

The employment situation of people with disabilities in the European Union

Employment & social affairs



European Commission

The employment situation of people with disabilities in the European Union

A study prepared by
EIM Business and Policy Research

Employment & social affairs

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A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet.
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Foreword

An increasing interest in disabled persons

There has been a marked increase in the interest of policy makers for social inclusion issues and re-integration policies for disabled persons. One of the important aspects relates to the labour market position of people with disabilities. Therefore DG Employment and Social Affairs, more in particular Unit E/4 'Social protection and social integration, Integration of people with disabilities' took the initiative to initiate and finance a *European Expert Group on Employment for Disabled People*.

Creating the Network

The Social Policy research unit Social Policy of EIM Business & Policy Research in the Netherlands was entrusted the task to bring together experts from all fifteen Member States to form a network.

A team of EIM co-ordinates the project, consisting of Wim Zwinkels (study manager), Micha van Lin (co-ordination and management) and Koos van Elk (contract manager). Dr. Rienk Prins of AStri in the Netherlands played an important role in the project as European Scientific Co-ordinator.

The backbone of the network consists of the fifteen national experts, one from each Member State. These experts represent research organisations, academic institutions and NGOs representing people with disabilities. All of them share expertise in labour market policies and reintegration issues. The annex Sources and Literature of this paper provides an overview of the network.

Activities of the Network

The main activities implemented in the period September 2000 - August 2001 are:

- development of a research outline;
- implementing an analytical annual study in close co-operation with all experts;
- answering ad-hoc questions formulated by the Commission creating a dedicated website;
- two Annual Meetings of the Network;
- organise an Annual Seminar in Brussels (held on 10 July 2001).

For more information on the work of the network please refer to the website: <http://www.employment-disability.net>.

This report

During the first year of existence the Expert Group has carried out several studies. The aim of these studies was to collect (statistical) information available on the labour market position of disabled persons in the European Union. The overview produced in the first year will be used as a basis for more analytical work in thematic reports in subsequent years.

This paper has been drafted for the conference of 10 July 2001 in Brussels and is mainly based on two sources:

- a working document *The employment situation of disabled persons in the EU*, which provides initial outcomes of a structured exploration of information collected by all national experts;

- a monograph *An Analysis of the Employment Status of the Disabled Persons Using The ECHP* by the Spanish expert in the network Prof. Miguel A. Malo in co-operation with his colleague Carlos García-Serrano.

Acknowledgements

The efforts made by all national experts to collect and present information on their countries and to contribute to the overall interpretation and analysis has been a valuable input to the research and is highly appreciated. Wim Zwinkels of EIM drafted this paper. In the process useful contributions have been made by Dr. Rienk Prins (AStri) and Marjolein Peters (EIM).

Finally EIM would like to express its gratitude for the grant received from the European Commission and the pleasant and professional co-operation with staff from unit E4, i.e. Mr. Brendan Sinnott, Mr. André Gubbels, Mrs. Michelle Pritchard and Mrs. Nina McArthur.

Koos van Elk
Contract

Manager

Executive Summary

The European Expert Group on Employment for Disabled People

There has been a marked increase in the interest of policy makers in social inclusion issues and reintegration policies for people with disabilities. One important aspect relates to the labour market position of people with disabilities. In particular the desire to prevent social exclusion on the one hand, as well as growing shortages in the labour market on the other, have combined to invigorate the emphasis in labour market policy on workplace adaptations and the activation and rehabilitation of non-working disabled people.

In this context, DG Employment and Social Affairs (Unit E/4 'Social protection and social integration, Integration of people with disabilities') initiated and financed a European Expert Group on Employment for Disabled People. The core of the network consists of fifteen national experts on labour market policy and reintegration issues. A team from EIM Business & Policy Research in the Netherlands supported by Dr. Rienk Prins from AStri co-ordinates all activities. Information on the network can be found at <http://www.employment-disability.net>.

The first year of existence the Expert Group was mainly used to collect available (statistical) information on the labour market position of disabled people in the European Union. After discussing a draft research outline, the group adopted a common approach to identify and present data and information on the situation in each of the Member States. The overview produced in the first year will be used as a basis for more analytical work in thematic reports in subsequent years.

Scope of the paper

This paper was drafted for the conference of 10 July 2001 in Brussels and is mainly based on a working document describing the employment situation of disabled people in the EU. The paper initial findings from a structured exploration of information collected by all national experts and a separate monograph analysing the employment status of disabled people (using data from the European Community Household Panel: ECHP).

This paper is based on a broad definition of disabled people, including those with an impairment from birth, those who are disabled as a result of work-related accidents and diseases, as well as those with non-work related accidents or diseases.

The sources used are mainly based on self-reported disability¹. Other definitions, e.g. those referring to disability benefit schemes, would be more less comparable, due to institutional differences between social security systems in the Member States. The study focuses on the labour market position of disabled people of working-age.

The type and degree of impairment are important factors when considering the labour market position of people with disabilities. Unfortunately, there is precious little informa-

¹ One of the evident drawbacks of using survey data on self-reported disability is that subjective elements are introduced in the definition. Respondents have to determine themselves how to assess terms like 'medical condition', 'daily activities' or severity of the impairment.

tion available on the labour market situation of different categories of disabled people. This study mainly seeks to describe the socio-demographic characteristics and the labour market position of disabled people in the European Union.

People with disabilities in the European Union

Obviously, any classification of disability is based on the notion of impairment. The WHO defines this as a 'loss or abnormality of body structure or of a physiological or psychological function'. This impairment can lead to limitation of activities, which in turn can lead to restrictions in participation in society.

The estimates of the number of people in the European Union directly affected by some form of disability vary from 8 to 14 %.

Surveying national studies, statistics and administrative data, experts identified a heterogeneous group of people with disabilities. The group consists of disabled people with congenital and acquired impairments, with different degrees of disability, mental and physical, permanent and temporary disabilities. Among them are those who are able to work and those who are not, those who are looking for work and those who are economically inactive, etc. Moreover, in most countries a significant proportion of people with disabilities report a combination of impairments.

However, analysing the data at this level of detail in a comparable fashion was not feasible at the present stage of the study. As a result, disabled people are presented in the first paper as a largely homogeneous group using the self-reported definition. In subsequent work of the network, a greater level of disaggregation may be adopted.

The ECHP contains questions on health, and the respondent's self-assessment of the extent to which their activities are limited by a health condition, is used to create a general disability measure¹. Using the 1996 ECHP, disabled people account for an estimated 14% of the total working-age population of the EU; this amounts to approximately 26 million people of working age.

The differences between countries are, however, substantial. The ECHP data suggest that Spain, Italy and Greece have relatively few people with disabilities (less than 10%). The highest disability rates are found in Finland (23%), followed by the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Portugal. According to national surveys, Austria, Belgium and Sweden also show high disability rates.

In the work of the expert group national sources were also considered, and differences between national sources and ECHP estimates proved to be substantial.

Disability and age

Disability is much more prevalent among older people: 63% of people with disabilities are older than 45. For non-disabled people the corresponding percentage is only 34%. So the disabled population is relatively old. This is particularly so in Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain.

¹ It is important to keep in mind that this definition does not coincide entirely with the definition provided by the World Health Organisation (WHO) nor with administrative definitions, which focus mainly on 'work-related disability'.

This pattern is mainly due to individuals' health condition deteriorating with age. Furthermore, many impairments leading to disability are acquired during a person's life. There may, in addition, be a 'generation factor', in so far as. Younger age groups experience better health and working conditions in their early working life and better health care and rehabilitation provisions, than their predecessors in older generations.

Disability and gender

National data show that in the majority of Member States differences in the incidence of disability by gender are rather small. In Denmark and the Netherlands there are however relatively many disabled women, whereas in France, Greece and Spain there are considerably higher numbers of men with disabilities.

ECHP-data show that the likelihood of being disabled (correcting for other characteristics) in the European Union as a whole is slightly higher for women than for men. One possible explanation is that this is related to the difference in work participation rates between men and women, however this could not be substantiated.

Disability and Education

The general pattern observed across the EU, is that disabled people have a relatively low educational level compared with non-disabled people. Countries with an extremely high share of disabled people with no educational qualifications beyond primary education level are France, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom. This phenomenon is partly due to an age effect (*i.e.* a higher proportion of disabled people are in older age groups, and older age groups are generally less highly qualified than younger people), but the lower than average qualification levels of disabled people persist even after correcting for age.

It is possible that the relationship between disability and educational level may be partly due to people with lower education levels entering jobs with a higher risk of becoming disabled. The correlation between disability and educational level might also be caused by the effect of disability on educational level: people with certain types of disability having fewer educational opportunities.

The labour market situation in the European Union

Becoming employed can be seen as a two step process: the decision to participate in the labour market and the process of getting a job. Therefore, it is interesting to study the differences in both participation rates¹ and unemployment rates² for disabled and non-disabled people:

- as many as 52% of people with disabilities are economically inactive compared with only 28% of non-disabled people;
- only 42% of people with disabilities are employed compared with almost 65% of non-disabled people.

¹ Participation rate = ((employed + unemployed) / working-age population)*100.

² Unemployment rate = (unemployed / (employed + unemployed))*100.

An important finding is that, at the EU level, people with disabilities who participate in the labour market are only slightly more likely to be unemployed than economically active non-disabled people (12% compared to 10%). However this modest difference at EU-level hides the serious problems that exist in individual countries. In most Member States the unemployment rates of disabled people are substantially higher, the major exceptions being Spain and Italy, and to a lesser extent Greece and Finland.

Disability has a negative effect on labour market participation and on unemployment. An important question is to what extent differences in socio-demographic characteristics such as age and education account for the relatively weak labour market position of people with disabilities. The paper shows that the probability of being in employment is lower for almost all age categories and for all educational levels. These effects reinforce each other: the labour market position of older people with disabilities is worse than the sum of the effects of being old and being disabled.

Disability affects the participation rate more than the unemployment rate. Consequently, the main labour market problem for people with disabilities their low participation rate, i.e. entry into the labour market (Step 1), rather than the unemployment rate, i.e. the problem of accessing a job (Step 2).

The low unemployment rate for people with disabilities may be partly explained by a 'discouraged worker effect': because chances of getting a job are perceived to be low, they do not enter the labour market at all. In this case, a lack of job opportunities might be reflected in low participation rates rather than in high unemployment rates. The situation is likely to be reinforced by institutional factors and disincentives related to benefit systems (benefit traps). In other words: relatively low unemployment rates among disabled people do not fully capture the extent of their labour market disadvantage.

Socio-demographic characteristics of disabled people in employment

Compared to other people with disabilities, working disabled people are younger, and more likely to be male and better educated. However compared with non-disabled people in work, the pattern is reversed: working disabled are older, and slightly more likely to be female and less well educated than non-disabled workers.

Data from several countries¹ show that employment rates vary greatly between types of disability. People with mental illnesses, learning disabilities or psychological impairments are less likely to be found in employment than are people with physical impairments.

Job characteristics

Differences in type of employment between disabled and non-disabled people, i.e. differences in employment status (employee or self-employed), sector of economic activity and firm size, are minor at EU or national level. Disabled people are more likely to work part-time than others, however, which is partly due to age and gender effects.

The hourly wage of disabled people is lower than that of non-disabled people Disabled people are over-represented in lower income bands and under-represented in higher income bands.

¹ Especially the United Kingdom, Portugal and Luxembourg.

Most of this wage difference can be explained by personal or job-related characteristics such as age, education or occupation, but an unexplained component remains, which might be attributed to discrimination (i.e. a disabled earns less than a non-disabled person with the same socio-demographic and job characteristics).

Dependence on benefits

Because disabled people with disabilities are somewhat more likely to be unemployed and considerably more likely to be inactive they are far more often in receipt of benefits than non-disabled people. Obviously - and this applies all member States – most disabled people are dependent on specific disability benefit schemes.

Across the EU as a whole, about 80% of disability benefit recipients are aged 45 years or older. Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom show higher proportions of recipients in younger age groups, however.

In five Member States (Austria, Denmark, Greece, Luxembourg and the Netherlands), women with disabilities are far less likely to be in receipt of disability benefits than men. Finland and Ireland are the only Member States in which women are over represented amongst disability benefit recipients.

Participation in active labour market programmes

Our Analysis shows that compared with the non-disabled working-age population, disabled people in these programmes are generally younger. The explanation of this is unclear, but it might, in part, reflect 'early intervention' strategies of Member States, i.e. taking action soon after someone becomes disabled.

Conclusions and recommendations

People with disabilities are in general older, less well educated and more likely to be female than those who are not disabled. All of these characteristics are associated with groups in a relatively unfavourable labour market position. This suggests that disabled people with disabilities are 'doubly disadvantaged' in the labour market, and that specific labour market policies for disabled people are required, irrespective of whether they are employed, unemployed or inactive.

Disabled people in employment work fewer hours per week, and receive lower wages than their non-disabled counterparts, and the evidence is consistent with widespread discrimination against disabled people in the labour market.

A particularly clear finding is that economic activity rates of disabled people are low, they participate - whether as employed or unemployed- less in the labour market than non-disabled people. It is, therefore, important to distinguish two steps in encouraging economically inactive disabled persons to work: labour market (re-)entry, and obtaining a job in the labour market.

The general objective set by the Lisbon European Council in the framework of the European Employment Strategy is to raise the employment rate from 61% to 70% by the year 2010, i.e. by 9 percentage points. By making strong assumptions such as that the unemployed disabled can all, potentially, become employed it can be estimated that the overall

employment rate in individual Member States may rise between 0.3 and 3.0 percentage points by reintegrating those people with disabilities who are capable of work, and who would like work. At EU-level an estimated 2 to 3.5 million persons with disabilities can potentially be reintegrated. This would imply a rise of 1 to 2 percentage points in the overall employment rate, so contributing at most 10-25% to the overall policy goal of 9 percentage points.

