

Training as Vehicle to Employment

Newsletter no. 1, June 2007

Dear Readers

Welcome to our first Bulgarian newsletter concerning the EU funded project Training as Vehicle to Employment (TVE). The consortium for the project consists of the Independent Living Institute, Sweden, the Centers for Independent Living in Bad Kreuznach (Germany), Dublin, Helsinki, Thessaloniki, Iniciativas y Estudios Sociales, Spain, Integracja, Poland, and Apeirons, Latvia. Initially Bulgaria joined the project as an Associate Partner who contributed to and benefited from exchange of experiences, methodology, synergy effects, etc. Since the beginning of 2007 CIL – Sofia received funding for promotion activities of the results achieved by the international project as well as for building a national network of employers who would accommodate disabled people in their trainee- and internship programmes.



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The purpose is to work closely with government agencies and organisations in a number of European countries to ensure that their trainee and internship programmes are also open to qualified people with disabilities. To improve the chances of disabled youth in the labor market we plan to list training opportunities where disabled youth can gain valuable work experience and insight into the operations of top level agencies.



The results will be published in [the Study and Work for All](#) database on the Independent Living Institute website.

Read more about the project and the consortium on the project's website, www.independentliving.org

Project News

The project has been up and running since the beginning of 2006. The national coordinators in Sweden, Germany, Greece, Finland, Ireland, Spain, Poland and Latvia started by mapping out state organizations to see how many of them offer trainee and internship programs. The coordinators also try to find out how many of the state organizations do offer trainee and internship programs explicitly stated that they are open to qualified people with disabilities.

In this newsletter we are mainly going to take a closer look on three countries; Germany, Greece and Spain to see what kind of answers they've received when contacting different state organizations. We will briefly describe the European Union's pilot programme of traineeships for people with a disability and finish with recent news as well.

- [Detailed activities of three partner countries](#)

Number of organizations contacted:

Germany: Contacted 800 organizations so far mainly by email and around 60 by phone.

Greece: 18 ministries, 19 universities, 14 technological educational institutes, state training centers (not all of them yet since there are few hundreds). Nevertheless, only few of them have got back to them with detailed information about their training activities. However, there are still plenty of sub-directorates of those state agencies that need to be interviewed separately, as they often act independently concerning the educational and vocational opportunities they offer to young trainees/employees.

Spain: 24 state agencies have been contacted directly by phone a 39 people within those agencies have been contacted by email.

How many offer a traineeship/internship?

Germany: Most of them offer some kind of traineeship and internships but they differ in type and duration.

Greece: Most of the high-level state agencies run formal training programs and/or internships. Some of those programs take place on a regular basis (e.g. yearly).



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Spain: All of them, but they offer mainly internships.

How many of these organizations explicitly on their homepages state that they have internships/traineeships open for people with disabilities?

Germany: The state agencies are generally obliged by law to ensure that their programs are open to all.

Greece: There are an extensive number of different state agencies that offer intern- and traineeships. Here are some examples: The 124 Public Vocational Training Institutes (IEK) in Greece run up to 180 different biennial training programs (up to 4 semesters). All of these training programs are meant to be open to trainees with disabilities as well. Nevertheless, there are no official policy actions that indicate the way in which those programmes can be accessible to all. The Public IEKs buildings are, however, obliged to follow the federal guidelines concerning the public buildings' accessibility. More than 200 Vocational Training Centers (KEKs) are the public (and private) sector agencies organize informal continuing training programmes with a view to combine training and employment. 20 Special Centers of Social and Vocational Inclusion for people with disabilities that offer some kind of trainee- or internships and the Centers for Adult Education (K.E.E.) who promote the upgrading of the educational, occupational and social conditions of certain "vulnerable" social groups of people. There are currently 43 KEEs running training programs (up to 250 hours each) for 56010 trainees for the period 2005-2006 (co-funded by the European Social Fund).

Spain: Not every agency gives info about trainee programs/internships directly on their homepage, and those who do, do not mention disabled men and women. It is only when you wish to apply, that you in the application can see that they follow "Royal Directive 2271/2004", which regulates the access to public employment to people with disabilities.

What kind of answers and/or feedback have you received when asking the above questions?

Germany: Most of the people interviewed think that people with disabilities, are included in all the programs. Nevertheless the difficulties are in the concrete implementation; i.e. access to buildings, working facilities etc. Many of the civil servants are aware of these problems and try to solve it with "small solutions", i.e. consider people with those disabilities and if they can offer appropriate facilities. Very few have contact with those state organizations who can advise or even help them, e.g. with working facilities etc. And in a situation when a qualified disabled person applies for an internship will he or she be



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treated equally as a non-disabled person? There is a difference between theory and praxis.

Greece: There are organisations which simply declare that they are not currently in position to accommodate trainees or employees with disabilities; some are not familiar with the accessibility issues because there are no disabled employees within their staff/trainees; and few others seem open to promote relevant disability policies concerning their employees and future trainees.

The truth is that most of the state agencies have been forced lately to follow the instructions of the [action plan "Elements provided for the configuration policy of the Ministry of Internal, Public Administration and Decentralisation \(ΥΠΕΣΔΔΑ\), for the employees with disabilities"](#) which was signed by the Minister in April 2006. This governmental action has made the agencies to be "alerted" and a bit more aware of the accessibility issues concerning their activities.

Within the context of the Ministry's policy, concerning the upgrade of the Greek manpower, the facilitation of the duties of the employees with disabilities is particularly important. In order for the Ministry to shape a relevant policy for the employees with disabilities, the ΥΠΕΣΔΔΑ has asked the state agencies to inform the Ministry (by filling in a relevant questionnaire) about the number of their employees with disabilities per sector and speciality, the institutional frame of their hiring process, their duties and finally the problems that they face within their working place (e.g. accessibility, working conditions, time schedule, etc).

Spain: Many of the civil servants are not aware that there is a difference between a non-disabled and a disabled person when it comes to their possibilities in getting accepted into a trainee-internship. They always refer to the Royal Directive 2271/2004 which governs this kind of situations. It is only when you ask them to be concrete (if the building is accessible, what kind of technical aids they have at disposal, what kind of facilities they offer and so on), that you realize that they are not able to answer the question properly. In fact, the impression we got is that this is out of control and many of the civil servants clearly has no knowledge about the problem a disabled trainee may face in terms of accessibility and so on.

[Paid traineeship for people with a disability in the European Parliament:](#)

The main purpose of this programme is to offer a number of people with disabilities a meaningful and valuable work experience, and an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the activities of the European Parliament.



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The traineeships are open both to graduates of universities or equivalent institutions and to people whose qualifications are below university level and are awarded for a period of five months. Only candidates who can certify that they have a disability will be considered for admission.

The accepted trainees will be paid a monthly allowance of 1070 euros and additional costs directly related to the disability may be covered by up to a maximum of 50 % of the amount of the monthly scholarship.

The traineeships start on the 1st of October and on the 1st of March. The application periods are between the 15th of March to the 15th of May and between the 15th of August and the 15th of October respectively.

Read more about the trainee program and how to apply on the website of the European Parliament, www.europarl.europa.eu



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Recent news

At the present time, partner countries are preparing a booklet which at the latest will be published on September 2007. Its content will concentrate on disability policy, general accessibility and technical expertise in the workplace and will be addressed to human resource managers at government agencies and also to all stakeholders.

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