#) was launched in November 2017 and has over 60 signatories. The diversity charter of Slovenia is coordinated by Dobrovita Ltd. and one of the outcomes of a project I.D.E.A.S. (Innovation. Diversity. Economy. Awareness. Success.) The implementation of the charter was co-funded by the Justice Programme of the European Union.

## SLOVAKIA

The [Slovak diversity charter](#), Charta Diverzity, was launched in May 2017. It run by Pontis foundation (Nadacia Pontis), supported by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, and Family of the Slovak Republic.

## FINLAND

The [Diversity Charter Finland](#), Suomen monimuotoisuusverkosto, was launched in October 2012 and has 59 signatories. The charter is run by FIBS, the leading corporate responsibility network in Finland.

## SWEDEN

The [Diversity Charter Sweden](#) was launched in December 2010. Its signatories employ over 300 000 people.



## ▶ CONTACTS FOR INFORMATION AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

- ▶ **Equinet** <https://equineteurope.org>
- ▶ **European Ombudsman** <https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu>
- ▶ **European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)** <https://fra.europa.eu>
- ▶ **European Labour Authority** <https://www.ela.europa.eu>
- ▶ **European Employment Services (EURES)** <https://ec.europa.eu>
- ▶ **European Disability Forum (EDF)** <http://edf-feph.org>
- ▶ **European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD)** <https://www.easpd.eu>
- ▶ **European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA)** <https://osha.europa.eu>



# ▶ HOW CAN YOU CHALLENGE DISCRIMINATION AT WORK?

## ▶ WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU HAVE BEEN A VICTIM OF DISCRIMINATION?

- ▶ You should collect any evidence needed to support your claim, like letters, e-mails and other documents.
- ▶ You need to show that you were treated unequally and that it was because of your **sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or racial or ethnic origin**.
- ▶ It is then for the employer to prove that there has been no breach of the principle of equal treatment because his/her decision was based on other legitimate reasons.
- ▶ You can complain to the European Commission if you think legislation in your Member State is not compatible with EU law. However, the Commission **cannot intervene in individual cases**.
- ▶ You can contact your national equality body as it is able to negotiate between you and your employer. In some cases, it can also bring cases before the court (see above for the contact details of your National equality body).

## ▶ WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU LODGE A COMPLAINT BEFORE NATIONAL COURTS?

- ▶ You can pursue discrimination cases through criminal, civil or administrative proceedings, depending on Member State laws.
- ▶ A negotiated solution is sometimes possible between you and your employer via Member State mediation agents. This is usually quicker and less costly.
- ▶ After you present evidence of discrimination, employers facing complaints have to show there was no discrimination based on the prohibited grounds. **The EU non-discrimination Directives shift the burden of proof, making it easier for victims of discrimination to lodge complaints.**
- ▶ If the claim goes to court, legal aid and advice may be available from equality bodies, trade unions, NGOs or lawyers.
- ▶ If the national court needs guidance on the interpretation of the EU non-discrimination Directives, it may refer to the European Court of Justice preliminary questions.

▶ **WHAT HAPPENS  
IF YOUR COMPLAINT SUCCEEDS?**

- ▶ While EU law does not state what remedies are available, it says that effective, proportionate, and dissuasive penalties are needed.
- ▶ Depending on the national legislation, you may be entitled to compensation, reinstatement in a job, or an order requiring the employer to remedy the discrimination and provide reasonable accommodation.





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