Obviously, many obstacles would need to be overcome in order to reintegrate this number of people with disabilities in the labour market. These include, for example: labour demand restrictions and employer attitudes, the cost of workplace adaptations, benefit traps (people with disabilities being financially better off on benefits), wages and number of working hours. Many disabled people are likely to be near the back of the queue, so if employment expands people with disabilities will have to compete with non-disabled unemployed people and may be one of the last groups to benefit from job growth.

Improving information

Valid and cross-nationally comparable information on the labour market position of people with disabilities is scarce. In most Member States more is known about the socio-demographic characteristics of disabled people than about their employment characteristics. A general concern is the fact that actually very little is known about people with disabilities who are in work: how do their career and wage levels develop?

Regarding the use of surveys, the first year's work of the Expert Group suggests several improvements:

- a common definition of disability across the European Union;
- improved coverage of certain categories of people with disabilities, such as people in institutions;
- the need to continue to pay attention to language and institutional differences among Member States hampering the creation of systematic data sets. Even if similar questions are used in European wide surveys, the interpretations of those questions may differ between countries, and some wording relating to disability may give rise to particular sensitivities in different states.

Research agenda

Various policy issues and questions emerge from the descriptive work done in the first year and the preliminary analysis carried out:

- How should inactive people with disabilities be returned to the labour market?
- How should unemployed people with disabilities be (re-) integrated into employment?
- How should disabled people with disabilities be retained in employment?
- How can job satisfaction and a high quality of employment be provided for disabled people?

In the second year of the expert group some of these issues will be taken up, for example the differences between Member States in the type of (Active) Labour Market policy used and the effect on the reintegration or activation of people with disabilities.

Résumé du rapport de recherche

Le Groupe d'experts européens sur l'Emploi des personnes handicapées

Les décideurs politiques ont montré un intérêt nettement accru en matière d'insertion sociale et de politiques d'insertion concernant les personnes handicapées. Un aspect important concerne la situation sur le marché de l'emploi des personnes handicapées. En particulier, le désir d'éviter l'exclusion sociale d'une part, ainsi que le manque de main-d'œuvre sur le marché du travail d'autre part, sont des facteurs qui ont incité à mettre davantage l'accent de la politique de l'emploi sur l'adaptation du milieu de travail et sur l'activation et la réinsertion des personnes handicapées sans emploi.

Dans ce contexte, la DG Emploi et Affaires Sociales (Unité E/4 Intégration des personnes handicapées) a mis sur pied et financé un Groupe d'experts européens sur l'emploi des personnes handicapées. L'essentiel du réseau se compose de 15 experts nationaux de la politique du marché de l'emploi et des questions de réinsertion. Une équipe de l'EIM Business & Policy Research aux Pays-Bas bénéficiant de l'appui du Dr Rienk Prins d'ASTri coordonne toutes les activités. Des informations sur le réseau sont disponibles sur <http://www.employment-disability.net>.

La première année d'existence du Groupe a été essentiellement consacrée au rassemblement des informations (statistiques) disponibles sur la situation du marché de l'emploi des personnes handicapées dans l'Union Européenne. Après discussion d'un projet cadre de recherches, le groupe a adopté une approche commune pour identifier et présenter des données et des informations sur la situation dans chacun des États Membres. L'étude qui en est résultée la première année servira de base à un travail plus analytique dans les rapports thématiques au cours des années suivantes.

Domaine couvert par le rapport

Le présent rapport a été établi en vue d'une conférence tenue le 10 juillet 2001 à Bruxelles et il est essentiellement basé sur un document de travail décrivant la situation de l'emploi des personnes handicapées dans l'UE. Les constatations initiales de ce rapport résultent de l'exploration structurée des renseignements recueillis par tous les experts nationaux et d'une monographie séparée analysant la situation de l'emploi des handicapés (à partir des données émanant du Panel communautaire européen des Ménages: PCEM).

Le présent rapport est basé sur une large définition des personnes handicapées, incluant celles ayant une déficience congénitale, celles qui deviennent handicapées du fait d'accidents ou de maladies professionnelles, ainsi que celles victimes d'accidents ou de maladies non liés à leur activité professionnelle.

Les sources utilisées sont principalement basées sur la déclaration de son handicap par la personne elle-même¹. D'autres définitions, par exemple celles se référant à des régi-

¹ L'un des inconvénients les plus évidents de l'utilisation des données d'enquêtes sur les handicaps déclarés par les intéressés eux-mêmes est que des éléments subjectifs sont introduits dans la définition. Les personnes interrogées doivent décider elles-mêmes comment évaluer des termes comme « état de santé », « activités quotidiennes » ou importance de la déficience.

mes de protection sociale des personnes handicapées, seraient plus ou moins comparables, du fait des différences institutionnelles entre les systèmes de sécurité sociale dans les États Membres. L'étude est centrée sur la situation du marché du travail des personnes handicapées en âge de travailler.

Le type et le degré de handicap sont des facteurs importants lorsque l'on étudie la situation sur le marché du travail des personnes handicapées. Malheureusement, il existe très peu d'informations sur la situation sur le marché du travail de diverses catégories de personnes handicapées. La présente étude vise surtout à décrire les caractéristiques socio-démographiques et la situation sur le marché du travail des personnes handicapées au sein de l'Union Européenne.

Les personnes handicapées dans l'Union Européenne

A l'évidence, toute classification de handicap est basée sur la notion de déficience. L'OMS la définit comme une "perte ou anomalie de structure corporelle ou d'une fonction physiologique ou psychologique). Cette déficience peut avoir pour conséquence une limitation d'activités, laquelle, à son tour, peut entraîner des restrictions de la participation à la vie sociale.

Les estimations du nombre de personnes dans l'Union Européenne directement touchées par une quelconque forme de handicap varient de 8 à 14 %.

En examinant les études, les statistiques et les données administratives nationales, les experts ont identifié les personnes handicapées comme formant un groupe hétérogène. Ce groupe inclut des personnes avec des déficiences congénitales et acquises, présentant différents degrés de handicap, mental et physique, permanent et temporaire. Parmi ces personnes se trouvent ceux qui sont capables de travailler et ceux qui ne le sont pas, ceux qui cherchent du travail et ceux qui sont économiquement inactifs, etc. En outre, dans la plupart des pays, une proportion significative de personnes handicapées présente une combinaison de plusieurs déficiences.

Toutefois, l'analyse de manière comparable des données à ce niveau de détail n'était pas réalisable dans l'état actuel de la recherche. De ce fait, les personnes handicapées sont présentées dans le premier rapport comme un groupe largement homogène en utilisant une définition basée sur l'auto-déclaration du handicap. Dans un travail ultérieur du réseau, une distinction plus affinée des diverses catégories pourra être effectuée.

Le PCEM comporte des questions sur la santé et l'auto-déclaration des personnes interrogées concernant la mesure dans laquelle leurs activités sont limitées par leur état de santé est utilisée pour établir une échelle générale des handicaps¹. D'après le PCEM 1996, les personnes handicapées représentent le nombre estimé de 14% du total de la population en âge de travailler dans l'UE ; ce pourcentage correspond à environ 26 millions de personnes en âge de travailler.

Les différences entre les États membres sont, toutefois, importantes. Les données du PCEM font apparaître que l'Espagne, l'Italie et la Grèce comptent relativement peu de personnes handicapées (moins de 10%). Les taux de handicap les plus élevés sont constatés en Finlande (23%), suivie du Royaume-Uni, des Pays-Bas et du Portugal. Se-

1 Il est important de se rappeler que cette définition ne coïncide pas entièrement avec la définition fournie par l'Organisation Mondiale de la Santé (OMS) ni avec les définitions administratives, qui sont surtout centrées sur « le handicap lié au travail ».

lon les enquêtes nationales, l'Autriche, la Belgique et la Suède révèlent aussi des taux élevés de personnes handicapées.

Lors du travail du Groupe spécialisé, les sources nationales ont aussi été prises en considération et les différences entre ces sources nationales et les estimations du PCEM se sont avérées importantes.

Handicap et âge

La fréquence du handicap est nettement supérieure chez les personnes âgées : 63% des personnes handicapées ont plus de 45 ans. Le pourcentage correspondant de personnes non-handicapées est de 34% seulement. La population handicapée est donc relativement âgée. Il en est ainsi en particulier en Allemagne, en Grèce, en Italie et en Espagne.

Ce schéma est essentiellement dû au fait que l'état de santé des individus se dégrade avec l'âge. En outre, de nombreuses déficiences aboutissant à un handicap sont acquises au cours de la vie de la personne. Un "facteur génération" peut, par ailleurs, jouer un rôle, dans la mesure où les groupes plus jeunes jouissent de meilleures conditions sanitaires et de travail au début de leur vie professionnelle et de dispositions plus favorables, en matière de soins de santé et de réadaptation, que les générations qui les ont précédés.

Handicap et sexe

Les données nationales montrent que dans la plupart des États Membres les différences de l'incidence du sexe sur le handicap sont assez faibles. Au Danemark et aux Pays-Bas, il se trouve un nombre assez grand de femmes handicapées, alors qu'en France, en Grèce et en Espagne le nombre d'hommes handicapés est beaucoup plus élevé.

Les données de PCEM font apparaître que l'éventualité de se trouver handicapé (en corrigeant d'autres caractéristiques) au sein de l'Union Européenne prise dans son ensemble est légèrement plus grande pour les femmes que pour les hommes. Une explication possible est que ce point est lié à la différence des taux de participation au travail entre les hommes et les femmes, mais ceci n'a pu être démontré.

Handicap et Niveau d'études

Le schéma général observé à travers l'UE est que les personnes handicapées ont un niveau d'études relativement bas par rapport aux personnes non handicapées. Les pays comptant un nombre très élevé de personnes handicapées n'ayant pas un niveau d'études dépassant l'enseignement primaire sont la France, l'Italie, l'Espagne et le Royaume-Uni. Ce phénomène est en partie dû aux effets de l'âge (c.-à-d. qu'une partie plus importante des personnes handicapées appartient à des groupes d'âges plus élevés, et les groupes d'âges plus élevés ont généralement des niveaux d'études moins élevés que les individus plus jeunes), mais les niveaux de qualification des personnes handicapées inférieurs à la moyenne persistent même après une correction par l'âge.

Il est possible que la relation entre handicap et niveau d'études soit en partie due au fait que les personnes dont le niveau d'études est bas prennent des emplois présentant un risque plus grand de leur causer un handicap. La corrélation entre handicap et niveau

d'études pourrait également résulter de l'influence du handicap sur le niveau d'études : des personnes présentant certains types de handicap ayant moins de possibilités de s'instruire.

La situation du marché du travail dans l'Union Européenne

Participer à l'emploi peut être envisagé comme un processus comportant deux étapes : la décision d'entrer dans le marché du travail et le processus d'obtention d'un emploi. Il est intéressant, en conséquence, d'étudier les différences à la fois dans les taux de participation¹ et les taux de chômage² pour les personnes handicapées et les non-handicapées:

52% au moins des personnes handicapées sont inactives économiquement, alors que 28% seulement des non-handicapées le sont ;

42% seulement des personnes handicapées ont un emploi, alors que pratiquement 65% des non-handicapées travaillent.

Une constatation importante, au niveau de l'EU, est que les personnes handicapées qui se trouvent dans le marché de l'emploi sont seulement un peu plus susceptibles d'être sans travail que des personnes non-handicapées actives économiquement (12% contre 10%). Toutefois, cette modeste différence au niveau de l'EU cache les graves problèmes qui existent dans des pays donnés. Dans la plupart des États Membres, le taux de chômage des personnes handicapées est nettement plus élevé, les principales exceptions étant l'Espagne et l'Italie et, dans une moindre mesure, la Grèce et la Finlande.

Le handicap a un effet négatif sur la participation au marché du travail et sur le chômage. Une question importante est celle de savoir dans quelle mesure les différences des caractéristiques socio-démographiques, comme l'âge et l'instruction rendent compte de la position relativement faible sur le marché du travail des personnes handicapées. Ce rapport montre que la probabilité d'être employé est plus faible pour presque toutes les classes d'âge et pour tous les niveaux d'études. Ces effets se confortent les uns les autres : la situation sur le marché du travail des personnes plus âgées ayant un handicap est pire que la somme des effets de l'âge et de l'existence d'un handicap.

Le handicap affecte le taux de participation plus que le taux du chômage. En conséquence, le principal problème relatif au marché du travail pour les personnes handicapées est leur faible taux de participation, c'est-à-dire d'entrée sur le marché du travail (Étape 1), plutôt que le taux de chômage, c'est-à-dire le problème d'obtention d'un emploi (Étape 2).

Le faible taux de chômage chez les personnes handicapées peut en partie s'expliquer par un "effet du travailleur découragé", car leurs chances d'obtenir un emploi étant perçues comme faibles, ils ne tentent plus du tout au marché du travail. Dans ce cas, un manque de possibilités d'emploi pourrait se refléter dans de faibles taux de participation plutôt que dans des taux élevés de chômage. La situation est susceptible d'être renforcée par des facteurs institutionnels et des effets dissuasifs liés aux systèmes de protection sociale (pièges de l'assistanat). En d'autres termes, des taux de chômage relativement bas chez les personnes handicapées ne donnent pas une image exacte de l'étendue de leur désavantage au plan du marché de l'emploi.

¹ Taux de participation = (employés + chômeurs) / population en âge de travailler)*100.

² Taux de chômage = (sans emploi / (employés + non-employés))*100.

Caractéristiques socio-démographiques des personnes handicapées face à l'emploi

En comparaison avec d'autres personnes handicapées, celles qui travaillent sont plus jeunes et plus probablement des hommes ayant un niveau supérieur d'études. Toutefois, par comparaison avec les personnes sans handicap qui travaillent, le schéma est inversé : les personnes handicapées qui travaillent sont plus âgées, la probabilité qu'il s'agisse de femmes est un peu plus grande et le niveau d'études moindre que chez les travailleurs non-handicapés .

