

Annex 1. The EU Disability Action Plan 2004-2005: on going actions

PRIORITY ACTION	INSTRUMENTS	RESULT
1. ACCESS TO AND REMANING IN EMPLOYMENT		
Awareness-raising on Directive 2000/78/EC for equal treatment in employment and occupation.	5 year pan European information campaign "For Diversity against Discrimination" on diversity at the workplace.	Website with good practice examples, fact sheets, updated country information and questionnaires to raise awareness. http://www.stop-discrimination.info European Commission Disability Discrimination 2005 Summer School, the first of its kind in Europe and targeted at persons with disabilities, practicing lawyers, judges, law students and disability NGOs.
Implementation of Directive 2000/78/EC.	Commission examination of national anti-discrimination legislation and conformity dialogue with Member States.	By December 2005 Member States will be required to submit information on the implementation of Directive 2000/78/EC implementation. European Commission will then transmit a report on the application of the Directive to the European Institutions.
Promoting access to active labour market measures.	Disability mainstreaming within the European Employment Strategy (EES)	June 2005 Commission Discussion Paper: "Disability mainstreaming in the European Employment Strategy". Contains examples of good practice, provides guidance for future National Reform Plans and support to focus ESF projects on the labour market needs of disabled people http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/disability/emco010705_en.pdf
Monitoring of disability issues through national statistical systems with a particular focus on employability aspects.	Disability Mainstreaming within the European Statistical System (EES) : data collection and analysis.	Disability Ad Hoc Modul of the 2002 European Labour Force Survey and EU-SILC data on people with disabilities. Analysis will be used in a report on the social conditions of disabled persons : call for tender VT/2005/006. Moreover, A specific modul on social integration of disabled people will be developed in the framework of the European Health Survey System.
Promoting and disseminating new and innovative practises in labour market integration of disabled people.	Disability Mainstreaming in Community Initiative EQUAL	European Commission Report "Recognising ability" highlighting experiences and good practices, mainly focussing on "convincing and improving employers", improving "integration services" and "empowering people with disabilities": http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equal/activities/etg1_en.cfm Information disseminated at February 2005 conference "Free movement of good ideas" in Warsaw.

	Research project to increase shared knowledge	OPTI-WORK started in 2005 on optimising strategies for integrating people with disabilities into work, through benchmarking existing systems and initiatives and proposing future strategies to minimise the costs for the State, the jobseeker and the employer. Http://www.optiwork.org/index.jsp
Supporting Social Partners commitments in the Declaration on the Employment of People with Disabilities.	Dialogue with Social Partners at cross-industry level : UNICE/UEAPME , CEEP and ETUC.	In the Declaration on the Employment of People with Disabilities and in the 2004 Joint Report on Social Partners Actions in Member States to Implement European Employment Guidelines (Guideline 7), Social Partners committed to promote integration of disabled persons into society. Commission invited Social Partners to assess the impact of their framework agreements on people with disabilities.
Promoting awareness of Corporate Social Responsibility approaches in employment of disabled people.	Financial support of pilot projects promoting disability issues with regards to Corporate Social Responsibility:	Project "Promoting the economic case for the integration of disabled people into business and society throughout Europe" through which the European Network on Business & Disability was established. The Network is collecting Accessibility Case Studies from across Europe: <i>VP/2004/008 featuring actions to mainstream disability issues on the ground.</i> http://www.businessanddisability.org/eur_projects/index.php
2. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES		
Assessing DG EAC Community Programmes in the course of 2005 from the viewpoint of equal opportunities.	Mainstreaming of disability issues in evaluation of DG EAC programmes.	Evaluation from the perspective of equal opportunities and disability will provide guidance for the post-2006-programmes in active citizenship, culture, education, training and youth.
Incorporating special needs of people with disabilities in e-learning.	e-Learning action programme	e-Learning programme 2004-2006 legally equipped to effectively promote the use of ICT among disabled persons. Decision n° 2318/2003/EC of 5 December 2003.
Improving the PLOTEUS information system on life long learning opportunities	Mainstreaming of disability issues and ongoing evaluation	The PLOTEUS information system on lifelong learning opportunities in Europe is being updated and new PLOTEUSII programme is being prepared.
Incorporating disability issues into the lifelong learning concept and processes.	Promotion of active mainstreaming through dialogue and consultation	A working group on active citizenship, equal opportunities and social cohesion, established in 2003, produces policy recommendations and/or concrete materials to support progress to target disadvantaged groups. A draft Communication on efficiency and equity issues in education and training will be submitted to the Commission for consideration in 2006.
Incorporating disability issues into the life long learning concept	European Year of Education through Sport (EYES)	During the year 2004 the European Commission financed 195 projects to increase awareness of the potential of sports as a tool for education and social inclusion. Out of these 37 projects aimed at using sport as a toll to integrate socially disadvantaged

and processes		groups including people with disabilities. <i>Http://www.Europa.eu.int/comm../sport/action_sports/aees_en.html#Evaluation</i>
3. USING THE POTENTIAL OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES		
Establishing an international dialogue on accessibility concerns and guidelines.	Dialogue with industry and service providers including disability and standardisation organisations. Support to positive actions.	A dialogue has been established between EU and US on "Exchange of information regarding the planned use of ICT standards in support of regulations and other public policies in the field of eAccessibility policies". A workshop on e-Accessibility Requirements for public requirements was organised in October 2004 in Brussels by the European Commission with EU ICT standardisation organisations (ICTSB), the US Access Board, ICT industry and users to promote harmonisation of technical solutions. Dialogue between European industry and representatives from disability organisations in the framework of standardisation work, mainly through the Design for All and Assistive Technologies Standardisation Coordination Group (DATSCG).
Addressing accessibility as horizontal matter in eEurope 2005.	Mainstreaming of disability issues for the forthcoming eAccessibility Communication.	Public online consultation in the domain of eAccessibility launched in January 2005 by the European Commission. Results are considered in the European Commission Communication on eAccessibility published in September 2005 with the view to increase eAccessibility of harmonised ICT products and services and to promote accessibility to the Information Society: http://europa.eu.int/information_society/policy/accessibility/com_ea_2005/index_en.htm
Preparing i2010 Communication and contributing with eInclusion aspects.	Expert Panel and Public Consultation	June 2005 European Commission Communication "i2010 – A European Information Society for growth and employment" addressing among others inclusion, better public services and quality of life. An expert group on eInclusion has suggested in a report several policy initiatives to address eInclusion. <i>References: http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/2005/all_about/advisory_group/documents/index_en.htm</i>
Supporting European accessibility requirements for the public procurement of products and services in the ICT domain.	Consultations with users, industry and Member States to prepare a standardisation mandate.	European Commission workshop on harmonisation of eAccessibility requirements for use in the public procurement of ICT products and services. Main findings summarised in a publicly accessible report: http://europa.eu.int/information_society/policy/accessibility/regulation/index_en.htm . Preparing a standard toolkit eAccessibility requirements to be used in public procurement in consultation with standardisation organisations CEN, CENELEC and ETSI. Mandate expected end of 2005.
Promoting the "Design for All" concept among professionals	European Awards Curriculum	At the REHACARE International in Düsseldorf in November 2004, the European Commission issued the first European Awards "Innovation in Design for All and Assistive Technologies". The basic skills and knowledge for a European Curriculum for "Design for All" has been developed by the idcnet project http://www.idcnet.info/home . Work contributes under the European Design for All and eAccessibility network of National Centres of

	development	Excellence (EdeAN): http://www.edean.org which provide a resource centre in Desing for all and exchange of information n courses
Establishing a structured and coherent EU dialogue with producers of Assistive Technologies (AT)	Discussions with AT industry associations	The European Commission asked in the 2005 call for proposals within the 6 th Research Framework Programme for coordinated actions to federate the fragmented Assistive Technology industry and to address market requirements as well as cost benefit analysis.. Successful proposals will be selected by end of 2005. Http://fp6.cordis.lu/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP6DetailsCallPage&call_id=208
Improving Web Accessibility	Report, project support to collect comparable data based on the W3C/WAI guidelines.	The European Commission eAccessibility working group has drafted a report on the implementation of the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) guidelines. A number of projects are developing a European methodology to monitor web accessibility of public websites in Europe: project BenToWeb, http://bentoweb.org/home ; Project EIAO, http://en.ftb-net.de/projekte/eiao.html ; Project Support-EAM, http://www.support-eam.org ; Project WAI TIES http://www.w3.org/WAI/TIES/ The first version of this methodology has been released in October 2005.
Promoting eAccessibility in relation to independent living	Mainstreaming of accessibility issues in consumer goods/services, including public services through applied research project support and development of advanced technologies.	The EuThe European Commission devoted 30 million Euro to a call within the 6th Research Framework Programme related to ICT accessibility. 14 projects were selected and are running: The projects are ASK-IT, HEARCOM, ENABLED, COGAIN; BenToWeb, EIAO, ENSURE, MAPPED, MICOLE, MOVEMENT, EUAIN, AAL, CWST, Support-EAM. Another call has been launched within the eInclusion strategic objective under the IST programme with an indicative budget of 29 million Euro: part of it is specifically addressed to the search of innovative solutions for persons with cognitive disabilities. Details can be found on the websites of each project and in the Commission cordis database : http://www.cordis.lu/ist/directorate_f/einclusion/calls.htm .
Promoting eAccessibility.	EU Presidency conference co-financed by the European Commission	Within the framework of the UK EU Presidency, the Commission supported the eAccessibility conference in October 2005 on the basis of its new Communication on eAccessibility.
4. ACCESSIBILITY TO THE PUBLIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT		
Encouraging universal building design.	Research Project support for case studies	As of January 2004, Commission funds POLIS project "Decision support tools and policy initiatives in support of a universal design of buildings", aiming to achieve systematic and cost efficient uptake of Universal Design by the large society. Results will be published in 2006: http:// www.polis-ubd.net/

