



K2 – Strategic Partnerships

„Beyond Inclusion: Employability for persons with disabilities”

Project number: 2020-1-RO01-KA204-080215

### **Intellectual Output 1/Task 3**

#### **Research study on employability-disability nexus for the development of learning material for SMEs and persons with disabilities for social inclusion and benefits for SMEs**

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### Executive summary

This report presents the results of the research conducted within IO1 activity of K2 – Strategic Partnerships project „**Beyond Inclusion: Employability for persons with disabilities**”, Project number: **2020-1-RO01-KA204-080215**.

The main purposes of the document is to draft a methodological framework for the creation of:

- a) **Learning material and tools for SMEs** (i.e. HR, managerial/executive level staff incl. consultants who are responsible for recruiting, hiring, retaining employees), that will help to acknowledge and reap the benefits of a disability-inclusive workforce.
- b) **Learning material for persons with disabilities** to get the best out of their professional development opportunities by showing how to demonstrate, acquire, develop job skills, as well as apply transferable soft skills at the workplace.

The information collected in the desk research carried out in the four countries involved in the project, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece and Spain, analysed and centralized in the country reports annexed to this report are presented in **Chapter 2 - Literature review regarding the disability-employability**. This chapter includes:

- a brief description of the employability situation in the countries analysed, including definitions of disability and statistics regarding the employability of persons with disabilities (*Chapter 2.1 - Employability of persons with disabilities*);
- a brief description of existing main laws that support or influence the inclusion of people with disabilities on the labour market (*Chapter 2.2 - Legislation regarding employment of persons with disabilities*);
- barriers and risk factors associated with disabilities at the workplace and enablers to employment (*Chapter 2.3 - Barriers and enablers to employment*);
- good practices of learning materials regarding the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in the SMEs workforce (*Chapter 2.4 - Good practices for learning materials*), and,
- policy recommendations regarding the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in employment (*Chapter 2.5 - Good practices for policy recommendations*).

**Chapter 3 - Quantitative and qualitative study on employability-disability nexus** presents the results of the quantitative research conducted among SME's and persons with disabilities, supported by the results of the qualitative research (in-depth interviews). The information obtained was structured in 6 sub-chapters, as follows:

- *The employability of the persons with disabilities in the SMEs (Chapter 3.1)* including: main used approaches by companies when hiring persons with disabilities, reasons for companies that are not employing and/or have not employed in the past persons with disabilities, reasons that motivate people with disabilities to look for a job, perception about legislation and shortcomings and gaps in the legislation identified by the respondents, the perceived impeding factors/challenges that limit the entry of persons with disabilities to the labour market.



- *The levels of awareness regarding the social, cultural, financial value of a diverse, disability-inclusive workforce in the SMEs are presented in Chapter 3.2.* This section also includes the importance given by SMEs to the inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the labour market and changes that persons with disabilities want to see in the attitudes of their colleagues/peers.
- *The impeding factors in hiring persons with disabilities in the SMEs are presented in Chapter 3.3* (factors /challenges that limit the entry of persons with disabilities to the labour market: the issues hindering the process of accommodating employees with disabilities within the company, issues in hiring people with disabilities).
- *The perceived facilitating factors in hiring persons with disabilities in the SMEs are presented in Chapter 3.4:* possible measures to increase in the number of persons with disabilities in employment indicated by the SMEs and persons with disabilities, benefits for SMEs in order to better integrate in the workplace the persons with disabilities.
- *The perceived benefits of hiring persons with disabilities in the SMEs are presented in Chapter 3.5.*
- *The preferred steps and guiding/training/consulting pedagogy, material, guidelines towards creating a disability-inclusive workforce are presented in Chapter 3.6.* In it are presented important aspects for developing learning tools for SMEs, important topics to be included in the learning tools for SMEs to create a disability-inclusive work force, importance given to the type of information to be included in these learning tools for SMEs to create a disability-inclusive work force, preferred approach for training courses and means of presentation most relevant / useful for learning process.

The conclusions of the research are presented in **Chapter 4 - Methodological framework for developing learning materials and tools for SMEs and persons with disabilities**, structured in 6 sub-chapters that summaries the key findings, like:

- conclusion remarks of the research study;
- preferences on topics including opinions and suggestions by the target groups;
- preferred methods (pedagogical approach, type of materials, time-length of modules) including best practices that could be learned from;
- potential obstacles that should be considered when drafting the training material;
- usability of the learning provision to be developed;
- potential contribution on increasing the employability of the persons with disabilities (SMEs, national etc.)

The a **methodological matrix** containing the methodological elements and tools facilitating the production of IO2 which is a core output of the project - learning material and tools for SMEs and learning material for persons with disabilities - is also presented here.

### 1. Methodological approach

The research process in Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and Spain was based on the approved Methodological Guidelines (IO1) and by using the adopted common research tools and methods. The research activities took place in the period February – July 2021, a period particularly influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting consequences (i.e. social, economic, health, etc.)

The objectives of the research study are:

- To get information on the employability prospects of persons with disabilities in the four countries.
- To understand the attitude of SMEs representatives on employing persons with disabilities and achieving diversity on the grounds of disability as a valuable resource in the work environment, rather than 'moral/ law obligation'.
- To analyse the existing challenges and opportunities of employment of a person with disabilities from their perspective.
- To analyse and promote existing good practices, policy proposals and recommendations as to transpose the activity-driven flow of the intervention towards social inclusion for persons with disabilities through employment and the role of SMEs towards that goal.

As research targets, were considered the investigation and exploration of SME's experiences, perspectives and especially their views on the employability-disability nexus with respect to the following indicative issues:

- Levels of awareness regarding the social, cultural, financial value of a diverse, disability-inclusive workforce;
- Impeding factors, perceived facilitating factors and perceived benefits of hiring persons with disabilities;
- Preferred steps and guiding/training/consulting pedagogy, material, guidelines towards creating a disability-inclusive workforce.

As research targets regarding the persons with disabilities, were considered their experiences and views on the employability-disability nexus with respect to the following indicative issues:

- Which are the perceived impeding factors according to their views and those of the employers?
- Which are their needs in acquiring or developing develop soft job skills, as well as apply them?
- Which are the preferred, most effective learning pathways?

The research process went through the following stages and activities:

ACTIVITY	BY WHEN	WHO
Task 1: Methodology including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quantitative questionnaires for SMEs (EN)</li> <li>- Quantitative questionnaire for persons with disabilities (EN)</li> <li>- Interview guide for persons with disabilities (EN)</li> </ul>	30.04.2021	GPIRO/ARPA
Task 1: Feedback and final questionnaires (EN)	30.04.2021	Militos, ITC, BICC, RNDO,

ACTIVITY	BY WHEN	WHO
		AEK, Me Alla Matia, ARPA: Input on suggested guidelines and tools GPIRO
Task 1: Translation of questionnaires into Romanian, Greek, Spanish, Bulgarian	30.04.2021	GPIRO into Romanian Militos, AEK, Me Alla Matia into Greek ITC into Spain BICC into Bulgarian
Task 1: Translation of Information Sheet & Consent Form for quantitative research into Romanian, Greek, Spanish, Bulgarian	30.04.2021	GPIRO into Romanian Militos, AEK, Me Alla Matia into Greek ITC into Spain BICC into Bulgarian
Task 1: Translation of Consent Form & Interview Guide for qualitative research into Romanian, Greek, Spanish, Bulgarian	07.05.2021	GPIRO into Romanian Militos, AEK, Me Alla Matia into Greek ITC into Spain BICC into Bulgarian
Task 1: Reporting templates and rules for country specific reports to be integrated	30.04.2021	GPIRO Militos, ITC, BICC, RNDO, AEK, Me Alla Matia, ARPA: Input on suggested guidelines and tools
Task 1: Overall methodology O1	30.04.2021	GPIRO
Task 2: Desk research of existing information and resources. At the initial stages of the research process, the project team from the four countries undertook targeted desk research of existing online documents and data of existing strategic documents, projects, the National Statistical Institute, and the relevant public institutions, working in support of people with disabilities. Data of the desk research provided insights into the main definitions regarding disabilities in legislation, key statistics of employability of persons with disabilities, main institutions and stakeholders, legislation and regulatory acts, strategic and policy documents, etc. In addition, the desk research aimed to gather information on existing good practices of learning materials regarding the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in SMEs.	30.04.2021	GPIRO and ARPA: Research in Romania Militos, AEK, Me Alla Matia: Research in Greece ITC: Research in Spain BICC: Research in Bulgaria



ACTIVITY	BY WHEN	WHO
Task 3: Developing and deploying online tools for quantitative research and analysis: Set-up online questionnaires for quantitative research (SMEs and Persons) into Romanian, Greek, Spanish, Bulgarian (one link per type of questionnaire and per language)	30.04.2021	RNDO
Task 3: Quantitative research based on online survey with both target groups – representatives of SMEs and people with disabilities. At the quantitative research conducted among SMEs attended 24 respondents (SMEs actors in recruitment and hiring of personnel) from Bulgaria, 25 from Greece, 30 from Romania, and 20 from Spain. At the quantitative research conducted among persons with disabilities attended 6 respondents from Bulgaria (66.7% with Mobility impairment, 16.7% are deaf or have a hearing impairment, while 16.7% are blind or visually impaired), 21 respondents from Greece (62% of them have a physical disability, 19% are deaf or have a hearing impairment, while 14% are blind or visually impaired), 26 respondents from Romania (50% of respondents are visually impaired, 30.8% are deaf or have a hearing impairment, 19.2% have mobility impairment), and 5 respondents from Spain (80% have visual impairments and 20% have a hearing impairment).	31.05.2021	GPIRO: 15 SMEs in Romania; ARPA: 15 SMES + 20 Persons with disabilities/support actors in Romania Militos: 20 SMEs in Greece AEK, Me Alla Matia: 10+10 Persons with disabilities in Greece BICC: 20 SMEs + 5 Persons with disabilities/support actors) in Bulgaria ITC: 20 SMES + 5 Persons with disabilities/support actors) in Spain
Task 3: Qualitative research - interviews based on a discussion guide, carried out with persons with disabilities to add to the findings of the previous research phases. A total of 6 interviews were carried out with people with disabilities in Bulgaria, 10 in Greece, 10 in Romania and 5 in Spain. Sign interpreters were provided for the persons with hearing impairments.	31.07.2021	ARPA: 10 interviews with persons with disabilities in Romania Me Alla Matia, AEK: 5+5 interviews with persons with disabilities in Greece BICC: 5 interviews with persons with disabilities Bulgaria ITC: 5 interviews with persons with disabilities in Spain
Task 3: Country report summary (EN)	31.07.2021	GPIRO: Country summary Report for Romania ARPA: Input in country report summary (Romania) Militos: Input in country

ACTIVITY	BY WHEN	WHO
		report summary (Greece) BICC: Country report summary (Bulgaria) ITC: Country report summary (Spain)
Task 3: Final report (EN) & Task 4: Methodological framework (EN)	31.08.2021	GPIRO

### 2. Literature review regarding the disability-employability

The information collected in the desk research carried out in the four countries involved in the project, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece and Spain, analysed and centralized in the country reports annexed to this report are presented here. This chapter includes:

- a brief description of the employability situation in the countries analysed, including definitions of disability and statistics regarding the employability of persons with disabilities (*Chapter 2.1 - Employability of persons with disabilities*);
- a brief description of existing main laws that support or influence the inclusion of people with disabilities on the labour market (*Chapter 2.2 - Legislation regarding employment of persons with disabilities*);
- barriers and risk factors associated with disabilities at the workplace and enablers to employment (*Chapter 2.3 - Barriers and enablers to employment*);
- good practices of learning materials regarding the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in the SMEs workforce (*Chapter 2.4 - Good practices for learning materials*), and,
- policy recommendations regarding the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in employment (*Chapter 2.5 - Good practices for policy recommendations*).

#### 2.1 Employability of persons with disabilities

In accordance with the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, disability is a concept that includes deficiencies/impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. This concept does not overlap with the concept of illness or disease, but represents its functional consequence. Deficiencies/Impairments may be temporary or permanent, evolving, regressive or stationary, intermittent or continuous.<sup>1</sup>

In **Bulgaria**, the definition of a person with a disability is stipulated in the relevant legislation and regulatory documents in the field, i.e. the Persons with Disabilities Act (PDA). According to the PDA, "persons with disabilities are considered people with a loss of physical, psychological, intellectual or a sensory impairment, which can prevent their efficient use of the surrounding environment and active participation in the society".

According to the Law 4488/2017, that lays the foundations for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in Greece "as persons with disabilities are defined those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, in particular institutional, environmental or attitudinal, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Joint Order of the Minister of Health and the Minister of Labour, Family, Social Protection and the Elderly. (2016). Order No 1306/1883/2016 approving bio-psycho-social criteria for establishing disabled children's level of disability and the means for applying such criteria, as subsequently amended.

<sup>2</sup> N. 4488/2017 article 60. Retrieved May 10, 2021 from <https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/kat-ergasia-koinonike-asphalise/nomos-4488-2017-fek-137a-13-9-2017.html>

In 2020, more than 20% of the EU population had been officially declared with some form of disability. In addition, according to data of Eurostat for 2019, 28.4% of people with a disability (aged 16 or over) were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, compared with 18.4% of those with no activity limitation. Thus, in 2019, 68.0 % of the EU population with an activity limitation would have been at risk of poverty without social benefits, allowances or pensions. In 2019, the Member States that recorded the highest proportion of people with a disability who were at risk of poverty or social exclusion were: Bulgaria (50.7%), Latvia (42.1%), Estonia (40.0%), Lithuania (39.9%) and Ireland (37.8%)<sup>3</sup>. The percent for Romania is 37.0%, for Greece is 33.2% and for Spain is 32.5%.

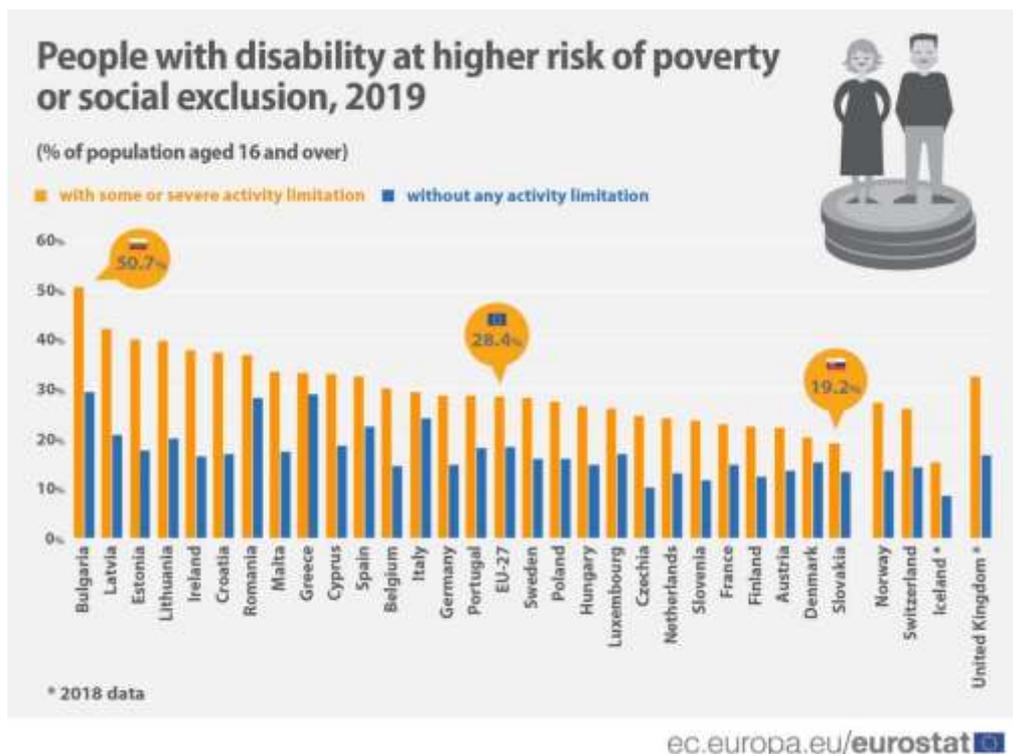


FIGURE 1 – PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY AT HIGHER RISK OF POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION, 2019

TABLE 1- THE EUROPE 2020 INDICATOR OF AT-RISK-OF-POVERTY OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION AROPE BY LEVEL OF ACTIVITY LIMITATION, 2019 (% SHARE OF THE POPULATION)

	At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion (ARPE)	At-risk-of-poverty (AROP)	Severe material deprivation (DEP)	People aged less than 60 living in households with very low work intensity (LWI)
<b>Bulgaria</b>	50.7	34.5	33.1	24.1
<b>Greece</b>	33.2	17.7	19.4	39.6
<b>Spain</b>	32.5	23.6	7.5	34.0
<b>Romania</b>	37.0	26.4	18.2	15.0

Source: Eurostat

<sup>3</sup> Source: Eurostat



Current data of the Agency for People with Disabilities in Bulgaria (APD) indicates that in 2019, there are over 460,000 people with permanent disabilities of working age in Bulgaria. However, only 30.7% of them are employed, and 5-6% are registered as unemployed, i.e. 64.7% of these non-disabled people are not employed. However, Bulgarian policy in support of disabled people in Bulgaria should cope with another negative trend. Statistics of the APD show that more than 58% of the people with disabilities in Bulgaria prefer to stay inactive and rely on financial support from the state rather than engaging in employment and taking an active role in society. Data from Eurostat and National Statistical Institute (NSI) show that the employment rate of people with disabilities in Bulgaria remains one of the lowest in the EU (35.4 %; EU average 50.8 %). Disabled persons are half as likely to be employed as persons without disabilities, the proportion being **stable during the last ten years**. This situation **is also expected to continue for at least another decade** if a radical change in the policies and support measures are implemented.

In **Greece**, according to the research conducted by the Hellenic Statistical Authority in cooperation with Eurostat in 2016, as per the GALI (Global Activity Limitation Index), people with serious or moderate impairments are 24.7% of the Greek population.

With regards to employment, the inclusion of persons with disabilities in Greek labour market as per the relevant data is rather disappointing, presenting the substantial violation of their rights to work, exercise their freedom and participate in the community.

Among persons with serious impairments that belong to the working age population only 24.2% are employed, compared to the general population that the employment rate reaches 57.6%. The overall unemployment rate among persons with serious disabilities reaches 39%, while among persons with moderate impairments, it reaches 29.3%.

For **Romania**, statistical data show that the number of people with disabilities in this country has increased in recent years from 797,104 in 2017 (3.58% of the country's population) to 857,638 in 2020 (3.86%).<sup>4</sup> According to the document 'Diagnosis of the situation of people with disabilities in Romania', while 74% of people between 20 and 64 years who do not have limitations are employed, the percentage is only 51% for people with some limitations and decreases dramatically for people with severe limitations (only 12%). According to the 2020 Country Report on Romania, although the employment rate of people with disabilities is below the EU average of 43.7% compared to 50.6%, the legal framework does not effectively stimulate their employability, and public employment support services are limited. The necessary reforms in the approach to case management and relations with employers continue to stagnate, despite the fact that the European Social Fund (ESF) provides funding. People with disabilities have limited access to support services. The lack of synergies and complementarity between educational, employment and social services further aggravates the situation of this group.

In **Spain**, Statistical data based on the poll EDAD 2008 by the Spanish National Institute for Statistics (INE) reveals that 3.85 million persons in Spain (out of which 59.8% are women) are affected by some

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<sup>4</sup> Romanian National Authority for Disabled Persons. (2019). Developments in the field of protection of persons with disabilities, Statistic Bulletin. Bucharest: Romanian Ministry of Labour and Social Justice.



level of disability which is equivalent to 8.5% of the population. According to the Olivenza Report of the State Disability Observatory in 2018, the latest data available, register a total of 1,840,700 people with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 64, which it represents 6.1% of the Spanish population. According to the 2010 OECD Report, *Sickness, Disability and Work: Breaking the Barriers (Vol.2)*, **only 35% of people with disabilities in Spain were employed**. This data is updated in 2018: according to the Olivenza Report of the State Disability Observatory, 1,193,500 people with disabilities were inactive in 2017 in Spain, that is, outside the labor market. **From 2010 to 2018, the employment rate decreased to 25.1%.**



### 2.2 Legislation regarding employment of persons with disabilities

In all these four countries, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and Spain, there is a normative act regarding persons with disabilities.

The main normative act guaranteeing the rights of persons with disabilities in the **Republic of Bulgaria** is the Law on People with Disabilities (LPD), in force since 01.01.2019. The law introduces a comprehensive legal framework for settling public relations related to the exercise of the rights of people with disabilities in the country. The impact in the field of employment, living standards and quality of life on vulnerable groups of people with disabilities continues to be a significant focus of the legislation, with a focus on accessibility.