Les données de plusieurs pays¹ montrent que les taux d'emploi varient grandement selon les types de handicaps. Les personnes ayant des maladies mentales, des difficultés d'apprentissage, ou des troubles psychologiques sont moins susceptibles d'être trouvées au travail que ne le sont les personnes ayant de handicaps physiques.

Caractéristiques des emplois

Des différences dans le type d'emploi entre les personnes handicapées et les non-handicapées, c'est-à-dire des différences dans le statut de l'emploi (employé ou travailleur indépendant), secteur d'activité économique et dimensions de l'entreprise, sont mineures au niveau de l'UE ou national. Les personnes handicapées sont plus susceptibles que les autres de travailler à temps partiel, ceci, toutefois, étant en partie dû aux effets de l'âge et du sexe.

Le salaire horaire des personnes handicapées est plus bas que celui des non-handicapées. Les personnes handicapées sont sur-représentées dans les fourchettes des bas salaires et sous-représentées dans les fourchettes des hauts salaires.

L'essentiel de cette différence des salaires peut s'expliquer par des caractéristiques personnelles ou liées au poste occupé, tels que l'âge, l'instruction ou le travail effectué, mais une composante demeure inexplicée, qui pourrait être attribuée à la discrimination (à savoir qu'un travailleur handicapé gagne moins qu'une personne non-handicapée présentant les mêmes caractéristiques socio-démographiques et de poste occupé).

Dépendance à l'égard des prestations sociales

Les personnes handicapées étant un peu plus susceptibles d'être sans emploi et beaucoup plus susceptibles d'être inactives, elles perçoivent beaucoup plus fréquemment des allocations que des personnes non-handicapées. Évidemment – et ceci vaut pour tous les États Membres – la plupart des personnes handicapées sont dépendantes des régimes d'assistance aux personnes handicapées.

A travers l'ensemble de l'UE, 80% environ des bénéficiaires d'allocations pour les personnes handicapées sont âgés de 45 ans ou plus. Toutefois, l'Irlande, l'Italie, le Luxembourg et le Royaume-Uni comptent des proportions plus importantes de bénéficiaires dans des classes d'âges plus jeunes.

Dans cinq États Membres (Autriche, Danemark, Grèce, Luxembourg et Pays-Bas), les femmes handicapées sont beaucoup moins susceptibles que les hommes de percevoir des allocations pour personnes handicapées. La Finlande et l'Irlande sont les seuls États

¹ En particulier au Royaume-Uni, au Portugal et au Luxembourg

Membres dans lesquels les femmes sont les plus nombreuses parmi les bénéficiaires d'allocations pour personnes handicapées.

Participation aux programmes de marché du travail actif

Notre analyse montre que comparés à la population en âge de travailler non-handicapée, les personnes handicapées sont, dans ces programmes, généralement plus jeunes. L'explication de ce point n'est pas claire, mais pourrait, en partie, refléter des stratégies d' "intervention précoce" des États Membres, c'est-à-dire l'adoption de mesures rapides dès après qu'une personne se trouve handicapée.

Conclusions et recommandations

Les personnes handicapées sont en général plus âgées, moins instruites et plus susceptibles d'être des femmes que celles qui ne sont pas handicapées. Toutes ces caractéristiques sont associées à des groupes en situation relativement défavorable sur le marché du travail. Ceci conduit à penser que les personnes handicapées présentant des déficiences sont 'doublement désavantagées' sur le marché de l'emploi et que des politiques spécifiques du marché de l'emploi pour les personnes handicapées sont nécessaires, indépendamment du fait qu'elles soient employées, au chômage ou inactives.

Les personnes handicapées qui ont un emploi travaillent moins d'heures par semaine et perçoivent des salaires plus bas que leurs collègues non-handicapés et cette évidence correspond à la discrimination largement répandue à l'égard des travailleurs handicapés sur le marché du travail.

Une constatation particulièrement claire est que les taux d'activité économique des personnes handicapées sont bas, elles participent moins – que ce soit comme employés ou comme chômeurs – au marché du travail que les personnes non-handicapées. Il est, en conséquence, important de distinguer deux étapes dans l'encouragement à travailler des personnes handicapées inactives économiquement : (re-)entrée dans le marché du travail et obtention d'un emploi dans le marché du travail

L'objectif général fixé par le Conseil Européen de Lisbonne dans le cadre de la Stratégie de l'Emploi Européenne est de faire passer le taux de l'emploi de 61% à 70% pour l'année 2010, soit 9 pour cent. En émettant des hypothèses sérieuses comme celle que les handicapés sans emploi puissent tous, potentiellement, trouver un emploi, on peut estimer que le taux global d'emploi dans les divers États Membres puisse s'élever de 0,3 et 3,0 pour cent en réinsérant les personnes avec des déficiences qui sont capables de travailler et qui souhaiteraient obtenir un emploi. Au niveau de l'UE, on estime entre 2 et 3,5 millions le nombre de personnes handicapées qui peuvent potentiellement être réinsérées. Ceci impliquerait une hausse de 1 à 2 pour cent du taux d'emploi global, contribuant ainsi au plus pour 10 à 25% à l'objectif de la politique globale qui prévoit 9 pour cent.

Évidemment, de nombreux obstacles devraient être surmontés pour réinsérer un tel nombre de personnes handicapées dans le marché du travail. Ils comprennent, par exemple des pénuries dans les offres d'emploi et le comportement des employeurs, le coût des adaptations des lieux de travail, les pièges de l'assistanat (des personnes handicapées qui sont mieux loties financièrement en vivant grâce à des allocations), les salaires et le nombre d'heures de travail. Lorsque l'offre d'emplois est en extension, étant donné que de nombreuses personnes handicapées se trouvent à l'extrémité de la queue

et se trouvent en concurrence avec des personnes non-handicapés au chômage , elles risquent d'être l'une des dernières catégories à bénéficier de cette croissance.

Amélioration de l'information

Les informations valides et comparables entre les pays sur la situation du marché du travail des personnes handicapées sont rares. Dans la plupart des États Membres on en sait plus sur les caractéristiques socio-démographiques des personnes handicapées que sur leurs caractéristiques au plan de l'emploi. Une préoccupation générale est le fait qu'actuellement on connaît peu de choses sur les personnes handicapées qui travaillent : comment se déroule leur carrière et comment les niveaux de salaires évoluent-ils ?

Concernant l'utilisation des études, le travail de la première année du Groupe spécialisé suggère diverses améliorations :

- une définition commune du handicap à travers l'Union Européenne ;
- une information améliorée sur certaines groupes de personnes handicapées, tels ceux qui se trouvent dans des institutions ;
- la nécessité de continuer à prêter attention aux différences de langue et institutionnelles entre les États Membres, différences qui font obstacle à la création d'ensembles de données systématiques. Même si des questions similaires sont utilisées dans les enquêtes au niveau de l'Europe, les interprétations de ces questions peuvent différer entre pays et certains libellés concernant les handicaps peuvent être ressentis de manière différente dans les divers pays.

Programme de recherche

Divers points et questions relatifs aux politiques ressortent du travail effectué au cours de la première année et de l'analyse préliminaire réalisée :

- Comment les personnes handicapées inactives doivent-elles être réinsérées dans le marché du travail ?
- Comment les personnes handicapées sans emplois doivent-elles être (ré-)intégrées dans un emploi ?
- Comment maintenir dans leur emploi les personnes handicapées ?
- Comment un emploi satisfaisant et de haute qualité peut-il être fourni aux personnes handicapées ?

Au cours de la seconde année d'activité du Groupe d'experts, certaines de ces questions seront abordées, comme par exemple les différences entre les États Membres dans le type de politique active d'emploi utilisée et son effet sur la réinsertion ou la mise en situation d'activité des personnes handicapées.

Resümee der Studie

Europäische Expertenkommission für Behindertenbeschäftigung

Die Politik beschäftigt sich bereits seit einiger Zeit verstärkt mit Fragen der sozialen Integration und Reintegration Behinderter. In diesem Kontext stellt die Arbeitsmarktsituation Behinderter einen zentralen Bereich dar. Insbesondere die Bemühungen zur Vermeidung sozialer Ausgrenzung sowie der zunehmende Mangel an Fachkräften auf dem Arbeitsmarkt haben zu einer Neuorientierung der Arbeitsmarktpolitik geführt, in deren Mittelpunkt nunmehr die Anpassung von Arbeitsplätzen an die Bedürfnisse Behinderter und die Wiedereingliederung dieses Personenkreises in das Erwerbsleben steht.

In diesem Zusammenhang hat das DG Beschäftigung und Soziales (Unit E/4 „Soziale Absicherung und Soziale Integration; Integration Behinderter“) eine Europäische Expertenkommission für Behindertenbeschäftigung ins Leben gerufen und finanziert. Der Kern dieses Netzwerks besteht aus 15 nationalen Experten auf den Gebieten der Arbeitsmarktpolitik und der sozialen Reintegration. Unterstützt von Dr. Rienk Prins (AStri) koordiniert ein am EIM Business & Policy Research ansässiges Team von Wissenschaftlern aus den Niederlanden alle Aktivitäten. Informationen zu diesem Netzwerk sind unter <http://www.employment-disability.net> erhältlich.

Das erste Jahr des Bestehens der Expertenkommission wurde überwiegend dazu genutzt, (statistische) Daten zur Arbeitsmarktsituation Behinderter in der Europäischen Union zu erheben. Nach der Erarbeitung eines konzeptionellen Rahmens hat die Expertenkommission zunächst einen einheitlichen Rahmen zur Identifikation und Präsentation von Daten und Informationen aus den einzelnen Mitgliedsstaaten entwickelt. Die im Laufe des ersten Jahres erstellte Übersicht wird als Grundlage der Arbeit an einzelnen Themenschwerpunkten in den kommenden Jahren dienen.

Reichweite der Studie

Die vorgelegte Studie wurde für eine Konferenz konzipiert, die am 10. Juli 2001 in Brüssel stattfand. Sie basiert überwiegend auf einem Arbeitsbericht, der die Beschäftigungssituation Behinderter in der EU dokumentiert. Die vorläufigen Ergebnisse basieren auf umfassenden Länderstudien der nationalen Experten sowie einer separaten Monographie, die die Beschäftigungssituation Behinderter mit Hilfe von Daten des „European Community Household Panel“ (ECHP) untersucht.

Die vorliegende Studie verwendet eine weitgefaste Definition des Begriffes „Behinderte“; diese umfasst sowohl Menschen mit angeborenen Behinderungen, als auch Menschen, die durch Arbeitsunfälle oder Krankheiten behindert wurden, sowie Menschen, deren Behinderung nicht auf Arbeitsunfälle oder Krankheiten zurückzuführen ist.

Das meiste Datenquellen verwenden Informationen von Betroffenen, die Auskunft über ihre Behinderungen geben¹. Andere Definitionen, z.B. solche, die auf den Bezug von Er-

¹ Ein offenkundiger Nachteil der Verwendung von Befragungsdaten ist der, dass diese lediglich die subjektive Einschätzungen der Schwere einer eventuell vorhandenen Behinderung erfassen. Zudem bleibt es den Befragten überlassen, die Bedeutung behinderungsbedingter Beeinträchtigungen des täglichen Lebens zu beurteilen.

werbsunfähigkeitsrenten abstellen, sind aufgrund institutioneller Unterschiede zwischen den jeweiligen sozialen Sicherungssystemen der Mitgliedsstaaten wenig hilfreich.

Die vorliegende Studie beleuchtet die Arbeitsmarktsituation Behinderter im erwerbsfähigen Alter. Insbesondere die Art und die Schwere einer Behinderung sind in diesem Zusammenhang von Bedeutung. Leider gibt es bislang aber nur wenige Informationen zur Arbeitsmarktsituation von Menschen mit verschiedenen Behinderungsarten. Das Ziel der vorliegenden Studie ist es deshalb, die Arbeitsmarktsituation von Behinderten mit unterschiedlichen soziodemographischen Merkmalen in den Ländern der Europäischen Union vergleichend zu analysieren.

Behinderte in der Europäischen Union

Es ist offensichtlich, dass jeder Versuch zur Klassifizierung von Behinderungen eine Definition des Begriffes der Invalidität voraussetzt. Die Weltgesundheitsorganisation (WHO) definiert Invalidität als „... a loss or abnormality of body structure or of a physiological or psychological function ...“ (Verlust oder Abnormalität einer physischen oder psychologischen Funktion). Jede Behinderung kann das individuelle Handlungsspektrum und damit letztlich auch die Teilhabemöglichkeiten an der Gesellschaft einschränken.

Schätzungen des Anteils der unmittelbar durch eine wie auch immer geartete Form der Behinderung betroffenen Menschen in der Europäischen Union reichen von 8 bis 14 Prozent.

Entsprechende Auswertungen nationaler Studien, Statistiken und Verwaltungsdaten machen deutlich, dass es sich bei der Gruppe der Behinderten um eine vergleichsweise heterogene Population handelt, die sich aus Menschen mit angeborenen und erworbenen Behinderungen, solchen mit verschiedenen Schweregraden der Behinderung, mit physischen und psychischen sowie mit permanenten und temporären Behinderungen zusammensetzt. Darunter befinden sich Menschen, die arbeiten können, und solche, die dazu nicht fähig sind sowie Menschen, die Arbeit suchen und solche, die wirtschaftlich inaktiv sind, usw. Darüber hinaus zeigt sich, dass ein erheblicher Teil der Betroffenen in der EU unter einer Kombination verschiedener Behinderungen leidet.