<p>Promoting specialised training and awareness on urban planning and architecture, highlighting accessibility aspects.</p>	<p>Project support through the EU pilot project scheme for mainstreaming of disability issues.</p> <p>Research project support for good practise</p>	<p>Specialised training for universities and continuous training to professionals in their respective fields is now being provided within the pilot project "Architecture and urban planning: DFA from school to practise". Project started in 2004 and will finish in autumn 2006. A guide of best practise will be published as a result:http://www.polis-ubd.net/</p> <p>Another project is identifying good practices in the provision of REASONABLE ACCESS to the physical built environment with the view to define a common and standardized technical expression of the term "reasonable accessibility and accommodation". Project started in January 2005. It will develop a Good Practice Guide for implementing reasonable accessibility and accommodation in design in support of the business case: <i>University of Leeds, School of Civil Engineering, web site under construction.</i></p>
<p>Developing a toolkit on accessibility design.</p>	<p>Project support through the EU pilot project scheme and research project for mainstreaming of disability issues.</p>	<p>The "Build for All" project aims at promoting dialogue between stakeholders and to develop a toolkit on accessibility design to be used by local authorities and bidders in the course of bidding process within the new Directive on Public Procurement 2004/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 which is to be implemented by the Member States no later than 31 January 2006: <i>Project developed by InfoHandicap Luxembourg.</i></p>
<p>Promoting accessibility of urban space</p>	<p>Project support through the EU pilot project scheme for mainstreaming of disability issues.</p>	<p>Within The "BAS - Building Accessible Services" project, detailed accessibility audit of typical and representative non residential buildings across EU will be carried out: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche Istituto per le Technologie della Construzione, Italy www....</p>
<p>Improving information on accessible tourism for disabled people</p>	<p>Information dissemination, study</p>	<p>DG ENTR published a brochure "Improving information on accessible tourism for disabled people" to support hotel owners to assess accessibility of facilities: http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/services/tourism/index_en.htm</p> <p>In 2005 a study on "Economic impact of providing accessible tourism facilities on business opportunities for SMEs, service quality, growth and employment" was launched <i>VT 2005/04.</i></p>
<p>5. OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</p>		
<p>Ensuring mandatory assistance by airport and air carriers and non discrimination treatment of persons with reduced mobility by carriers or</p>	<p>European Commission Communication and legislative proposal for a disability specific regulation</p>	<p>On 16th February 2005, the European Commission Communication "Reinforcing passengers' rights in the European Union" was issued together with a legislative proposal for a regulation concerning the rights and obligations of people with reduced mobility when travelling by air: COM (2005) 47 final. When adopted, airport managers will have to provide free of charge assistance to persons with reduced mobility at airport while air carriers will have to provide assistance on board aircraft. Air carriers will not be allowed to refuse to accept a reservation for a flight on ground of reduced mobility. However some derogation to this rule may apply with respect to safety requirements, size of aircraft or justified absence of cabin crew.</p>

tour operators.		
Guaranteeing the rights of international rail passengers	Legislative proposal	The proposal for a Regulation on international rail passengers' rights and obligations (COM (2004) 143 final) adopted in 2004 provides for non-discrimination of persons with reduced mobility travelling by rail as well as assistance before and during journey.
Ensuring protection of maritime passengers' rights in the EU	European Commission study	The European Commission has commissioned a study on "The protection of rights of maritime passengers: assessment of the current situation and possible development of the Community legislation". Stakeholders' consultation concerning the rights of maritime transport passengers will take place in autumn 2005.
Guaranteeing the rights of passengers in international bus and coach transport.	Working Paper, analysis	In 2 July 2005, the European Commission launched a public consultation on the basis of the Commission Staff Working Paper "Rights of passengers in international bus and coach transport". Taking into consideration the results of the consultation, the Commission may come up, if appropriate, with a legislative proposal in 2006.
Supporting passengers rights on urban transport	Exchange of good practices	A working group on "Accessibility to transport by reduced mobility people" has been established within a "Urban Transport Benchmarking Initiative".
Identifying good practises in the field of integration of people with disabilities through and in sport	Expert meetings. Member States.	In October 2005 a first Expert Meeting on Sport and Disabilities was organised in Brussels. Experts from Member States were called to exchange good practices and identify potential fields for action at national level. The role of Sport as employment tool, inclusion tool and the Sport in itself will be envisaged under the prism of people with disabilities. The Commission is providing the platform to facilitate this exchange with invited observers from NGO.
Identifying practices that help or hinder European Commission staff with disabilities in their career development.	Evaluation, analysis, survey.	In 2004, the European Commission launched two disability surveys to identify needs of disable staff at work and at home. Code of Good Practice was implemented in conjunction with the new Commission Staff Regulations. Recruitment and selection procedures have been adapted to ensure non-discrimination of disabled people. Accessibility of Commission buildings is progressively improving.

Annex 2. The EU Disability Action Plan 2006-2007: actions proposed

PRIORITY ACTION	INSTRUMENTS	TECHNICAL OBJECTIVE
1. ENCOURAGING ACTIVITY		
Encouraging Member States and Social Partners to improve access of disabled people to the open labour market and to mainstream disability issues in Member States Reform Programmes.	Mainstreaming of disability issues in the European Employment Strategy through dialogue with Member States in relevant for a.	Cooperation between the EU Employment Committee and EU Disability High Level Group will be developed, reflecting on the new Employment Guidelines, examining how they can be concretely implemented to support the mainstream approach addressing disabled people needs in employment policies.
Promoting the use of new Structural Funds, in particular the European Social Fund (ESF) , to support employment, training and equal opportunities for disabled people as well as the development of an accessible environment.	Mainstreaming disability related results of the Equal initiative. ESF Conference, European Year of Equal Opportunities for All.	Member States will be encouraged to make use of the conclusions outlined in the Commission discussion paper on mainstreaming of disability in the European Employment Strategy when defining their future strategic orientations for the use of the ESF. An ESF conference will be organised in the course of 2006 in order to highlight good practices.
Reviewing the European Commission block exemption regulation on employment and training aids for the employment of disadvantaged categories of workers (EC) No 2204/2002 of 12.12.2002.	Analysis and dialogue with Member States and stakeholders in the EU Disability High Level Group in view of updating and adjusting EU competition legislation.	If necessary, revised rules on sheltered employment will be adopted. The new Commission regulation should entered into force in early 2007 in order to take account of its functioning so far.
Promoting good practice approaches for integration of social criteria into procurement	A guide on the incorporation of social criteria into public procurement in the framework of the EU CSR Action Plan 2005-2009 and on the basis of the EU public procurement directives.	Commission will produce a guide on the integration of social criteria (including accessibility criteria) into public procurement.
Encouraging EU Social Partners to assess the impact of their framework agreements on disabled people and to increase the participation of people with disabilities in their organisations.	Reinforced Dialogue in the Liaison Forum. Extension of dialogue at cross industry level in the framework of the Social Dialogue Committee.	Operational conclusions of the study on Social Partners policies of disabled persons integration into the labour market will be discussed through the EU Social Dialogue Committee as well as in the EU Disability High level Group.
Analysing the impact disability is having on mobility in the European labour market and free movement of persons.	European Year of Worker Mobility, 2006: disability question in the Euro barometer survey.	Within the framework of the 2006 European Year, the Commission will analyse the extent to which having a disability constitutes a barrier for disabled people to take advantage of free movement of people.
Raising disability awareness among SMEs and industry on the EU Corporate Social Responsibility concept.	Information and dissemination of disability of Commission pilot project results concerning the business case of disability	The Commission will give publicity to the Corporate Social Responsibility concept among industry and employers, highlighting disabled people as employees and customers.

