



## Paving the way for an inclusive work environment

### Inclusion is good for business

**Persons with disabilities bring in Small and Medium Enterprises their unique perspective and take business into new heights.**

What if SMEs pursue disability diversity in the workplace as a valuable resource that benefits business rather than “moral” or “law” obligation?

#### The Challenge

1 out of 2 persons with disabilities is still unemployed in the EU Member-States.

**What happens with this untapped human potential?**

National legislations promote inclusion of persons with disabilities, but the quotas system in general addresses almost entirely companies with more than 50 employees.

**What happens with SMEs?**

#### The answer is... Beyond Inclusion!

First off, we delved into the culture of SMEs with regards to a disability-inclusive work environment and at the same time, we explored the position of people with disabilities into the labour market.

Between February and October 2021, the partners from Romania, Greece, Spain and Bulgaria conducted a research about the current employability of persons with disabilities and the training methods both SMEs and persons with disabilities welcome the most, reaching out to more than 100 SMEs and persons with disabilities.

5 countries join forces in the Beyond Inclusion Project, in order to improve the employability for persons with disabilities and:

- ✓ Trigger a disability inclusive SMEs mindset, where disability is a benefit
- ✓ Equip persons with disabilities with the appropriate tools, practices and soft skills orientation, as well as with a methodology on how to best demonstrate their unique skills in a professional context or when seeking for a job.



## Let's go... Beyond Inclusion!

## What we wanted to explore

### SMES

How do they feel about hiring a person with disability?

How aware are they regarding the social, cultural, financial value of a diverse, disability-inclusive workforce?

What are the impeding factors and the facilitating factors in hiring persons with disabilities?

Are they aware of the benefits of inclusion?

Are they willing to participate in training towards a disability inclusive workforce?

What training methods SMEs prefer?

### PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

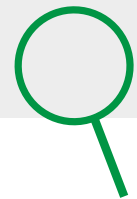
What is their current place in the labour market?

Is finding and sustaining work for a person with disability challenging?

What are the barriers and the enablers to their employment?

What skills they would prefer to develop for finding and sustaining a job?

What learning tools they prefer?



## What we came up with

- \* Both SMEs and persons with disabilities believe that most of the employers consider disability as an impediment in the work environment.
- \* Although SMEs representatives are highly aware of the importance of inclusion of persons with disabilities and recognize some of the benefits from their inclusion, they hesitate to include them in their own workforce.
- \* Employers' misconceptions about the productivity of persons with disabilities, the cost of their accommodation, the behaviour of colleagues and their safety at the workplace hinder their inclusion in the labour market.
- \* SMEs rarely receive applications by persons with disabilities.



## What' s next?

- ✓ The Beyond Inclusion Project gets ready to respond to these challenges.
- ✓ The Project team has developed a solid methodological framework for the development of online training material available to all!
- ✓ Both SMEs and persons with disabilities are to be trained for an inclusive work environment.
- ✓ **SMEs** are to discover the benefits of hiring persons with disabilities and the added value of a diverse workplace. New talent awaits. What SMEs need to know is how easily it can be included in their workforce!
- ✓ **Persons with disabilities** will see their skills evolve. From building a well structured CV, to presenting oneself in an interview, to adapt to a new work environment, persons with disabilities will find in the training material everything they need to know in order to hit the labour market!

# So, let's go Beyond Inclusion!

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