Da eine diesen Differenzierungen Rechnung tragende Studie aufgrund von Defiziten im verfügbaren Datenmaterial derzeit nicht möglich ist, wurde die Gruppe der Behinderten zunächst als eine überwiegend homogene Population betrachtet, wobei die Zuordnung zu der Gruppe der Betroffenen ausschließlich von der subjektiven Einschätzung des Gesundheitszustandes durch die Befragten abhängt. Zukünftige Studien des Netzwerks sollten der Heterogenität der Behindertenpopulation wo immer möglich Rechnung zu tragen versuchen.

Das ECHP enthält mehrere Fragen zum Gesundheitsstatus; als „behindert“ gelten alle Personen, die angeben, durch ihren Gesundheitszustand bei täglichen Verrichtungen beeinträchtigt zu sein¹. Die Daten des ECHP von 1996 zeigen, dass rund 14 Prozent der gesamten EU-Berufsbevölkerung in diesem Sinne als behindert zu gelten haben; dies entspricht einer Zahl von rund 26 Millionen Menschen im erwerbsfähigen Alter. Dabei fallen substantielle Unterschiede zwischen den Ländern auf: Den ECHP-Daten zufolge ist der Behindertenanteil in Spanien, Italien und Griechenland vergleichsweise gering (klei-

¹ Es muss betont werden, dass diese Definition weder identisch mit der Definition der Weltgesundheitsorganisation (WHO) ist, noch mit verwaltungstechnischen Definitionen, die sich mehrheitlich auf arbeitsbezogene Behinderungen beziehen.

ner als 10%). Den höchsten Anteilswert weist Finnland (23%) auf, gefolgt vom Vereinigten Königreich, den Niederlanden und Portugal. Nationale Studien ergaben ebenfalls hohe Behindertenanteile für Österreich, Belgien und Schweden.

Die Arbeit der Expertenkommission berücksichtigte auch nationale Quellen. Dabei ergaben sich mitunter erhebliche Unterschiede zwischen den jeweiligen nationalen Quellen und den ECHP-Schätzungen.

Behinderungen und Lebensalter

Behinderungen nehmen mit dem Lebensalter zu: 63 Prozent der Behinderten, aber nur 34 Prozent der Nichtbehinderten sind älter als 45 Jahre. Die Behinderten in der Bevölkerung sind somit relativ alt; ein Befund der insbesondere für Deutschland, Griechenland, Italien und Spanien gilt.

Das hohe Durchschnittsalter dürfte primär damit zu erklären sein, dass sich der Gesundheitszustand vieler Menschen im Laufe des Lebens sukzessive verschlechtert. Des Weiteren werden viele zur Invalidität führenden Behinderungen im Laufe des Lebens erworben. Zudem dürfte auch der Umstand eine Rolle spielen, dass die heute jüngeren Altersgruppen bessere Arbeitsbedingungen und eine umfassendere Gesundheitsfürsorge sowie umfangreichere und qualifiziertere Rehabilitationsmaßnahmen erfahren als die ältere Generation.

Behinderungen und Geschlecht

Nationale Daten legen den Schluss nahe, dass es hinsichtlich des Behinderungsrisikos in der Mehrheit der Mitgliedsstaaten allenfalls geringfügige geschlechtsspezifische Unterschiede gibt. Während der Anteil behinderter Frauen in Dänemark und den Niederlanden relativ hoch ist, weisen Frankreich, Griechenland und Spanien einen substantiell höheren Männeranteil unter den Behinderten auf.

Die Daten des ECHP machen deutlich, dass die Wahrscheinlichkeit einer Behinderung (unter Berücksichtigung anderer Charakteristika) in der gesamten Europäischen Union für Frauen geringfügig höher ist als für Männer. Obwohl wissenschaftlich nicht fundiert, könnte die unterschiedliche Erwerbsbeteiligung von Männern und Frauen ursächlich dafür sein.

Behinderungen und Bildung

In allen EU-Ländern weisen Behinderte im Vergleich mit Nichtbehinderten ein relativ niedriges Bildungsniveau auf. Länder mit einem sehr hohen Anteil Behinderter, deren Bildungs- und Qualifikationsniveau das der Grundschule nicht übersteigt, sind Frankreich, Italien, Spanien und das Vereinigte Königreich. Das geringe Bildungsniveau lässt sich nur teilweise mit dem höheren Lebensalter Behinderter erklären (Menschen höheren Alters sind im Durchschnitt weniger qualifiziert als Jüngere, und unter den Behinderten ist der Anteil Älterer vergleichsweise hoch); das vergleichsweise niedrige Qualifikationsniveau Behinderter bleibt auch bei Berücksichtigung des Lebensalters erhalten.

Eine Ursache für den Zusammenhang zwischen Bildungsniveau und Behinderung könnte darin bestehen, dass Menschen mit niedrigerem Bildungsniveau Arbeitsplätze einnehmen, die mit einem höheren Invaliditätsrisiko behaftet sind. Umgekehrt ist es aber auch denkbar, dass Behinderungen einen Einfluss auf die Bildungsbeteiligung haben, d.h. dass Menschen mit spezifischen Behinderungsarten nicht alle Bildungsmöglichkeiten in dem gleichen Maße offenstehen wie den Nichtbehinderten.

Die Arbeitsmarktsituation Behinderter in der Europäischen Union

Die Aufnahme einer Beschäftigung lässt sich als ein zweistufiger Prozess interpretieren, in dessen erster Phase das Individuum entscheidet, Arbeit anzubieten. Die zweite Phase schließlich ist die der Arbeitsplatzsuche und des Findens einer geeigneten Stelle. Vor diesem Hintergrund ist es sehr aufschlussreich, die Unterschiede in der Erwerbsbeteiligung¹ und der Arbeitslosigkeit² von Behinderten und Nichtbehinderten zu untersuchen:

- Rund 52 Prozent der Behinderten, aber nur 28 Prozent der Nichtbehinderten sind nicht erwerbstätig.
- Nur etwa 42 Prozent der Behinderten, aber beinahe 65% der Nichtbehinderten stehen im Berufsleben.

Überraschenderweise haben berufstätige Behinderte EU-weit eine nur geringfügig höhere Wahrscheinlichkeit als Nichtbehinderte, arbeitslos zu werden (12 gegenüber 10%). Diese auf den ersten Blick geringe Differenz überdeckt jedoch die gravierenden Probleme Behinderter in einzelnen Ländern. Mit Ausnahme von Spanien und Italien ist die Arbeitslosenquote Behinderter erheblich höher als die der Nichtbehinderten; in Griechenland und Finnland ist sie geringfügig niedriger.

Offenkundig hat eine Behinderung einen negativen Einfluss auf die Beteiligung am Erwerbsleben. Eine in diesem Zusammenhang zu klärende Frage ist die, ob und in welchem Umfang Unterschiede in den soziodemographischen Merkmalen, wie z.B. dem Lebensalter und dem Bildungsniveau, für die inferiore Arbeitsmarktsituation Behinderter verantwortlich sind. Die Studie macht deutlich, dass die Wahrscheinlichkeit, als behinderter Mensch im Erwerbsleben zu stehen, in nahezu allen Alters- und Bildungsgruppen erheblich geringer ist als bei Nichtbehinderten. Die Probleme verstärken sich zudem wechselseitig: Die Arbeitsmarktsituation älterer Behinderter ist schlechter als die Summe der Effekte eines höheren Lebensalters und einer bestehenden Behinderung.

Eine Behinderung wirkt sich stärker negativ auf die Erwerbsbeteiligung aus als auf die Arbeitslosenquote. Demzufolge stellt die niedrige Partizipationsquote das unter arbeitsmarktpolitischen Gesichtspunkten betrachtet größere Problem dar, d.h. der Zugang zum Arbeitsmarkt (Phase 1) ist offenbar schwieriger als der Verbleib auf dem Arbeitsmarkt (Phase 2).

Die niedrige Arbeitslosenquote Behinderter könnte Ausdruck individueller Resignation sein: Aufgrund der vermeintlichen Aussichtslosigkeit, eine Stelle zu finden, werden viele Behinderte möglicherweise gar nicht erst mit der Suche beginnen. In diesem Fall wird sich das Fehlen adäquater Beschäftigungsmöglichkeiten eher in einer niedrigen Erwerbsbeteiligung als in einer hohen Arbeitslosigkeit niederschlagen. Diese Situation wird möglicherweise durch institutionelle Faktoren, wie z.B. einer von den sozialen Sicherungssystemen ausgehenden Entmutigung zur Suche nach einer Beschäftigung (Erwerbsunfähigkeitsrentenfalle) verstärkt. Mit anderen Worten: Relativ niedrige Arbeitslosenquoten unter den Behinderten sagen nur bedingt etwas über den Umfang der Arbeitsmarktnachteile behinderter Menschen aus.

¹ Partizipationsrate = ((Berufstätige + Arbeitslose) / Bevölkerung im erwerbsfähigen Alter)*100.

² Arbeitslosenquote = (Arbeitslose / (Erwerbstätige + Arbeitslose))*100.

Soziodemographische Charakteristika berufstätiger Behinderter

Gemessen an den Behinderten insgesamt sind berufstätige Behinderte jünger; der Männeranteil und das Bildungsniveau sind höher. Bei einem Vergleich mit den erwerbstätigen Nichtbehinderten zeigen sich einige bemerkenswerte Unterschiede: arbeitende Behinderte sind älter, der Frauenanteil ist höher und das Bildungsniveau ist niedriger als in der Vergleichsgruppe.

Wie entsprechende Daten aus einigen Ländern¹ zeigen, hat die Art der Behinderung einen erheblichen Einfluss auf die Erwerbsbeteiligung: Menschen mit geistigen Behinderungen, Lernschwierigkeiten oder psychischen Erkrankungen haben eine geringe Wahrscheinlichkeit, erwerbstätig zu sein, als Menschen mit physischen Behinderungen.

Arbeitsplatzcharakteristika

Im Hinblick auf die Art der Beschäftigung (abhängige vs. selbständige Erwerbstätigkeit, Branchenzugehörigkeit und Unternehmensgröße) zeigen sich der Studie zufolge nur geringe Unterschiede zwischen Behinderten und Nichtbehinderten; dies gilt sowohl für die Ebene der EU insgesamt als auch für die der einzelnen Mitgliedsländer. Wohl aufgrund der Alters- und Geschlechtsstruktur ist in einzelnen Ländern der Anteil der Teilzeitbeschäftigten unter den Behinderten relativ hoch.

Die Stundenlöhne Behinderter sind niedriger als die der Nichtbehinderten. Behinderte Arbeitnehmer sind in den unteren Einkommensgruppen über- und in den oberen unterrepräsentiert. Obwohl der überwiegende Teil dieser Einkommensunterschiede mit persönlichen und jobbezogenen Merkmalen (wie z.B. Alter und Bildung) erklärt werden kann, verbleibt eine unerklärte Restkomponente, die sich als Ergebnis von Diskriminierung interpretieren lässt, d.h. Behinderte verdienen bei identischen soziodemographischen und Job-Charakteristika weniger als Nichtbehinderte.

Abhängigkeit von Erwerbsunfähigkeitsrenten

Die überwiegende Mehrheit der Behinderten in den Ländern der EU ist – wie bereits erwähnt – nicht erwerbstätig. Die meisten dieser Personen beziehen statt dessen eine Erwerbsunfähigkeitsrente.

Rund 80 Prozent dieser Rentenbezieher innerhalb der Europäischen Union sind 45 Jahre und älter. Insbesondere in Irland, Italien, Luxemburg und dem Vereinigten Königreich gibt es jedoch einen vergleichsweise hohen Anteil von Rentenbeziehern jüngeren Alters.

In fünf Mitgliedsländern (Österreich, Dänemark, Griechenland, Luxemburg und den Niederlanden) haben behinderte Frauen eine deutlich niedrigere Wahrscheinlichkeit als Männer, eine Erwerbsunfähigkeitsrente zu beziehen. Finnland und Irland sind die einzigen Mitgliedstaaten, in denen Frauen unter den Beziehern von Erwerbsunfähigkeitsrenten überrepräsentiert sind.

Aktive Teilnahme an Arbeitsmarktprogrammen

Unsere Analyse macht deutlich, dass die in arbeitsmarktpolitische Programme involvierten Behinderten im Durchschnitt deutlich jünger sind als die nichtbehinderten Erwerbstätigen. Auch wenn es bislang an einer plausiblen Begründung mangelt, könnte dies zumindest teilweise mit den von den Mitgliedsstaaten initiierten Frühinterventionsstrategien

¹ Insbesondere im Vereinigten Königreich, Portugal und Luxemburg.

zu erklären sein, d.h. staatliches Eingreifen erfolgt mittlerweile bereits kurz nach Eintreten einer Behinderung.

Schlussfolgerungen und Empfehlungen

Generell sind Behinderte älter als der Durchschnitt der Bevölkerung; sie weisen ein niedrigeres Bildungsniveau auf und der Frauenanteil ist höher als in der Gesamtbevölkerung. Der Umstand, dass alle diese Merkmale mit einer oftmals ungünstigen Arbeitsmarktsituation assoziiert werden, legt den Schluss nahe, dass behinderte Menschen als „doppelt benachteiligt“ zu gelten haben und dass aus diesem Grund eine spezifische Arbeitsmarktpolitik für Behinderte erforderlich ist.

Dies gilt um so mehr, als die erwerbstätigen Behinderten in vielen Mitgliedsländern kürzere Arbeitszeiten und geringere Entgelte aufweisen als ansonsten gleiche Nichtbehinderte, was auf eine gewisse Diskriminierung Behinderter auf dem Arbeitsmarkt hindeutet.

In diesem Kontext ist insbesondere auf die geringe Erwerbsbeteiligung Behinderter hinzuweisen, die zu beseitigen zwei verschiedene Strategien erforderlich macht: Zum einen gilt es, die (Re-)Integration in den Arbeitsmarkt zu fördern und zum anderen die individuellen Beschäftigungsverhältnisse zu stabilisieren.