	(VP/2004/08).	
Encouraging mainstreaming of disability issues in the area of education and training, including regular monitoring of developments in the field of special needs education.	Open method of Coordination in the area of life long learning and youth. EU Education and training programmes.	The Commission will monitor the progress achieved at national levels towards common 2010 objectives. Disability issues will also be taken into account when designing the new generation of Community programmes in the overall education area.
2. PROMOTING ACCESS TO QUALITY SUPPORT, CARE AND HEALTH SERVICES		
Reinforcing mainstreaming of disability issues into the streamlined Open Method of Coordination (OMC) on social inclusion and social protection	Open Method of Coordination (OMC) on social inclusion and social protection.	Analysis will be a cornerstone for further reflections on the organisation of disability mainstreaming in Member States with regard to social inclusion and social protection processes. It will be discussed in the EU Social Protection Committee and High Level Group on Disability.
Reflecting disability issues in the forthcoming Communication on social and health services of general interest	Analysis and consultations	The Commission will discuss, through inter service consultation, the need for accompanying EU initiatives to ensure a high level of social and health services quality also for disabled people. Standardisation possibilities will be explored.
Studying the economic and financial case of community based settings so as to support the de-institutionalisation process when appropriate.	Analysis on the basis of Commission tender study (VT/2005/021)	The Commission will share the results of its study on the comparative costs of the de-institutionalisation process. On the basis of successful de-institutionalisation processes, the study will describe how current resources could be shifted and re-allocated best.
Studying the possible risks of specific discrimination of disabled people with high dependency or complex needs	Study under the Anti Discrimination Programme 2006 on the basis of an open call for tender.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To improve the understanding of issues related to the risks of various forms of discrimination in relation to disabled people having complex needs and or a high dependency. -To define the risks of possible discrimination which people with severe disabilities could face in particular in the fields of social protection and access to quality social services. - To draw conclusions on how policy makers could benefit in the future from identifying specific fields where the risk is higher for severely disabled people to be discriminated against - To contribute to the development of person centred services provision
Following up on findings of the Commission study on Disabled People Access to Assistive Technologies.	Dialogue with industry and stakeholders, including representatives of the various health care and social systems.	The Commission will initiate a dialogue with main stakeholders aiming at increasing market transparency and facilitating exchange of good practices, including with regard to notably administrative requirements, testing procedures and reimbursements systems.
Providing better access to information on health	EU public health programme	The Commission will, through inter service consultation, ensure incorporation of disabled peoples' needs into the Programme of Community

		action in the field of public health, focusing on monitoring tools and eHealth applications.
Developing an EU strategy on mental health	Commission contribution on the implementation of the World Health Organisation (WHO) European Ministerial Conference on Mental Health of January 2005.	Commission will analyse the findings of 2005 Green Paper on mental health. By the end of 2006 the Commission will present an EU-strategy on mental health.
Promoting and developing the concept of independent living of disabled people.	Commission Conference for the European Day of people with Disabilities, dissemination of information, policy development.	The "2005 European Day of Disabled People" Commission Conference focusing on the conditions which are necessary to promote independent living will be disseminated to stakeholders and used as feedback in further activities of the EU High Level Group on Disability.
3. FOSTERING ACCESSIBILITY OF GOODS AND SERVICES		
Examining the possibility of developing a toolkit for evaluating accessibility of ESF projects to people with disabilities.	Toolkit to support Member States to make ESF projects more accessible for people with disabilities.	Eventual development of guidelines for assessment of accessibility of eligible ESF projects.
Contributing to the review of electronic communication framework Directives.	Report highlighting the needs of disabled people	Report will be used as input into the revision process of Directive on a common regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services.
Measuring progress of e-Accessibility in Europe	Study launched by DG Infso	To examine accessibility situation in Europe in respect to the information society and to measure the evolution and impact of European measures as proposed in the recent Commission Communication on e-Accessibility of 13 September 2005. The study aims at developing indicators to identify the impact of the proposed approaches and on-going actions. It also seeks to measure, as soon as possible, and in two years from now, the accessibility of ICT.
Promoting ICT accessibility related issues in RTD projects	Project support for a total value of approximately 29 Million euro within the 6 th Research Framework Programme.	Disability related research projects.
Defining RTD needs with regards to ICT accessibility related issues in new research programmes	Work plan for the 7 th Community Research Framework Programme.	Commission will define and fine-tune priorities for accessibility to the Information Society in an inclusive manner, addressing both the areas of Design For All and Assistive Technology.
Developing a European standard harmonising requirement for accessibility in ICT.	Standardisation	Standard will support interoperability across European Union and will be available for use in the ICT public procurement process.
Promoting web accessibility of public web sites and design for all in ICT	Support to cooperation among key players and users	Promoting the use of the ICT European Curriculum in Design for all, enhance cooperation through EDeAN and encourage ICT Assistive Technology Industry Association network. Continue the international dialogue on eAccessibility.
Pushing forward Commission proposal for a regulation on the	Legislative proposal	Adoption by Council and EP is expected to take

rights of persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air.		place in the course of 2006.
Pushing forward Commission proposal for a regulation on international rail passengers' rights and obligations	Legislative proposal	Adoption by Council and EP is expected to take place in the course of 2006.
Examining the possibility for a legislative proposal regulating rights of mobility impaired persons when using international maritime transport.	Assessment and consultation	Eventual proposal will depend on results of assessment of current situation and consultation of stakeholder.
Ensuring follow-up to the 2005 Services Working Paper on the rights of passengers in international bus and coach transport.	Legislation proposal	Follow-up might result in drafting of legislative proposal carried out in 2006.
4. INCREASING THE EU CAPACITY OF ANALYSIS		
Measuring health and disability in Europe: supporting policy development through scientific knowledge	Support to, and development of project, within the 6 th Research Framework Programme under the area of Scientific Support to Policies-3.	<p>MHADIE project started :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To demonstrate the feasibility of the WHO International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) in the measurement of types and prevalence of impairments. - To use the ICF model as the structure for analysing existing general population health surveys and education statistics data. - To demonstrate that the ICF model is adequate for describing and measuring patterns of disability - To produce policy recommendations and guidelines concerning how the existing sources of data can be harmonised with the ICF model. <p>Project Website: http://www.mhadie.it. Project coordinator: Istituto Nazionale Neurologica "Carlo Besta".</p>
Developing and analysing valid statistics on disabled persons and their integration into society.	Analysis of statistics obtained through the European Statistical System (ESS).	Analysis will focus on : national data obtained in 2004 by Eurostat surveys, the 2002 Labour Force Survey ad-hoc module on 'Employment of disabled persons', the first data available through the European Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC).

		A new study will also be launched to compile statistical data on disability obtained through MS administrative registers.
Developing new survey instruments for disability items	Work on disability surveys within the European Health Survey System.	Special emphasis will be placed on participation and environmental factors taking into account the work of the UN Washington City Group.
Reporting on and disseminating outputs of Commission pilot projects on mainstreaming of disability issues at decentralised level.	Dissemination of results and information	Dissemination of the results from pilot projects launched in 2004-2005, discussion in the EU Disability High Level Group.
Promoting EU networks of academic expert on disability policies	Network support	Mapping of academic research
Investigating quality aspects of care for people with disabilities in regard to developments of social policy and typical examples of service practise, including with focus on the subjective experience of individuals with disabilities.	Support to, and development of, project under the 6 th Research Framework Programme.	<p>DIS-QOL project started :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To examine the extent to which care and support options for people with disabilities across the lifespan promote integrated living, social participation and service user participation. - To analyse the role of attitudes in relation to the delivery of care and service user's experience of social justice - To assess the impact of different service models and care practices on the quality of life of individuals with disailbities. - To inform social policy and practice in relation with intellectual and physical disability in the Eu and more globally. <p>Coordinator: Scholl of Health in Social Science, University of Edinburgh, UK</p>
Exploring the access to mobility for people with disabilities	Support for two projects within the 6 th Research Framework Programme within the area of "Scientific Support to Policies", research priority "Quality of life relating to disabled people", including equal access facilities"	Corresponding disability related research projects planned to start in 2006.

Annex 3: Mainstreaming of disability issues in practice

3.1. Mainstreaming as an objective and as a tool to promote equality for people with disabilities

Mainstreaming of disability is one of the main EU instruments to promote equality of opportunities for people with disabilities notably through the EU Disability Action Plan.

The Council Conclusions of 1 December, 2003, in response to the European Year of People with Disabilities, and the promotion of equal opportunities for people with disabilities call on the Member States to pro-actively mainstream disability issues in relevant national policies and in particular in their National Action Plans on employment and social inclusion. This principle will continue to apply in the new National Reform Plans and integrated guidelines under the revised Lisbon Strategy. In this context, the Commission Services produced several working documents on the methodology of mainstreaming which were discussed with the Member States within the EU Disability High Level Group. A questionnaire on mainstreaming was also circulated to the Member States so as to, at a later stage, spread good practices. In addition, pilot projects developing mainstreaming tools were initiated and co-financed by the Commission. In total 6 million Euro (for 2004 and 2005) was allocated through a range of pilot projects¹.