In **Greece** the Law 4074/12, ratifying the UN's CRPD (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to “live in the community, with choices equal to others”, and the “full enjoyment by persons with disabilities of this right and their full inclusion and participation in the community” on an equal basis. Therefore, since employability is a key element of inclusion and participation in the community, the aforementioned law sanctions “the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. States Parties shall safeguard and promote the realization of the right to work, including for those who acquire a disability during the course of employment, by taking appropriate steps.

In **Romania**, the Law no. 448/2006 Of December 06, 2006 Regarding the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Disabled Persons, as subsequently amended and supplemented, has been adopted to ensure the right of people with disabilities to work in a non-discriminatory environment and regulates the rights and obligations of disabled persons granted for the purpose of their social integration and inclusion. There are no stipulations obliging them to provide reasonable accommodations or forbidding them to discharge employees on the basis of disability.

In the case of **Spain**, based on the General Law on Rights of Persons with Disabilities and their Social Inclusion (Royal Legislative Decree 1/2013), disability is a situation that results from the interaction between people with foreseeably permanent deficiencies and any type of barriers that limit or prevent their full and effective participation in society, on equal terms with others.

An approach that has been implemented in these four countries is a disability quota system which forces companies to employ a minimum percentage of people with disabilities, but the quota systems allow for a fine that organizations can pay and that releases them from fulfilling the quota. Thus, organizations either obey the inflicted rules or, in the event of non-compliance, pay a penalty usually in the form of a tax per month for each place not filled. This quotas system in general addresses almost entirely public companies or private organizations with more than 50 employees.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the

<sup>5</sup> Ε.Σ.Α.μεΑ Παρατήριο Θεμάτων Αναπηρίας. 2020. «Οδηγός απασχόλησης και επιχειρηματικότητας για άτομα με αναπηρία και χρόνιες παθήσεις» Ηλιούπολη: Εθνική Συνομοσπονδία Ατόμων με Αναπηρία Retrieved May



majority of SMEs is left out of the legal framework.

Companies that are constrained to submit to a quota often experience persons with disabilities as a strain rather than a valuable contribution to their workforce and non-disabled workers may perceive the quota job placements as creating an unfair division in the labour market (Niehaus & Bauer, 2013; WHO, 2011). For the person with a disability, a quota system primarily provides an opportunity to become employed, but at the same time might contribute to the experience of self-stigma and might have detrimental effects on a person's self-esteem. The quota system creates the impression that individuals obtain employment just because of the prevailing legislative system, and not because of their qualification for a certain job.<sup>6</sup>

The main strategic document that regulates the policies of **Bulgaria** in support of people with disabilities is the National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities 2021 – 2030 (NSPD). The Strategy represents a continuation and an update of the previous Strategy, which covered the period 2016 – 2020. It was developed in coherence with the National Development Program Bulgaria 2030 (NDP Bulgaria 2030). On a European level, the Strategy is coherent with the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030. As with the previous NSPD, the Strategy was developed in connection with the fulfilment of national commitments on the implementation of the ratified Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, particularly in terms of implementing strategic goal 8, point 8. 2 of the Action Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2015-2020). The implementation of the Strategy is reported through an Annual Plan for implementation, which is adopted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies of Bulgaria. The Annual report includes an overview of all activities and policy measures that were undertaken throughout the relevant year, as reported by the relevant stakeholders that participate in their implementation.

**Romania's** Government adopted the National Strategy “A barrier-free society for persons with disabilities 2016-2020” (National Disability Strategy). In the past few years, the authorities have also taken several legislative measures aimed at improving the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.

In **Spain** it was implemented Spanish National Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2010-2020. The lines of action of the Plan are framed under the: UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities; in the guidelines of the European Strategy on Disability 2010-2020; in the Europe 2020 Strategy; in the provisions of the Spanish Strategy on Disability.

On the other hand, the General Law on the rights of people with disabilities and their social inclusion constitutes the legal reference and principles on which the Plan is inspired.

The Plan aims to eliminate the causes of discrimination, based on the idea that equal rights for all people must be the benchmark for any measure that seeks to act on the conditions of exclusion in which people frequently find themselves. with disabilities.

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10, 2021 from <https://www.esamea.gr/publications/books-studies/5032-odigos-apasxolisis-kai-epixeirimatikotitas-gia-atoma-me-anapiria-kai-xronies-pathiseis>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1359432X.2017.1387536>



The principles of equal opportunities and equality between women and men are an essential part of the Plan, favouring the gender perspective in the context of disability, in such a way that women with disabilities, frequent objects of double discrimination, are specifically considered. Similarly, children with disabilities are considered, a group with a special risk of falling into situations of exclusion, violence and poverty and in which the UN Convention sets special interest.

It also pays special attention to people with disabilities who live in rural areas and to older people with disabilities, increasingly numerous groups, who will benefit from the actions of the Plan that have an impact on the promotion of active aging.



### 2.3 Barriers and enablers to employment

Regarding the barriers to employment of people with disabilities there are many stereotypes among society which lead to rejection and isolation of people with disabilities. When individuals with disabilities are invisible to society, the proper identification of their problems and rights become very difficult. It also signals that much effort is needed to overcome these negative trends and attitudes, resulting from a multitude of cultural factors, issues and stereotypes. This negative attitude is obvious in the employers' attitude to persons with disabilities. Most employers, especially in smaller communities, prefer not to employ persons with disabilities. This further increases social isolation and lack of motivation for employment. Many small employers, SME's, fail to recognise that individuals with disabilities have the necessary potential and skills to "fit in" their team and company policies.

A report prepared by the Romanian Academic Society highlight the reasons invoked by **Romanian employers** for their reluctance to actually hire people with disabilities. These include concerns of lower productivity, the need for closer supervision, or the increased likelihood of absence due to medical problems. Employers who had experience working with people with disabilities, however, did not confirm these fears, but even mentioned they had stronger motivation in solving the given tasks.<sup>7</sup>

**Employers in Greece** hesitate to include persons with disabilities in their workforce. The reason behind this attitude is that most of the employers think that persons with disabilities are less productive because of their disability<sup>8</sup>, that they lack proper education, that the costs for their accommodation at work are going to be really high and the interaction with the rest of the employee's problematic. These misperceptions cease to exist when the employers actually hire a person with disability. Research shows<sup>9</sup> that most of the employers employing persons with disabilities are satisfied with their performance, the rest of their employees are highly motivated and customer loyalty increases towards businesses that include persons with disabilities in their workforce. These facts act as enablers to employment of persons with disabilities, since most of the employers that have actually experienced the benefits from hiring persons with disabilities retain them in their workforce for a long time.

Specific employment promotion measures for persons with disabilities, even if exist, do not seem to be effective and popular both among persons with disabilities and employers. The support for people with disabilities who are motivated to work and engage in employment is still insufficient. The number of centres specializing in information, counselling and mediation of the work of people with disabilities is not very high. Not organizing and/or not publicising such events does not create the possibility for employers to know people with disabilities, communicate with them, realize the skills and competencies they have, know exactly what the facilities granted by law are.

<sup>7</sup> Romanian Academic Society. (2009). Diagnosis: EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET. Barriers in the employment of persons with disabilities in Romania.

<sup>8</sup> Λογαράς, Δ. 2013. *Συνδικαλιστική Εκπαίδευση Στελεχών Αναπηρικού Κινήματος/ 2: Εργασία – Απασχόληση και Αναπηρία* Ηλιούπολη: Εθνική Συνομοσπονδία Ατόμων με Αναπηρία 60

<sup>9</sup> Λογαράς, Δ. 2013. *Συνδικαλιστική Εκπαίδευση Στελεχών Αναπηρικού Κινήματος/ 2: Εργασία – Απασχόληση και Αναπηρία* Ηλιούπολη: Εθνική Συνομοσπονδία Ατόμων με Αναπηρία 60-62



The limited access to employment for persons with disabilities is also influenced to a larger extent by the lack of equal access to education. The limited participation in education leads to inequality in income and poverty for persons with disabilities, as well as social exclusion and isolation.

Unfortunately, there are not many enablers that could enhance and facilitate the access of persons with disabilities to the labour market and thus improve their overall professional and personal realisation prospects and quality of life. The existing incentives are based on financial support, tax amendments and direct subsidies for persons with disabilities who are seeking to enhance their entrepreneurship and self-employment prospects. “Financial incentives” and “tax deductions” do not guarantee social inclusion; the various forms of work or experience allow for socialization and autonomy, as well as the feeling of “belonging” to a group or community. These elements are essential in the process of identifying an adult as useful to society. Financial support is a necessary measure but does not support the development of potential or personality.

Financial support and incentives for persons with disabilities are provided in the framework of the National Strategy for People with Disabilities (2012 – 2020) in **Bulgaria**. The Bulgarian government has initiated a grant scheme "Supporting entrepreneurship of persons with disabilities" and "Supporting self-employment of persons with disabilities". Both initiatives have proven to successfully support and finance persons with disabilities to start a new business and self-employment activities. There has been substantial financial support for the specialised enterprises, offering sheltered employment to persons with disabilities.

In **Bulgaria**, training opportunities for people with disabilities are provided mostly through EU funded projects and programmes. There are several projects that provide support for people with disabilities for improving their employability skills. The project "Employment and education" provides support for the training of unemployed people aged 29 + who have permanent disabilities. The project supports the education and employment of people with disabilities in local authorities and SMEs of the private sector through subsidies for 24 months of employment and a bonus for long-term employment. The National programme for employment of persons with disabilities provides financial support for employers who are willing to employ them, covering their salaries and social contributions for a period of 24 months.

In **Greece**, with regards to the costs of the accommodation of persons with disabilities, they are often overrated.<sup>10</sup> The majority of persons with disabilities does not actually need “reasonable accommodation” and if they do, this cost is insignificant. Besides, teleworking has been introduced in Greece as a form of employment in 2006 and lately, especially after the restrictions of the pandemic, it is considered an acceptable and popular form of employment.

Strengthening the role of non-governmental organizations in order to improve legislation and support the interests of people with disabilities is an essential condition for social integration. Independence can change the quality of life of disadvantaged people.

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<sup>10</sup> Λογαράς, Δ. 2013. *Συνδικαλιστική Εκπαίδευση Στελεχών Αναπηρικού Κινήματος/ 2: Εργασία – Απασχόληση και Αναπηρία* Ηλιούπολη: Εθνική Συνομοσπονδία Ατόμων με Αναπηρία



Moreover, setting up special employment centres to support and guide people with disabilities in their job search process, given the probability that only a few use public employment services, could help their entry into the labour market much more.

Lack of a job can be seen as being deprived of skills and can be understood as a failure to begin the process of capitalizing on their rights, a process that must be encouraged and initiated together with people with disabilities.



### 2.4 Good practices for learning materials

A total of 9 good practice examples regarding learning materials (Training Programs, Handbooks/Guidelines, Online Tools / learning Platform etc.) to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in employment were identified by each participating country:

- **Bulgaria** - 1 good practice example covering an accessible training programme for persons with disabilities;
- **Greece** - 4 good practice examples covering 2 training programmes for persons with disabilities; 1 inclusive art group and 1 model of training seminars and matchmaking of employers and employees;
- **Romania** - 2 good practice examples covering 1 guide to good interaction with people with disabilities and 1 online course on working with disability;
- **Spain** - 2 good practice examples covering 1 online collaborative learning platform and 1 guide for companies on the rights of persons with disabilities: how companies can respect and support the rights of persons with disabilities and benefit from inclusion.

The main aim of the good practices, as presented below, is to support the persons with disabilities to improve their knowledge, skills and employability prospects or help interacting with persons with disabilities.

#### Bulgaria:

- **JAMBA** (<https://jamba.bg/>) - is a Bulgarian NGO that provides support for people with disabilities. The founders of the NGO found out that the problem associated with the job market inclusion is one of the biggest challenges for the people with disabilities as well as the solution to this problem as a prerequisite for the increase of the economic welfare of the people and the increase in actively working Bulgarians. In partnership with LinkedIn Social Impact, Jamba is offering an Accessible Training Session for people with disabilities. The main aim of the training is to support people with disabilities to improve their employability prospects by optimising their LinkedIn Profile & Build a Professional Brand. Topics of this good practice: Learn to Create or Optimise your LinkedIn Profile & Build a Professional Brand, Job Search Support - CV & Interview Support, Discover LinkedIn's Learning Paths.

#### Greece:

- **Mellonabilities** (<http://www.knowl.gr/social/programs/mellonabilities>) - is an upskilling and reskilling skills intensive programme that enhances the entry and stay of people with disabilities in the job market. The programme adopts a personalized approach and strengthens each person individually, in a tailor-made way, on the basis of their own profile, needs and aspirations, serving their own professional choices, facilitating the matching with market and employment positions.

Mellonabilities provides personalized development of professional skills, at zero cost, while the participants receive training and counselling on digital skills by trained and experienced consultants.

The program adopts a personalized approach, using state-of-the-art techniques and tools that strengthen each person individually, in a tailor-made way, on the basis of their own professional profile, their own needs and aspirations, serving their own professional choices,



transferring directly applicable skills knowledge regardless their background or education level.

Trainings are provided by experienced trainers selected on the basis of strict qualitative criteria, ensuring the provision of high-quality learning experience and effective knowledge transmission by renowned and highly-qualified professionals and "knowledge carriers". The proper adaptations are made to assure smooth and effective participation of people with disabilities (constantly updated content based on participants' needs, approved and accessible tools for communication, online trainings for their convenience etc.)

- **ARTimeleia Theatre Group** (<https://artimeleia.com/>) - is a theatre group of actors with and without physical/kinetic disabilities that targets to develop the acting skills of both the actors with and without disabilities.

Its primary aim is to explore the unlimited possibilities that the physical limits offer in an integrated theatrical environment. The continuously developing acting skills of both the disabled and the non-disabled actors are unique, based on the method "a neurological approach to acting" developed by their artistic director, Annita Kapousizi.

This inclusive environment creates a high-quality artistic result, welcomed by colleagues and art critics.

ARTimeleia includes all levels of artists. Diversity of skills is what leads to the development of the artistic result.

The artistic director of ARTimeleia uses a "neurological approach to acting", adjusted to the abilities of persons with mobility impairments. Performances are built on each actor's unique abilities and talents and the group promotes their skills. The interaction of the group motivates the actors without disabilities as well, promoting their talents and creates an absolutely inclusive mindset deriving from the benefits that arise from disability inclusion. Soft skills are enhanced by the interaction of this diverse group for persons both with and without disabilities and their artistic skills are developed by this exchange of ideas and perceptions.

- **ReGeneration** (<https://www.regeneration.gr/>) - is the largest paid placement, professional and personal development program challenging brain drain in Greece by fostering youth employability in an all-inclusive way.

ReGeneration works with an accessibility consultant. The participants, in their application, include any impairment. Each stage is evaluated by a focus group of disabled people and it is being adjusted to the individual needs of every disabled participant. The accessibility consultant keeps an open communication with the participants. The promotion of each cycle is carefully designed to be accessible to everyone.

Every stage of the process is evaluated and adjusted to the personal needs of every disabled participant e.g. Written interview instead of spoken one.

The trainers are pre-trained in matters of diversity and inclusion to better integrate disabled students in their class. The training is carried by disabled people that work on the field. That way they adapt their training materials themselves having as a constant consultant the disabled focus group.

- **Career Fair4All** - is a Training Seminars and Matchmaking of employers and employees. Career Fair.4all tries to bring the Greek labour market close to disabled people through a yearly



career fair where disabled people and companies that are hiring get together for live interviews.

The main axis of Career Fair4All is the personal networking of people with company managers. Via Career Fair4All academy they support disabled people to know their labour rights, to discover the profession that suits them best, to evolve in the social media era, to develop their skills and CV.

At the same time, they train the companies involved to better accommodate disabled employees.

The main goal is to evolve the Fair in a general all-inclusive way to involve everyone.

Inclusion and accessibility should be considered in a-for-all design whenever there is a big event regarding employability. Via Career Fair4All companies understand the power of diversity in the workplace and get in touch with the laws they can take advantage of.

### Romania

- **Guide to good interaction with people with disabilities in Romania** (<https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toolbox/tool/guidance-handbook-on-a-healthy-interaction-with-people-with-disabilities-english.1497/>): This is a guidance handbook/training manual. The handbook is the result of the training course: "A guide to good interaction with people with disabilities", a project carried out under the Youth in Action programme, which took place in the Netherlands between 28 October and 7 November 2013. The goal is to create an etiquette for disability, a set of clear guidelines on communication and interaction with persons with disabilities.

The handbook was produced with the contribution of 40 people with and without disabilities from 8 countries (Bulgaria, Slovenia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Turkey, Italy, the Netherlands and Romania) and the recommendations of organizations for persons with disabilities around the world.

Topics covered: Definition of disability; Disability versus handicap; Interaction with people with disabilities; Socialization; Meeting a person with disabilities; Removing barriers; Environment; Attitude and approach; Good manners towards people with disabilities; Communicating; General communication suggestions Language; Recommended terms vs terms to avoid; Interaction and various types of disabilities; General suggestions; Interaction strategies for specific limitations; Persons with disabilities and help; How to provide help; Providing directions and ways to accompany people with disabilities;

The identified good practice manual is addressed to everyone who interacts with people with disabilities, to support the best choices in terms of communication and interaction.

- **Disability and a Good Life: Working with Disability** (<https://www.my-mooc.com/en/mooc/working-with-disability/>): Is an online course where participants can learn how disability intersects with human rights, and how a good life can be made possible for everyone. Work with disability to enable a good life for yourself and others.

Today we recognise disability as a part of human diversity. But what does it mean to work with disability in a way that enables a good life for ourselves and others?

In this course, the participants have the opportunity to engage with some of the big issues facing disabled people, governments and societies. They'll explore human rights approaches to disability and critically examine the concepts of inclusion, access and support. They'll also



learn about disability politics and policy, advocacy and activism, and consider how to work with disability at multiple levels to enable a good life for all.

Topics covered: The importance of valuing human diversity, inclusion and belonging; The implications of discrimination and barriers to access in the lives of people with disabilities; Definitions of disability, human rights, access, care, support and contribution; The significance of international human rights frameworks, including the UNCRPD; What care and support look like in practice; The diverse ways that people with disabilities contribute to society; Advocacy and activism as channels for working for change.

This course is suitable for both beginners and experts wanting to raise their awareness of disability and disability-related issues within a global context. It is appropriate for persons with disabilities and their family members, friends and allies; professionals in the care and community service sectors; medical and allied health professionals; educators; built environment professionals; advocates and policy makers; scholars; and lifelong learners.

### Spain

- **COMPASSS' PLATFORM** ([www.compassss.cermi.es](http://www.compassss.cermi.es)) - is an online collaborative learning platform that allows the NGOs for disabled people that register to develop knowledge and skills for the sustainability of the sector of the associative movement of disability, through materials, expert tutoring and collaborative learning.

The promotion of this Learning Community for the Sustainability of the Social Sector (Compass) was carried out in April 2020 right after the pandemic, which has had a great impact on the NGOs for disabled persons in Spain.

Its objective is to respond to this situation, sharing information and specific materials, as well as a compendium of the regulatory framework, a tool for the collection and reporting of data from residential centres to the autonomous communities, or materials related to the eligibility of public expenditures.

The identified platform is addressed to all organizations that aim to support disability. The platform offers materials, expert tutoring, and collaborative learning.

- 2017 ILO and UN **“Guide for companies on the rights of persons with disabilities: how companies can respect and support the rights of persons with disabilities and benefit from inclusion” in Spain**: Jointly developed by the United Nations Global Compact and the ILO, the “Guide for companies on the rights of persons with disabilities: how companies can respect and support the rights of persons with disabilities and benefit from inclusion” proposes concrete actions and measures that companies can take to implement good practices that include persons with disabilities in the workplace, in the marketplace and in the community, in line with relevant United Nations conventions and frameworks.

The objective of this guide is to help improve business’ understanding of the rights of people with disabilities, how to respect and support them and the opportunity to improve their competitiveness and sustainability by doing so.

It includes concrete actions and measures companies can take to implement good practices that are inclusive of persons with disabilities in the workplace, marketplace and in the community – in alignment with relevant UN conventions and frameworks.

Topics covered:



- BUSINESS AND DISABILITY: Rights of persons with disabilities; Business and Human Rights;
- BUSINESS ACTIONS: How to include respect and support for the rights of persons with disabilities in existing policies and processes; Promote equal opportunities in the workplace; Promote equal opportunities in the marketplace; Promote equal opportunities in the community.