Die generelle Zielsetzung der Vereinbarung von Lissabon im Rahmen der Europäischen Beschäftigungspolitik beinhaltet u.a. eine Anhebung der Erwerbsquote um 9 Prozentpunkte von derzeit 61 auf 70 Prozent bis zum Jahr 2010. Unter der restriktiven Annahme, dass alle arbeitslosen Behinderten auch tatsächlich eine Beschäftigung suchen und arbeiten können, ließe sich die Erwerbsquote in den einzelnen EU-Mitgliedsstaaten um schätzungsweise 0,3 bis 3 Prozentpunkte erhöhen.

Auf EU-Ebene könnten rund 2 bis 3,5 Millionen behinderte Menschen (re-)integriert werden, was einer Steigerung der allgemeinen Erwerbsquote um 1 bis 2 Prozentpunkte gleichkäme. Dies entspräche einem Beitrag von höchstens 10-25 Prozent zur gesamtpolitischen Zielsetzung einer Steigerung der Erwerbsquote um 9 Prozentpunkte.

Zweifelsohne müssen viele Barrieren überwunden werden, um eine so große Zahl behinderter Menschen in den Arbeitsmarkt integrieren zu können. Zu den Hindernissen gehören beispielsweise eine zu geringe Arbeitsnachfrage, Vorurteile seitens vieler potentieller Arbeitgeber, die Kosten von Arbeitsplatzanpassungen und die von Erwerbsunfähigkeitsrenten ausgehenden negativen Anreize (Behinderte sind durch Renten finanziell oftmals besser gestellt als durch eine abhängige Beschäftigung).

Viele Behinderte werden sich wahrscheinlich am Ende der „Arbeitskräfteschlange“ befinden: Bei einer Ausdehnung der Beschäftigung werden behinderte Menschen mit nichtbehinderten Arbeitslosen konkurrieren müssen. Insgesamt werden die Behinderten vermutlich als letzte von einer Zunahme der Arbeitsnachfrage profitieren.

Verbesserung der Informationslage

Statistisch gesicherte und länderübergreifend vergleichbare Informationen über die Arbeitsmarktsituation Behinderter gibt es nach wie vor nicht in dem erforderlichen Umfang. Für die meisten Mitgliedsstaaten liegen zwar umfangreiche Daten zu den soziodemographischen Charakteristika Behinderter vor, nicht aber zu deren Beschäftigungssituation. Das in diesem Kontext größte Defizit besteht demzufolge darin, dass eine Rekonstruktion der Erwerbskarrieren und Berufsverläufe Behinderter bislang nicht möglich ist.

Während des ersten Jahres ihrer Arbeit hat die Expertenkommission einige Vorschläge zur Verbesserung der Informationslage unterbreitet:

- Eine EU-einheitliche Definition des Begriffes „Behinderung“.
- Eine Beseitigung des Datendefizits über einzelne Gruppen von Behinderten, wie z.B. Menschen in Pflegeanstalten.
- Bei der Zusammenstellung international vergleichbarer Datensätze sind Unterschiede, die oftmals sprachlich und institutionell bedingt sind, zu berücksichtigen, weil im Rahmen EU-weiter Erhebungen selbst eine identische Fragestellung ansonsten keine einheitliche Beantwortung sicherzustellen vermag. Des weiteren kann die Verwendung einer spezifischen Terminologie in einzelnen Ländern auf größere Vorbehalte stoßen als in anderen.

Forschungsagenda

Als Ergebnis der überwiegend beschreibenden Arbeit der Expertenkommission im ersten Jahr ihres Bestehens ergeben sich verschiedene Fragestellungen, die politisch gleichermaßen relevant sein dürften:

- Auf welche Weise können (bislang) nicht erwerbstätige Menschen mit Behinderungen in den Arbeitsmarkt (re-)integriert werden?
- Auf welche Weise können Arbeitslose mit Behinderungen in (reguläre) Beschäftigungsverhältnisse (re-)integriert werden?
- Welche Maßnahmen und Instrumente sind im Hinblick auf die Erhaltung der Arbeitsplätze Behinderter besonders wirksam?
- Wie können die Arbeitszufriedenheit Behinderter und die „Qualität“ ihrer Arbeitsplätze sichergestellt werden?

Im Laufe des zweiten Jahres ihrer Arbeit wird sich die Expertenkommission der Beantwortung eines Teils dieser Fragen zuwenden. Dazu gehört u.a. eine systematische Analyse der in den einzelnen Mitgliedsstaaten praktizierten (aktiven) Arbeitsmarktpolitik, die ihrerseits einen entscheidenden Einfluss auf die (Re-)Integration Behinderter in das Erwerbsleben haben dürfte.

1 Introduction

1.1 An increasing interest in disabled people

There has been a marked increase in the interest of policy makers in disabled people. Various policy issues have prompted this interest. Future health policy requires better knowledge of the present health care situation to be able to judge the estimated needs and related services involved. In the social policy field serious concerns have arisen with regard to the costs of health insurance and in particular with regard to income replacement schemes such as disability pensions and disability benefits. In particular the desire to prevent social exclusion as well as growing shortages in the labour market have invigorated the efforts made within labour market policy regarding the adaptation of the work place and the activation and rehabilitation of non-working disabled people. Finally, disabled people are one of the target groups covered by anti-discrimination policies.

1.2 A network of European experts

These issues constituted the background for the creation of a European Expert Group on Employment for Disabled People by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs.

The current research paper makes use of the initial studies carried out by this network in its first year of existence.¹ The aim of these studies was to collect and analyse the information available on the labour market position of disabled people in the European Union. On the one hand, this yields an overview of the 'body of knowledge' on this issue. On the other hand, it should also provide both a starting point and a frame of reference for policy making. Finally, this exercise also lays the statistical foundation for future, more thematical issues on the research agenda.

1.3 Definitions and demarcation

This report uses data, analyses and studies, focussed on the employment of disabled people, provided by the network during its first year. It is based on a broad definition of disabled people. Our definition of the target group includes those who have an impairment from birth, are disabled as a result of work-related accidents and diseases, as also those who have had accidents or suffer from diseases not related to work.

This report mainly used sources based on subjective definitions, i.e. disability as reported by respondents in surveys (self-reported disability). In principle, the Expert Group agreed on this definition instead of a definition that is related to disability benefit schemes or other administrative sources, as the latter are 'biased' by national differences between social security systems and/or institutional differences. The only restriction that has been made concerns the age of the target population: the

¹ In particular M. van Lin, R. Prins and W. Zwinkels (2001), *The employment situation of disabled persons in the EU* (we will further refer to this as the Working Paper), M.A. Malo and C. Garcia-Serrano (2001), *An Analysis of the Employment Status of the Disabled Persons using the ECHP data*, and 15 national reports by members of the Expert Group. For these and other sources we refer to our website: <http://www.employment-disabled.net/>.

study focuses on the labour market position of disabled people of working-age (16–64 years of age). It should be noted that, depending on education and (early) retirement programmes, this category might include students and those who have taken early retirement.

The broad definition includes all disabled people, irrespective of the type and degree of their impairment, their activity limitations and their participation restrictions. These are important factors when considering the labour market position of disabled people. Unfortunately, there is precious little information available on the labour market situation for different categories of disabled people. As a consequence, the information on the labour market situation presented throughout the report refers to a rather heterogeneous group.

We use cross-sectional data only to provide a snap shot view of the disabled population. The study does not address dynamic aspects, e.g. the flow into or out of employment. Longitudinal data required for such analyses have not been collected.

1.4 Research questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

- What is the number of disabled persons in the European Union of working-age and do they differ from non-disabled persons with regard to socio-demographic characteristics? What explanations can be given for such differences?
- What is the labour market position of disabled persons of working-age and (why) does it differ from that of others in this age group?
- Does the situation of disabled persons in employment differ from that of non-disabled in employment?
- Does the situation of disabled persons differ from that of non-disabled persons with regard to dependency on benefit schemes and participation in active labour market programmes?
- Do the characteristics of disabled people dependent on (disability) benefits and/or who participate in active labour market programmes differ from characteristics of disabled people in general?

The study underlying this report uses various sources: national surveys, data from administrative sources, and international surveys, in particular the Eurostat ECHP – European Community Household Panel. A core source of information was provided by the third wave of ECHP, for which data collection took place in 1996.¹

1.5 Structure of the report

The structure of the report is as follows. In chapter 2, we give an overview of some socio-demographic and employment characteristics of disabled people in the European Union. In addition to an estimate of the number of disabled people we describe characteristics of the group and compare them with non-disabled people. In chapter 3, we analyse the labour market situation of disabled

¹ The data are used under the license contract ECHP/15/00 between Eurostat and the University of Alcalá.

people and their dependency on benefits and participation in active labour market programmes. Chapter 4 contains conclusions and recommendations on the employment situations of persons with disabilities that need further attention in employment policy and monitoring.

2 Disabled people in the European Union

2.1 Definitions and sources

The collection of comparable statistical information to build up a clear picture of the situation of disabled people within the labour market is particularly difficult. In part this is due to the fact that most Member States do not regularly carry out surveys on the employment situation of disabled people. Comparison of the situation at EU level is further complicated by the fact that each Member State has its own system for defining the disabled population.¹

This variation in sources and definitions has led to several estimates of the proportion of EU citizens that are disabled:

- The Director-General of the WHO estimated in a speech² on Interagency Consultation on Disability in 1999, that 7-10% of the global population has a disability, with social, educational and/or economic consequences. This would imply an estimate of between 17 and 24 million people in Europe in the age category 16 to 64.
- At any point in time, the number of people in the European Union directly affected by some form of disability is estimated at around 10% of the total population; this percentage also amounts to approximately 24 million people of working age.³
- In 1996, it was estimated that about 40 million persons in Europe had a disability. Of these, around 50% were of working-age. According to this source, there are thus an estimated 20 million people of working-age who have a disability.⁴

Obviously, these differences are the result, to a large extent, of differences in the definitions and data collection techniques used by various sources. Although the aim of the present study is not primarily to assess similarities and differences in definitions of disablement, a brief examination of the definitions used and their consequences is relevant.

A quick look at the relevant literature shows that there is no agreement on how the concept of disability should be defined.⁵ One basic principle is that disability has a medical cause and results in limitations in daily activities.

¹ See European Commission Staff Working Paper, SEC (1998) 1550.

² http://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/1999/english/19990615_interagency_consultation.html.

³ European Commission (2000b), page 4.

⁴ European Commission (1996), page 6.

⁵ At the moment a comparative analysis on 'Definitions of Disability in Europe' is carried out by Brunel University, London; see Brunel (2001).

However, as there are no databases containing the results of medical examinations on a sufficient number of individuals, we have to rely on surveys that use a definition of disability based on self-evaluation.

Fortunately, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has provided one common terminology by developing the International Classification of Impairments, Activities and Participation (ICIDH-2). Obviously, any classification of disability is based on the notion of impairment. The WHO defines this as a 'loss or abnormality of body structure or of a physiological or psychological function'. This (physical, psychological) impairment can lead to limitation of activities, which in turn can lead to restrictions in participation in society.

A survey that uses a definition of disabled based on this conceptual framework is the European Community Household Panel (ECHP). This survey contains questions on health, and the respondent's self-assessment on the limitation of activities is used to create a general disability measure. Two questions are used to determine whether someone is disabled or not (see box).

Defining disability in the ECHP

Q158: *Do you have any chronic physical or mental health problem, illness or disability?* If Yes → Q159

Q159: *Are you hampered in your daily activities by this chronic or mental health problem, illness or disability?*

Yes, severely / Yes, to some extent / No

Those who answer 'yes' (severely or to some extent) are defined as disabled persons.

It is important to keep in mind that this definition does not coincide entirely with the definition provided by the World Health Organisation (WHO) nor with administrative definitions, which focus mainly on 'work-related disability'.

As previously indicated, in this study we rely to a large extent on data based on self-reported disability. In addition, administrative data, which stem from social security statistics or from employment programme participation statistics, have been used. For some countries these data are used if self-reported data are not available. Obviously, all countries have to use administrative data to describe the characteristics of people relying on benefit schemes and active labour market programmes (ALMPs).

Administrative data use definitions based on participation in benefit schemes or in ALMPs. In this study we prefer the use of definitions on self-reported disability, if available, because this has some clear advantages:

- A definition based on benefit receipt or ALMPs implies in most cases that the person has worked or wants to work. Our definition includes both congenital and acquired impairments. The latter includes people who have an impairment as a consequence of work-related accidents and diseases, as well as accidents and diseases not related to work.
- There are numerous institutional differences between countries, especially with respect to the eligibility criteria they employ in their benefit schemes. Self-reported disability will provide a more common basis for comparing different countries, though there might be an effect that those who are receiving benefits or participating in an ALMP are more likely to state that they are disabled.

One of the evident drawbacks of using survey data on self-reported disability is that subjective elements are introduced in the definition. Respondents have to determine themselves how to assess terms like 'medical condition', 'daily activities' or severity of the impairment ('hampered').

Secondly, there are differences between definitions applied in various countries. An OECD study (Gudex and Lafortune, 2000) reviewed the operational definitions of disability used by national statistical authorities in various OECD countries. It was concluded that considerable differences exist in emphasis between medical conditions and impairments, limitations in specified activities and limitations to the respondent's own usual activities. Even if we used the same definition, translation into other languages would introduce differences. When comparing different countries, cultural differences also have to be taken into account.

The national experts selected survey data for their country that met the criteria specified in a common format, and administrative data were used when necessary. However, the categories of variables in the format are broad, definitions differ between countries and thus restrict comparability. In addition, information was retrieved from the ECHP. Such data are suitable to determine the effects of various characteristics on disability and participation at the European level, but its limited sample size¹, makes it less appropriate for estimating the number of disabled people in some individual countries.