Implementing a mainstreaming strategy is a complex and long-term process, requiring a diverse approach and political commitment. It demands: analysis of the current situation to establish the differential impact of disability policies; statistics disaggregated by sex; funding; and participation of people with disabilities in decision-making. Success relies on the commitment of national, regional and local authorities.

Member State policies show a tendency towards more mainstreaming of disability issues into relevant policies. A wide policy mix is used, ranging from: anti-discrimination and equal treatment legislation; global and sectoral legislation; national disability action plans; and other specific measures to achieve equal opportunities for disabled people in line with national traditions. Some institutional mechanisms/structures have been created to ensure coherence in national actions.

3.2 Promoting employment:

Dialogue with **Member States** as part of the European Employment Strategy has had a positive impact on developments in the Member States. Since the launch of the European Year of People with Disabilities, new disability legislation has been passed in twelve Member States² along with employment promotion programmes and accompanying measures.

¹ See http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/disability/funding_en.html

² The 2004 analysis of National Actions Plans on Employment shows that Ireland has introduced a Disability Bill, France has drawn a draft law to improve employment participation rates, Luxembourg began to legislate for disability in 2003, while Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Cyprus, Germany, Estonia, Lithuania, Portugal and Spain have new legislation in prospect or recently adopted.

National policies and programmes are being developed to improve employment and participation rates.³ National measures combine legislation and active labour market policies (ALMPs). Initiatives to support independent living as a key factor in obtaining and retaining employment are increasing. Early intervention and enhanced personal support are already showing positive results. Other measures include: incentives to make work pay; adaptation of workplace/work practices; job coaching, for example for people with learning disabilities; and enhanced dialogue with social partners.

However, few Member States make a clear distinction in their welfare systems between benefits to compensate for disability-related additional costs, and income replacement benefits to make up for the lack of a wage. Where the distinction is made, 'additional cost' benefits are generally retained regardless of the employment status, but income replacement benefits often stop when the person takes up work.

any public employment services are not yet fully accessible to disabled people who, as a result, often have limited access to the labour market and to mainstream employment. Where a severe disability precludes mainstream employment, supported and sheltered employment arrangements and social enterprises continue to have a place. Some now adopt a more business-oriented approach incorporating vocational and developmental training to facilitate a gradual transition to the open labour market.

Corporate social responsibility programmes and greater cooperation with business are developed by social partners in Member States, as are policies to improve accessibility of education and training institutions, workplaces, public buildings, transport, social housing and ICT.

3.3 Examples of integration of disabled people into the labour market and society

The new Employment Guidelines target overall employment policies in Europe and focus on: attracting and retaining more people in employment; increasing the labour supply, modernising social protection systems; and improving the adaptability of both workers and enterprises. All of these aspects apply equally to people with disabilities. In addition, the EU Disability Action Plan aims to increase the employment level of disabled people to the open labour market through employment-related disability measures in areas such as an accessible public built environment, access to education and life long learning and use of the new technologies. In this respect, the European Social Fund (ESF) is supporting the integration of disabled people into the labour market. Other Community initiatives such as EQUAL also play an important role in fostering the employment of people with disabilities.

3.3.1 Active employment measures:

Austria promotes the participation of disabled people in the labour market in line with the European Employment Strategy. A good example is the 'Clearing' initiative. This is an innovative solution for the period between the school end and the first job. It establishes detailed personal development plans to increase employability.

³ Employment in Europe Report 2004: employment growth in 2003 was almost static at 0,2%

The Federal Disability Equality Act is one of the most **important legal activities** to be enacted this year in Austria. This act shall ensure disability equality and antidiscrimination in all areas of life. The act has been adopted by the two houses of Parliament on 6 July 2005 and 21 July 2005 („Nationalrat” and „Bundesrat”) and will come into force on 1 January 2006.

The federal government will also increase the employment rate of disabled people through its Employment Offensive for People with Disabilities or “Beschäftigungsoffensive”. The Employment Offensive of the Austrian Government in favour of people with disabilities, which started in 2001, has a strong impact for combating unemployment among disabled people and increasing their labor market participation. A large number of measures and projects are promoted throughout the Employment Offensive.

In **Belgium**, several positive trends include job coaching, aimed at guiding disabled people into the labour market; a narrowing of the gap in labour force participation between disabled and non-disabled persons; a new service to promote diversity plans; and the introduction of ‘diversity consultants’.

In **Slovenia**, the Act on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities adopted in 2004 will increase the employment rate of persons with disabilities and provide possibilities for equal participation of persons with disabilities in the labour market by creating suitable work places and conditions for work, and relocate the resources from passive to active measures in the area of employment.

The act defines a range of financial incentives for the employment of persons with disabilities such as: subsidising wages of persons with disabilities, payment of the costs for the workplace adjustment and means of work, payment of the costs for the services in supported employment, dispensation of the costs for the pension and disability insurance of persons with disabilities, rewards to the employers for exceeding the quota and yearly rewards for good practice in the field.

In transposing the anti-discrimination directive 2000/78/EC, the **Czech Republic** has amended the Labour Code. Moreover, a new Act on Employment came into force in October 2004. This Act introduces several new instruments on vocational rehabilitation, training and employment including personal development plans. The Czech government has launched an initiative aimed at the participatory levels of disabled persons in the labour market. The initiative 'Supported employment for people with disabilities' targets seriously impaired people who, through the project, receive long-term support during the job seeking process. The Transition programme has been launched in 2001 as part of the Supported employment programme and the main target group are the final year students of special schools. The programme is implemented in the Olomouc region. Recently, the Training and Information Centre of the Czech Union for supported employment launched a 9-day course for employment consultants, with regard to disabled persons.

Poland adopted, in consultation with the social partners, a National Social Inclusion Strategy (NSIS) in June 2004. The document sets out objectives and quantified targets of the Polish social inclusion policy until 2010. Several projects aimed at the integration of disabled people into the open labour market and society has been launched within the framework of the Polish Sectoral Operational Programme for Human Resources Development. The Polish Association for Persons with Mental Disability is currently implementing a project entitled 'Raising skills of personnel providing services to persons

with disabilities'. The Institute of Public Affairs Foundation manages a project focusing on the development of various flexible forms of employment and vocational training for disabled young people. Through the project 'To job without words', the University of Information Technology and Management is preparing ten regional branches of the Polish Association of Deaf People to make the integration of disabled people into the labour market more effective.

Italy co-operates closely with private and semi-private employment agencies to integrate disabled people into the labour market. In addition, a recently adopted reform package has increased flexibility in the labour market, promoting “welfare to work” policies. The 2003 mid-term review of ESF programmes increased funding (+15% in Obj. 3 areas) devoted to disadvantaged people, including people with disabilities. In addition to the regional programmes, two national operating programmes (*Assistenza tecnica ed azioni di sistema* in Obj. 1 areas and *Azioni di sistema* in Obj. 3 areas) finance system actions in this field, in particular as regards specific information, training and support to employment services and awareness raising activities on the opportunities provided for by the national law (law 68/99). The Legislative decree 276/03 (reform of the labour market) - art. 14 provide new paths to widen opportunities to access the labour market for people with disability, with a stronger involvement of social cooperatives alongside enterprises. To monitor the concrete implementation of the new rules in the territorial contexts, and to harmonize them to the provisions of law 68/99, a new experimental project has been started.

Furthermore, according to a recent monitoring report conducted by ISFOL, 81% of the Provincial Employment Services in 2003 provides specific services to deliver information on focused employment.

Recent data regarding the involvement of disabled persons in the Equal programme for the period 2003-2004 indicates that almost 6000 disabled persons have been participating in Equal projects related to employability and employment, adaptability and equal opportunities promotion.

In **Estonia**, people with disabilities are considered a group at risk of being excluded from the labour market. A case management approach was therefore developed under the framework of an EU-PHARE Twinning Project between Estonia and the United Kingdom during 2003-2004. Within the project, officials of institutions providing local services were trained to better understand the issue of disability employment and the use of case management methods in their everyday work. In 2004, the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs, in cooperation with various stakeholders, prepared a new concept of labour market policies. Based on this new concept, a new draft law of Labour Market Services was prepared and is currently being discussed in the Estonian Parliament.

In **Cyprus** Poverty and social exclusion are not particularly acute problems because of the low unemployment level. Public Assistance and Service Laws secure a minimum standard of living for every person legally resident in Cyprus. Recipients of public assistance belonging to vulnerable groups, such as disabled persons, are entitled to supplementary public assistance (subsidised wages) even if they are fully employed.

