



Desk Research & Best Practices Analysis

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

General info – EU Level:

The aim of this desk research was to identify the needs and obstacles that long-term unemployed persons with acquired disability face in their everyday life and in their quest to re-integrate back into the workforce. In the EU, long-term unemployment is defined as being unemployed for a period that exceeds 12 months. For the purpose of this research, partners of the New Horizons project provided information and data on their respective countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Spain, United Kingdom) in order to give an overall view of the current state in European partner countries and provide a solid background which will serve as a guide to the successful implementation of the New Horizons project.

The European Union promotes the active inclusion and participation of disabled people in society and has set eight (8) major objectives. The objectives of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 are pursued by actions in the following priority areas: Accessibility, Participation, Equality, Employment, Education and Training, Social Protection, Health and finally External Actions.

With regards to Employment, the main goal is to raise significantly the share of persons with disabilities working in the open labour market. Disabled persons represent one-sixth of the EU's overall working-age population, but their employment rate is comparatively low. The New Horizons project's main objective is to help persons with acquired disabilities to re-integrate back into the workforce in line with the agenda set by the EU.

Therefore, this report presents the key findings of each partner country on the issue of long-term unemployment due to acquired disability, which is the main topic of the New Horizons project.

The desk research has identified key organisations in each partner country that are directly involved with the New Horizons project target group (persons with acquired disability that have been out of the workforce for more than 12 months) with a short description of their scope of work and their contact information. These organisations will provide necessary information and assistance on assembling the project target group.

In addition, the desk research identified existing initiatives in each partner country that aim to support persons with disabilities, socio-economic benefits provided by each respective government and most importantly the needs and barriers that long-term unemployed persons with acquired disability face in their everyday life. Statistical data are also presented, but it must be emphasized that all partners stated that current statistics on disability are limited and not accurately represented.

Country Specific Highlight:

Some key figures on statistics that concern unemployed disabled people are highlighted below:

- In **Austria**, in 2014, 57.594 persons with health-related limitations were unemployed. This was 18,03% of all unemployed persons in Austria. 97.948 persons were registered with the status “benefited disabled” – 10.502 persons of them were registered as unemployed (ELIS, April 2015). Unemployment statistics of this period show, that the percentage of disabled people being unemployed is increasing – they show the highest growing rate with 27,7 %.
- In **Bulgaria**, there are 474,267 people with recognised permanent disabilities (as of 2011), whereas 98% of them are people of 16 years of age and more (465 228). The overall employment rate of people with disabilities is 22.5%, while the index for non-disabled people is 59.1%.
- In **Cyprus**, in 2007, it was reported that there was a total of 12,017 disabled people who were registered as unemployed; 5,209 were men and 6,808 were women. Information is provided about the types of job positions that are related to the unemployment of disabled men and women. In the same report of 2007, it

was noted that 4.3% of disabled people are employed in the protogenic sector (i.e. agriculture), 22.7% in the secondary sector (i.e. industry) and 73% in the tertiary sector (i.e. services).

- In **Greece**, the unemployment rate of people with disabilities ranging near 80%, while at the same time the average of the European Union is about 50%. The employment rate of people with disabilities (for both sexes) is 30% in Greece (2011 data). The employment rate of women with disabilities concludes to 23%.
- In **Ireland**, 40% of all disability in the country today is due to mental health difficulties. In 2017, Ireland is listed as having the fourth highest rate of unemployment on the OECD indicator.
- In **Spain**, long-term unemployment affected by more than 62% the total number of unemployed people with disabilities, while in the rest of the population, this situation accounted for 44.1%. EDAD estimated the number of people with disabilities residing in households at 3.85 million, representing 8.5% of the population living in family homes. The disability rates by age are higher in women than in men after 45 years. Below this age, the prevalence rates of disability among men outnumber those of women. In addition, the probability of having a disability increases with age.
- In the **United Kingdom**, Over 50% of working age people who are out of work are disabled (either unemployed or economically inactive). In March 2013, 20.8% of the working age population in the UK (8.3 million people) had a disability. The employment rate gap between disabled and nondisabled people has narrowed from 37.2% in 2006 to 32.8% in 2013.

In regards to the needs and barriers that disabled people face in their everyday life and in the labour market in general, below is a table summarising the main obstacles:

Austria	Employer Discrimination	Prejudice in society and labour market	Lack of information on public incentives	Lack of clarity and information on funding possibilities	Lack of professional qualifications
Bulgaria	Employer discrimination	Prejudice in society and labour market	Lack of educational-professional qualifications	Lack of information-resources-guidance-support	Social benefits hindering motivation
Cyprus	Employer Discrimination	Prejudice in Society/labour market	Lack of national data on disability	Inadequate access to buildings-transportation	Lack of services in rehabilitation-training-education
Greece	Employer Discrimination	Prejudice in society/labour market	Economic crisis/labor market deterioration	Lack of information on public services	Fear of losing disability pensions
Ireland	Employer Discrimination	Prejudice in society/labour market	Racism		
Spain	Employer discrimination	Prejudice in society/labour market	Lack of professional qualifications	Wage discrimination	Inadequate access to physical environments
UK	Employer Discrimination	Prejudice in society/labour market	Inadequate access to buildings-transportation	Lack of available data	Lack of guidance-support

Some Best Practices:

The report also outlines some of the best practices implemented in each partner country which provides a useful insight on what is already being done to assist persons with acquired disability to re-integrate back into the workforce. Some examples of good practices in partner countries are the First European Fair for Social Enterprises and Cooperatives of People with Disabilities organised by the National Federation of Employers of Disabled People in Bulgaria, where the main objective of the project is to promote an active social position of the members of specialised enterprises and cooperatives for people with disabilities, their achievements in employment in the process of integration in the social and public life of the country, through participation in an international event. It is an innovative model for strengthening specialised employment and work force development. It is a mechanism for social inclusion of people with disabilities and provides opportunities for sustainable employment to people with disabilities within the country through promoting their labour and creating new contacts and business partnerships. Another example of good practice is the Mobil Unit Incorpora introduced by the Spanish federation of disabled people (COCEMFE) which intends to overcome the facts of exclusion suffered by people who have some form of disability and who are living in rural areas, which makes it difficult for them to have access to resources and training. It is a van, with the conditions of accessibility and the necessary technological equipment (computers with printer, DVD and screen, internet connection, GPS, etc.), aimed at advising, sensitizing and informing companies about the employment of people with disabilities, resources and legislation of interest, as well as on accessibility, technical aids and adaptation of the job. The mobile unit moves through different rural populations, acting as a community resource.

In conclusion, this report has identified a considerable amount of research on long-term unemployed persons with acquired disability in European countries and has provided a thorough overview of the current state of affairs in regards to the New Horizons project.

The detailed research report can be found on the New Horizons website, under Resources. [\(LINK for downloading the Comprehensive Desk research report\)](#)