As we are studying the employment situation we shall look at the working-age population, i.e. the total population aged 16-64, which include students and in some countries pensioners. It is important to keep in mind that we shall analyse the disabled people as a homogenous group using the self-reported definition. In fact, this group consists of various categories of disabled persons, namely disabled with congenital and acquired impairments, with different degrees of disability, mental and physical, permanent and temporary disabilities, those who are able to work or not, those looking for work or voluntarily inactive, and so on. Moreover, in most countries the majority of disabled people report a combination of impairments, which makes classifying them in a homogeneous category even more complicated.

2.2 Disability in the European Union

Based on the ECHP, about 14.3% of the EU population of working-age was reported to be disabled in 1996. For 14 Member States (excluding Sweden) this would amount to about 26 million people above 15 and under 65 years, who are to some extent or severely hampered in their daily activities by a chronic or mental health problem.

Disability prevalence rates by country are presented in table 2.1. This table combines both the estimates based on national surveys analysed by the Expert Group members, and the outcomes from ECHP-1996. According to both sources, the differences between countries are substantial. Spain, Italy and Greece have relatively few disabled: less than 10% based on ECHP. Some national sources also show percentages less than 10%. According to the ECHP, the highest disability rates are found in Finland (23%), followed by the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Portugal. But according to national surveys, Austria, Belgium and Sweden also show high disability rates.

¹ Another limitation is that Sweden is not included in the ECHP.

Austria, in particular, is an example of a country with substantial differences between ECHP and the national source rates. This seems to be caused by the broad definition in the national survey. However, most national sources report far lower levels of disability than the ECHP survey. This is especially the case for Denmark, Finland, Germany and France. Differences in definitions, target populations and data collection techniques are the main causes of these differences. Even when the difference is slight, definitions might differ, which is the case in the UK. Consequently, by using a uniform definition for all countries (despite variations in translations and interpretations), ECHP data show less dispersion than data based on national sources. We also should stress that the accuracy of the ECHP rates is not the same for all countries, because there are major differences in the sample size by country.

Table 2.1 Percentage of persons (aged 16-64 years) with self-reported disability according to national surveys and ECHP 1996 (EU-average 14.3, ECHP)

	A	B	DK	FIN	F	D	EL	IRL	I	L	NL	P	E	S	UK
Surveys	29.0	17.0	7.0	5.0	3.1	6.9	2.2		1.6	8.0	16.4		5.8	17.1	18.8
ECHP	12.5	12.9	17.4	22.9	15.3	17.3	8.2	10.9	7.8	16.5	18.6	18.4	9.9		18.8

Source: National surveys (various years) and ECHP (1996).

2.3 Who are the disabled?

2.3.1 Introduction

Before analysing the employment situation of the disabled, we will firstly examine some socio-demographic characteristics of the disabled. Differences and similarities between people with and without disabilities in the Member States are reviewed as to age, gender, educational level and household composition.

In addition, we shall discuss causal relationships between these characteristics and being disabled. This does not automatically follow from differences in characteristics between the disabled and non-disabled for two reasons: this causality may work two ways and certain socio-demographic characteristics may be interrelated. For example, age and education are interrelated, because older generations have a lower educational background. Micro data are necessary to separate effects. The ECHP-data have been used to estimate net-effects of socio-demographic characteristics on disability, correcting for effects of all other characteristics.

Table 2.2 gives a summarising overview of age, gender and educational level of the disabled and non-disabled in the European Union. These three characteristics, as well as household composition, are discussed in more detail in the following sections. Data for the European Union as a whole come from the ECHP survey. Comparisons between countries have been based on the standardised results from national surveys. In the sections below, only the more remarkable similarities and differences between countries are described.

Table 2.2 Demographic characteristics of disabled and non-disabled working-age population (%)

	Disabled	Non-disabled
Age (years)		
16-24	6.4	17.0
25-34	12.6	25.5
35-44	17.7	23.6
45-54	24.9	19.0
55-64	38.4	14.9
Gender		
Male	47.3	48.9
Female	52.7	51.1
Educational level		
Low	52.7	42.7
Medium	34.5	39.2
High	12.8	18.1

Source: ECHP, 1996.

2.3.2 Age

The clearest and most consistent relationship across countries is between age and disability. Higher age groups have a higher share of disabled. Or, in other words, the disabled population is old in comparison to the population in general. This is particularly so in Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain. Table 2.2 shows that 63.3% of the disabled are older than 45. For non-disabled the corresponding percentage is 33.9%.

Disability is much more prevalent among older people. This is mainly explained by the fact that the health condition of individuals generally deteriorates with age. Furthermore, impairments leading to disability are acquired during a person's life. As one ages these risks (work-related or not) accumulate.

There is also a 'generation factor'. Younger age groups in general meet with better health and working conditions in their early working life and better health care and rehabilitation provisions, than persons from older generations. This reduces the chance of members of the younger generation becoming disabled. On the other hand, it has been argued that the younger generation is more exposed to risks leading to mental disability.

2.3.3 Gender

The situation is far less obvious when we consider the relationship between gender and disability. National data show that in the majority of European countries the proportions of males and females amongst the disabled and the non-disabled show no significant differences. However, in the case of Denmark and the Netherlands there are fewer disabled males than females. And three countries, France, Greece and Spain, show considerably higher numbers of disabled males compared with the general population.

ECHP-data (see Malo and Garcia-Serrano (2001)) show that the chance of being disabled (correcting for other characteristics) for the European Union as a whole is slightly higher for women than for men.

A country-by-country analysis shows that this is the case for Denmark, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Luxembourg, Finland and Portugal. Austria is the only country where men have a higher chance of being disabled than women.

For those countries where gender differences could be noted, the explanations relate this fact to (differences in) work participation patterns, since accidents or diseases leading to disability are in many cases work-related. However, in all European countries men have a higher participation rate than women and still the difference in gender distribution is only minimal. Therefore, the difference in work participation rates between men and women only provides a partial explanation for the differences observed.

For those countries where disability is higher in females, also the combination of the burden of work and family life responsibilities may be a risk factor.

2.3.4 Educational level

There is a clear relationship between education and disability. The general pattern in all countries from which data were available is that the disabled on average have a lower educational level than the non-disabled. Countries with an extremely high share of disabled with primary education only, are France, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Part of the explanation is that it is actually an age effect. Older generations have less educational background. Given the correlation between a higher age and disability, there is also a correlation between a lower educational level and disability. However, an analysis of the ECHP-data shows that if we correct for age there is still a net effect from education on the probability of being disabled.

This resulting effect of education on disability can also be explained by the fact that people with lower education tend to have jobs with a higher risk of becoming disabled than people with higher education. However, a Danish study by Bengtsson (1997) among those who became disabled as adults, does not support this hypothesis. Thus, no clear association between education and disability was found, suggesting that the difference in the educational level might reflect the age structure.

Furthermore, the correlation between disability and educational level might also be caused by the effect of disability on educational level. For instance, people with certain types of disability (e.g. mental impairments, learning disabilities) have fewer educational opportunities and are likely to attain a lower average qualification level than non-disabled people.

2.3.5 Household composition

In national data sources, household composition has been defined in several ways. These include the number of persons in a household, marital status and the presence of dependent children.

The results of some national surveys show that the disabled more often tend to live alone, without dependent children and in households with a small number of persons. EU-wide ECHP-data confirm this view. Considering marital status, there does not seem to be a clear difference between disabled and non-disabled. ECHP-data show that disabled are more likely to be married. However, this is mainly the result of the strong correlation between age and marital status, and the influence of age on disability. When we correct for other characteristics (such as age), disabled are more often single and not having dependent children for most countries. The explanation for the relationship between mari-

tal status and being disabled is unclear. Conceivably, we have to reverse cause and effect: disability reduces a person's chances in the 'marriage market'.

2.4 Conclusions

According to ECHP-data from 1996, there are about 26 million persons with self-reported disability of working-age in the European Union (except Sweden). This means that some 14% of the working-age population feel that they are severely or to some extent hampered in their daily activities by health problems. Almost 40% of the disabled people of working-age are 55 years or older. This is a high share compared to the 15% of elderly people under the non-disabled. The share of females among the disabled slightly exceeds the share of males. If a relationship between gender and disability does exist, it indicates higher risks for women of becoming disabled. However, the results are not always consistent on this point. A clearer picture exists with respect to two other variables: education and household situation. Disabled people on average have a lower educational level and are more often single, without dependent children, compared to non-disabled Europeans of working-age.

3 The labour market position of disabled persons

3.1 Introduction

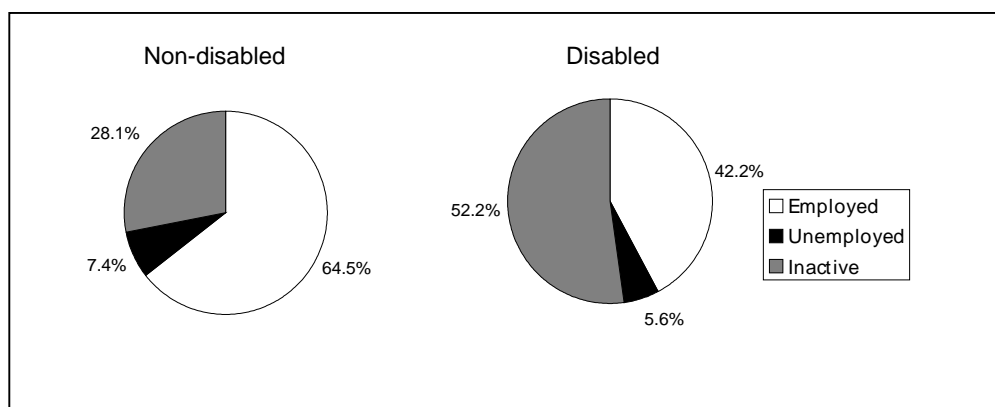
The previous chapter provided some insights into the socio-demographic characteristics of the disabled and the likelihood of being disabled. In this chapter, we present information concerning their labour market position while of working-age. With respect to the labour market status, we distinguish three groups: employed, unemployed and inactive.

We examine to what extent being disabled limits – directly or indirectly – people’s chances of having a job and of participating in the labour market in general in section 3.2. Section 3.3 focuses on disabled in work. In section 3.4, we describe definitions and data sources on benefit schemes and ALMPs. The focus is on participation in benefits schemes and ALMPs, respectively in sections 3.5 and 3.6. Finally, section 3.7 concludes.

3.2 The labour market situation of people with disabilities

As figure 3.1 shows, differences between the disabled and the non-disabled population are considerable.

Figure 3.1 Employment status of disabled and non-disabled working-age population



Source: ECHP, 1996.

Four out of ten disabled people in the European Union work. Another 5 percent is active in the labour market, although unemployed. Nonetheless, disabled are far more often inactive than non-disabled are.

Becoming employed can be seen as a process consisting of two steps: the process to choose to participate in the labour market and the process of getting a job. Therefore, it is interesting to compare both participation rates¹ and unemployment rates² for disabled and non-disabled. Approximately half

¹ Participation rate = ((employed + unemployed) / working-age population)*100.

² Unemployment rate = (unemployed / (employed + unemployed))*100.

of the disabled of working-age are inactive, compared to 28% of the non-disabled. Disabled who participate in the labour market are also slightly more likely to be unemployed than active non-disabled are (11.7% compared to 10.3%).

Table 3.1, presents this information for the individual Member States and shows that the participation rates of disabled are considerably lower than those of the non-disabled. It can also be seen that the unemployment rates of disabled are substantially higher in many countries, except in Italy, Greece, Finland and Spain. The modest difference at EU-level hides the serious problems that exist in individual countries.

Table 3.1 Participation and unemployment rates in disabled and non-disabled

	Disabled population		Non-disabled population		Ratios Dis./Non-dis.	
	Part. Rate	Unemp. Rate	Part. Rate	Unemp. Rate	Ratio part.	Ratio unemp.
A	49.9	6.8	75.0	4.2	0.67	1.62
B	38.6	14.9	66.6	11.4	0.58	1.30
D	57.6	10.7	78.4	5.4	0.73	1.99
DK	51.1	9.1	86.0	5.6	0.59	1.63
E	29.5	16.4	66.3	22.7	0.44	0.72
EL	32.7	10.0	65.7	11.0	0.50	0.91
F	53.0	14.1	73.1	10.7	0.72	1.33
FIN	52.3	16.6	76.5	17.3	0.68	0.96
I	29.6	11.4	58.7	14.3	0.50	0.79
IRL	32.9	18.3	67.9	10.6	0.48	1.72
L	44.0	11.5	66.0	2.6	0.67	4.50
NL	49.9	9.6	75.8	5.6	0.66	1.70
P	51.3	6.3	74.4	5.3	0.69	1.21
UK	46.4	11.2	82.6	7.1	0.56	1.58

Source: Malo and Garcia-Serrano (2001), based on ECHP, 1996.

However, as we have already seen in the previous chapter, the disabled population has a disproportionate share of older, female and lower educated people, usually groups with a poor labour market position. This means that the persons constituting the category of disabled – disregarding their disability – already have some labour market disadvantages, compared to the non-disabled.

Table 3.2 Distribution of activity status for demographic characteristics of disabled and non-disabled of working-age

	Working	Unemployed	Inactive
Disabled			
Age (years)			
16-24	41.1	13.1	46.1
25-34	57.8	9.0	32.9
35-44	60.5	7.6	31.8
45-54	51.4	6.0	42.4
55-64	22.8	2.1	75.3
Gender			
Male	49.5	6.2	44.3
Female	35.6	5.1	59.3
Educational level			
Low	30.9	5.8	63.6
Medium	52.3	5.9	41.5
High	61.4	3.9	34.0
Non-disabled			
Age (years)			
16-24	39.3	13.4	47.4
25-34	74.2	9.6	16.3
35-44	79.0	6.0	15.0
45-54	75.8	4.4	19.7
55-64	39.5	2.8	57.8
Gender			
Male	76.3	6.8	17.0
Female	53.2	8.0	38.7
Educational level			
Low	52.9	8.8	38.9
Medium	68.7	7.1	24.0
High	82.9	4.8	11.4

Source: ECHP, 1996.