The **Greek** Manpower Employment Organisation (O.A.E.D) which is the main planning and application mechanism of the National Employment Policy, is implementing special employment measures, such as the *Subsidy Programmes for New Jobs and for New Entrepreneurs* and the “*STAGE*” *Work Experience Programme* in order to integrate

vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, into the labour market. *Accompanying Support Services* are also provided to these groups through the Operational Programme “*Employment and Vocational Training*”. People with disabilities are also participating in special EQUAL actions designed to support their integration to the labour market.

Malta has through the Employment and Training Corporation and the European Structure Funds introduced a scheme whereby persons with a disability are given specialized and personalized long-term support in order to enter and be retained in the labour market.

In **Hungary**, the employment of disabled persons in public administration is promoted by the creation of Equal Opportunity Plans, which assist the integration of disabled people into the open labour market and several ministries have appointed equal opportunities officers. Two measures within the Human Resources Development Operational Programme are specifically focused on the improvement of employability of disadvantaged people and on the promotion of social inclusion through the training of professionals working in the social field. In addition, an EQUAL project entitled "Chance for Normal Life" (Esély a teljes életre III) is aimed at enhancing equal labour market chances for the mildly mental disabled and disadvantaged young Roma people (<https://equal.cec.eu.int/equal/jsp/dpComplete.jsp?cip=HU&national=40>).

Germany in 2004 launched a nation-wide joint initiative “JOB – Jobs Ohne Barrieren” (jobs without barriers). The German government, regional and local authorities, employers, trade unions, disability association and rehabilitation institutions as well other types of organisations cooperate to promote the training and employment of disabled people. The programme will be evaluated in 2007. The JOB initiative follows an earlier campaign “50.000 Jobs for Disabled People” in 1999-2002, which aimed to reduce the number of unemployed disabled persons by 24%. In 2004, the German government launched a further reform that allows disabled persons to receive a personal budget, which replaces the relevant benefits and gives the persons greater responsibility and control over their own life.

The recently adopted **Lithuanian** law on social enterprises aims to improve employment opportunities for persons from disadvantaged groups. Forty percent of employed workers in social enterprises should be persons from disadvantaged groups, including disabled people. The wage compensation rate amounts to 50% of the gross salary and 60% for people with severe disabilities.

In **Ireland**, the Supported Employment Programme is an open labour market initiative which provides support to people with disabilities. The programme is carried out by sponsor organisations on behalf of FÁS, the Irish public employment service. The sponsor organisations employ Job Coaches who provide a range of supports tailored to the individual needs of the jobseeker with a disability. Another special grant is available for employers in the private sector aiming at retention of workers who acquire a disability in the course of their working lives to that they can continue to work in the same company. The Workway project is an initiative by the social partners in Ireland, whereby local networks have been established comprising of employers, union representatives, people with disabilities and relevant service providers to provide a forum for the sharing of knowledge and perceptions of the local employment opportunities of people with disabilities and to enable the development of solutions to some of the complex and challenging barriers that exist.

In **Latvia**, ESF supports the integration of disabled people into the labour market through the measure “Combating social exclusion”. Actions under this measure include prevention and mentoring activities as well as the provision of social, employment, education and training activities: **(a)** training for groups at risk of social exclusion, including ICT support for disabled persons; **(b)** subsidised employment and the development of entrepreneurship and self-employment; **(c)** widening the scope of social rehabilitation programmes; **(d)** development of pedagogical correction programmes; **(e)** integration of young people with special needs into the general education system.

The ERDF activities under the measure “The Development of Education, Health Care and Social Infrastructure” promote the accessibility and equal quality of the employment, social assistance, health and education services in all regions by enhancing service institutions.

Additional activities to improve the situation of people with disabilities in the labour market are taken under the EQUAL initiative. For example, the EQUAL programme co-finances the project 'Silent Hands' implemented by the Latvian Association of Deaf People. The project intends interventions in all spheres and systems connected to the employment of deaf persons, to develop preconditions for the social reintegration of women with hearing disabilities.

On 10th of August 2005 the Policy Guidelines for Reduction of Disability and its Consequences for the years 2005-2015 were approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. There are four main ways of action in the Policy Guidelines regarding the policy on persons with disabilities: 1) employment of people with disabilities; 2) prevention of the disability; 3) new approach to assignment of disability; 4) new social services and social protection measures for people with disabilities.

In consultation with disabled people representatives, the **Spanish** government approved in 2003 a Law on Equal opportunities, non-discrimination and universal accessibility. In 2004, the government launched the 'Aid for Job Creation' initiative, increasing the 2% target employment quota in the public sector to 3-5%. Income tax credits are granted to disabled workers. The Law also established the National Disability Council with activities aimed at integrating disabled people into the labour market within the framework of the Second State Action Plan for the People with Disabilities (2003-2007). The ESF has co-financed a number of projects aimed at increasing the integration and participation of disabled persons in the labour market. In Aragon, through the project INEM, the ESF co-financed subventions addressed to companies offering a long-term contract (over three years) to a person with any disability, hindering access to the open labour market under standard conditions. The regional Ministry for Social Services of the autonomous community of Madrid, in cooperation with the Federation of Associations of People with Intellectual Disability, launched in 2000 a project which aims to integrate disabled people into the labour market, focusing particularly on people with intellectual disabilities. An essential part of this integration strategy has been the so-called "labour trainer", charged with the task of mobilizing resources potentially leading to labour market integration. These 'labour trainers' have been financed by the ESF.

The **UK government** extended and amended in 2005 the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act, conferring specific rights in a number of areas including employment and education and reinforcing the anti-discrimination law. In January 2005, the United Kingdom Prime Minister's Strategy Unit issued a report entitled "Improving the life chances of disabled

people" which calls for an ambitious vision that 'by 2025, disabled people in Britain should have full opportunities and choices to improve their quality of life and will be respected and included as equal members of society'. Examples of how a mainstreaming approach to disability issues is being promoted include: In Northern Ireland the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in partnership with the Northern Ireland Department for Employment and Learning, the Department for Enterprise Trade and Industry and the Employer's Forum funded the Employers Recognition Awards. These recognise those employers that have adapted good practice in the employment of disabled people in terms of recruitment, retention and participation policies. Essex County Council has established an Independent Advocacy Service staffed largely by disabled people which is involved in policy-making at County Council level, including devising a commissioning process that promotes equality of disabled people and holds the Council to account on issues such as its target for employment of disabled people.

In the **Netherlands**, disability mainstreaming policies are carried out within a framework of the Equal treatment on the Grounds of Disability and Chronic Illness Act, 2003. Initially, the Act contained rights to equal treatment in employment, vocational and professional training and public transport. The possibilities are being considered to extending it to other areas such as housing, while also inquiring into the prospects for the area of education and the delivery of goods and services. The Act was complemented by a National Action Plan on equal treatment and mainstreaming. The integration of disabled people is also carried out through a number of EU funded projects. Project 'Tante Truus' (<http://www.tantetruusalmere.nl/>) aimed at the integration of disabled people with mental health problems into the labour market through practical training and education represents one such example. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport has also developed a Disability Mainstreaming Checklist ('Handreiking') that has been distributed to all Ministries. The objective is to assist other Ministries and other levels of government subsequently, to take into account disability and "reasonable accommodation" in all relevant policy domains. The format of the checklist not only makes disability mainstreaming concrete to the policy makers, but also assumes that the primary responsibility for mainstreaming lies with them, within their respective domains. The Handreiking makes mainstreaming policies operational, and its application presupposes the unfolding of responsibilities throughout government levels.

France promotes the integration of disabled persons into the open labour market through a number of actions, outlined in the 2004 National Action Plan on employment. The objective of reducing the unemployment of disabled workers is set out in detail in the Bill on Equal Opportunities and the Participation and Citizenship of Disabled Person, adopted by the National Assembly in 2004. The Bill sets out ways to improve professional integration and vocational training levels for disabled persons by making these aspects a compulsory subject for collective bargaining. The Bill also reinforces the need for public and private employers to comply with their obligation to employ disabled workers.

In December 2004, the **Danish** Ministry of Employment launched a new employment strategy entitled "Disability and Jobs", aimed at increasing the number of disabled people on the open labour market. The strategy, divided into twelve specific initiatives (employment, leisure and quality of life, public administration, accessibility, etc.) is a part of a wider disability policy of the Danish Government adopted during the European Year of People with Disabilities in 2003. The impact of the strategy will be measured against two main objectives; 1) The number of disabled people in the labour market should increase by 2000 every year and 2) The number of enterprises and organisations employing

disabled people should increase by 1%. In 2005, the government earmarked an additional 80 million Danish crowns (10 million euro) for these activities. Integration and mainstreaming has been further promoted through ESF and EQUAL programme sponsored projects. The 'Vision Partnership in Denmark' (Synspartnerskabet i Danmark) is a follow-up to a successful EQUAL project 'Handeplan' that is currently being implemented, focusing on the integration of visually impaired into the open labour market. The individual's participation in the project is coordinated by a rehabilitation expert and a visual expert. The objective of another EQUAL financed project 'EQUAL Partnership' is to help marginalised groups to enter the labour market through the employment of modern technology, notably a portable PDA device that can be instantly consulted when facing a cumbersome situation.