The identified good practice manual is addressed to companies so as to increase their understanding of the rights of people with disabilities, how to respect and support them and the opportunity to improve their competitiveness and sustainability.



### 2.5 Good practices for policy recommendations

A total of 8 good practice examples regarding policy recommendation (e.g. policies, strategies, governmental programmes or facilities, guidelines, standards and benchmarks on accessibility and inclusion) to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in employment were identified by each participating country:

- **Bulgaria** - 2 good practice example covering the National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020 and 1 governmental supported facility for persons with disabilities (sheltered employment);
- **Greece** - 2 good practice examples covering 1 governmental program for developing Lifelong Training Centers; 1 policy & strategy regarding the Observatory of Disability Affairs of NCPD;
- **Romania** - 2 good practice examples covering the National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities 2021-2027 and 1 policy example of good practice such as the Dutch social system;
- **Spain** - 2 good practice examples covering the Spanish employment programme to promote employment for people with disabilities and 1 publication aimed to promote the future shaping of work for disabled people.

The main aim of the good practices, as presented below, is to present actions and policy measures available in the research target countries aimed to support the persons with disabilities, having a positive impact on increasing the access to employment for people with disabilities or to improve current legislation.

#### Bulgaria

- **The National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020 in Bulgaria:** The Strategy serves as a roadmap for all actions and policy measures the Bulgarian government and state agencies undertake in support of persons with disabilities. One of the key aims of the Strategy is to ensure job opportunities and employment of people with disabilities in an integrated work environment and to provide adequate support for workers and employers. The measures in the Strategy are based on the fundamental principles enshrined in Article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The following key policy priorities are envisaged:
  1. To provide access to a living environment, to transportation and transportation services, to information and communications.
  2. To provide access and inclusion of every child in the education system and the opportunities for lifelong learning.
  3. To ensure effective access to quality health services.
  4. To provide conditions for work and employment of people with disabilities.
  5. To provide adequate support for community living.
  6. To provide access to sport, recreation, tourism and participation in cultural life.

Work from home and teleworking are very suitable for people of working age with a high degree of reduced capacity. The home-based form of employment of people with disabilities is used in specialised enterprises and cooperatives of people with disabilities since their creation. This concept could be further examined and updated to further enhance the employability of people with disabilities.



- **The Specialised Enterprises for Persons with Disabilities** (sheltered employment) (SEPD), have a contract with the Agency for people with disabilities and enjoy various benefits for both the enterprise itself and the workers provided with the sheltered employment. SEPD are equal in the labour market as an essential form of provision of permanent employment of the target group. The home-based form of employment of people with disabilities is used in specialised enterprises and cooperatives of people with disabilities since their creation. This form has proven its effectiveness, especially during the COVID-19 crisis. Sheltered employment is suitable for providing jobs for people with severe and complex disabilities, and sheltered workshops are places excluded from the competitive market. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a system of incentives for municipal administrations to introduce this type of employment and to raise awareness of the public to the concept of sheltered employment. Also, specialised enterprises could be further expanded in the concept of social enterprises.

### Greece

- **Lifelong Learning Centers** are operating since 2010 with the aim of promoting the upgrading of environment, digital, literacy, civic, financial, Personal & Interpersonal capabilities among marginalized groups (people with disabilities, immigrants, religious minorities etc.) The program aims at promoting a positive attitude to learning, ensure equal access to education, using leisure time in a creative way, enhancing access to the labour market and finally, to integrate or re-integrate into the education process any adult who for any reason has not completed the compulsory education cycle. A repository of learning material in each of the disciplines that boosts social activation, active involvement, put on practice (project-based learning) and self-learning (via educational material provided with activities, scenarios etc.) is available online. With this way of sharing information, a problem-posing approach is being activated. The substantive differentiation of KeDiViM is that the Municipality has the ability to decide on and organize the educational and training programs that it wishes to implement in its region. This enables the process of selecting educational programs to be reversed, as it is possible to first investigate the educational needs of citizens and then “translate” the needs into learning programs. This way, persons with disabilities develop and promote their skills and manage to enter the labour market in positions suited to their talents, benefiting the business.
- **The Observatory of Disability Affairs of NCPD in Greece** aims to monitor and evaluate disability policies throughout public life in the light of the legal approach to disability and to strengthen the institutional capacity of the NCPD as the core of disability policy production. The Observatory is a powerful tool of the disability movement, so that the rights of people with disabilities and chronic diseases are not left on paper, but translated into real changes in the life of disabled people and the creation of an inclusive society with equal rights and opportunities for all. It conducts thematic research and each year prepares a report on disability issues in Greece, following the course of social integration of disabled people. Among other things, they have prepared a report on the employment of the disabled in Greece, the results of which could be studied in the program compared to similar records of other countries of the European Union.



### Romania

- **The National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities 2021-2027.** The overall goal of the **2021-2027 Strategy** is to ensure the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities, based on freedom of decision, in all areas of life and in an accessible and resilient environment.

The beneficiaries of the 2021-2027 Strategy are persons with disabilities, children and adults, as the group is defined by Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and society in general: family members caring for people with disabilities, legal representatives, staff involved in direct activities, teachers, professionals, representatives of academia, human rights institutions, authorities and other entities.

The 2021-2027 strategy has eight priority areas: Accessibility and mobility; Actual protection of the rights of persons with disabilities; Employment; Social protection, including empowerment/rehabilitation; An independent and community-integrated life, including access to public services; Education; Health; Political and public participation.

- **The policy of the Dutch system** is oriented towards activation at work, non-hospitalization of people, development of work skills, accessibility of jobs and the creation of social economy enterprises/protected units for people at a distance from the labour market.

There are 2 ways for persons with disabilities to work: 1. in protected units, i.e. inside (sheltered employment) and 2. adapted workplaces, on the free market, i.e. outside (adapted employment).

There is a system in the form of a ladder from the inside to the outside: in the first stage the disabled person is with the group in the protected unit, after which they gradually detach, individually until they manage to reach the free market and have a classic work contract.

**Reintegration into employment:** In the Netherlands, a distinction is made between persons with disabilities who cannot work and persons with disabilities who do not want to work. The state supports those who really cannot work, offering them subsidies, but those who do not want to work are penalized and part of the money from the subsidy is withdrawn.

The reintegration of people with disabilities into the labour market is done by public social services, by private organizations or by both.

### Spain

- **INSERTA EMPLEO, the employment programme to promote employment for persons with Disabilities.** The **INSERTA Program of the ONCE Foundation** is aimed at companies that include within their strategic policies the implementation of a management system based on the principles advocated by Corporate Social Responsibility, fundamentally through the voluntary integration of social concerns in their operations and their relationships with their Stakeholders, specifically fostering their commitment to the group of people with disabilities. Through this program, the ONCE Foundation is identifying strategic partners for the development of actions that enable the direct employment of persons with disabilities in companies of recognized prestige and belonging to the most diverse economic sectors, as well as the activation in these companies of a series of measures and actions that directly or indirectly contribute to the improvement of the living conditions of people with disabilities as an integrating and value-added element in the field of Corporate Social Responsibility.



The participation of the companies to the Program is materialized through the signing of an Agreement, through which a specific action plan that determines the actions to be undertaken based on of the needs, the specificities of the company, the aim, the social objective, and the strategies of each company.

The areas of action of the INSERTA Agreement, in which Fundación ONCE advises the company, are made up of:

- *As a fundamental axis*, the development of strategic projects for the generation of direct employment and promotion of the training of persons with disabilities.
- *And as complementary axes*: Indirect labour integration; Promotion of actions in the field of accessibility of goods and services; Inclusion of actions and strategies around disability in the social responsibility plans of large companies; Dissemination and social awareness actions; Impulse, promotion and sponsorship of actions that contribute to labour insertion; Projects that contribute to the improvement of the group of people with disabilities; Any other of a similar nature that serves to further the social objectives pursued by the signatories; The development of most of these Agreements, particularly in the areas related to training and employment, is carried out by Inserta, within the framework of the Operational Program to Combat Discrimination co-financed by the European Social Fund.
- **“Making the future of work inclusive of people with disabilities” in Spain** is a joint publication by Fundación ONCE and the ILO Global Business and Disability Network, developed within the framework of Disability Hub Europe, a project led by Fundación ONCE and co-funded by the European Social Fund.

It includes a “A roadmap for an inclusive future of work”. The focus of **the publication** is to promote the future shaping of work for disabled persons. This is a first exercise to connect different areas of debate, looking at the key trends of the future of work from a disability perspective and seeking to identify specific action needed in order to shape the future of work in a more disability-inclusive way.

Processes such as the technological revolution, new demands for skills, cultural and demographic changes as well as climate change are the object of reflection to identify the challenges and opportunities, and the actions to be undertaken by the different agents involved, for the labour inclusion of the people with disabilities - 1 billion people in the world - in the context of the future of work. Inspired by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the 2030 Agenda, the publication constitutes a specific contribution to Sustainable Development Goal 8 "Decent work and Economic growth", whose target 8.5 makes specific mention of persons with disabilities. The publication is available in English.

It includes a “A roadmap for an inclusive future of work” with 5 key objectives for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the future of work: New forms of employment; Skills development and lifelong learning made inclusive of persons with disabilities; Universal Design embedded in development of all new Infrastructure, products, and services; Assistive technologies; Measures to include persons with disabilities in growing and developing areas of the economy.



### 3. Quantitative and qualitative study on employability-disability nexus

The following chapter presents the results of the quantitative research conducted among SME's and persons with disabilities, supported by the results of the qualitative research (in-depth interviews). The information obtained was structured in 6 sub-chapters, as follows:

- *The employability of the persons with disabilities in the SMEs (Chapter 3.1)* including: main used approaches by companies when hiring persons with disabilities, reasons for companies that are not employing and/or have not employed in the past persons with disabilities, reasons that motivate people with disabilities to look for a job, perception about legislation and shortcomings and gaps in the legislation identified by the respondents, the perceived impeding factors/challenges that limit the entry of persons with disabilities to the labour market.
- *The levels of awareness regarding the social, cultural, financial value of a diverse, disability-inclusive workforce in the SMEs* are presented in *Chapter 3.2*. This section also includes the importance given by SMEs to the inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the labour market and changes that persons with disabilities want to see in the attitudes of their colleagues/peers.
- *The impeding factors in hiring persons with disabilities in the SMEs* are presented in *Chapter 3.3* (factors /challenges that limit the entry of persons with disabilities to the labour market: the issues hindering the process of accommodating employees with disabilities within the company, issues in hiring people with disabilities).
- *The perceived facilitating factors in hiring persons with disabilities in the SMEs* are presented in *Chapter 3.4*: possible measures to increase in the number of persons with disabilities in employment indicated by the SMEs and persons with disabilities, benefits for SMEs in order to better integrate in the workplace the persons with disabilities.
- *The perceived benefits of hiring persons with disabilities in the SMEs* are presented in *Chapter 3.5*.
- *The preferred steps and guiding/training/consulting pedagogy, material, guidelines towards creating a disability-inclusive workforce* are presented in *Chapter 3.6*. In it are presented important aspects for developing learning tools for SMEs, important topics to be included in the learning tools for SMEs to create a disability-inclusive work force, importance given to the type of information to be included in these learning tools for SMEs to create a disability-inclusive work force, preferred approach for training courses and means of presentation most relevant / useful for learning process.

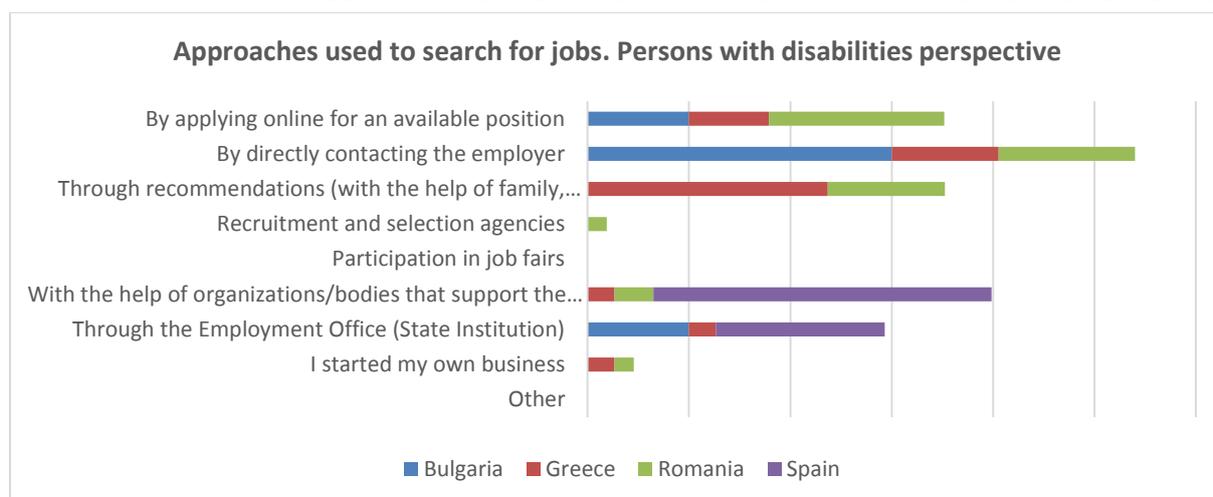
### 3.1 Employability of the persons with disabilities in the SMEs

From the analysed sample, 52.6% of SMEs are currently employing and/or have employed in the past persons with disabilities (hearing impairments, visual impairments, mobility impairments, other types of disabilities) in Bulgaria, 23% in Greece, 36.7% in Romania and 20% in Spain.

When hiring persons with disabilities, these companies have mainly used direct recruitment/recommendations (Bulgaria – 60%, Greece<sup>11</sup> – 60%, Romania – 100%). Other approaches used were: the Employment Office (State Institution) (Bulgaria – 30%, Greece – 20%, Romania 18.2%, Spain<sup>12</sup> – 66.7%), online recruitment and selection platforms (Bulgaria – 20%, Spain – 33.3%), the help of organizations/bodies that support the rights of people with disabilities (Greece – 40%, Spain – 33.3%).

The persons with disabilities prefer to look for a job: by directly contacting the employer (Bulgaria<sup>13</sup> – 60%, Greece – 21.1%, Romania – 26.9%), through recommendations (with the help of family, friends, acquaintances) (Greece – 47%, Romania – 23.1%), with the help of organizations/bodies that support the rights of persons with disabilities (Spain<sup>14</sup> – 66%) and by applying online for an available position (Bulgaria – 20%, Greece – 15.8%, Romania – 34.6%).

**FIGURE 2 APPROACHES USED TO SEARCH FOR JOBS. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES PERSPECTIVE**



Q1. How do you usually look for a job (if you don't currently have a job) / how did you manage to find a job? (Single answer)

The main reason selected by the SMEs for not employing persons with disabilities is that they never had such candidates. Other reasons mentioned were: No such job applicants were available at the Local Employment Office; The nature of the job and inability of persons with disabilities to perform it; The size of the company (in general small companies).

<sup>11</sup> Please note the sample size for Greece – 5 SMEs. Full tables are available in the ANNEX TABLES

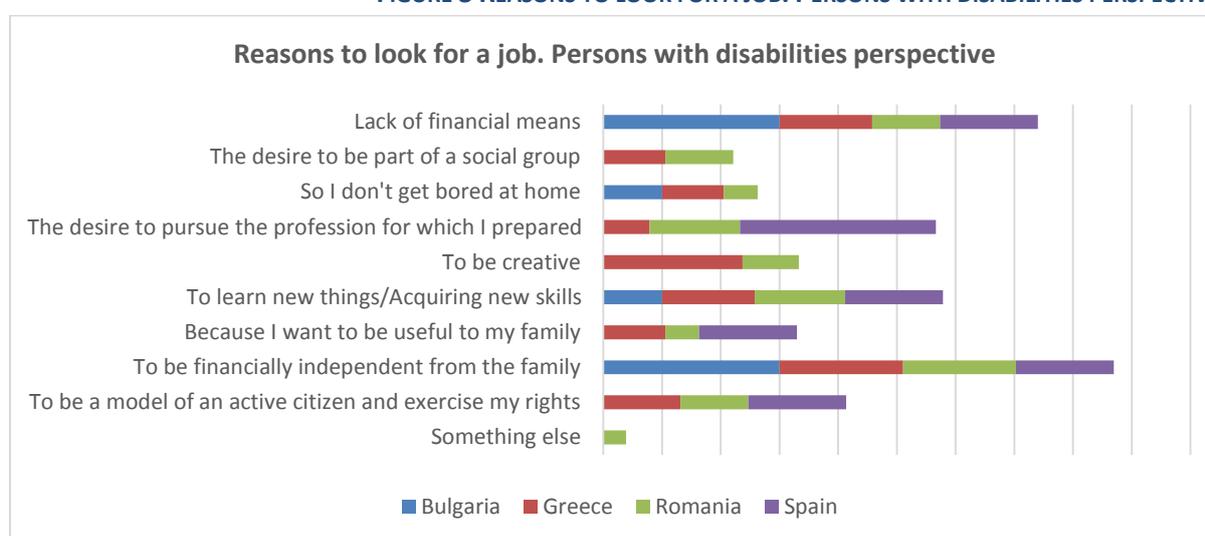
<sup>12</sup> Please note the sample size for Spain – 3 SMEs. Full tables are available in the ANNEX TABLES

<sup>13</sup> Please note the sample size for Bulgaria – 5 respondents, persons with disabilities. Full tables are available in the ANNEX TABLES

<sup>14</sup> Please note the sample size for Spain – 3 respondents, persons with disabilities. Full tables are available in the ANNEX TABLES

The daily life of persons with disabilities is affected in various ways, depending on the type of disability they have. Most of them face accessibility issues, while some lack independent living and must be supported. Therefore, the respondents highlighted how important it is to have a job, in order to be financially independent and support themselves (Bulgaria 60%, Greece 42.1%, Romania 38.5%, Spain 33.3%), since life in a non-accessible environment can be rather expensive and also to learn new things (Bulgaria 20%, Greece 31.6%, Romania 30.8%, Spain 33.3%). In Greece, the respondents highlighted how important it is to have a job in order to be creative and be an active member of the society but also (47.4%), while in Bulgaria the respondents highlighted how important it is to have a job because lack of financial means (60%).

**FIGURE 3 REASONS TO LOOK FOR A JOB. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES PERSPECTIVE**



**Q2. What prompted you to look/apply for a job? (Multiple answer)**

When looking for a job, people with disabilities receive advice and support first from friends and family. In Spain, more than half of the respondents mentioned that they receive support from Counselling or recruitment specialists (66.7%). In Greece and Romania, percentage of those who do not receive support is very high, 53% in Greece and respectively 34.6% in Romania.

Regarding the legislation supporting the integration of persons with disabilities into the labour market, under 10% from respondents (SMEs) consider this legislation to be effective, while most of them consider it to be not effective enough (Bulgaria 42.1%, Greece 86.3%, Romania 53.3% and Spain 66.7%). The following shortcomings and gaps in the legislation have been identified by the respondents:

- Not enough facilities or incentives for employers to hire people with disabilities, e.g. training in ensuring an inclusive environment for people with disabilities, as well as infrastructure, mindset etc.;
- Numerous legal and administrative barriers related to the employment of people with disabilities;
- Lack of knowledge on the legislation;
- Inadequate insurance policies;



- Lack of education for both the community and the persons of disabilities;
- Lack of business awareness and employment support, qualified mentors, and professionals with knowledge of disability;
- Too much focus on employment centers for disabled people in Spain and not enough emphasis in their integration in SMEs.

Most of the questioned persons with disabilities (hearing impairments, visual impairments, mobility impairments) think that finding and sustaining work is very challenging (66.7% in Bulgaria, 84% in Greece, 61.5% in Romania). In **Spain**, all respondents (100%) think that finding and sustaining work is somewhat challenging.

To elaborate on the aspects addressed in the quantitative surveys in Bulgaria 5 interviews with persons with disabilities were held, 10 in Greece, 10 in Romania and 5 in Spain. Sign interpreters were provided for the persons with hearing and visual impairments.

In their opinion, the society has numerous stereotypes towards people with disabilities. The attitude of employers to such people is very negative, resulting from both the lack of awareness of the specific needs of disabled persons and the numerous regulatory requirements related to ensuring the safe and productive environment for such people. The employers fear (with a reason) that their administrative burden will increase drastically and prefer not to risk it, despite the fact that there are financial incentives for hiring such persons. The whole perception of the society points to the wrong direction, questioning the productivity of persons with disabilities, identifying disability with inability. Therefore, when in search for a job, persons with disabilities face serious difficulties and some of them do not hesitate to mention that they have to create their own job opportunities if they want to find a place in the labour market.