The question is whether these differences in socio-demographic characteristics account for the relatively weak labour market position of disabled persons. To answer this question, the distribution of activity status for demographic characteristics of disabled and non-disabled of working-age is given in table 3.2. It can be seen that the probability of being in employment is lower for all age categories (except the category 15-24 years) and for all educational levels. It also becomes clear that in the higher age groups the difference between disabled and non-disabled is more pronounced. This means that the labour market position of older disabled is worse than the sum of the effects of being old and being disabled. This does not apply to this is not the case. The difference in employment rate between disabled and non-disabled is about the same for all age categories.

An analysis by Malo and Garcia-Serrano (2001) also shows that disability has a negative effect of its own on participation and on unemployment. After correction for other characteristics (incl. age and

education), the participation rate for disabled people is lower and the unemployment rate still higher than for the non-disabled.

From the same analysis it is interesting to note that disability affects the participation rate more than the unemployment rate. Consequently, the main labour market problem for disabled is entry into the labour force (their low participation rate), rather than the problem of accessing a job.

The high unemployment rate for disabled can be caused directly by the disability itself: an impairment may reduce the number of possible jobs for a disabled person, or lower his or her productivity. Another explanation may be discrimination.

The low participation rate can also be explained by these two factors. A 'discouraged worker effect' could also be responsible for the low level of participation of disabled in the labour market. The poor chance of getting a job may discourage the disabled from entering the labour market at all. However, there can also be institutional reasons for not entering the labour market, such as benefit traps.

3.3 Characteristics of disabled in employment

3.3.1 Socio-demographic characteristics

In this section, we shall describe the socio-demographic characteristics of disabled in employment. Firstly, we shall compare the characteristics of disabled in employment with the total disabled population. Secondly, we will compare the characteristics of disabled in employment with the characteristics of non-disabled in employment. Table 3.3 provides information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the relevant groups.

When we compare the distribution of socio-demographic characteristics of disabled in employment with the total disabled population, we obviously get an image similar to the probabilities that these socio-demographic groups of disabled are in employment as described in the previous paragraph. Working disabled are younger, more often male and better educated.

When we compare the working disabled with the working non-disabled, the image reflects the differences between socio-demographic characteristics of the entire population of disabled and non-disabled. Working disabled are older, slightly more often female and less-well educated.

Table 3.3 Demographic characteristics of disabled and non-disabled in employment and total population (%)

	Disabled		Non-disabled	
	Total	Working	Total	Working
Age (years)				
16-24	6.4	6.2	17.0	10.4
25-34	12.6	17.3	25.5	29.3
35-44	17.7	25.4	23.6	28.9
45-54	24.9	30.4	19.0	22.3
55-64	38.4	20.7	14.9	9.1
Gender				
Male	47.3	55.4	48.9	57.8
Female	52.7	44.6	51.1	42.2
Educational level				
Low	12.8	18.6	18.1	23.2
Medium	34.5	42.7	39.2	41.8
High	12.8	18.6	18.1	23.2

Source: ECHP, 1996.

Apart from socio-demographic characteristics, the type of disability itself results in differences. Though we do not have an EU-wide view, data from several countries¹ show that the employment rates vary greatly between types of disability. People with mental illnesses, learning disabilities or psychic impairments are less likely to be found in employment than people with physical impairments.

3.3.2 Job characteristics

Does the situation of disabled persons in employment differ from non-disabled in employment? Table 3.4 gives some answers.

¹ Especially United Kingdom, Portugal and Luxembourg.

Table 3.4 Job characteristics of disabled and non-disabled

	Disabled	Non-disabled
Type of employment		
Employee	85.6	86.5
Self-employed	14.4	13.5
Sector		
Private	68.6	71.8
Public	31.4	28.2
Industry		
Primary	5.7	4.0
Secondary	29.5	30.7
Tertiary	64.8	65.3
Firm size (employees)		
0-19	47.3	47.0
20-99	22.4	21.2
100-499	14.0	14.7
500+	16.3	17.1
Hours of work per week		
Less than 15	5.7	3.6
Between 15 and 30	14.5	10.6
More than 30	79.9	85.9

Source: ECHP, 1996.

The differences in type of employment, i.e. employee or self-employed, sector of economic activity and firm size are minor. In general, national data sources do not show a significant difference either.

Differences are more pronounced when we compare the number of hours worked per week and wages (not included in table 3.4). Disabled persons more often work part-time than the non-disabled. Whereas 86 percent of the non-disabled employed population work more than 30 hours, the corresponding percentage for disabled is 80%. However, we have to be careful when classifying this as an unfavourable labour market position for disabled. First of all, a Danish study by Bengtsson (1997) shows that when age and gender are taken into account the disability does not influence the number of weekly working hours.

Furthermore, it should be kept in mind that the disabled might prefer to work part-time or might not be able to work full-time because of their handicap. From a policy perspective, being employed in a part-time job will be preferred to not working at all.

The hourly wage of people with a disability is lower than that of people without disabilities. Looking at wage-quintiles based on ECHP, we can observe that the lowest income quintile contains 22.8% of the disabled versus 18.2% of the non-disabled. The highest income quintile contains 13.1% of the disabled and 21.3% of the non-disabled.

Part of this is explained by other characteristics. In particular the low educational level of disabled people has a downward effect on the wage. On the other hand, this may be compensated by the age distribution of disabled (older people tend to have higher wages). Two studies for the UK (Blackaby et al. (2000) and Kidd et al. (2001)) and a Danish study (Bengtsson (1997)) show that part of the wage

difference can be explained by personal characteristics, and by occupational differences, but they also show an unexplained component. This means that a disabled person with the same socio-demographic and job characteristics earns less than a non-disabled person. However, it is not clear whether this is a reflection of a lower productivity (caused by the impairment) or a result of some form of discrimination.

The arguments forwarded in the preceding paragraphs suggest that the difference in earnings is to a large extent caused by differences in age and gender. In other words, disability matters a lot in relation to the chance of entering employment, but apparently much less when it comes to the working conditions and job characteristics of the disabled who manage to get a job.

3.4 Benefit schemes and active labour market programmes: definitions and sources

As we have seen, the labour market situation of disabled people is less favourable than that of non-disabled. In the remainder of this chapter, we will examine the role of benefit schemes and active labour market programmes. Do disabled persons participate more, less or to the same degree as non-disabled persons in benefit schemes and active labour market programmes?

For data on participation in benefit schemes and ALMPs we have in most cases to rely on administrative sources. Most of the surveys we used earlier did not collect information on these issues. As has been noticed, different countries use different disability definitions for benefit schemes and ALMPS.

Disability benefit schemes mainly use the concept of disability in the light of former or all types of work (work incapacity). Someone qualifies for the receipt of a disability benefit if his or her health-related functional limitations are such that they considerably affect a person's ability to perform in a job or earn an income. Consequently, disability according to these schemes depends not only on an individual's health condition and capacities, but also on the characteristics of the job and – in many countries- also on the general labour market.

Furthermore, disability benefit schemes are systems for income replacement. For many schemes, beneficiaries need to have worked a certain period in order to qualify for a benefit. As every country has its own entitlement requirements for disability benefit schemes, the possibility to compare disability benefit programme statistics cross-nationally, is limited (Einerhand et al., 1995). Systems can differ with respect to:¹

- determination of disability, which can refer to the percentage loss of potential earnings (remaining earning capacity), percentage loss of score on an index of functioning, of medical impairment, or some other base;
- the minimum threshold, the percentage disability rating needed to qualify for a benefit;
- the cause of the disability, whether directly related to work (*'risque professionnel'*) or not (*'risque social'*);
- the extent of partial disability covered;

¹ For a complete overview of disability benefit schemes, the reader is referred to Missoc, the Mutual Information System on Social Protection in the Member States of the European Union.

- non-medical eligibility criteria (employment periods);
- the level (earnings related or flat rate) and duration of benefits.

Consequently, the category of disabled covered in social security statistics is greatly affected by the legal context of benefit schemes.

ALMPs for the disabled also have different definitions for eligibility. Definitions of disability differ not only between countries, but also between the numerous different ALMPs within one country. There are several categories of ALMPs, each with particular features, target groups, criteria, etc. Ecotec (2000) distinguishes programmes aiming at or providing:

- anti-discrimination / equal opportunities (incl. quota systems),
- prevention / retention measures,
- job subsidies,
- rehabilitation – initial training / rehabilitation – return to work,
- sheltered employment,
- adaptation of work and the workplace,
- entrepreneurship measures.

Furthermore, each country has its mainstream employment policies, which do not specifically target the disabled but in which the disabled may also participate.

3.5 Participation in benefit schemes

Dependency on benefits

The fact that disabled persons are somewhat more often unemployed and considerably more often inactive is reflected in the use they make of social security schemes. Table 3.5 gives an impression of the distribution over benefit types of disabled and non-disabled, based on self-reported disability. This information is available for three countries: Denmark, Spain and the Netherlands.

Table 3.5 Dependency on benefits of self-reported disabled and non-disabled persons of working-age for three countries (percentages)

Member		Social				
State	Status	Disability	Unemployment	assistance	Other	No benefit
DK	disabled	34.8	11.1	5.5	14.0	34.7
	non-dis.	2.4	13.2	2.9	8.7	73.0
E	disabled	61.8	0.5	n.a.	6.7	30.9
	non-dis.	2.5	2.5	n.a.	2.8	92.3
NL	disabled	27.7	4.3	6.3	2.9	58.7
	non-dis.	2.3	1.8	2.1	3.2	90.6

Source: National reports from Denmark, Spain and the Netherlands.

It should be noted that non-disabled persons can have a disability benefit because the self-reported definition has been used to determine disability. Also, there might be people with both a job and a

partial benefit simultaneously. Furthermore, not all people with self-reported disability receive a disability benefit. This is quite obvious because some of them are working and receive wages and some of them are inactive. Countries also differ considerably regarding the extent of benefit provision for the disabled. Nevertheless, disabled people are far more often in receipt of benefits than non-disabled people are. This reflects their poor labour market position.

Furthermore it can – not surprisingly – be noted that in all countries disabled persons, when receiving benefits, are mostly dependent on disability benefit schemes. It also is evident that countries vary considerably regarding the ‘alternatives’ for those who have to rely on benefit schemes, as the role of ‘other’ benefits varies substantially.

Characteristics of persons receiving disability benefits

Although the share of self-reported disabled who receive disability benefits is unknown for most countries, some information is available on the recipients themselves, when using the definitions and statistics of national disability benefit programmes. We show two indicators: the share of persons older than 45 years and the percentage of women in the benefit scheme. We shall compare these indicators with the characteristics of the disabled in general (table 3.6 and table 3.7).

Age

Across all Member States, about 80% of the people in receipt of disability benefit is aged 45 years or older. Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom show comparatively many beneficiaries in younger age groups. In all countries, with the exception of Italy, the percentage of disability benefit recipients aged over 45 years substantially exceeds the share of those of 45 or older in the total disability population. This probably reflects the better labour market position for younger disabled (more often in employment and less reliant on benefits). There can also be institutional differences in social security systems: the entitlement to and the duration of benefits depend on the work history and, therefore, correlate with age.

Table 3.6 Percentage of people aged over 45 years: disability benefit recipients and self-reported disabled (percentages)

Member State	Disability benefit scheme	Disabled population
A	89	71 (*)
B	70	51
D	n.a.	77
DK	87 (*)	65
E	84 (*)	63
EL	81	69 (**)
F	n.a.	26 (**)
FIN	84	58
I	60	70
IRL	49	43 (***)
L	60	n.a.
NL	70	54
P	92	63
S	81	43 (**)
UK	63	54

Notes: (*) percentage of age >40 is given, (**) >50, (***) >35.
Source: National reports from Expert Group members.

Gender

There are large cross-national variations in the percentages of female disability benefit recipients. These reflect differences in the labour market participation rates of females as well as influences from eligibility criteria, which may affect female insured more than male (e.g. the minimum insured period). In five Member States (Austria, Denmark, Greece, Luxembourg and the Netherlands), disabled women are far less likely to be in receipt of disability benefits than men. Only in Finland and Ireland, are women over represented amongst the disability benefit recipients. In the other Member States, there is not much difference between the share of women in disability benefit schemes and in the disabled population.

Table 3.7 Women of working-age: disability benefit recipients and self-reported disabled (percentages)

Member State	Disability benefit scheme	Disabled population
A	39	50
B	52	51
D	n.a.	48
DK	57	67
E	34	36
EL	31	45
F	n.a.	33
FIN	67	52
I	55	52
IRL	61	46
L	26	46
NL	39	56
P	56	51
S	56	50
UK	44	47

Source: National reports from Expert Group members.

3.6 Participation in active labour market programmes

For most ALMPs it is not known how many (self-reported) disabled and not-disabled persons participate in these programmes at a certain moment. As mentioned previously, Member States have numerous programmes, targeting not only disabled but also job seekers in general or other specific groups that may also include persons with disabilities. Therefore, only a limited insight can be given regarding the persons participating or not in ALMPs.

Initial analyses¹ show that compared to the non-disabled working-age population, the disabled in ALMPs are generally younger. Member States might consider it to be economically more profitable to 'invest' in younger people. It might also be a consequence of 'early intervention' strategies, i.e. taking action when someone becomes disabled rather than when someone has been disabled for a couple of years.

3.7 Conclusions

The disabled are less often employed than the non-disabled. They have a much lower participation rate and a higher unemployment rate than non-disabled persons. In employment they earn less and work fewer hours, but the differences with non-disabled are less pronounced. Disability matters a lot in relation to the chance of entering employment, but apparently much less when it comes to the working conditions and job characteristics of the disabled who manage to get a job.