In **Finland** the Act on Social Enterprises (1351/2003) was prepared under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour to promote the employment of the disabled and the long-term unemployed. The Act came into force on 1 January 2004. A corporation, a foundation or another registered trader may on application be entered in the register of social enterprises under section 3 of the Trade Register Act (129/1979). A disabled person and a long-term unemployed person are included in the percentage of placed employees for as long as employment subsidies or combined subsidies are paid towards their wage costs. Currently there are 16 social enterprises in the register of social enterprises.

The **Swedish** Government proposes a three-step model in order to secure the effectiveness of the measures for the occupational disabled. Initial vocational guidance will be followed by rehabilitation located in the workplace if considered necessary by the Public Employment Service, PES, and regular work has still not been found. Sheltered work at state owned Samhall AB or another employer will also be possible.

In **Portugal** public employment policies are perhaps one of the areas in which the disability perspective is most firmly consolidated, particularly via its integration into general employment support instruments. There has been a notable shift from individual programmes to a more mainstreamed approach in favour of people with disabilities. In concrete terms this has led to the intensification of specific programmes and measures, such as: **1)** the consolidation of the *Local and Specialized Resource Centres Networks* as support and specialized intervention structures within the domain of vocational rehabilitation, namely in the evaluation/vocational guidance domains, integration support and retaining people with disabilities in employment, specialized support towards their training when integrated in courses and actions targeted to general publics; **2)** the *Resources Centres Network* approved by the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP), based on mobilizing partnerships with non profitable private entities acting in this field, covers currently the 86 Employment Centres, 9 of which are entities of Specialized Resources Centres and 74 entities of Local Resources Centres.

It is also possible to detach, among others, the following measures promoted by the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP): Pre-vocational Education; Information, Evaluation and Vocational Guidance of people with disabilities; Vocational Training; Retraining; Incentives for employers in order to promote people with disabilities' employment; Self-Employment, Telework; Technical Assistance carried out at job station itself; Supported Employment in the normal labour market; Sheltered-Employment; Technical-Assistance.

3.3.2 Life long learning and Integration of disabled people through ICT:

Malta has set up the Foundation for Accessibility in Information Technology (FITA) to ensure that new developments in Information and Communication Technology are fully accessible to people with disabilities.

In March 2003, **Italy** adopted the White Paper on Technological Innovation setting the following priority objective – to break down the barriers which the development of ICT can create for the democratic growth of the whole population and in particular of some groups with specific needs. Following the conclusions of the White Paper, a new law on Accessibility to web sites was approved. The law sets out principles and guidelines for Public administrations to provide accessible sites. Furthermore, a Permanent interministerial Commission has been instituted aimed at the correct implementation of the laws and to cooperate with all the institutions to develop e-accessibility approach. During the last year, a nation-wide project entitled Navigabile was implemented. This internet-based system aims to provide an innovative way to access web content for children and youths affected by motor and communicational disabilities.

In **Hungary**, state support for disabled adult training is twice as high as the general support. Accredited training institutions that design and organise training courses for disabled people can receive this state support. Each year the Ministry of Education organises a communication campaign to increase the number of students with disabilities taking part in higher education.

In August 2003, **Portugal** adopted the National Programme for the Participation of Citizens with Special Needs in the Information Society. The documents provide additional incentives for life-long learning for people with disabilities. This includes a priority line regarding work (priority 6), though the remaining eight priorities also have an impact on the employability of people with disabilities. Several actions are being developed within priority 6, namely a manual on “Information Technology without Barriers in the Work Place”, projects on software and documentation accessibility used in a labour context and incentive measures to facilitate teleworking.

In **Slovakia**, projects to increase computer literacy are developed within the framework of the Sector Operational Programme Human Resources and the Single Programming Document NUTS II Objective, co-financed with ESF funding and oriented towards disadvantaged job-seekers, including people with disabilities.

In **Sweden**, “Folkhögskolor” (high schools for adults) arrange ‘adjustment courses’ to provide social and practical skills training for disabled adults and ‘activation courses’ in cooperation with disability organisations. The Swedish National Agency for Special Educational Support provides annual funding for these higher education establishments. This is supplemented by grants for disabled students and a special programme entitled “Added Value”, which is an EQUAL Development Partnership. In June 2004, the Swedish Board for e-Government operating within the framework of the Swedish Agency for Public Management, in collaboration with the Swedish Disability Ombudsman and the national W3C contact point, presented updated guidelines for public web site design.

In **Greece**, the Institute of Social Protection and Solidarity runs Adult Training Centers in four regions of the country. The emphasis is basically on the training of staff that work in various agencies, governmental and non-governmental, that deal with various needy categories of people, including people with disability. A lot of training schemes have been

implemented for the staff of such agencies so as to better improve their skills and attitudes to their daily work.

In **France**, Law No. 2004-391 of 4 May 2004 on lifelong vocational training and social dialogue lays down a number of provisions to improve access to vocational training for disabled persons.

ESF has in recent years co-financed a number of interesting ICT related projects in **Spain**. Disc@pnet, website developed by the Spanish Organisation for People with Visual Disability (ONCE) aims to design and implement platforms adapted for people with disabilities, using technology as an opportunity to facilitate the accessibility of information society for everyone. Within this platform, it publishes the digital newspaper *Solidaridad Digital*, the first daily digital publication about disability in Europe (and the only one published entirely in Spanish). *Solidaridad Digital*, published since the year 2000, collects national and international information related to people with disabilities. In 2004 five special monographic editions were published, devoted to Employment and Disability, Enterprise and Disability, Corporate Social Responsibility and Disability, Information and Communication Technologies and Disability, and Labour market integration of people with disabilities in the EU. The ESF also supports the project IMSERSO aimed at the training of professionals that work with disabled people and at the dissemination of information on the specific needs of the disabled.

The **Czech Republic** launched The National Programme of Computer Literacy in 2003. This programme aims to provide basic computer literacy skills for beginners at a low price. These courses are very sought after by people between 40 and 60 years of age. A part of this programme is NPCL Handicap, which provides people with disabilities with basic computer skills, which will help them to improve their situation in the labour market.

3.3.3 Accessibility to the public built environment and information:

A majority of Member States have national strategy documents complementing the National Action Plans on Employment and Social Inclusion.

Swedish public authorities are required to implement the elements of the national action plan for disability policy within their sphere of competence. The authorities therefore have to adjust their environment according to set accessibility standards and must bear the costs of modifications. The Swedish government has established authorities to monitor the implementation of the national action plan by the 14 separate authorities and to ensure achievement of the objectives by 2010 at the latest.

In the **United Kingdom** as part of its' commitment to creating sustainable communities, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) published in 2003 a good practice guide on disability and planning. Aimed principally at local planning authorities, it explains the relevance of disability legislation, emphasises the needs of those with mobility needs and explains the importance of the planning system in helping to deliver environments which can be used by everyone. A Department of Health initiative (Valuing people: a new strategy for learning disability for the 21st century) is designed to improve the lives of people with learning disabilities, their families and carers through recognition of their rights as citizens, social inclusion in local communities, choice in their daily lives and opportunities to be independent. In support of the strategy, the Government has developed a long term implementation programme of consultation with disabled people and experts.

The **Finnish** Ministry of Environment has issued Building Codes setting out national regulation guidelines and guidelines for the government, as well as binding regulations for Housing Design (currently under review). The National Council on Disability and some 220 municipal disability councils address issues concerning town and infrastructure planning, housing and building, education, social and health services. Recently, different ministries have issued their own strategy on accessibility. The Ministry of Transport and Communication has published a strategy to make transport accessible for all. The Ministry of Education has launched a similar national project within the sphere of culture.

In February 2005, the **Hungarian Government** launched a series of measures to promote and develop the accessibility of public services. In March 2004, a Hungarian Sign Language Programme Office was established, serving as an operational centre for seven regional sign language interpretation centres operating across the country. Access to information is secured through a National Information Strategy, incorporating the principles of equal access to electronic information. The Ministry of National Cultural Heritage has developed a disability strategy to provide equal access to cultural assets.

In November 2005, The Slovenian Government will adopt the project the Accessible **Slovenia** Strategy. The aim of the strategy is for the State to become friendly and pleasant to live in for all people and to equalise the living conditions and participation in social processes for all groups of people in the areas of education, culture, recreation, information, decision making and other spheres of daily life. Accessibility to services in the public and private sector and to the physical environment is one of the basic rights of persons with disabilities.

