

Employment of persons with disabilities in the Czech Republic

a report from the DISCIT study

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The DISCIT project: Making persons with disabilities full citizens

- Making persons with **DIS**abilities full **CIT**izens



The DISCIT project: Making persons with disabilities full citizens

Project was inspired by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

We are exploring what it means for persons with disabilities to be **active citizens** and what policies and programmes can help.





We see Active Citizenship as including a mix of different characteristics:

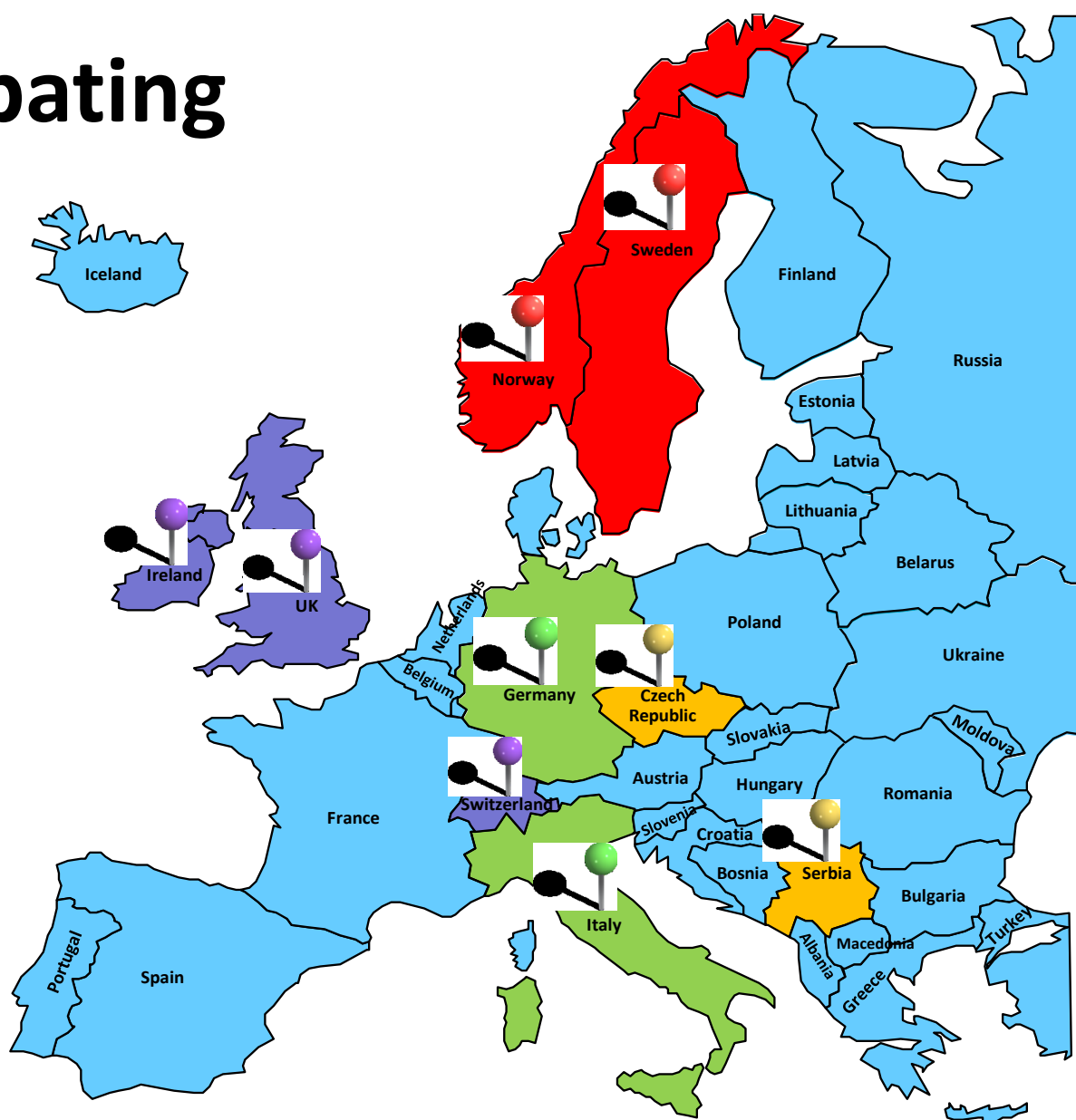
- Active citizenship grants rights but also imposes duties on all citizens, including persons with disabilities
- Active citizenship means having choice but also responsibility
- Active citizenship means being able to have influence on decisions of public and professional organisations

Labour market participation is one of the principal mechanisms through which Active Citizenship can be promoted and achieved.



DISCIT participating countries

-  UK, Ireland, Switzerland
-  Germany, Italy
-  Czech Republic, Serbia
-  Norway, Sweden



Exploring key conditions (facilitators and barriers) for PwD exercising specific dimensions of AC

- We have a number of 'work packages' exploring different aspects of active citizenship, including work, community living, social services, political participation
- **WHAT?** DISCIT work packages (WPs) apply understanding of Active Citizenship by exploring key conditions (facilitators and barriers) for persons with disabilities exercising specific dimensions of Active Citizenship and the options for changing these conditions within a multilevel policy context.
- **HOW?** To investigate change and inequalities, DISCIT undertakes a coordinated semi-structured life course interviews with 3 age cohorts of 4 target groups of persons with disabilities (born around 1950, around 1970 and around 1990)



What have we done so far?

- literature review
- Conducting life course interviews phase
- Process of transcription and analysis



What is next?