According to their opinion, there is a lot to do regarding raising awareness of the society in general, not only in the work environment. Many persons with disabilities face serious difficulties to find a job related to the studies they have followed and in many cases the way out is just a special center or self-employment.

The lack of confidence is another impeding factor that results from the constant neglect of people with disabilities by society. This also applies to colleagues and co-workers. The misconception about the work skills of persons with disabilities affects their confidence, as one of the interviewees has mentioned, resulting in a vicious circle, where lack of confidence becomes an additional limitation for persons with disabilities in finding and maintaining a job.

In Greece, more specifically, interviewees mention that when applying for a job they face accessibility issues in the workplace. Apart from the architectural accessibility of the work environment, a deaf interviewee has mentioned that he was called for an interview without the presence of a sign language interpreter! Almost all of them highlighted the bias with regards to the disabled employees' productivity and that they end up being either self-employed, or hired by employers they know personally, or absorbed in the public sector.

In Romania, one first issue identified by all interviewees is related to employment information. In general, there are no jobs for people with disabilities, and information about job fairs or the Job Exchange is not shared well enough. People with hearing impairments have been mainly helped by



the deaf community or found it easier to get a job with the support of the Romanian National Association of the Deaf. People with visual impairments have often turned to acquaintances or friends who have the same disability. In the case of people with physical disabilities, they find it hardest to find a job, because employers often believe that in addition to their lack of mobility, they could also hide a mental problem. People with physical disabilities stated that they found a job among friends or relatives, or participated in public competitions in state institutions, and received very little help from NGOs or other state institutions.

Among the obstacles identified by the persons with disabilities interviewed were also discrimination in the workplace, especially from colleagues, is another problem that the people with disabilities interviewed have faced and continue to face. The health problems of people with disabilities make them seem inferior in the eyes of colleagues. Among the situations reported by interviewees, what caught our attention was the dominant attitude of taking advantage of people with disabilities, which is generally shown by colleagues. Often at work, people with disabilities are considered naive and submissive, as others feel that no matter how they harass them, they will not have the courage to face them or complain.

### 3.2 Levels of awareness regarding the social, cultural, financial value of a diverse, disability-inclusive workforce in the SMEs

The majority of the SMEs consider the inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the labour market as important or very important (73.7% in Bulgaria, 77.3% in Greece, 93.3% in Romania, 73.3% in Spain). They also acknowledge that the fact that a person with disabilities has a disadvantage in the labour market and confirm that a person with disabilities makes a greater effort to find a job than a person without disabilities.

When approaching the employment of the persons with disabilities most of the responding SMEs agree that:

- Employers consider physical disability an impediment to employment;
- For a person with disabilities finding a job is mainly determined by the skills and knowledge possessed;
- Hiring persons with disabilities has positive effects on the image of the company/organisation/institution.

**TABLE 2 PERCEPTIONS OF DISABILITY AND EMPLOYABILITY. SME PERSPECTIVE**

<i>% (Agree/ Strongly agree)</i>	Bulgaria	Greece	Romania	Spain
<i>Base (N)</i>	19	22	30	15
A person with disabilities has a disadvantage on the labour market.	89.5	50.0	66.7	86.7
For a person with disabilities finding a job is mainly determined by the skills and knowledge possessed.	68.4	81.8	76.7	80.0
There are employers who consider physical disability an impediment to employment.	78.9	81.8	86.7	40.0
Hiring a person with disabilities brings benefits and advantages to the company.	26.3	45.5	73.3	80.0
A person with disabilities makes a greater effort to find a job than a person without disabilities.	89.5	95.5	93.3	73.3
For a person with disabilities, additional training is needed at work.	26.3	27.3	40.0	46.7
Workers with disabilities lack the skills and experience to do our jobs.	21.1	4.5	6.7	13.3
Hiring persons with disabilities has positive effects on the image of the company/organization/institution.	57.9	86.4	70.0	66.7
People with disabilities show involvement and dedication in the workplace.	57.9	59.1	60.0	53.3
The quality of the work done by a person with disabilities is the same as that of those without disabilities.	26.3	81.8	60.0	46.7

% (Agree/ Strongly agree)	Bulgaria	Greece	Romania	Spain
Base (N)	19	22	30	15
Persons with disabilities may not be as safe and productive as other workers.	26.3	13.6	30.0	20.0
A person with disabilities can integrate very well into the normal work pace.	52.6	86.4	53.3	60.0
A person with disabilities can easily integrate into a team.	26.3	86.4	63.3	60.0
It costs more to employ workers with disabilities than those without disabilities due to accommodations, additional management time, or healthcare and insurance costs.	31.6	31.8	36.7	26.7
Supervisors are not comfortable managing people with disabilities.	10.5	18.2	30.0	20.0
Supervisors are not sure how to evaluate a person with a disability.	26.3	18.2	30.0	20.0
Supervisors are not sure how to take disciplinary action for a person with a disability.	42.1	18.2	40.0	13.3

Base: total sample

Q12. Please state to what extent you agree with the following statements, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means 'Strongly Disagree' and 5 - 'Strongly Agree': (Single answer per row)

When asked the same question, the persons with disabilities have similar views as the representatives of the SMEs. From their perspective:

- A person with disabilities makes a greater effort to find a job than a person without disabilities;
- There are employers who consider physical disability an impediment to employment;
- Hiring a person with disabilities brings benefits and advantages to the company;
- Hiring persons with disabilities has positive effects on the image of the company/organization/institution;
- The quality of the work done by a person with disabilities is the same as that of those without disabilities;
- A person with disabilities can integrate very well into the normal work pace;
- A person with disabilities can easily integrate into a team.

**TABLE 3 PERCEPTIONS OF DISABILITY AND EMPLOYABILITY. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES PERSPECTIVE**

% (Agree/ Strongly agree)	Bulgaria	Greece	Romania	Spain
Base (N)	5	19	26	3
A person with disabilities has a disadvantage on the labour market.	100.0	52.6	73.1	66.7
For a person with disabilities finding a job is mainly determined by the skills and knowledge possessed.	80.0	47.4	53.8	66.7

<i>% (Agree/ Strongly agree)</i>	Bulgaria	Greece	Romania	Spain
<i>Base (N)</i>	5	19	26	3
There are employers who consider physical disability an impediment to employment.	100.0	89.5	69.2	33.3
Hiring a person with disabilities brings benefits and advantages to the company.	60.0	63.2	84.6	66.7
A person with disabilities makes a greater effort to find a job than a person without disabilities.	100.0	94.7	96.2	100.0
For a person with disabilities, additional training is needed at work.	80.0	57.9	61.5	100.0
Workers with disabilities lack the skills and experience to do our jobs.	-	21.1	30.8	66.7
Hiring persons with disabilities has positive effects on the image of the company/organization/institution.	40.0	78.9	76.9	100.0
People with disabilities show involvement and dedication in the workplace.	100.0	63.2	65.4	100.0
The quality of the work done by a person with disabilities is the same as that of those without disabilities.	100.0	73.7	84.6	66.7
Persons with disabilities may not be as safe and productive as other workers.	-	42.1	46.2	100.0
A person with disabilities can integrate very well into the normal work pace.	100.0	73.7	84.6	100.0
A person with disabilities can easily integrate into a team.	60.0	84.2	84.6	100.0
It costs more to employ workers with disabilities than those without disabilities due to accommodations, additional management time, or healthcare and insurance costs.	40.0	36.8	46.2	100.0
Supervisors are not comfortable managing people with disabilities.	40.0	52.6	50.0	-
Supervisors are not sure how to evaluate a person with a disability.	40.0	52.6	65.4	-
Supervisors are not sure how to take disciplinary action for a person with a disability.	80.0	63.2	53.8	-

Base: total sample

Q14. Please state to what extent you agree with the following statements, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means 'Strongly Disagree' and 5 - 'Strongly Agree': (Single answer per row)

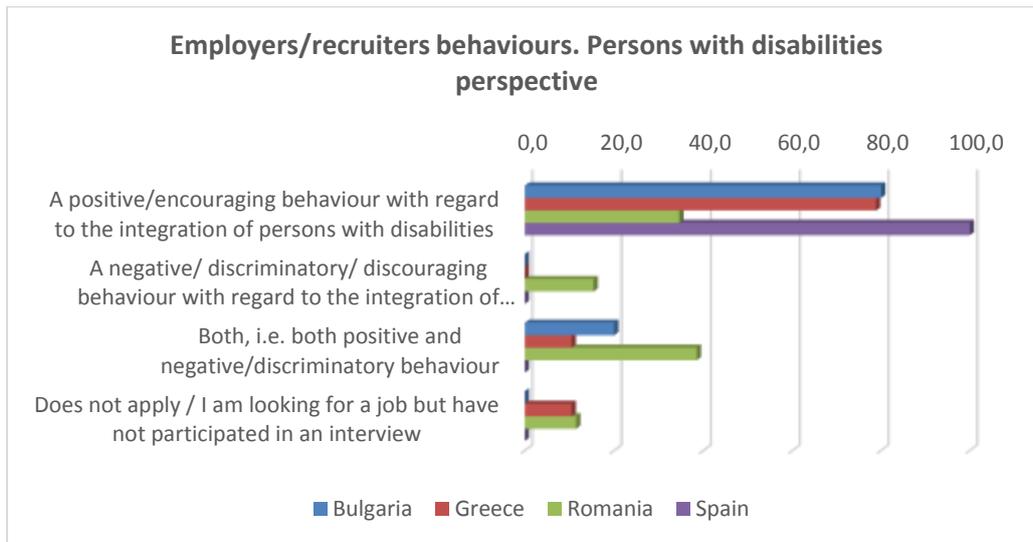


Regarding the satisfaction about the performance of the persons with disabilities in the workplace, all of the SMEs which are currently employing and/or have employed in the past persons with disabilities, who participated in the research, are satisfied or very satisfied.

While applying for a job, the majority of the respondents from Bulgaria, Greece and all from Spain encountered “a positive/encouraging behaviour with regard to the integration of persons with disabilities” while in Romania this share is only 34.6%. 20% of respondents from Bulgaria and 15.4% from Romania encountered “a negative/discriminatory/discouraging behaviour with regard to the integration of persons with disabilities”. Both behaviours were encountered by 34.6% of respondents from Romania and 10.5% from Greece.



FIGURE 4 EMPLOYERS/RECRUITERS BEHAVIOURS. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES PERSPECTIVE



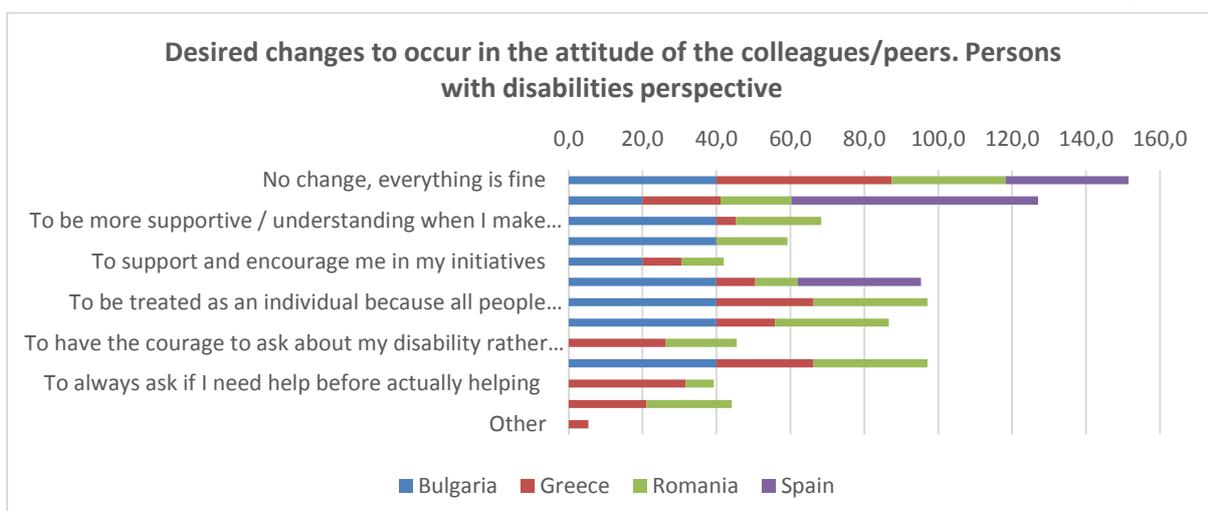
Q10. In the process of my job search, employers/recruiters displayed: (Single answer)

Almost all surveyed persons with disabilities perceive that it is important and very important to have a job, and for the majority of them, the current position is the right one.

While at the workplace, most of the respondents would like to see the following changes in the attitude of their colleagues/peers:

- To be treated as an individual because all people should be treated equally;
- To avoid focusing on their disability and act as they would normally act;
- To be more supportive/understanding when they make mistakes;
- To be more tolerant of the difficulties they have;
- To have the courage to ask about their disability rather than to presume knowledge.

FIGURE 5 DESIRED CHANGES TO OCCUR IN THE ATTITUDE OF THE COLLEAGUES / PEERS. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES PERSPECTIVE



Q8. What changes would you like to occur in the attitude of your colleagues / peers? (Multiple answer)

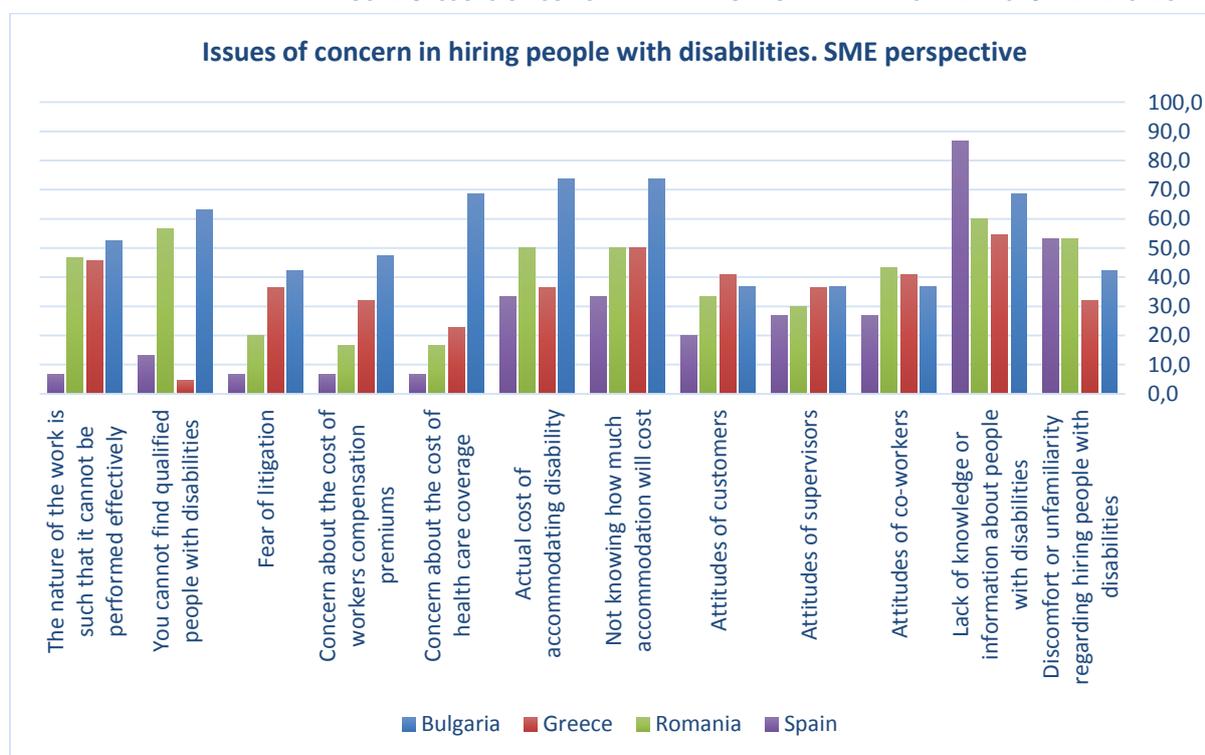
### 3.3 Impeding factors in hiring persons with disabilities in the SMEs

Most of the representatives of SMEs note that they have concerns when hiring persons with disabilities, such as:

- Lack of knowledge or information about people with disabilities;
- Not knowing how much accommodation will cost;
- Actual cost of accommodating a disability.

In **Bulgaria**, among the main concerns is also the cost of health care coverage and that you cannot find qualified people with disabilities. In **Greece** were also mentioned the attitudes of co-workers, supervisors and customers, while in **Romania** the fact that you cannot find qualified persons with disabilities and the discomfort or unfamiliarity regarding hiring persons with disabilities.

FIGURE 6 ISSUES OF CONCERN IN HIRING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES. SME PERSPECTIVE



Q15. To what extent are you concerned about the following issues in hiring people with disabilities? (Single answer per row)

When accommodating employees with disabilities within the company, the special requirements in carrying out the job is the main issue for the majority of the respondents. They also note that the unfavourable attitude of colleagues, of supervisors and the unfavourable attitude of customers may hinder this process.

From the perspective of the SMEs representatives, the persons with disabilities face the following main challenges when entering the labour market:

- Lack of promotion of jobs among persons with various disabilities;
- Employers rarely see people with disabilities applying for jobs;



- Employers' perception of persons with disabilities / don't know how to handle the needs of a worker with a disability on the job / concerns about attitudes of co-workers toward the person with a disability;
- Particularities of vacancies;
- The disability perceived as a deterrent to accomplish the work to the same standards as other employees;
- The cost of providing reasonable accommodations so that workers with disabilities can do their jobs / other costs, such as increased health insurance or worker's compensation premiums.

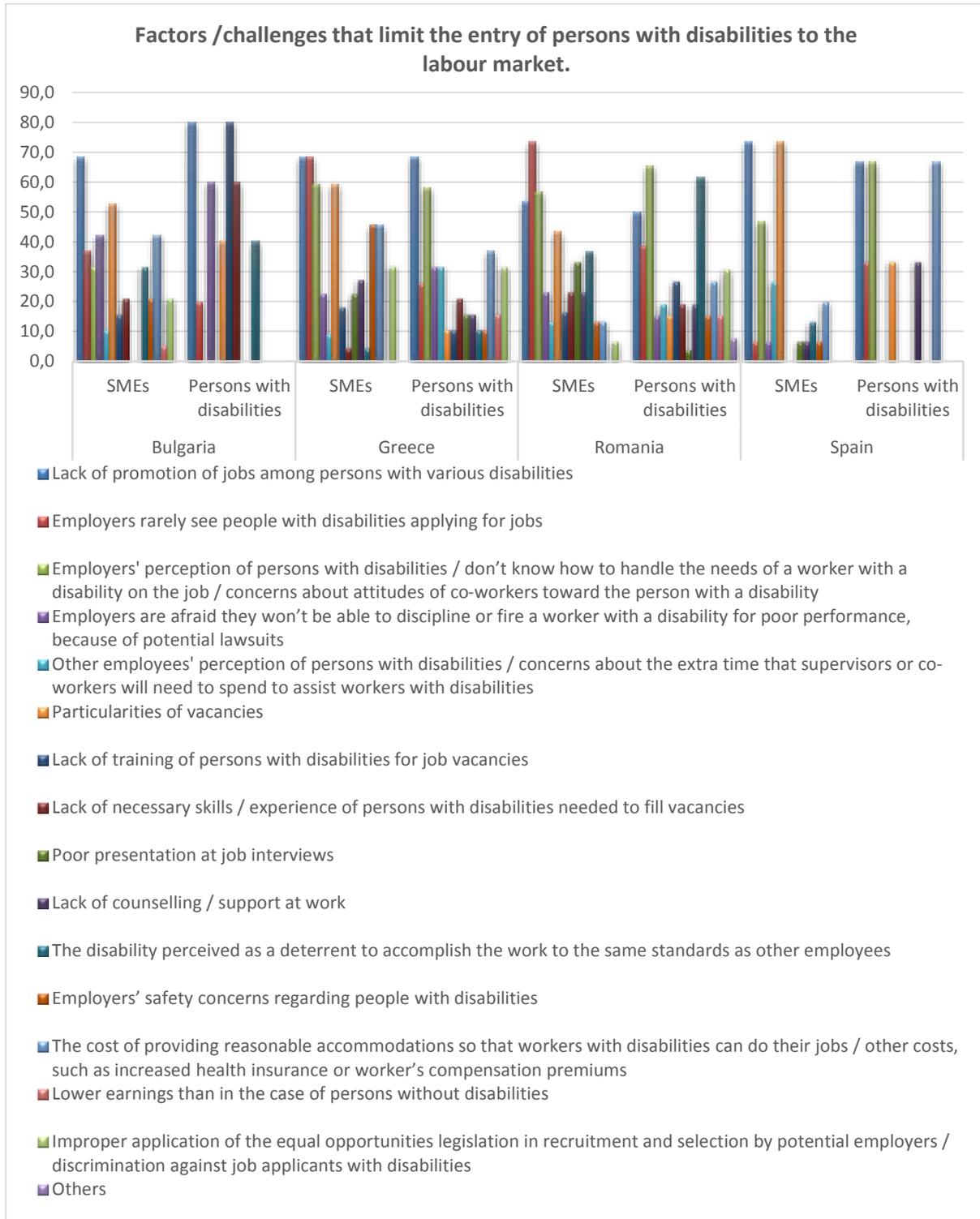
The persons with disabilities consider that they face the following challenges when entering the labour market:

- Lack of promotion of jobs among persons with various disabilities;
- Employers' perception of persons with disabilities / don't know how to handle the needs of a worker with a disability on the job / concerns about attitudes of co-workers toward the person with a disability;
- The cost of providing reasonable accommodations so that workers with disabilities can do their jobs / other costs, such as increased health insurance or worker's compensation premiums (specifically in Spain and Greece);
- Employers rarely see people with disabilities applying for jobs;
- Employers are afraid they won't be able to discipline or fire a worker with a disability for poor performance because of potential lawsuits.