The **Spanish** Second Action Plan for People with Disabilities recalls the importance of developing an accessible public environment. The implementation of this commitment is set out in detail in the State Accessibility Plan (2004-2012). The Plan revolves around the principle of "design for all" and accessibility of new technologies.

Italy promotes policies to eliminate barriers in the public built environment. A specific inter-institutional Committee has been created aimed at studying the process of harmonisation of the legal provisions related to the public built environment.

In Greece, the *Ministry for the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works* independently or in cooperation with other competent organizations, have instituted common legislation for environmental and building interventions that facilitate the access of people with disabilities to the public built environment. Also, in the framework of the Olympic and Paralympic Games 2004, specifications for the construction of athletic facilities, highway infrastructure and buildings were set and applied. In addition, the *Ministry of Transport and Communications* has made the necessary adjustments to public transportation vehicles, airports, railway stations and all the organizations under its supervision and has planned special bus routes for the disabled and in cooperation with the *Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity* issues a discount transportation card. The Ministry of Transport has procured for the provision of telecommunication services tailored to the needs of disabled people (accessible public card phones, discounts to the Greek main phone service provider, special telephone sets etc). Moreover, the Ministry according to the World Wide Web Consortium standards, has developed a special internet site which ensures access to immediate electronic information for a variety of matters that interest disabled people. A specialized internet site designed to provide supportive, consultative and e-government communication and information services is being developed by the *Institute of Social Protection and Solidarity* and the *Ministry of Interior*.

In **Portugal**, apart from the general principles laid down in the basic legal instruments, such as the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic – most specifically in Article 71, there are strategic documents complementing the National Action Plans on Employment and Social Inclusion. Among these we can especially point out the a) Executive Law 123/1997 defining a set of Technical Rules and Standards designed to enable access for persons with reduced mobility to public built environment, b) The framework law 38/2004 defining general basis of the juridical system for prevention, rehabilitation and participation of people with disabilities, c) The labour code law (99/2003) incorporating a set of rules designed to prevent discrimination against people with disabilities in their access to the job market, d) The Executive Law 29/2001 establishing a job quota system for people with disabilities with a level of incapacity of 60% or more in the various services and bodies of the central and local public administration, and finally, e) The Executive Law 247/1989 setting out the regime governing the provisions of technical and financial support for the programmes involving vocational rehabilitation of people with disabilities. The **Czech Republic** accepted a programme “Mobility for Everybody” in 2002, which strives for high-quality and barrier-free means of transport, barrier-free accessibility of public services, health services and social services and introduces signal and information systems for people with visual and hearing impairments.

In **Germany** the Act on Equal Opportunities for Disabled Persons, which entered into force on 1 May 2002, includes general provision for the ban on discrimination for public authorities. The core of the Act on Equal Opportunities for Disabled Persons is the creation of comprehensively understood barrier-free environments. Disabled persons are to be enabled to use all areas of life, such as buildings and means of transport, in the usual way, without particular difficulties and without help from others.

In addition, three ordinances entered into force in July 2002 which obliged Federal authorities to ensure barrier-free environments. Hearing- or speech-impaired persons have the right, when defending their own rights in administrative procedures with all Federal authorities, to communicate in German sign language with signs supporting spoken language or via other suitable communication aids. The authorities are to meet the cost of this. With the ordinance on barrier-free documents in the Federal administration, all blind and visually-impaired persons have a right, when asserting their rights in administrative procedures, to be provided with documents in a form which is perceptible for them. This right includes written notices, contracts under public law and forms. Modern electronic information processing makes it possible to send these documents as e-mail if blind and visually-impaired persons have Internet access and a computer with a Braille line or speech output. Information can also be provided where necessary using a diskette or CD-ROM, as Braille print or where necessary in large print. Barrier-free access to all websites of the Federal Administration must be ensured by 31 December 2005.

3.4 Promotion of autonomous living and re-integration into socio-economic life:

Progress is also visible in the many **Member States'** National Action Plans on Social Inclusion, as is a greater emphasis on mainstreaming of disability(see Annex 3).

A main priority is the promotion of social inclusion through employment of people with disabilities. It is also acknowledged that employment promotion programmes are more efficient when accompanied by integrated policies to ensure access to mainstream education, vocational training, lifelong learning opportunities and accessibility of the public environment.

Member States are becoming aware of the positive impact which a developed and fully implemented accessibility policy can have on social and economic inclusion. Recent efforts seek to promote the "design for all" concept in the supply of goods, services and infrastructures. Most progress has been made in ICT and e-Accessibility. Developments in accessibility to the public built environment are more difficult to measure. Annex 3 provides further information.

Moreover, the delivery of services to people with disabilities in the various aspects of life and related policies is receiving increasing attention in most Member States, some of whom are refocusing social protection policies⁴.

Over recent years, closed institutions have been gradually replaced by open, decentralised and smaller support and care units. Member States rely increasingly on personalised assistance when striving to integrate disabled people into the open labour market and society. The transposition of the "acquis communautaire" into national legislation in new Member States has been an important factor in changing perceptions about care for disabled people.

The **Dutch** government has set up an interdisciplinary Task Force (an autonomous advisory body comprising of people with disabilities) to stimulate the development of mainstreaming, to promote good practices and to monitor and evaluate the progress and impact of mainstreaming policies in society.

In 2002, **Slovenia** introduced the right of disabled people to have sign language interpretation when dealing with authorities and when entering the labour market. The act enables the removal of basic communication barriers between the hearing and non-hearing, which used to limit the expression of the deaf. It also improved possibilities of accessing appropriate social, education and professional participation in society.

With this act, a deaf person has achieved the right to use sign language when dealing with state administration bodies, local administration, performers of public concessions or public service providers. A deaf person is also entitled to use sign language in all other life situations, in which being deaf could present a barrier to fulfilling his or her needs. This right is implemented by enforcing the right to a sign language interpreter. On the request of a deaf person or by the formal duty based on the document, stating the right of the person to the interpreter, state bodies, local administrative bodies, performers of public concessions or public service providers are obliged to provide a deaf person with a sign language interpreter.

The **Act on the equalisation of opportunities for persons with disabilities** is in preparation and is planned to be adopted by the Parliament in 2007. Its purpose is to promote equality for all persons with disabilities in society, notably by: improving the possibilities of persons with disabilities to act as full-fledged members of society and by improving the possibilities of disabled persons to live independently.

Italy has, through its 'White Paper on the Welfare State', committed itself to improve the personal independence and socio-professional integration of disabled people.

⁴ European Joint Report on Social Inclusion 2004 and European Report on social inclusion in the ten new Member States 2005

The programs of Individual projects on independent living continues to be achieved at local level according to law 162/98 regarding the financing of specific interventions for people with disabilities in need of high level of support.

Slovakia recognizes that personal assistance is one of the most progressive forms of social assistance to people with disabilities. Within the framework of the 2004 edition of the Slovak National Programme for development of living conditions of people with disabilities in all domains of life, the government has set up an Institution of Labour Assistants under the Employment Services Act.

In **Estonia**, the Concept of Social Benefits for Disabled Persons was prepared at the beginning of 2005. The document aims to improve instruments for disability assessment, moving away from the care-centred concept towards an assessment of the effects of the functional aspects of disability.

Sweden has placed mainstreaming of disability at the core of its Governments Bill “From patient to citizen – a national action plan for disability policy” adopted in May 2000 under which the government will strive towards a more accessible society. The implementation of disability policy by public authorities has been clearly defined in the Swedish National Action Plan.

A network of **Spanish** universities led by the University Carlos III of Getafe in Madrid, is currently conducting a research project aimed at integrating statistical information, in order to explore the relationship between disability and the open labour market.

Within the framework of its policy to promote an inclusive labour market, the government of **Cyprus** has developed and co-financed a number of projects together with ESF. Some of these are aimed at employers in order to encourage them to employ disabled people and to adapt the working environment to their needs; others are intended to improve existing facilities and to extend the care infrastructure for children, older persons and disabled people.

The amendments in the Law of Social Services and Social Assistance have been highlighted recently. The law has been supplemented with a social service – “halfway home”. In the halfway home, short-term social rehabilitation is provided for people with mental health problems who do not require long-term social rehabilitation and social care. Service in the halfway homes provide people with the necessary skills for independent living or to help prepare them for living in group homes.