¹ For examples we refer to the Working Paper.

Part of the differences in activity status between the disabled and non-disabled are explained by differences in socio-demographic characteristics between the two groups. Disabled are older and lower educated, groups that are known to have a weaker position in the labour market. Even after correcting for these characteristics, being disabled still has an effect on the labour market position. The combination of having a disability and being older reduces the chances in the labour market more than just the sum of the individual effects of disability and age.

Disabled in employment do not differ from non-disabled in employment with respect to type of employment (employee, self-employed), sector of economic activity and firm size. However, they more often work part-time and they earn less. The relationship between disability and the number of hours is not very strong. The fact that the disabled work less is to a large extent explained by other factors, especially age. However, the characteristics of disabled persons, especially their lower education, can only explain a part of the wage difference. Studies in certain Member States show that a disabled person with the same socio-demographic and job characteristics earns less than a non-disabled person. However, it is not clear whether this is a reflection of lower productivity (caused by the impairment) or the result of some form of discrimination.

With respect to participation in benefit schemes and ALMPs it can be concluded that the older disabled are more often found in disability benefit schemes than the younger disabled. The latter group has a relatively higher participation in ALMPs.

4 Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Introduction

This final chapter focuses on the main outcomes of our exploration and their implications for employment policies. Subsequently, we try to identify which additional information is needed to increase our understanding of processes underlying the poor employment rates of persons with disabilities. This will contribute to a better understanding of policies to improve the employment situation of such people. Finally, we shall discuss some of the indicators needed to monitor improvements and drawbacks in the employment situation of persons with disabilities.

4.2 The employment situation of people with disabilities in the EU

According to various sources, there is a considerable number of disabled persons in the European Union. The proportion of disabled in the entire population, however, varies considerably across Member States. Definitions, sample and measurement techniques partly evoke these differences. Available sources further indicate that disabled persons are in general older, more often female and lower educated than those who are not disabled. All characteristics refer to groups with a relatively unfavourable labour market position. Therefore, people with disabilities are 'doubly disadvantaged' in the labour market. This calls for a specific policy for disabled, irrespective of whether they are employed, unemployed or inactive.

Disabled in employment

When we consider those who are in employment, we find that disabled in employment work slightly fewer hours per week, and in lower-paid jobs than the non-disabled. This finding might conflict with the principle of equal opportunities, which implies that a job occupied by a disabled person should be paid the same rate as a non-disabled person occupying the same job, given that they have the same characteristics and productivity. However, we don't know to what extent differences are related to the preferences of disabled people.

With regard to work retention, the focus was (and still is) put on work place adaptations and various kinds of 'aid at the work place'. Bengtsson (1997) notes for Denmark that these may very well be effective instruments, but the disabled who are working often ask for other measures that may improve their employment possibilities, i.e. reduced working hours, extended possibilities for having a rest on the job, and better possibilities for extended periods of sick leave. Recent cross-national studies on return to work after long period of sick leave showed that this problem also plays a role in other countries: there are considerable differences between countries regarding the willingness and (positive) experiences of employers to allow part-time work (for persons with or without disabilities).¹

Unemployed disabled

If a disabled person participates in the labour market, the likelihood of being unemployed is slightly higher than for a non-disabled person. One possible explanation may be the role of employers' atti-

¹ See also Bloch and Prins (2001).

tudes towards persons with disabilities and personnel selection policies. Both German and Dutch sources indicate that employers focus on health in staff recruitment and ask health-related questions during the application interview in order to avoid the risk of having to pay for days lost through illness and disability. As a reaction, many persons hesitate or do not inform their employer about their health situation status or receipt of partial disability benefits. This fosters discrimination against disabled.

Finally, if better working conditions were offered it would be likely that more disabled would seek and obtain work.

Inactive disabled

Disabled participate (either as employed or unemployed) less in the labour market than non-disabled. To return inactive persons to work comprises two steps: return to the labour market and obtaining a job in the labour market.

Within the category of persons with disabilities, groups may be discerned whose labour market situation differs depending on the type of impairment. Some types of impairment imply such a limitation, that it is not possible to fill a job at all. It is not realistic to imagine that the labour market situation of people with disabilities will ever be equal to the labour market situation of the non-disabled. As a consequence, the labour market policy should not aim for total equality of the participation rates of the disabled and non-disabled persons because participation should necessarily be lower than for the non-disabled persons. However, for many categories of disabled their potential certainly need better chances of being employed.

4.3 A potential rise in the employment rate?

How far and to what extent will raising the employment level of people with disabilities help to increase the employment rate? The general objective set by the Lisbon European Council in the framework of the European Employment Strategy is to raise the employment rate from 61% to 70% by the year 2010. The question is to what extent the disabled who are not working, but can potentially be reintegrated, can raise the overall employment rate.

The members of the Expert Group have tried to answer this question by making strong assumptions, sometimes relying on limited data sources. One assumption made by most experts is that the unemployed disabled can all, potentially, become employed. It is not likely that this assumption will ever be fulfilled. Furthermore, it should be noted that information on inactive disabled is scarce. Some countries have surveys in which inactive (disabled) people are asked if they would like to work, are seeking work and/or are available for work within a certain period of time (usually 2 weeks). Some surveys also contain 'reservation wages', i.e. the minimum wage someone wishes to earn before accepting a job, the number of hours that are preferred or other employment conditions.

Table 4.1 contains the number of disabled estimated by the experts (or a minimum and maximum variant) and the corresponding rise in employment rate.

Table 4.1 Employment rate, potential rise in employment rate and number of disabled potentially to be reintegrated

Member State	Employment rate	Potential rise (percentage points)	Disabled (x 1,000)
A	68.2	n.a.	n.a.
B	58.9	n.a.	n.a.
D	65.0	0.3 - 0.4	200
DK	79.7	1.3 – 2.9	41 – 90
E	53.1	1.7 - 2.7	474 – 746
EL	55.9	2.9	200
F	61.4	0.7	270
FIN	66.9	1.9	67
I	53.8	0.2–0.5	75 – 195
IRL	66.0	0.3 - 0.7	8 – 17
L	61.8	0.3	1
NL	67.4	1.4 – 2.7	144 – 269
P	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
S	74.3	0.9	48
UK	75.1	1.6 - 4.0	570 – 1,450
EU, except A, B, P	61.1	1.1 – 2.0	2,047 – 3,552

Note: n.a. – not available or not reliable.

Table 4.1 shows that an estimated 2 to 3.5 million disabled persons in the European Union can potentially be reintegrated. Though this figure is substantial, the corresponding rise in overall employment rate between 1 and 2 percentage points is not enough to raise the overall employment rate in the European Union to 70%. In fact disabled people's employment can contribute 10-25% of the difference that is needed, i.e. 9 percentage points.

Furthermore, it is quite a challenge to reintegrate this number of disabled people in the labour market. Improving the employment situation of disabled people will require dealing with various problems and restrictions:

- In order to reintegrate this number of disabled people many new job openings have to be available.
- Conditions under which reintegration can take place are only partially reflected in the figures. These contain: labour demand restrictions, cost of workplace adaptations, benefit traps (when people with disabilities would be better off on benefits instead of working), wages and number of working hours.
- Many disabled people are likely to be near the back of the queue, so if employment expands disabled people will have to compete with non-disabled unemployed and are one of the last groups to take advantage of it.
- It is very unlikely that the unemployment rate of disabled people will be lower than the unemployment rate for non-disabled people, or that there will not any difference between the two groups.

- Finally, experts hesitate about the ways in which reintegration can take place. For inactive disabled people without any kind of benefit, the crucial problem is to find them, as they are not registered anywhere.

4.4 Research agenda

In the first year of the Expert Group we systematically collected a great deal of data to obtain an up-to-date insight into the employment of persons with disabilities. In addition, we aimed to deepen our insight in underlying processes (explanations) and to become aware of pitfalls that restrict the use of data for policy development and monitoring.

Various policy issues emerge from our analysis and can be formulated as follows:

- How can we improve the return to the labour market of inactive disabled people?
- How do we (re)integrate unemployed disabled people into employment?
- How do we keep disabled people in employment and provide job satisfaction?

If we formulate these major aims, there are several topics that need more attention in social policy research:

- *Impact of the type of impairment on employment opportunities and retention of work.* The bad labour market situation for disabled people is partly related to socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender and education) but these do not fully account for all employment deficits. The question arises, what is the influence of the type of impairment on the chances of finding and keeping employment and on wage levels? What are relevant differences in employment requirements or conditions for persons with physical or mental impairments? Or those with congenital and acquired impairments? Do combined impairments complicate employment opportunities? In general: what role is played by the severity of the handicap in searching for and achieving success in employment?
- *Employers' attitudes towards persons with disabilities.* What attitudes do employers have towards disabled people? What is known about higher absence rates of disabled persons (as employers often seem to assume)? How do employers' attitudes and expectations affect personnel recruitment policies? How can they be influenced in order to improve opportunities and create equal chances for persons with disabilities? Is there any discrimination with respect to chances of employment or wage level?
- *Employment preferences of disabled people.* To what extent are deficits in employment affected by the employment preferences or expectations of disabled people themselves? Do inactive disabled people want to have or return to employment, especially those who are older? Which preferences do persons with disabilities have, regarding jobs they want to occupy? If disabled people succeed in gaining employment, what needs do they have to stay in employment? Do disabled persons voluntarily or involuntarily work fewer hours?

4.5 Improving information

Valid and cross-nationally comparable information on the labour market position of people with disabilities is scarce. The extent, topicality and details of information that is available, differ between countries. In most Member States more is known about socio-demographic characteristics than about employment characteristics. A general concern is the fact that actually very little is known about persons with disabilities who are in employment: how do their career and wage levels develop? What are their risks should there be an economic decline? This lack of information on the quality of employment and career developments of those actually in employment may restrict the adequacy of policies to increase employment for persons with disabilities.

When considering the improvement of statistical information on employment, not only data collection techniques and legal aspects play a role. In this study it should also be mentioned that in a few countries the use of clear definitions and indicators in (survey) research is hampered by the fear of discrimination and stigmatisation. Consequently, instead of defining the concept of persons with disabilities, descriptions are used which refer to 'individuals with particular needs' (e.g. Greece).

Finally, the investigation of our network experts also shows various types of restrictions regarding the use of surveys. These cover:

- the call for a common definition of disability in the European Union to design a policy for people with disabilities;
- incomplete coverage of certain categories of disabled, especially persons in institutions;
- the translation of questions in a European wide study such as the ECHP can cause difficulties if they pertain to the sensitive wording related to disability;
- the sample size differs considerably between the various types of surveys presented throughout this report.

Eurostat has initiated an inclusion of an ad hoc module on disability in the 2002 Labour Force Survey for all Member States. The rationale behind this is to meet the need for a comprehensive and cohesive dataset on the labour market situation of disabled people among Member States. The disability module focuses on restriction of activities rather than functional limitations. This will provide a basis for policy development or an evaluation of strategies and programmes.¹

Furthermore, it is worthwhile considering increasing the sample size of the ECHP in order to improve the possibilities of analysing disability at the national level in a consistent way.

These steps may contribute to a better monitoring and understanding of the employment situation of disabled people. A subsequent important step will be to focus attention on specific issues (cf. section Research Agenda), which might be analysed.

¹ See Eurostat (2000).

4.6 Indicators for monitoring the employment situation of disabled

Guideline 8 of the Employment Guidelines for 2001¹ (see box) regards combating discrimination and the promoting of social inclusion by access to employment. The experts of the network were asked to give suggestions for indicators concerning disability.

¹ See European Commission (2000a).

Combating discrimination and promoting social inclusion by access to employment

Many groups and individuals experience particular difficulties in acquiring relevant skills and in gaining access to, and remaining in the labour market. This may increase the risk of exclusion. A coherent set of policies, which promote social inclusion by supporting the integration of disadvantaged groups and individuals into the world of work, and combat discrimination in access to, and on, the labour market is called for.

8. Each Member State will
- Develop pathways consisting of effective preventive and active policy measures to promote the integration into the labour market of groups and individuals at risk or with a disadvantage, in order to avoid marginalisation, the emergence of “working poor” and a drift into exclusion.
 - Identify and combat discrimination on grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation in access to the labour market and education and training.
 - Implement appropriate measures to meet the needs of the disabled, ethnic minorities and migrant workers as regards their integration into the labour market and set national targets for this purpose, in accordance with the national situation.

The following indicators have been suggested by Expert Group members for monitoring the labour market position of disabled people:

- employment rate
- participation rate
- unemployment rate
- type of employment (temporary/non-temporary, sector of economic activity)
- working hours per week
- vocational education or training participation.

For all issues, disabled people are to be compared with non-disabled people or with the total population of working-age. It should be noted that a comparison of disabled people and non-disabled people needs to take into account certain socio-demographic differences between the two groups. The study underlying this paper shows that certain characteristics (e.g. age) have a significant influence on the percentage of people with disabilities. When monitoring indicators to assess the position of disabled people, this has to be taken into account

It was suggested that more homogeneous groups (for example as to gender and age) should be compared rather than indicators comparing the total population of working-age of disabled people with non-disabled people. An alternative to this approach may be the use of micro-data to perform comparative analyses of the labour market situation to detect employment or wage discrimination. However, the OECD project may provide valuable suggestions regarding the use and relevancy of such sources.

It also was suggested that indicators for categories of persons which have a certain type and degree of impairment in common should be examined. This way of identification would allow assessing categories that have a bad labour market position or face discrimination.

Finally, the complexity of defining and measuring disability, the availability (or absence) of data sources and the call for 'simplicity' must be taken into account when determining indicators. In some countries no statistical sources exist. As a consequence, indicators have to be collected and computed from surveys. The disability module in the Labour Force Survey 2002 can be considered as a useful source of additional information, though at present the module is only foreseen to be implemented in 2002.

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