According to the perception of the persons with disabilities, in **Bulgaria**, among the main challenges when entering the labour market we also find the lack of training for job vacancies and the lack of necessary skills/experience needed to fill the vacancies. In **Greece** were also mentioned challenges such as the other employees' perception of persons with disabilities/concerns about the extra time that supervisors or co-workers will need to spend to assist workers with disabilities, while in **Romania** the fact that the disability is perceived as a deterrent to accomplish the work to the same standards as other employees and improper application of the equal opportunities legislation in recruitment and selection by potential employers/discrimination against job applicants with disabilities.



**FIGURE 7 FACTORS /CHALLENGES THAT LIMIT THE ENTRY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TO THE LABOUR MARKET.**



*[SMEs] Q13. From your point of view, what are the factors /challenges that limit the entry of persons with disabilities to the labour market? (Multiple answer) & [Persons with disabilities] Q9. From your point of view, what are the factors /challenges that limit the entry of persons with disabilities to the labour market? (Multiple answer)*



When analysing the different groups of respondents, SMEs and persons with disabilities, some similarities can be observed such as the “lack of promotion of jobs among persons with various disabilities” rated very high by both SMEs and persons with disabilities. The main difference may lie in the employers' perception of persons with disabilities / don't know how to handle the needs of a worker with a disability on the job / concerns about attitudes of co-workers toward the person with a disability rated highest by the persons with disabilities compared to the SMEs.

The interviewed persons further elaborated this as part of the qualitative phase of the research. According to the opinions gathered, there is no information on the available job opportunities for people with disabilities at both SMEs and the relevant state authorities that manage the labour market in **Bulgaria**. In addition, people with disabilities lack a formal platform or a single place where they can advertise their potential and increase their opportunities of being spotted by a company or entrepreneur for either full-time or part-time employment/service.

Despite the fact that people with disabilities are fully committed to learn new things and adapt to a particular work environment, many of them lack the confidence to "go out there" and present their potential. Therefore, according to one of the interviewees, one important target should be to increase the motivation, self-awareness and presentation skills of the person with disabilities to better "sell" themselves on the labour market. However, none of the respondents in the online survey and the interviews liked the concept of "marketing disability". Instead, they preferred to market the person itself and his/her skills and experience. Interviews agreed that there is a huge problem with the self-esteem of people with disabilities. Having low self-esteem leads to depression, poor mental and physical health. Therefore enhancing independence and improving self-esteem, especially from an employability aspect, is essential.

Additionally, both target groups consider that the employers' perception of the persons with disabilities, the cost of their accommodation and the concern about the possible attitude of co-workers may limit the entry of persons with disabilities in the labour market. However, it is interesting to note that SMEs do not receive often applications from persons with disabilities, considering this fact as a major challenge along with the particularities of vacancies, while the persons with disabilities add in one extra challenge they face; the fact that the employers are afraid they won't be able to discipline or fire a worker with a disability for poor performance.

The interviewees with disabilities described their experiences when looking for a job. Supportive behaviour from employers and colleagues was among the positive experiences in their work environment. However, the cases where they had to face discrimination with regards to their disability were numerous. Interviewees with disabilities mention specifically that people assume things for their disability and their personality without actually knowing them, and for this reason, as candidates for a job, they have to show exceptional soft skills and actually prove who they really are and the quality of work they are capable of. Also, employers find excuses not to hire a person with disabilities, according to some of the interviewees' opinion, and are not flexible to different ways of performing the job. One of the interviewees points out that when teleworking was suggested by a person with disability 2 years ago as a different form of performing the job, the employers turned it down saying that “teleworking is a way for the employee to be lazy and avoid control”.



In the opinion of the persons with disabilities interviewed in **Romania**, the education system does not offer qualifications in accordance with the requirements of the labour market, nor are the qualification courses offered by the various employment agencies appropriate to the skills they have, e.g. in some qualification courses they attended, people with hearing impairments did not have an interpreter. For this reason, most have found jobs in fields other than those for which they were trained, or have accepted unskilled jobs.

In the opinion of persons with disabilities, the best active measures to stimulate employment are: to provide greater facilities to employers so that they create more jobs for persons with disabilities; to make the environment more accessible so that a person with disabilities can get to work on time; to inform the general public about the benefits of employing a person with disabilities, for example the transition from a socially and financially assisted status to a taxpayer status.

Regarding the available legislation, most interviewees are not very familiar with the legislative aspects regarding the rights of people with disabilities. What is worse is that most interviewees do not know the labour legislation (Labour Code), nor the institutions to which they must turn in order to resolve a labour dispute or to look for a job.



### 3.4 Perceived facilitating factors in hiring persons with disabilities in the SMEs

To increase in the number of persons with disabilities in employment, the SMEs indicate the following possible measures:

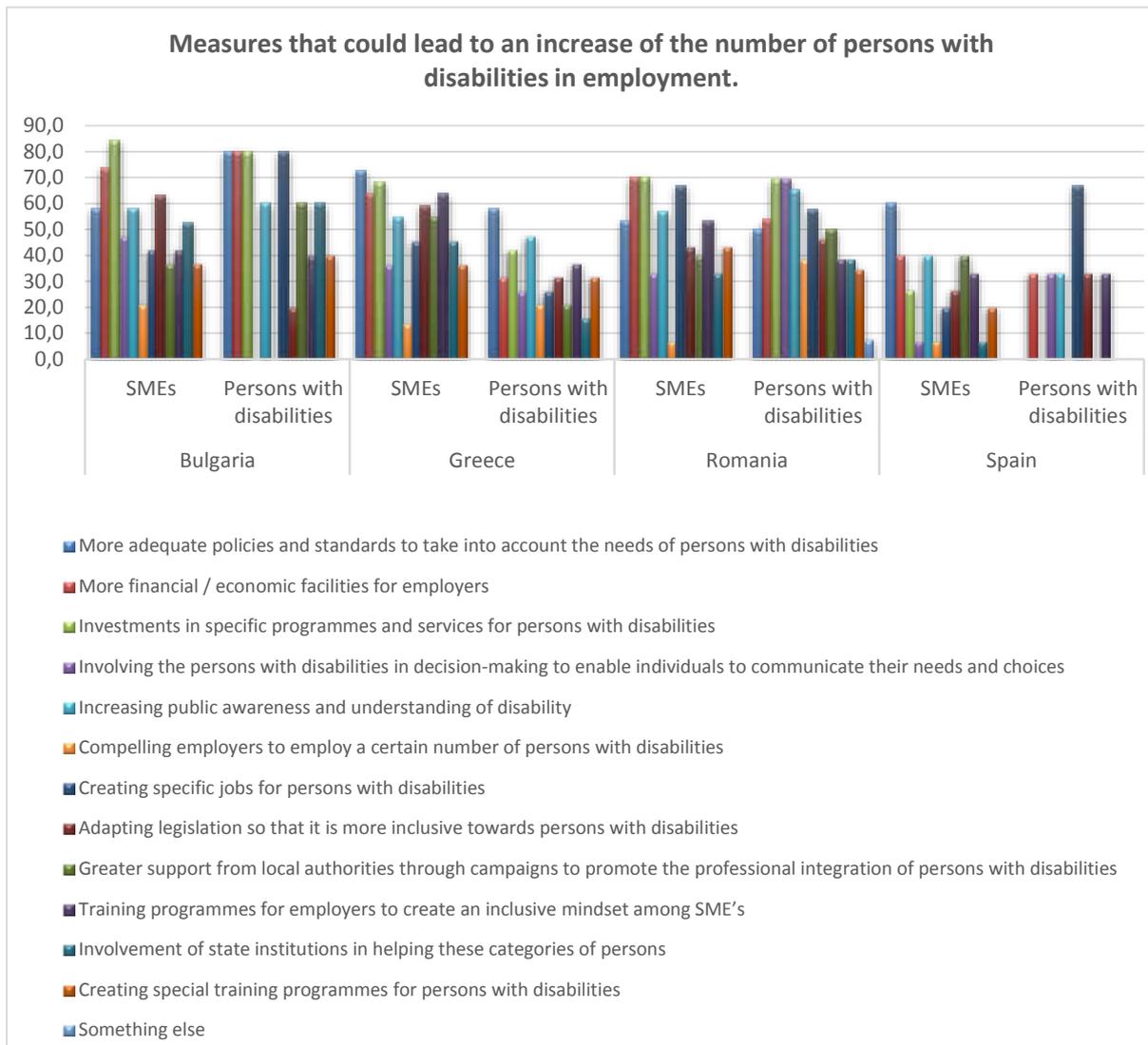
- More adequate policies and standards to take into account the needs of persons with disabilities (e.g. clear policy of inclusive education, enforceable access standards in physical environments, and priority accorded to rehabilitation);
- Investments in specific programmes and services for persons with disabilities;
- More financial / economic facilities for employers (e.g. tax reduction in relation to the number of persons with disabilities employed);
- Training programmes for employers to create an inclusive mindset among SME's;
- Adapting legislation so that it is more inclusive towards persons with disabilities;
- Increasing public awareness and understanding of disability.

Similarly, the persons with disabilities view the following measures as possible to lead to an increase in the number of persons with disabilities in employment:

- More adequate policies and standards to take into account the needs of persons with disabilities (e.g. clear policy of inclusive education, enforceable access standards in physical environments, and priority accorded to rehabilitation);
- More financial/economic facilities for employers (e.g. tax reduction in relation to the number of persons with disabilities employed);
- Investments in specific programmes and services for persons with disabilities;
- Increasing public awareness and understanding of disability;
- Creating specific jobs for persons with disabilities.



**FIGURE 8 MEASURES THAT COULD LEAD TO AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN EMPLOYMENT**



*[SMEs] Q16. According to your opinion, what measures could lead to an increase in the number of persons with disabilities in employment: (Multiple answer) & [Persons with disabilities] Q11. Please recommend some measures that could lead to an increase of the number of persons with disabilities in employment: (Multiple answer)*

According to the respondents, in order to better integrate in the workplace, the persons with disabilities need/can benefit, from:

- Adaptation of the work environment to provide access to the place of work (e.g. accessible parking, elevators, modified toilets, railings);
- A clear company strategy on disability management in the workplace;
- Ensuring equal opportunities with other workers at the workplace to acquire the skills and experience necessary to advance in the career;
- Enforcing policies prohibiting discrimination in the workplace;

- Better communication and awareness raising within the workplace in regard to potential challenges for workers with disabilities.

**FIGURE 9 MEASURES TO BETTER INTEGRATE THE PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE WORKPLACE. SME PERSPECTIVE**



Q17. From your experience or knowledge, in order to better integrate in the workplace, persons with disabilities need / can benefit from: (Multiple answer)

**FIGURE 10 MEASURES TO MAKE THE JOB EASIER. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES PERSPECTIVE**



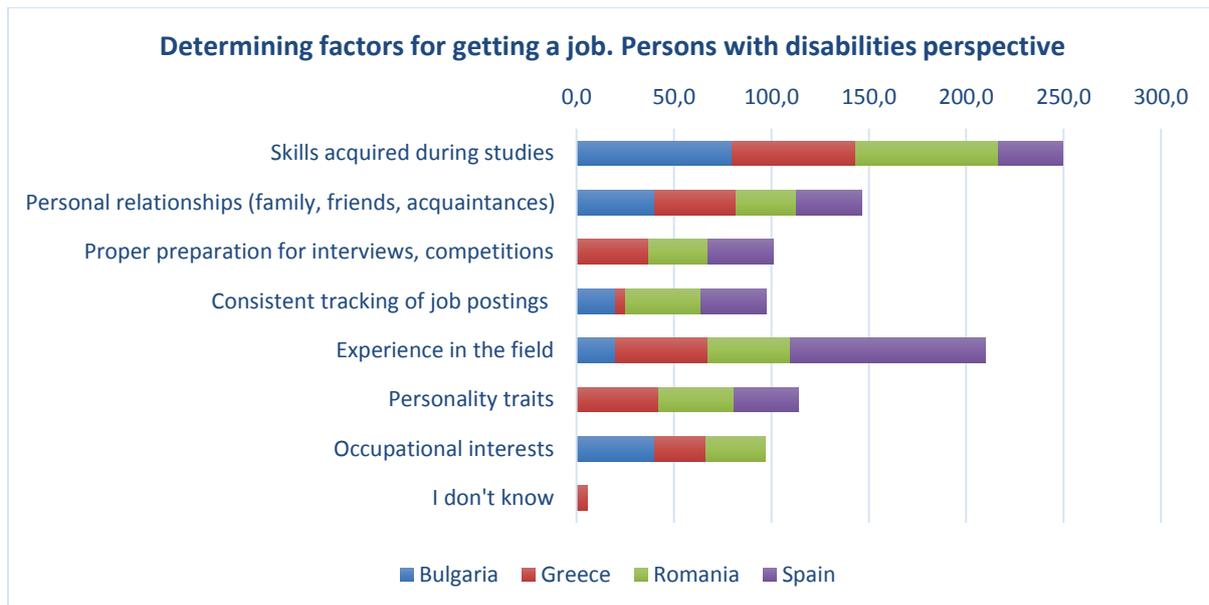
Q7. According to your opinion, what measures could your employer take to make your job easier? (Multiple answer)



To get a job, for the persons with disabilities the determining factors are:

- Skills acquired during studies;
- Experience in the field (with a highest share in Spain, 100%);
- Personal relationships (family, friends, acquaintances);
- Proper preparation for interviews, competitions;
- Consistent tracking of job postings;
- Personality traits;
- Occupational interests.

**FIGURE 11 DETERMINING FACTORS FOR GETTING A JOB. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES PERSPECTIVE**



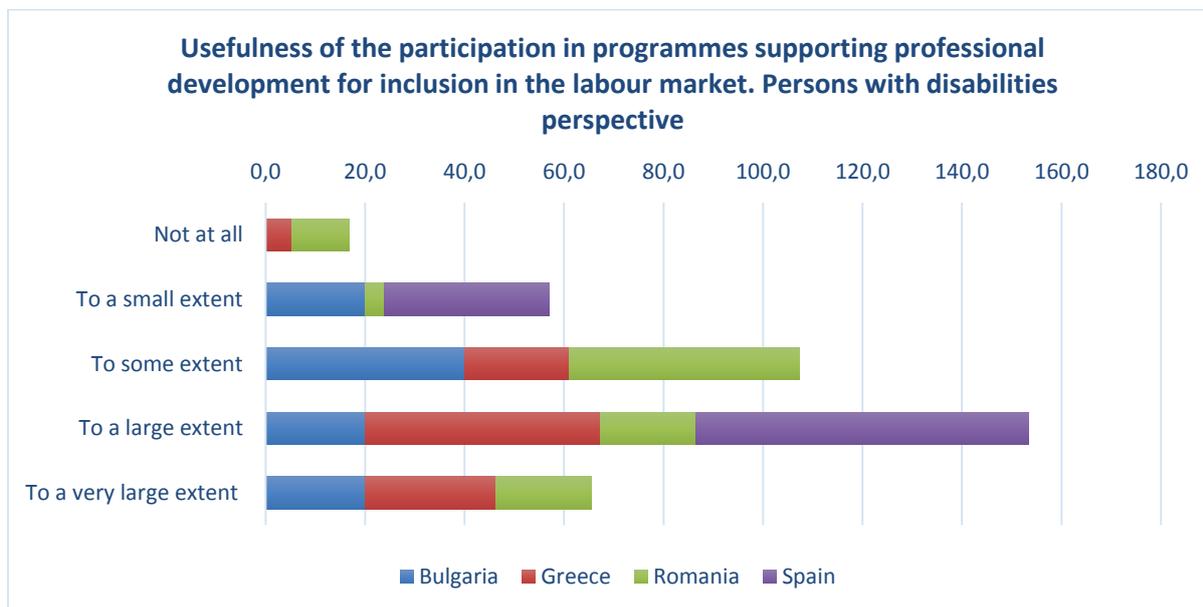
Q13. In general, in your opinion, what do you think are the determining factors for getting a job? (Multiple answer)

The knowledge and understanding of the legislation regarding the employment of persons with disabilities would improve the work situation for majority of the respondents, persons with disability, (80% in Bulgaria, 95% in Greece, 65.4% in Romania and 66.7% in Spain).

The participation in programmes supporting the professional development for inclusion in the labour market (courses, trainings, seminars/workshops, etc.) is useful for 40% of respondents – persons with disabilities in Bulgaria, 74% in Greece, 38.5% in Romania, and 66.7% in Spain. 20% of SMEs from Bulgaria organize this type of programmes within their company/ institution (for example: training funded with the EU's support), 9% in Greece (sheltered workshops for the visually impaired conducted by the Lighthouse for the Blind), 13.3% in Romania (social enterprise; the job itself; workspace modification; programs with European support) and only 6.7% in Spain.



FIGURE 12 USEFULNESS OF THE PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMMES SUPPORTING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR INCLUSION IN THE LABOUR MARKET. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES PERSPECTIVE



Q15. To what extent do you find your participation in programmes supporting professional development for inclusion in the labour market (courses, trainings, seminars / workshops, etc.) useful? (Single answer)

For the respondents from **Bulgaria**, the following skills and abilities are considered to be the most important to be developed in a person with disabilities, for employment: *Respect* - 100%; *Sincerity* - 100%; *Responsibility* - 100%; *Cooperation* - 100%; *Change Management* - 80%; *Problem Solving* - 80%; *Motivation* - 80%; *Team Work* - 80%; *Openness to Experience* - 80% etc.