- Full analysis of the interview data from over 200 persons with disabilities
- New interviews with key stakeholders
- Objective: Clarify the strengths and weaknesses of existing approaches and the scope for policy exchange and learning across country-borders
- Publications: 'How to enhance Active Citizenship for persons with disabilities in Europe through AC domains'
- For more information, please visit: www.discit.eu



Employment of people with disabilities in the Czech Republic

*Disability Policy system and the implications of those for labour
market participation*

- Social regulation
- Social services
- Income maintenance



Definition of disability from the work law perspective in the Czech Republic

Definition differs according to the system in which a person with disability is seeking for help

- ***Sector of Education;*** in order to get special or inclusive education
- **Social service Sector;** in order to be qualified for social services, resp. get financial contribution to purchase social service
- **Labour market / work law perspective;** in order to have certain rights and protection on a labour market



The Employment Act of 2004 (434/2004)

- The most important national policy in the field of employment that secures the right for work to all people and secures implementation of certain protection instruments to groups of people considered as marginalised on the labour market
 - Persons with disabilities
 - Persons up to the age of 25
 - University school graduates for 2 years since they graduated up to the age of 30
 - Pregnant women and women on maternity leave
 - Persons (M, F) taking care of children up to the age of 15
 - Persons unemployed and actively looking for jobs for more than 6 months
 - Other Persons who need extra support (person returning from a prison, women 50years old and older)



Employment for persons with disabilities using a quota system

- the Employment Act requires public and private companies with more than 25 staff to employ PwD at a rate of 4% of the workforce. In addition to direct employment, they can indirectly employ disabled people by commissioning goods and services from organisations with more than 50% disabled workforce. Alternatively extra tax (fee) can be paid.
- What the research says? (Czech National Board of Persons with Disabilities Research, 2009)
- What is the reality?



Employment Services provided to persons with disabilities by labour offices

- **Counselling and support provided to individuals with disabilities**
 - in search for jobs on the open labour market
 - in searching for establishing their own business (with possible subsidy to start up a business)
- **Financial support to public and private companies that employ PwD**



Financial support to public and private companies that employ persons with disabilities

- “**non mandatory**” subsidy to companies that run sheltered workshops – definition: place (not necessarily a company but a unit where at least 60% of people with disabilities were employed (does not exist since 2013)
- “**non mandatory**” subsidy to support companies that allocate / design a work position for a person with disabilities (can be to start up a position/ adapt work environment, obtain necessary equipment or can also be a reimbursement on capital expenditures related to employment of PwD)
- “**non mandatory**” subsidy to support companies that run vocational rehabilitation programmes – occupational rehabilitation (paid work for PwD) that support PwD in getting such social and work skills that they need in getting a future job (subsidy covers expenditures on support staff wages)
- „**mandatory**“ subsidy to support companies that employ more than 50% of PwD (per organisation) (exact income per 1 employee with disability set by the government with decreasing tendencies over the years)
- Tax deduction for employers of PwD



Establishment of a minimum wage

- The Czech system has the institute of minimum wage. Until 2013 it was CZK 8,000 for all Czech citizens.
- Since 2013 the Czech government has increased it up to CZK 8,500 except those with disabilities (disability pensions of 1st, 2nd and 3Rd degree) for whom it stayed at CZK 8,000.
- Since 1/2015 the Czech government has increased it up to CZK 9,200 except for those with disabilities (disability pensions of 1st, 2nd and 3Rd degree) for whom it stayed at CZK 8,000.



Unemployment benefits

- PwD awarded by the I. and II. degree of disability pension are obliged to register as jobseekers with all the rights and duties that arise from such position
 - They qualify to get unemployment benefits
- PwD awarded by III. degree of disability pension are not obliged to register as job seekers and they do with different status (limited rights and duties that arise from such position)
 - They do not qualify to get any unemployment benefits



Summary - challenges

- State employment support is not provided systematically without clear strategies. Approach of Labour offices towards organisations that employ persons with disabilities is not unified and it varies from region to region.
- State support for employment services is not efficient for some disability groups (i.e. need for individual support, individual planning and case management).
- Challenges can be seen particularly in regard with implementing vocational rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities (relatively new instrument that has been legally claimed since 2004)



Summary – implementation of CRPD?

What works?

- Civil society has been re-established and started to flourish again (many international charities and EU and USA has helped).
- With an emphasis on personal responsibility and involvement in the community together with legal framework needed for that, many new initiatives and non for profit organisations were established. New services started to be an alternative to existing services.
- Establishing of new services opened „door“ and provided opportunities to persons with disabilities to participate in society (work opportunities and training included).
- Organisations of and for PwD associated on local, regional and national level lately entered European structures (EDF, ESPD, Inclusion Europe, etc.) and are becoming more and more important stakeholders to an academic sphere as well
- Ratification of CRPD (2009) though not the Optional Protocol. The notion Inclusion is slowly getting into a public awareness.



Summary – implementation of CRPD?

What does not work

- Many Public companies do not act as examples of good practice (i.e. do not employ any persons with disabilities)
- Public authorities do not understand the notion „right to work rehabilitation)“ as a „duty“, but as a „possibility“ that always depends on financial resources
- Minimum wage is not the same in the population of persons with disabilities as in population of persons without disabilities
- Unemployment benefits – some group of persons with disabilities (full disability pension) does not qualify for compensation in unemployment



Summary – implementation of CRPD?

What does not work II.

- Overall:
 - Unsystematic solutions and strategies in employing PwD – services provided rather intuitively and if mostly by motivated people engaged in the third sector influenced by their experience from abroad (UK, US, etc.).
 - Innovative solutions and strategy are slowly emerging , thanks to ESF, ERDF and other private funds (i.er. international companies for which the social responsibility image is something very important)



THANK YOU

Please visit the DISCIT website for more information and up to date news

www.discit.eu

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