The **Greek** Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity, has under its supervision the implementation of certain programs in order to promote autonomous living and gradually re-integrate people with disabilities into socio-economic life. Such programs are: a) the *Operational Program “Health-Welfare 2000-2006”* that aims to reform the existing model of closed care institutions into open and decentralized small-size support and care units by providing special actions for skill development and training in semi-autonomous living for persons with disabilities living in institutions, further education and training of the institutions' staff, actions for the development of volunteerism, etc., b) the *Recovery, Physical and Social Rehabilitation Centers Program* designed to provide among other services, physical and social rehabilitation services to disabled people of all ages through the utilization of all the modern methods of physical rehabilitation, as well the implementation of Programs funded by the European Union for the pre-professional education, vocational orientation and training of people with disabilities, c) the *Physical Exercise and Recreation Program* which is

a nationwide program designed to Integrate disabled people in the Greek Community by providing them through sports, training and competition, with the same opportunities as non-disabled persons and benefit them physically, mentally, socially and spiritually.

The *Institute of Social Protection and Solidarity* based on the disability classification according to the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health-ICF, has developed the Functionality Card which aims to facilitate the dealings between the disabled and the Public Administration by indicating the disability category and the functionality degree of the disabled person. The Card is part of wider adaptations in the system that include training and certification of evaluators, setting up of new centers for training and evaluation, development of relevant information technology system and legal and organizational changes.

The Czech Republic approved the National plan for Support and Integration of People with Disabilities for the period (2006-2009) in August 2005. This plans aims to improve the situation of people with disabilities by setting targets in all relevant policies. This plan supports among others wider choice of services enabling people with disabilities to stay at home and live an independent and self-determined life.

3.5 Other trends

3.5.1 Decentralisation:

Responsibility for designing and implementing actions to integrate disabled people into the labour market and other areas of life are increasingly being decentralised from the national to the local and especially to the regional level. This process is particularly apparent in the new Member States where it appears that the regional authorities have given a positive response to these new challenges.

In the **Czech and Slovak republics** the respective Associations of Local Authorities have organised nation-wide contests to select the most disability-friendly city. Local authorities in the new Member States have increasingly been able to finance actions and measures aimed at improving the situation of disabled people through Structural Funds and the PHARE programme.

Moreover, regions in the **Czech Republic** approve their own regional plans with regard to achieving equality of opportunity for people with disabilities. The best regions are awarded a prize in a contest organized by the Czech National Disability Council (Czech umbrella disability organisation).

In Member States with a federal structure, the regions traditionally play an important role. **Italian regions** have been very actively involved in shaping and implementing disability related policies within the framework of new labour market reforms. Several experimental and pilot projects aimed at increasing the integration of people with disabilities into the labour market are currently implemented across Italy. Italy recently allocated over 100 million euro to the regions to establish so called “halfway homes” aimed at accommodating persons with serious disabilities who lack the assistance of their family members. New local authorities to ensure participation at regional and local level have been created (i.e. Regional observatories in Piemonte, Marche, Veneto). In **Portugal**, The “Alert School” and “Accessible Beach” Projects were launched during EYPD and turned into permanent programmes. These projects have as an objective to change the disability perspective by using the school system and by involving community and tourism bodies.

The objectives of the “Alert School Project” are to raise children and young people’s awareness of the need to defend the rights of, and not discriminate against, disabled people. It does this by getting them to take part in activities within the context of their schools that help to eliminate physical, communicational and attitude-related barriers. This intervention is based on an annual competition among basic (primary) and secondary students, on the subject of disability. The students are challenged to “identify physical, communicational and attitude-related barriers and to propose solutions”, namely in what concerns architectural barriers in their schools, in surrounding areas, and in public transport. Each study is conducted by one or more students working under the guidance of their teachers.

The objective of the “Accessible Beach” project is to make seaside and riverside beaches accessible to people with disabilities. It aims to provide beaches with suitable conditions in terms of access (car parking, ramps down to the sand, accessible toilet facilities, boardwalks) and to allocate them a distinctive symbol (similar to the Blue Flag system which currently tells users about a beach’s quality and whether it has life guards and so on), a specially designed flag.

The project will be conducted in accordance with a plan and involves the participation and articulation of a whole range of bodies with intervention in swimming areas – precisely one of its most valuable aspects. The project is led by the SNRIPD, which was responsible for designing the pennant and the publicity materials. The Directorate-General of Tourism (DGT) will be in charge of publicising the project itself. The Water Institute (INAG), which is the body that coordinates the Coastal Strip Planning Schemes (POOC’s), will select the beaches. The Institute of Employment and Vocational Training is responsible for the information kit to be distributed to the life guards. Provision has been made for a protocol with an even wider range of bodies, including: the Lifesaving Institute (ISN), which already has a training manual that covers assistance to disabled persons; the National Guard (GNR – one of Portugal’s police forces and generally responsible for traffic policing), which will help oversee car parking, and the Fire Brigade.

Danish disability NGOs have become an integral part of a decentralised decision making system following new legislation. As from 2006, each Danish municipality is to establish a disability council, where representatives from the local level and the disability NGOs will meet and discuss issues affecting disabled people. The Danish Disability Council supports the new law, on the basis that the reform can further increase mainstreaming of disability issues. As the municipality will be the only source of assistance and support for disabled people, each municipality is required to introduce a comprehensive disability policy based on the UN standards by no later than January 2007. Today, 38 out of a total of 100 municipalities have disability policy in place. Special websites have been set up to monitor progress and development of municipal disability policies. In order to support the reform and provide competence, a special Research and Advisory Council has been created. The Danish Equal Opportunities Centre for Disabled Persons has compiled guidelines for municipal disability policies and will organise seminars on how the municipal disability councils will work in practice. Activities are carried out jointly with the Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People.

3.5.2 Trans-regional and international cooperation:

Some programmes to integrate disabled people into the labour market have been implemented through trans-regional and international cooperation. For example **Austrian NGOs and Slovak regions** have jointly established four pilot agencies for supported employment in

Slovakia within the framework of the project “Support of employment of people with disabilities”. These agencies, designed on the pattern of Austrian agencies, but working on a regional principle, are engaged – contrary to standard agencies – not only as mediators by seeking out suitable employers for their clients, but also by monitoring their conduct at the workplace during the adaptation phase.

Estonia, following a joint project with the UK, has put in place a network of case managers to provide individual employment consultation in labour market offices in each country. Simultaneously, the managers have become heads of local cooperation networks.

The Institute of Social Protection and Solidarity in **Greece** is participating in a two-year transnational project entitled EDAMAT that takes place within the context of the European Commission Action Plan to mainstream disability issues into relevant Community policies. The project aims a) To develop a policy assessment tool to benchmark the mainstreaming of disability issues, the European Disability Action for Mainstreaming Assessment Tool (EDAMAT); b) To create accompanying Advocacy Guidelines for (and by) disability stakeholders so that they can use this tool to influence policy development at various levels (e.g. local, regional, national and European); c) To disseminate the assessment tool and the advocacy guidelines widely throughout the 25 countries of the EU and amongst disability organisations in candidate countries. Eight agencies from seven countries participate in the project.

3.5.3 Increased participation of NGO’s and associations:

Over Recent years, NGO’s and voluntary associations have assumed an important role and responsibility for providing some services and raising the profile of disabled people. Often, the NGOs act in cooperation with State and local authorities. In February 2005, a **Polish NGO** called “Friends of Integration Association” launched, in association with the Government, a campaign “Able to work – 2005”. The campaign was targeted at employers and persons with disabilities – to change their negative approaches and raise awareness of employment possibilities. It aims to increase the awareness of rights, of self-esteem and the self-determination of economically inactive disabled persons.

In the **Czech Republic**, NGOS play a very important role in providing services. However, the legal framework of NGO service providers is currently not consolidated. A legal framework of NGO service providers will be laid down by a new act on social services, which was presented to the Parliament in September 2005. This act will help to boost the efficiency and quality of services. The National Plan for Support and Integration of People with Disabilities 2006 - 2009 was approved in August, this plan supports among others the participation of NGOs in preparation of policies and programmes and strategic documents towards people with disabilities.

In **Greece**, the Institute of Social Protection and Solidarity in collaboration with the non-governmental organization “Disability Now” and other agencies are working together for the implementation of the project “MARKET ON WHEELS” within the context of the Community Initiative EQUAL. The project aims for the collaboration of two categories of disabled people, that is, the mentally handicapped and those with a mobility related disability, in order to respond more effectively to the new economic environment. By dividing responsibilities in the production and marketing of their products (protective production environment), according to their special abilities, a new dynamism is generated. The new

enterprise will enter the market on better terms and will ensure the conditions for equal participation of disabled people in the economy and the society.

3.5.4 Integration through and in sport of people with disabilities :

The European Commission has received from Member States valuable information concerning the integration of people with disabilities through and in sport. National administrations have provided information on ongoing programmes of integration of people with disabilities through and in sport, budget allocated to these programmes and other factual elements. Member States are willing to cooperate on a deeper exchange facilitated by the Commission in order to arrive, within the framework of national competences, to better and more innovative solutions applied to integration of people with disabilities.