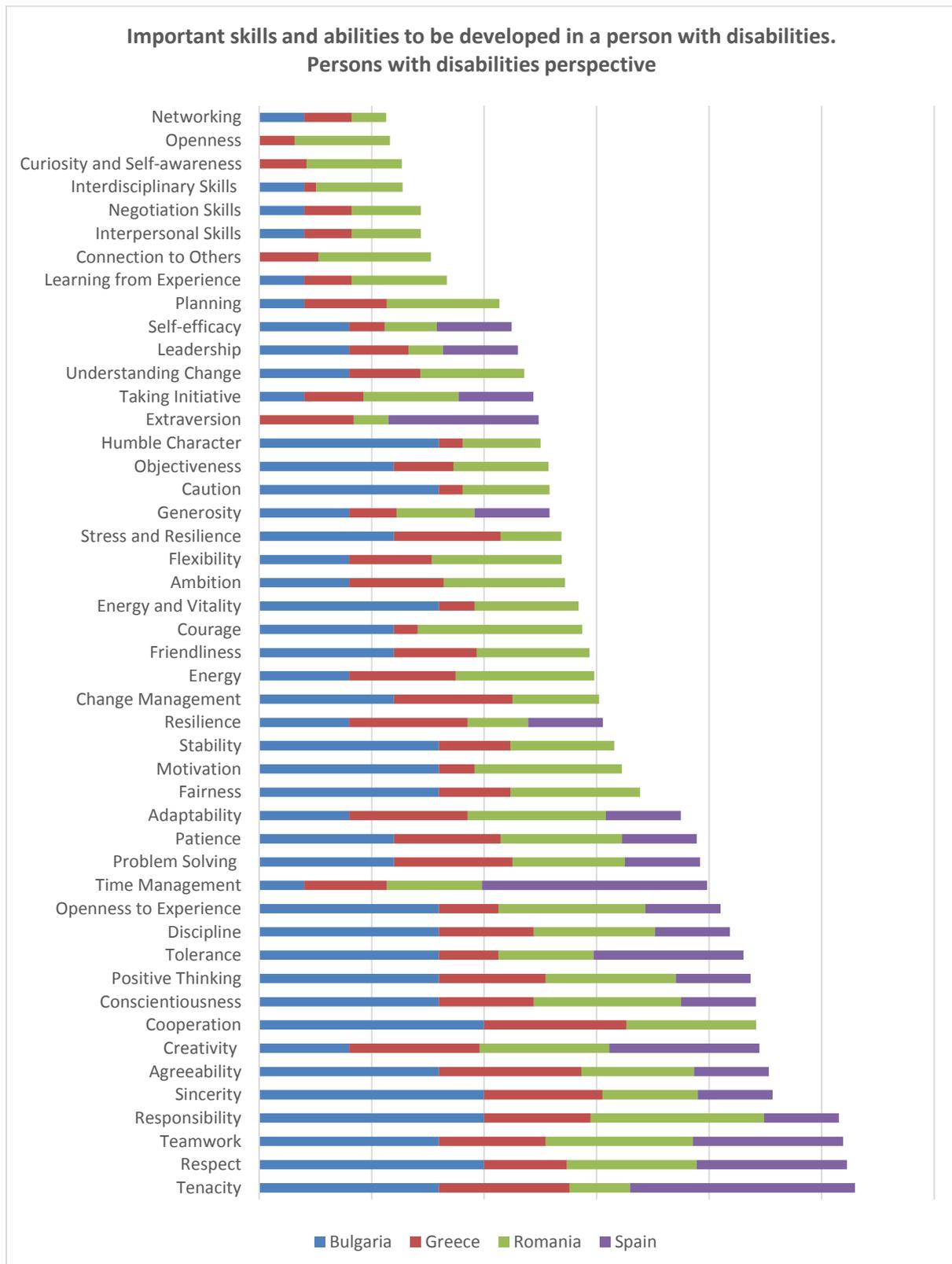
For the respondents from **Greece**, the following skills and abilities are considered to be the most important to be developed in a person with disabilities, for employment: *Agreeability and Cooperation* - 63%; *Tenacity and Creativity* - 58%; *Resilience, Sincerity, Flexibility* - 53%; *Change Management, Problem Solving* - 42%; while some interviewees emphasize the acceptance of their disability as a parameter to find and maintain job, as a factor of self-confidence and thus effective self-presentation when applying for a job.

In the case of the respondents from **Romania**, the following skills and abilities are considered to be the most important to be developed in a person with disabilities, for employment: *Responsibility* - 76.9%; *Courage* - 73.1%; *Conscientiousness* - 65.4%; *Openness to Experience* - 65.4%; *Motivation* - 65.4%; and *Teamwork* - 65.4%.

For the respondents from **Spain**, the following skills and abilities are the most important to be developed in a person with disabilities, for employment: *Tenacity* - 100%; *Time Management* - 100%; *Extraversion* - 66.7%; *Tolerance* - 66.7%; *Respect* - 66.7%; *Teamwork* - 66.7%; *Creativity* - 66.7%, while some interviewees pointed teamwork and adaptability plus the need to have enough confidence as key to find and maintain job.



**FIGURE 13 IMPORTANT SKILLS AND ABILITIES TO BE DEVELOPED IN A PERSON WITH DISABILITIES. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES PERSPECTIVE**



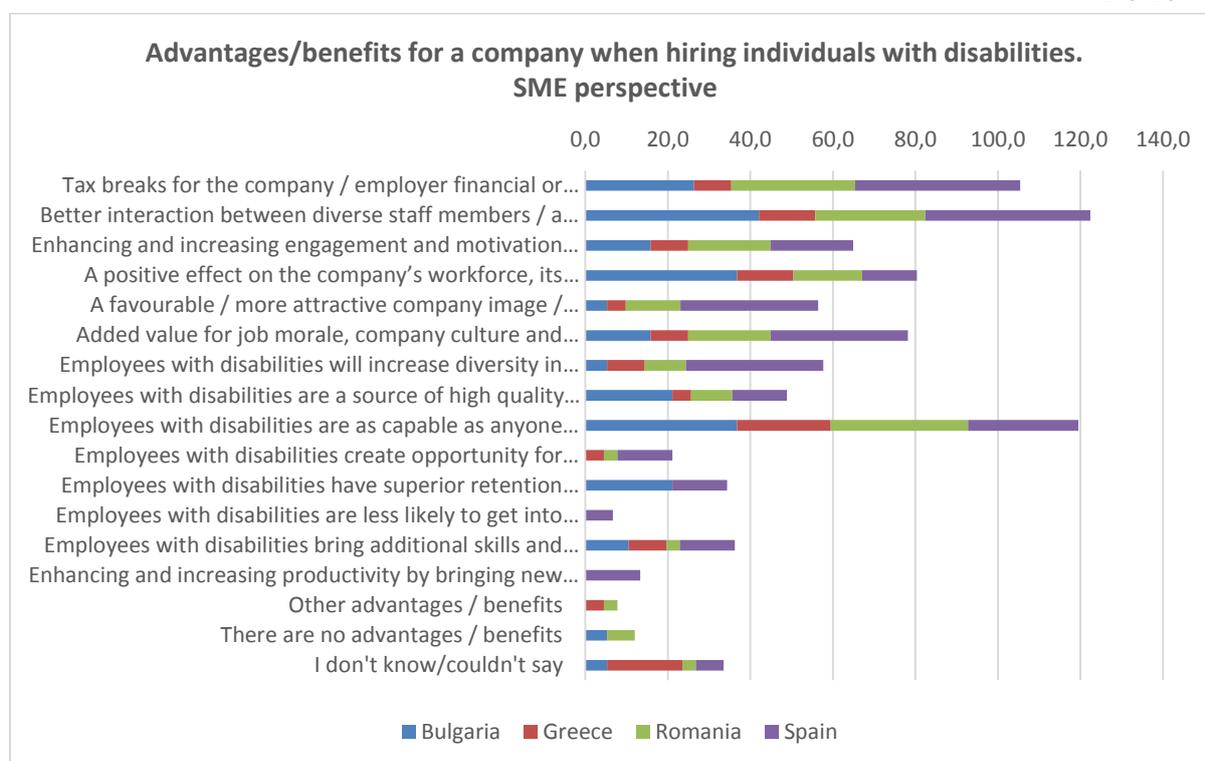
Q25. Which of the following skills and abilities do you consider to be the most important to be developed in a person with disabilities, for employment? (Multiple answer)

### 3.5 Perceived benefits of hiring persons with disabilities in the SMEs

When considering the advantages/benefits to hiring individuals with disabilities, the following were identified by the responding SMEs:

- Employees with disabilities are as capable as anyone else;
- Better interaction between diverse staff members/a positive workplace culture;
- Tax breaks for the company/employer financial or economic incentives;
- Enhancing and increasing engagement and motivation of the staff members;
- Added value for job morale, company culture and social mission;
- Employees with disabilities will increase diversity in the workplace / an inclusive and diverse workplace.

**FIGURE 14 ADVANTAGES/BENEFITS FOR A COMPANY WHEN HIRING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES. SME PERSPECTIVE**

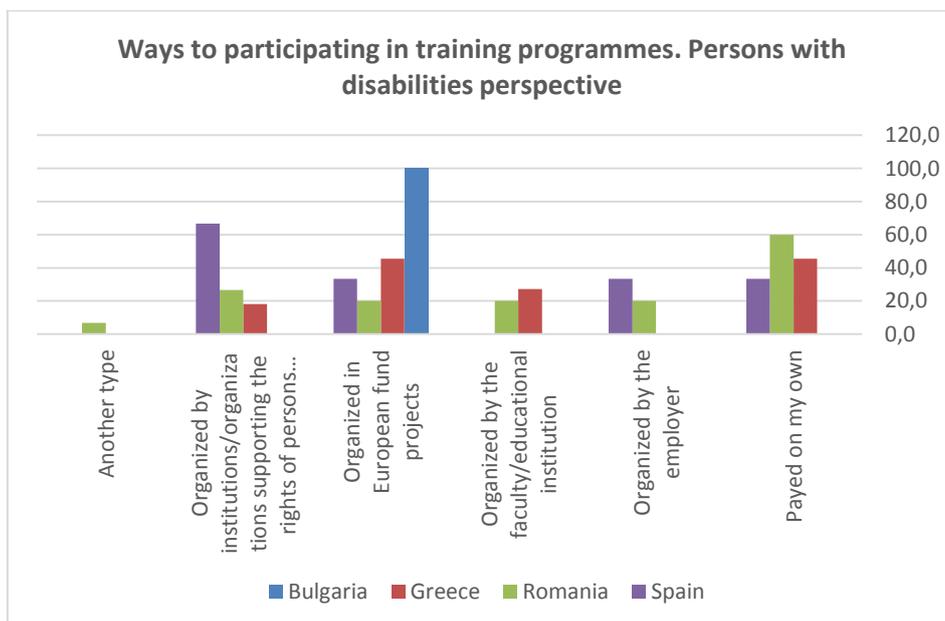


Q11. What advantages/benefits have you identified as a company when hiring individuals with disabilities? (Multiple answer)

### 3.6 Preferred steps and guiding/training/consulting pedagogy, material, guidelines towards creating a disability-inclusive workforce

The majority of the respondents, persons with disabilities, have been involved in training programmes before (Bulgaria – 20%, Greece – 58%, Romania – 57.7%, Spain – 100%). In **Bulgaria** all of these were organized with the support of the European Union. In **Greece**, the training programs were paid on their own (45.5%); organized through European Union funded projects (45.5%) or organized by the faculty/educational institution they were involved (27%)/by institutions and organizations supporting the rights of persons with disabilities, while none of the respondents was involved in training programmes organized by the employer. In **Romania**, were paid on their own – 60.0%, organized by the faculty/educational institution – 26.7%, organized by the employer – 20.0%, organized in European Union funded projects – 20.0%, and organized by institutions/organizations supporting the rights of persons with disabilities – 20.0%. In **Spain**, in 66.7% of cases the training programs were the paid by institutions/organizations supporting the rights of persons with disabilities, 33.3% organised paid on their own, 33.3% by European Union funded projects, 33.3% organized by employers, while none of the respondents was involved in training programmes organized by the faculty/educational institution they were involved.

**TABLE 4 WAYS TO PARTICIPATING IN TRAINING PROGRAMMES. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES PERSPECTIVE**



*Base: the respondents who were involved in training programmes before (answer “Yes” at Q16 question)*

*Q17. Please mention the way(s) in which you participated in training programmes. (Multiple answer)*

The reasons for those who have not previously participate in training programmes were: these programmes did not match their needs, did not have the time to do so, they didn’t know where to turn. On the other hand, the majority of the respondents would be interested in being involved in a training program with topics such as: showing how to demonstrate, acquire, develop job skills and /or apply transferable soft skills at the workplace to help. The respondents prefer in general training

courses that are interactive/stimulating, except in Bulgaria where majority of the respondents prefer classical courses.

**FIGURE 15 PREFERRED TYPE OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING COURSE. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES PERSPECTIVE**



Q22. If you were to take professional training courses, what would you be interested in? (Single answer)

In **Bulgaria** all respondents prefer training for professional growth, while in **Greece** the majority of the respondents prefer training programmes to help both their professional and their personal growth. In **Romania** the professional growth is preferred for 76.9% of respondents and the personal growth for 53.8%.

In **Spain**, all respondents pointed out that it helped them in their personal growth and 66.7% in their professional development. Online learning was preferred by 100% of the respondents followed by 66.7% who preferred blended learning.

**FIGURE 16 USEFUL TYPE OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING COURSE. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES PERSPECTIVE**



Q23. If you were to take training courses, it would be useful if they helped you in: (Multiple answer)

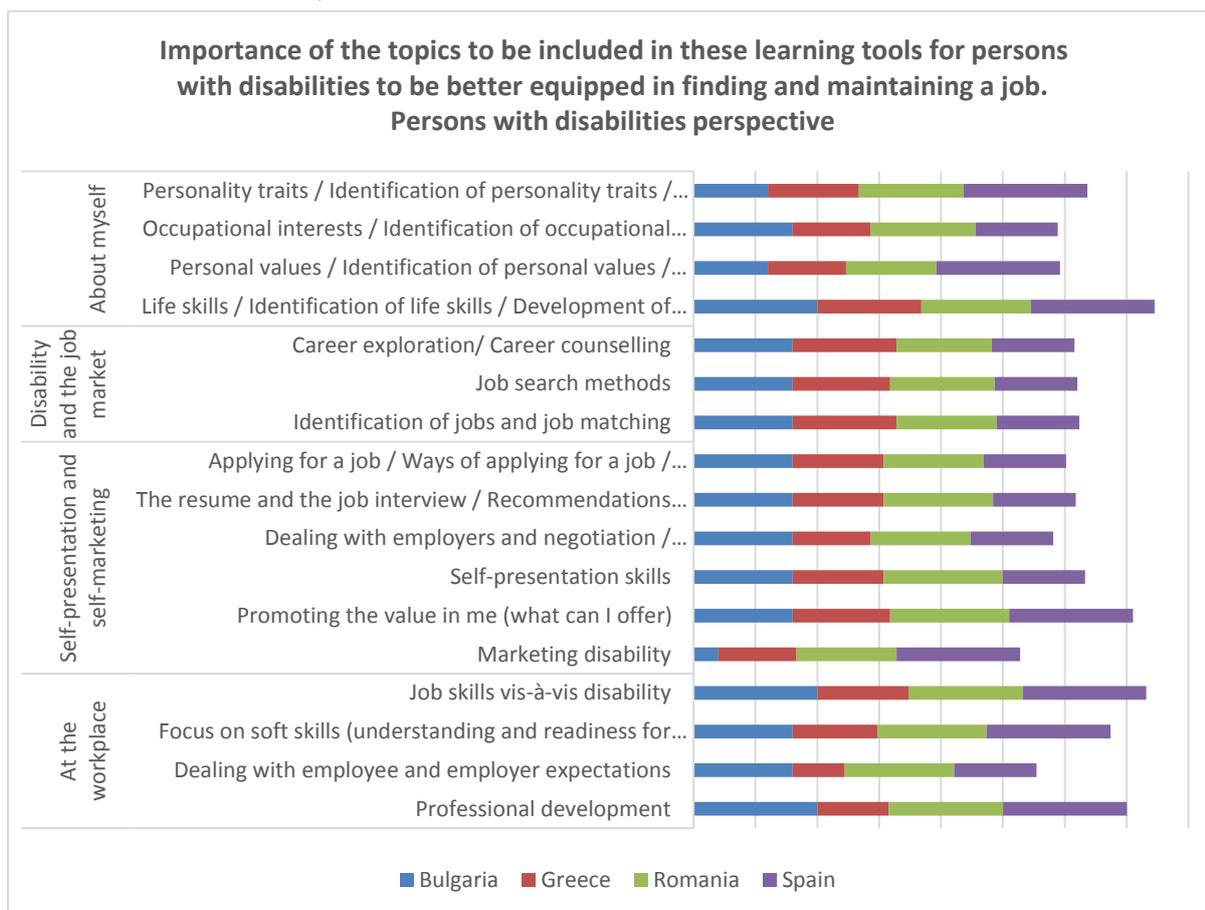
Overall, in **Bulgaria**, during the interviews, the persons with disabilities shared that they would prefer mostly a typical classroom/workshop setting, working in a group with other like-minded individuals sharing similar issues and challenges. Online and blended learning was also suitable. In terms of timing, most interviewees preferred short (i.e. 60 minute sessions), once or twice a week. All presented options were interesting to them as soft skills were considered particularly important in terms of

content. Many wanted help in developing their own professional branding online, i.e. creating an appealing CV and portfolio, LinkedIn profile, how to post intriguing content to enhance their professional image, etc.

The following topics in developing learning tools for persons with disabilities to be better equipped in finding and maintaining a job are viewed as important and very important:

- About myself: Personality traits and inventory, interests, personal values, my life skills;
- Disability and the job market: Career exploration, job search methods, identification of jobs and job matching;
- Self-presentation and self-marketing: applying for a job, the resume and the job interview, dealing with employers and negotiation, self-presentation skills, promoting the value in me (what can I offer), marketing disability;
- At the workplace: job skills vis-à-vis disability, focus on soft skills (understanding and readiness for application), dealing with employee and employer expectations, professional development.

**FIGURE 17 IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPICS TO BE INCLUDED IN THESE LEARNING TOOLS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TO BE BETTER EQUIPPED IN FINDING AND MAINTAINING A JOB. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES PERSPECTIVE**



Q24. How important do you consider each of the following to be in terms of developing learning tools for persons with disabilities to be better equipped in finding and maintaining a job? (Single answer per row)



In **Greece**, in general, the interviewees insisted on self-awareness; knowing their abilities, the “value in them” and developing the ability to promote it during an interview. Self-presentation was a skill they highlighted many times during the interview, and job-matching was something they would like to feel more comfortable with. Finding the right job for them is really important and knowing how to search for a job and apply, from CVs to interviews, was something they would like to have guidance with. At the same time, some of the interviewees mentioned that learning about laws and their rights when applying for a job is something that matters to them and so does the psychological preparation for failing an interview.

In **Spain**, the interviewees pointed out the importance of promoting confidence and self-awareness, that is promoting and marketing disability but not only for the companies but for the people with disabilities themselves. They mentioned that obviously finding a job is even harder for them, now with the pandemic and that for this reason, the promotion of learning and awareness courses to properly look for a job and follow the whole application process is very important.

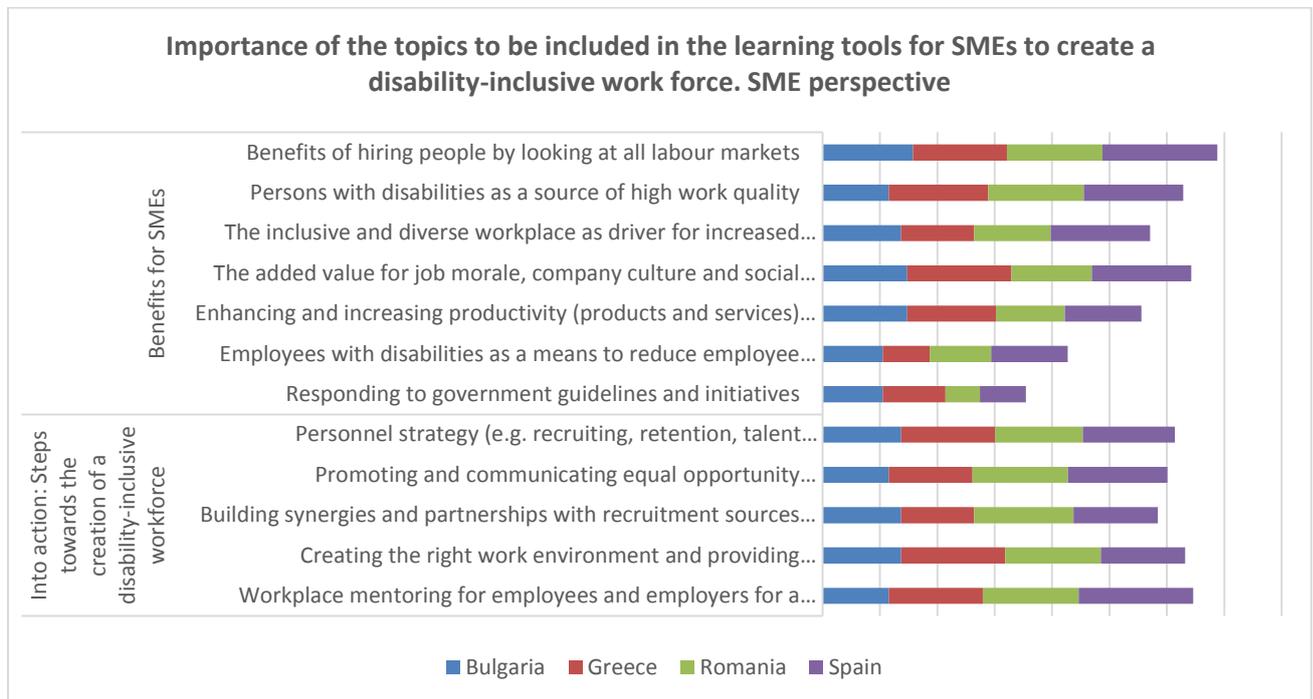
In general, we can say they that the opinion of the interviewees matches the survey results with more emphasis on the importance of raising more confidence in the process of finding a job.

When developing learning tools to create a disability-inclusive work force, the following topics were considered as important and very important by the SMEs:

- Benefits of hiring people by looking at all labour markets;
- The inclusive and diverse workplace as a driver for increased consumer market and revenue;
- The added value for job morale, company culture and social mission;
- Enhancing and increasing productivity (products and services) by bringing unique skills, creativity, experiences and understanding;
- Personnel strategy (e.g. recruiting, retention, talent identification, professional development strategies and practices etc.);
- Promoting and communicating equal opportunity commitment on the ground of disability as the company's business differentiator and driver;
- Building synergies and partnerships with recruitment sources promoting persons with disabilities as prospect employees;
- Creating the right work environment and providing workplace flexibility (including time, place, task);
- Workplace mentoring for employees and employers for a disability-inclusive and disability-friendly workplace;
- Persons with disabilities as a source of high work quality.



**FIGURE 18 IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPICS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE LEARNING TOOLS FOR SMEs TO CREATE A DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE WORK FORCE. SME PERSPECTIVE**



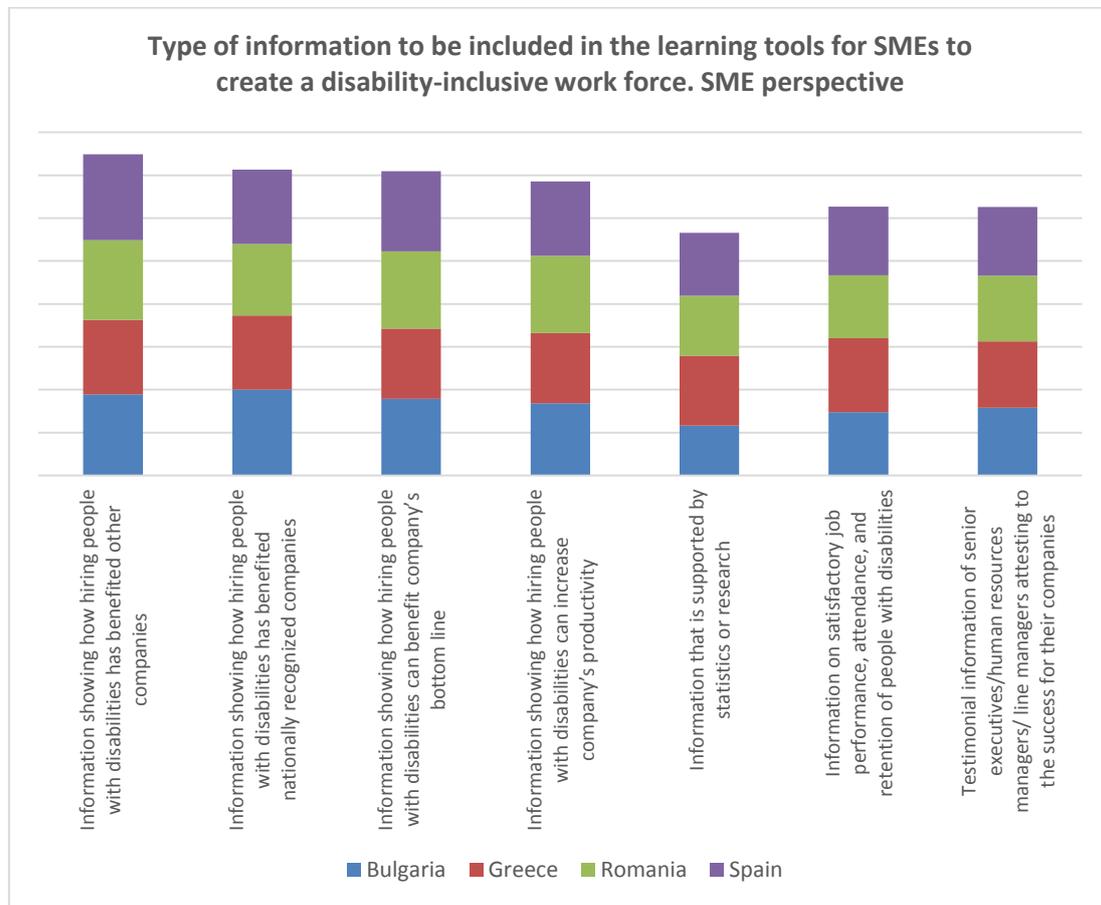
Q24. How important do you consider each of the following topics to be included in these learning tools for SMEs to create a disability-inclusive work force? (Single answer per row)

The SMEs also consider that is important and very important to include the following type of information in the learning tools developed:

- Information showing how hiring people with disabilities has benefited other companies;
- Information showing how hiring people with disabilities has benefited nationally recognised companies;
- Information showing how hiring people with disabilities can benefit the company's bottom line;
- Information showing how hiring people with disabilities can increase a company's productivity;
- Information that is supported by statistics or research;
- Information on satisfactory job performance, attendance, and retention of people with disabilities;
- Testimonial information of senior executives/human resources managers/ line managers attesting to the success for their companies.



FIGURE 19 TYPE OF INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN THE LEARNING TOOLS FOR SMEs TO CREATE A DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE WORK FORCE. SME PERSPECTIVE



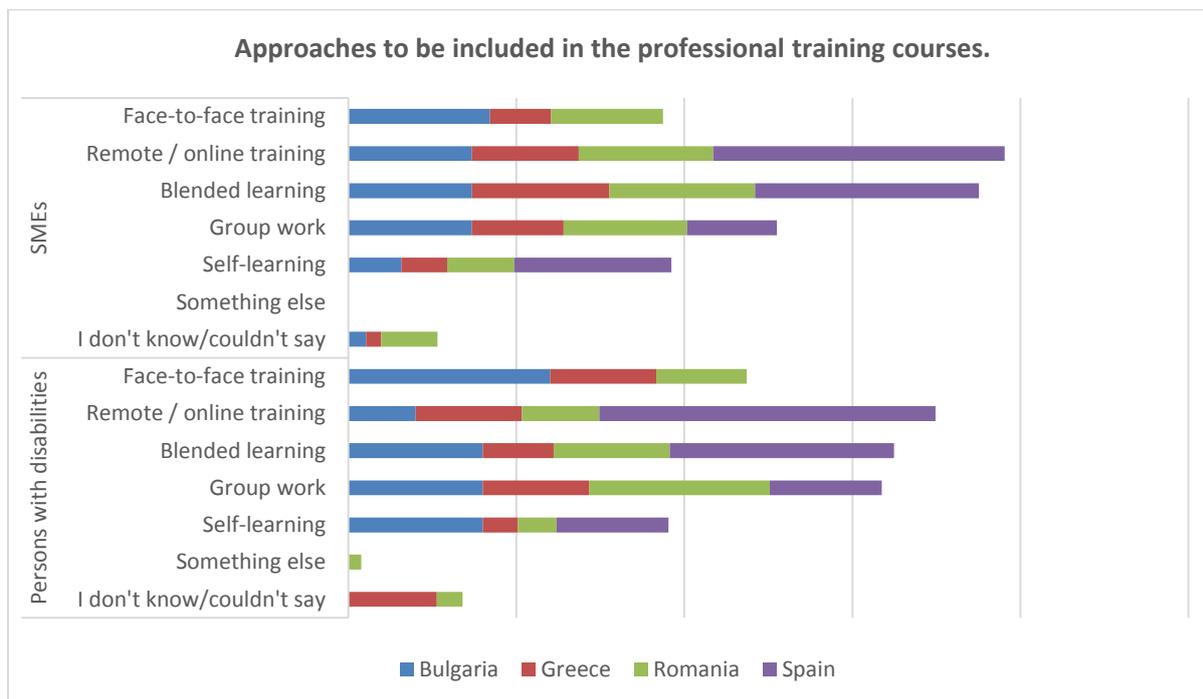
Q25. How important do you consider each of the following type of information to be included in these learning tools for SMEs to create a disability-inclusive work force? (Single answer per row)

Regarding the delivery methods for professional training courses, the SMEs from Greece, Romania and Spain prefer blended learning and remote/online training while the SMEs from Bulgaria prefer face-to-face training, blended learning and work in small groups.

The persons with disabilities prefer to take professional training courses online and blended learnings in Spain, group work and blended learning in Romania, online, group work and face to face in Greece and face-to-face training, blended learning and work in small groups in Bulgaria.



FIGURE 20 APPROACHES TO BE INCLUDED IN THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING COURSES.



[SMEs] Q26. If you were to take professional training courses, what approach would you be interested in? & [Persons with disabilities] Q20. If you were to take professional training courses, what approach would you be interested in? (Multiple answer)

Regarding the most relevant/useful means of presentation for the learning process, there are some differences between the two target groups and the four countries covered by the research. So, in **Bulgaria**, the SMEs would be interested in attending courses that include: open educational resources (OER), audio and video files and/or animated presentations, while the persons with disabilities prefer printed materials, slides for an overhead projector and/or open educational resources (OER).

In **Greece**, as far as the means of presentation are concerned, learning platforms were considered as most relevant/useful for the learning process for SMEs (68% of SMEs while only 21% of the persons with disabilities find it useful) while the persons with disabilities find audio and video files as their preferred means of presentation (39% of persons with disabilities, while 45,5% of SMEs find it useful). With regards to Infographics, 32% of the SMEs and 26% of persons with disabilities find it useful, while the persons with disabilities find printable worksheets useful as well (32% of persons with disabilities, 26% of SMEs). In their interviews, the persons with disabilities preferred distance/online learning methods by reasons of accessibility, but they recognize the value of face-to-face training as a more substantial educational method.

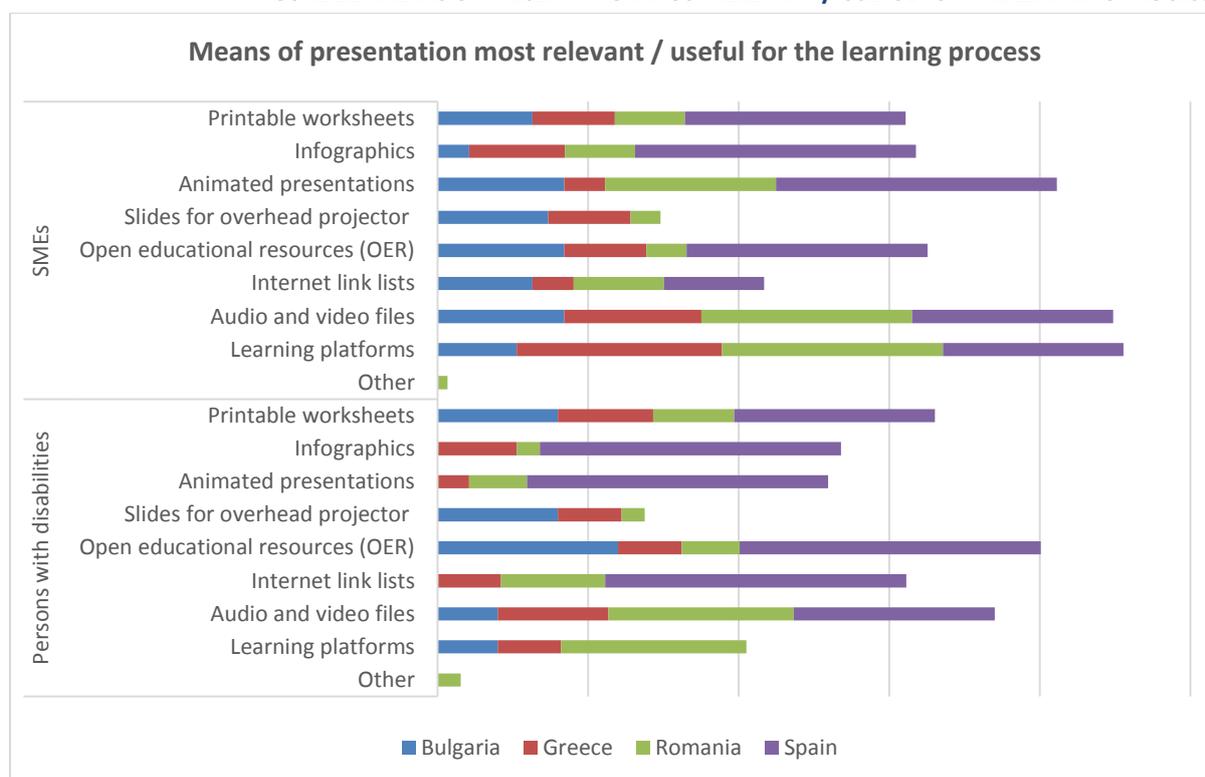
In **Romania**, the following means of presentation were considered as most relevant/useful for the learning process for SMEs: learning platforms - 73.3%, audio and video files - 70.0%, animated presentations - 56.7%. For the persons with disabilities, the following means of presentation were considered as most relevant/useful: learning platforms – 61.5%, audio and video files – 61.5%, internet link lists – 34.6%, printable worksheets – 26.9%.

Interviews identified that the preferred courses were those with fewer hours per day, but with a longer duration, and depending on the evolution of the pandemic, there was a preference for face-to-face courses, for the purpose of socialization and for practical reasons, but the option of blended learning was not excluded either.

In **Spain**, as to the means of presentation are most relevant infographics and animated presentations were preferred by SMES (93.3%), while the persons with disabilities, all of them (100%) preferred the same ones plus links and audio and video files.

In the interviews, the persons with disabilities preferred online learning methods because of their accessibility showing a very similar panorama to the survey. The value of blended learning however was mentioned by the interviewees. The persons with disabilities also expressed their desire for modules-oriented training courses they can select according to their needs in terms of both themes and time.

**FIGURE 21 MEANS OF PRESENTATION MOST RELEVANT / USEFUL FOR THE LEARNING PROCESS.**



*[SMEs] Q27. According to your needs / preference, which of the following means of presentation are most relevant / useful for your learning process? (Multiple answers) & [Persons with disabilities] Q21. According to your needs / preference, which of the following means of presentation are most relevant / useful for your learning process? (Multiple answer)*



### 4. Methodological framework for developing learning materials and tools for SMEs and persons with disabilities

The conclusions of the research are presented in here. This chapter is structured in 6 sub-chapters that summaries the key findings, like:

- conclusion remarks of the research study;
- preferences on topics including opinions and suggestions by the target groups;
- preferred methods (pedagogical approach, type of materials, time-length of modules) including best practices that could be learned from;
- potential obstacles that should be considered when drafting the training material;
- usability of the learning provision to be developed;
- potential contribution on increasing the employability of the persons with disabilities (SMEs, national etc.)

The a **methodological matrix** containing the methodological elements and tools facilitating the production of IO2 which is a core output of the project - learning material and tools for SMEs and learning material for persons with disabilities - is also presented here.

#### 4.1 Background and aims

The methodological framework is a synthesis of the exploration of the factors determining the employability-disability nexus on the side of the SMEs and that of persons of disabilities.

Integrating data to orient the development of a “learning” path for SMEs for the creation of disability-inclusive workforce, as well for supporting persons with disabilities at the soft skills level, does not only guide the development of the intervention at hand, but furthermore it expands knowledge in terms of the inner workings, the attitudes, the stereotypes, the missing knowledge that condition the views and perceptions of SMEs and persons with disabilities regarding the nature of the relationship between disability-work ability-employability.

The methodological framework draws from a comparative analysis of documentation, elaborating into methodological elements and tools facilitating the production of IO2 which is a core output of the project. Substantial input is provided by all partners regarding country-specific aspects.

The **main goal** of the framework consists in distinguishing what is to be considered as more essential and what not, and to provide a methodological matrix around which educational content will be organized such as (indicatively):

- I. Which are the subjects participants are more likely to engage with?
- II. What is the appropriate time-length in order for participants to reach a significant level of comprehension of the learning material?
- III. Which are the most appropriate pedagogical methods to be used during the learning process?
- IV. How does the learning content need to be structured for the online-based material?



According to the methodology framework, **a set of digital modules will be developed** both content-wise, as well as technically to be made available in an online environment. The set will include **material for SMEs** to create a disability-inclusive workforce, as well as **material for persons with disabilities**, supporting them pursuing employability and professional development as employees. The integrated provision will cover the needs, the perceived notions of the employability-disability nexus as reflected in both the benefits for SMEs, as well as a crucial factor for social inclusion and personal/professional fulfilment for persons with disabilities.

The variations explored through targeted research towards the development of the methodological framework were:

1. Disability as a constraint for employability
2. Disability as not affecting employability of a person and thus considered as a resource
3. Employability not as determined by disability, but influenced by aspects relevant with specific job, competences, personal characteristics etc.

The methodological framework was developed to support the creation of:

- a) Learning material and tools for SMEs (i.e. HR, managerial/executive level staff incl. consultants who are responsible for recruiting, hiring, retaining employees), that will help to acknowledge and reap the benefits of a disability-inclusive workforce.
- b) Learning material for persons with disabilities to get the best out of their professional development opportunities by showing how to demonstrate, acquire, develop job skills, as well as apply transferable soft skills at the workplace.

The framework as a piece of evidence and tool at the same time will be promoted on multiple sides of the project scope: SMEs, SME representative bodies, Disabled persons representative bodies/actors/networks, Business consulting and training organisations, Labour and social inclusion governmental institutions. Regarding transferability it will allow for customisation in different contexts, by leaving enough room for adaptations by referring to national/local context and further categories of persons with disabilities.

### 4.2 Conclusion remarks of research study

In accordance with the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, *disability* is a concept that includes deficiencies/impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. This concept does not overlap with the concept of illness or disease, but represents its functional consequence. Deficiencies/Impairments may be temporary or permanent, evolving, regressive or stationary, intermittent or continuous.

In 2020, more than 20% of the EU population had been officially declared with some form of disability. In addition, according to data of Eurostat for 2019, 28.4% of people with a disability (aged 16 or over) were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, compared with 18.4% of those with no activity limitation. Thus, in 2019, 68.0 % of the EU population with an activity limitation would have been at risk of poverty without social benefits, allowances or pensions. In 2019, the Member States that recorded the highest proportion of people with a disability who were at risk of poverty or social exclusion were: Bulgaria (50.7%), Latvia (42.1%), Estonia (40.0%), Lithuania (39.9%) and Ireland (37.8%). The percent for Romania is 37.0%, for Greece is 33.2% and for Spain is 32.5%.

Current statistical information shows that the employment rate of people with disabilities it is at a low level, respectively: 30.7% in Bulgaria (2019), 24.7% in Greece (2016), 43.7% in Romania (2020) and 35% in Spain (2018), but the legal framework does not effectively stimulate their employability, and public employment support services are limited. The necessary reforms in the approach to case management and relations with employers continue to stagnate, despite the fact that the European Social Fund (ESF) provides funding.

People with disabilities have limited access to support services. The lack of synergies and complementarity between educational, employment and social services further aggravates the situation of this group.

In all these four countries, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and Spain, there normative acts regarding people with disabilities are adopted.

An approach that has been implemented in these four countries is a disability quota system which forces companies to employ a minimum percentage of people with disabilities, but the quota systems allow for a fine that organizations can pay and that releases them from fulfilling the quota. Thus, organizations either obey the inflicted rules or, in the event of non-compliance, pay a penalty usually in the form of a tax per month for each place not filled. This quotas system in general addresses almost entirely public companies or private organizations with more than 50 employees. Therefore, the majority of SMEs is left out of the legal framework.

Regarding the barriers to employment of the persons with disabilities there are many stereotypes among society which lead to rejection and isolation. When the persons with disabilities are invisible to society, the proper identification of their problems and rights become very difficult. It also signals that much effort is needed to overcome these negative trends and attitudes, resulting from a multitude of cultural factors, issues and stereotypes. This negative attitude is obvious in the employers' attitude to persons with disabilities. Most employers, especially in smaller communities,



prefer not to employ people with disabilities. This further increases social isolation and lack of motivation for employment. Many small employers, SME's, fail to recognise that people with disabilities have the necessary potential and skills to "fit in" their team and company policies.

Despite these stereotypes, the research shows that most of the employers employing persons with disabilities are satisfied with their performance, the rest of their employees are highly motivated and customer loyalty increases towards businesses that include persons with disabilities in their workforce. These facts act as enablers to employment of persons with disabilities, since most of the employers that have actually experienced the benefits from hiring persons with disabilities retain them in their workforce for a long time.

Specific employment promotion measures for persons with disabilities, even if exists, they do not seem to be effective and popular both among persons with disabilities and employers.

The limited access to employment for people with disabilities is also influenced to a larger extent by the lack of equal access to education.

Unfortunately, there are not many enablers that could enhance and facilitate the access of the persons with disabilities to the labour market and thus improve their overall professional and personal realisation prospects and quality of life.

Strengthening the role of non-governmental organizations in order to improve legislation and support the interests of people with disabilities is an essential condition for social integration. Independence can change the quality of life of disadvantaged people.

Moreover, setting up special employment centres to support and guide people with disabilities in their job search process, given the probability that only a few use public employment services, could help their entry into the labour market much more.

The lack of a job can be seen as being deprived of skills and can be understood as a failure to begin the process of capitalizing on their rights, a process that must be encouraged and initiated together with people with disabilities.

The majority of the SMEs representatives who participated in the research have no experience employing persons with disabilities (hearing impairments, visual impairments, mobility impairments, other types of disabilities). The main reason of the SMEs that are not employing and/or have not employed in the past persons with disabilities is that they never had such candidates. Other reasons mentioned were: no such job applicants were available at the Local Employment Office; the nature of the job and inability of persons with disabilities to perform it; the size of the company (in general small companies).

Most of the representatives of SMEs note that they have concerns when hiring persons with disabilities, such as:

- Lack of knowledge or information about people with disabilities;
- Not knowing how much accommodation will cost;
- Actual cost of accommodating a disability.

Regarding the satisfaction about the performance of the persons with disabilities in the workplace, all of the SMEs which are currently employing and/or have employed in the past persons with disabilities and who participated in the research are satisfied or very satisfied with performance.



When considering the advantages/benefits to hiring individuals with disabilities, the following were identified by the responding SMEs:

- Employees with disabilities are as capable as anyone else;
- Tax breaks for the company / employer financial or economic incentives;
- Better interaction between diverse staff members / a positive workplace culture;
- Enhancing and increasing engagement and motivation of the staff members;
- Added value for job morale, company culture and social mission;
- Employees with disabilities will increase diversity in the workplace / an inclusive and diverse workplace.

The majority of the respondents within the persons with disabilities (hearing impairments, visual impairments, mobility impairments) think that finding and sustaining work is very challenging, and among the problems encountered are: numerous stereotypes in society towards people with disabilities, the negative attitude of employees to such people, resulting from both the lack of awareness of the specific needs of disabled persons and the numerous regulatory requirements related to ensuring the safe and productive environment of such people, the lack of confidence (the misconception about the work skills of persons with disabilities affects their confidence, as one of the interviewees has mentioned, resulting in a vicious circle, where lack of confidence becomes an additional limitation for persons with disabilities in finding and maintaining a job), accessibility issues in the workplace, employment information (in general, there are no jobs for people with disabilities, and information about job fairs or the Job Exchange is not shared well enough), discrimination in the workplace, especially from colleagues.

For all or almost all surveyed persons with disabilities, it is important and very important to have a job, and for the majority of them, the current position is the right one. When looking for a job, people with disabilities receive advice and support first from friends and family.

The persons with disabilities consider that they face the following challenges when entering the labour market:

- Lack of promotion of jobs among persons with various disabilities;
- Employers' perception of persons with disabilities / don't know how to handle the needs of a worker with a disability on the job / concerns about attitudes of co-workers toward the person with a disability;
- The cost of providing reasonable accommodations so that workers with disabilities can do their jobs / other costs, such as increased health insurance or worker's compensation premiums (in specially in Spain and Greece);
- Employers rarely see people with disabilities applying for jobs;
- Employers are afraid they won't be able to discipline or fire a worker with a disability for poor performance because of potential lawsuits.

While at the workplace, most of the respondents would like to see the following changes in the attitude of their colleagues/peers:

- To be treated as an individual because all people should be treated equally;
- To avoid focusing on my disability and act as they would normally act;
- To be more supportive / understanding when I make mistakes;
- To be more tolerant of the difficulties I have;



- To have the courage to ask about their disability rather than to presume knowledge.

To increase in the number of persons with disabilities in employment, the SMEs indicate the following possible measures:

- More adequate policies and standards to take into account the needs of persons with disabilities (e.g. clear policy of inclusive education, enforceable access standards in physical environments, and priority accorded to rehabilitation);
- Investments in specific programmes and services for persons with disabilities;
- More financial / economic facilities for employers (e.g. tax reduction in relation to the number of persons with disabilities employed);
- Training programmes for employers to create an inclusive mindset among SME's;
- Adapting legislation so that it is more inclusive towards persons with disabilities;
- Increasing public awareness and understanding of disability.

In order to better integrate in the workplace, the persons with disabilities need/can benefit, from:

- Adaptation of the work environment to provide access to the place of work (e.g. accessible parking, elevators, modified toilets, railings);
- A clear company strategy on disability management in the workplace;
- Ensuring equal opportunities with other workers at the workplace to acquire the skills and experience necessary to advance in the career;
- Enforcing policies prohibiting discrimination in the workplace;
- Better communication and awareness raising within the workplace in regard to potential challenges for workers with disabilities.

To get a job, for the persons with disabilities the determining factors are:

- Skills acquired during studies;
- Experience in the field;
- Personal relationships (family, friends, acquaintances);
- Proper preparation for interviews, competitions;
- Consistent tracking of job postings;
- Personality traits;
- Occupational interests.

The knowledge and understanding of the legislation regarding the employment of persons with disabilities would improve the work situation for majority of the respondents, people with disability.

The participation in programmes supporting professional development for inclusion in the labour market (courses, trainings, seminars/workshops, etc.) is useful for persons with disabilities.

As a result of the analysis of the data obtained, some solutions that could have an impact on improving certain aspects and supporting the initiatives in favour of employing people with disabilities are available:

- Better media coverage of the situation of people with disabilities in order for employers to get to know them, but also to raise their and society's awareness in general, to help these



people enjoy the rights provided by the current legislation and to fight against prejudice and misinformation. At present, people with disabilities are perceived more as welfare recipients, and not as a potential workforce;

- The number of occupations young people with disabilities train for is relatively small and undiversified in relation to the existing offers on the labour market, but also to their individual diversity;
- The introduction into the curriculum for special vocational schools or special high schools of some educational disciplines that could prepare them for an occupation that they can carry out from home;
- Reducing the dependence of youth/people with disabilities on the minimum income guaranteed by the state, a situation that leads to high costs that the state has to bear, with the greatest danger of perpetuating the situation of someone who gets used to being dependent;
- Encouragement and support by the State of social entrepreneurship, especially among NGOs dealing with people with disabilities;
- Families caring for people with disabilities should be counselled by professionals in the field, to understand the role of young people's independence and its implications for coping with everyday life;
- More support from the State for the establishment of social enterprises;
- Greater emphasis on labour mediation in the case of graduates with disabilities;
- Offering professional qualification courses adapted to the needs and particularities of each type of deficiency and State financial support for these courses;
- Ensuring and enforcing legislation regarding workplace accessibility.



### 4.3 Selection of topics and objectives for the training materials

- I. **Learning material and tools for SMEs (i.e. HR, managerial/executive level staff incl. consultants who are responsible for recruiting, hiring, retaining employees), that will help to acknowledge and reap the benefits of a disability-inclusive workforce.**

The aim for learning material and tools for SMEs is to become an hands-on guide with practical aspects, which cover the untapped aspects and positive elements of a disabled-inclusive workforce, in the “language” of SMEs, beyond the inclusion element.

When developing learning tools to create a disability-inclusive work force, the following topics were considered as important and very important by SMEs:

- ✚ Benefits of hiring people by looking at all labour markets;
- ✚ The inclusive and diverse workplace as a driver for increased consumer market and revenue;
- ✚ The added value for job morale, company culture and social mission;
- ✚ Enhancing and increasing productivity (products and services) by bringing unique skills, creativity, experiences and understanding;
- ✚ Personnel strategy (e.g. recruiting, retention, talent identification, professional development strategies and practices etc.);
- ✚ Promoting and communicating equal opportunity commitment on the ground of disability as the company's business differentiator and driver;
- ✚ Building synergies and partnerships with recruitment sources promoting persons with disabilities as prospect employees;
- ✚ Creating the right work environment and providing workplace flexibility (including time, place, task);
- ✚ Workplace mentoring for employees and employers for a disability-inclusive and disability-friendly workplace;
- ✚ Persons with disabilities as a source of high work quality.

The SMEs also consider that is important and very important to include the following types of information in the learning tools developed:

- Information showing how hiring people with disabilities has benefited other companies;
- Information showing how hiring people with disabilities has benefited nationally recognised companies;
- Information showing how hiring people with disabilities can benefit the company's bottom line;
- Information showing how hiring people with disabilities can increase a company's productivity;
- Information that is supported by statistics or research;
- Information on satisfactory job performance, attendance, and retention of people with disabilities;
- Testimonial information of senior executives/human resources managers/ line managers attesting to the success for their companies.



- II. Learning material for persons with disabilities to get the best out of their professional development opportunities by showing how to demonstrate, acquire, develop job skills, as well as apply transferable soft skills at the workplace.

The learning material for persons with disabilities is aimed at functioning as a skills-development tool, responding to SMEs needs and equally beyond the approach of inclusion as main driver, but rather with that of personal fulfilment at equal terms, rendering employability not only a right, but a development force for personal, social, financial well-being.

The following topics in developing learning tools for persons with disabilities to be better equipped in finding and maintaining a job are viewed as important and very important:

- ✚ *About myself*: Personality traits and inventory, interests, personal values, my life skills;
- ✚ *Disability and the job market*: Career exploration, job search methods, identification of jobs and job matching;
- ✚ *Self-presentation and self-marketing*: applying for a job, the resume and the job interview, dealing with employers and negotiation, self-presentation skills, promoting the value in me (what can I offer), marketing disability;
- ✚ *At the workplace*: job skills vis-à-vis disability, focus on soft skills (understanding and readiness for application), dealing with employee and employer expectations, professional development.



### 4.4 Pedagogical approach for the creation of the learning material

*SMEs* prefer to take professional training courses such as: Blended learning and Remote / online training.

As for *the persons with disabilities*, a large part of those who had not participated in training courses at the time of the research listed as a reason that they did not know who to turn to (more in Bulgaria and Romania), so better promotion would be beneficial, most respondents showing high interest in training programmes on topics such as: showing how you can demonstrate, acquire, develop professional skills and/or apply transferable soft skills at work.

At the beginning of the training, participants should participate in pre-assessment activities in order to evaluate their skills and adapt/modify (only to a certain extent) the contents and methodology of the training based on the identified needs. A similar test should be carried out upon exit of the Programme to compare results.

Both professional development and personal development courses are considered useful.

Training courses which are interactive/stimulating are preferred. In Bulgaria it is preferred classic/theoretical/ lecture-based course, but this preference may be influenced by the profile of the respondents (66.7% over 54 years).

The persons with disabilities prefer to take professional training courses online and blended learnings in Spain, group work and blended learning in Romania, online, group work and face to face in Greece and face-to-face training, blended learning and work in small groups in Bulgaria.

When developing the training materials, partners should consider the existing and potential employment prospects of people with disabilities (including self-employment options) in the field of ICT, graphic design, social research, e-commerce business, and social entrepreneurship (i.e. small crafts, arts, etc.).

People with disabilities would need to have their overall self-esteem boosted. Therefore, some soft skills and teaching methods for improving the overall self-confidence should be incorporated in the training programme. Also, good practices for existing self-employment and successful businesses managed by people with disabilities could be incorporated throughout the training modules.

As for the duration of the training course some interviewees preferred short (i.e. 60 minute sessions), once or twice a week (Bulgaria), with fewer hours per day, but with a longer duration (Romania) or modules-oriented training courses they can select according to their needs of both themes and time (Spain).



### 4.5 Preferred technical solutions for delivery

For SMEs the following means of presentation were considered as the most relevant/useful in the learning process:

- Animated presentations, Open educational resources (OER) and Audio and video files in Bulgaria,
- Learning platforms, Audio and video files, Infographics in Greece,
- Learning platforms, Audio and video files and Animated presentations in Romania, and
- Infographics, Animated presentations and Open educational resources (OER) in Spain.

In the case of the persons with disabilities there are some differences between the four countries:

- in Bulgaria, the persons with disabilities prefer: Open educational resources (OER), Printable worksheets and Slides for overhead projector.
- In Greece are preferred: Audio and video files, Printable worksheets and Infographics.
- In Romania are preferred: Audio and video files, Learning platforms and Internet link lists.
- In Spain are preferred: Infographics, Animated presentations, Open educational resources (OER) and Internet link lists.

A mandatory requirement for the training would be its complete accessibility to persons of all types of disabilities (blind/visually impaired, deaf/hard-hearing, physical disabilities).



## 4.6 Methodological matrix

### 4.6.1 Learning material and tools for SMEs

Training module	Topic(s) <i>In order of preference</i>	Indicative content(s)	Preferred Length	Pedagogical Method(s)	Preferred technical solution(s)
<b>Benefits for SMEs</b>	Benefits of hiring people with disabilities by looking at all labour markets <i>(BG-78.9%, EL-81.8%, RO-83.3%, ES-100.00%)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- factors /challenges that limit the entry of persons with disabilities to the labour market</li> <li>- information on cultural factors, issues, misperceptions and stereotypes which lead to rejection and isolation of people with disabilities</li> <li>- advantages/benefits for a company when hiring individuals with disabilities</li> <li>- information showing how hiring people with disabilities has benefited other companies</li> <li>- statistical data from other countries showing how hiring persons with disabilities benefits companies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- short (i.e. 60 minute sessions)/ with fewer hours per day, but with a longer duration (Romania)</li> <li>- once or twice a week (Bulgaria)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Blended learning and Remote / online training</li> <li>- Interactive/stimulating</li> <li>- Information that is supported by statistics or research;</li> <li>- Testimonial information of senior executives/human resources managers/ line managers attesting to the success for their companies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Animated presentations, Open educational resources (OER) and Audio and video files in Bulgaria,</li> <li>- Learning platforms, Audio and video files, Infographics in Greece,</li> <li>- Learning platforms, Audio and video files and Animated presentations in Romania, and</li> </ul>
	The added value for job morale, company culture and social mission <i>(BG-78.9%, EL-81.8%, RO-83.3%, ES-100.00%)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- stereotypes towards people with disabilities</li> <li>- increasing awareness of the specific needs of disabled persons and the numerous regulatory requirements related to</li> </ul>			



Training module	Topic(s) <i>In order of preference</i>	Indicative content(s)	Preferred Length	Pedagogical Method(s)	Preferred technical solution(s)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensuring the safe and productive environment of such people</li> <li>- changing negative attitudes toward persons with disabilities</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Infographics, Animated presentations and Open educational resources (OER) in Spain.</li> </ul>
	Persons with disabilities as a source of high work quality <i>(BG-57.9%, EL-86.4%, RO-83.3%, ES-86.7%)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- tackling misconceptions about the work skills of persons with disabilities</li> <li>- improving self-awareness of employees with a disability</li> <li>- special talents of persons with disabilities developed due to their disability (ex. Discovering hands case – best practice in our website)</li> </ul> good practices in other SMEs & organizations			
	The inclusive and diverse workplace as driver for increased consumer market and revenue <i>(BG-68.4%, EL-63.6%, RO-66.7%, ES-86.7%)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- information showing how hiring people with disabilities can benefit the company's bottom line</li> <li>- positive effects on the image of the company</li> </ul>			
	Enhancing and increasing productivity (products and services) by bringing unique skills, creativity, experiences and understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- information showing how hiring people with disabilities can increase a company's productivity</li> <li>- productivity of persons with disabilities. Disability vs. inability</li> </ul>			



Training module	Topic(s) <i>In order of preference</i>	Indicative content(s)	Preferred Length	Pedagogical Method(s)	Preferred technical solution(s)
	<i>(BG-73.7%, EL-77.3%, RO-60.0%, ES-66.7%)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the bias with regards to the disabled employees' productivity</li> </ul>			
	<p>Employees with disabilities as a means to reduce employee turnover (longer tenure of employees with disability leading to reduced training and recruitment costs)</p> <p><i>(BG-52.6%, EL-40.9%, RO-53.3%, ES-66.7%)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- information on satisfactory job performance, attendance, and retention of people with disabilities</li> <li>- investing in specific programmes and services for persons with disabilities</li> </ul>			
	<p>Responding to government guidelines and initiatives</p> <p><i>(BG-52.6%, EL-54.5%, RO-30.0%, ES-40.0%)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- legal framework/normative act(s) regarding people with disabilities &amp; social inclusion</li> <li>- the rights of people with disabilities</li> <li>- existing incentives (e.g. financial support, tax amendments and direct subsidies for people with disabilities)</li> <li>- shortcomings and gaps in the legislation and possible solutions</li> <li>- initiatives, strategies &amp; impact</li> <li>- access to funding &amp; grants</li> <li>- the role of public institutions and non-governmental organizations</li> <li>- good practices</li> </ul>			



Training module	Topic(s) <i>In order of preference</i>	Indicative content(s)	Preferred Length	Pedagogical Method(s)	Preferred technical solution(s)
<b>Into action: Steps towards the creation of a disability-inclusive workforce</b>	Creating the right work environment and providing workplace flexibility (including time, place, task) (BG-68.4%, EL-90.9%, RO-83.3%, ES-73.3%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- discrimination in the workplace</li> <li>- tackling assumptions</li> <li>- alternative employment means (e.g. telework)</li> <li>- training programmes for employers to create an inclusive mindset</li> <li>- adaptation of the work environment &amp; associated costs</li> <li>- – actual accommodation costs VS misperceptions about accommodation costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- short (i.e. 60 minute sessions)/ with fewer hours per day, but with a longer duration (Romania)</li> <li>- once or twice a week (Bulgaria)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Blended learning and Remote / online training</li> <li>- Interactive/stimulating</li> <li>- Information that is supported by statistics or research;</li> </ul> <p>Testimonial information of senior executives/human resources managers/ line managers attesting to the success for their companies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Animated presentations, Open educational resources (OER) and Audio and video files in Bulgaria,</li> <li>- Learning platforms, Audio and video files, Infographics in Greece,</li> <li>- Learning platforms, Audio and video files and Animated presentations in Romania, and Infographics, Animated presentations and Open educational</li> </ul>
	Workplace mentoring for employees and employers for a disability-inclusive and disability-friendly workplace (BG-57.9%, EL-81.8%, RO-83.3%, ES-100,0%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- information, counselling and mediation of the work of people with disabilities</li> <li>- changes in the attitudes; sensitivity trainings</li> <li>- raising motivation &amp; confidence</li> <li>- policies to take into account the needs of persons with disabilities</li> </ul>			
	Personnel strategy (e.g. recruiting, retention, talent identification, professional development strategies and practices etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- concerns when hiring persons with disabilities</li> <li>- strategies on disability management in the workplace</li> </ul>			



Training module	Topic(s) <i>In order of preference</i>	Indicative content(s)	Preferred Length	Pedagogical Method(s)	Preferred technical solution(s)
	<i>(BG-68.4%, EL-81.8%, RO-76.7%, ES-80.0%)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- policies prohibiting discrimination in the workplace</li> <li>- enhancing and increasing engagement and motivation of the staff members</li> <li>- potential employment promotion measures for persons with disabilities</li> </ul>			resources (OER) in Spain.
	Promoting and communicating equal opportunity commitment on the ground of disability as company's business differentiator and driver <i>(BG-68.4%, EL-63.6%, RO-86.7%, ES-73.3%)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increasing awareness and understanding of disability &amp; potential challenges for workers with disabilities</li> <li>- equal opportunities with other workers at the workplace to acquire the skills and experience necessary to advance in the career</li> </ul>			
	Building synergies and partnerships with recruitment sources promoting persons with disabilities as prospect employees <i>(BG-57.9%, EL-72.7%, RO-73.3%, ES-86.7%)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- centres specializing in information, counselling and mediation of the work of people with disabilities</li> <li>- main recruitment methods/preferred ways to look for a job by persons with disabilities</li> <li>- proper application of the equal opportunities legislation in recruitment and selection by potential employers</li> <li>- reducing discrimination against job applicants with disabilities</li> </ul>			



## 4.6.2 Learning material for persons with disabilities

Training module	Topic(s) <i>In order of preference</i>	Indicative content(s)	Preferred Length	Pedagogical Method(s)	Preferred technical solution(s)
<b>About myself</b>	My life skills <i>(BG-100%, EL-84,2%, RO-88,5%, ES-100%)</i>	Life skills / Identification of life skills / Development of life skills (E.g.: Self-awareness, Critical thinking, Decision making, Problem solving etc.)	- short (i.e. 60 minute sessions)/ with fewer hours per day, but with a longer duration (Romania)	- online and blended learnings in Spain; group work and blended learning in Romania; online, group work and face to face in Greece and face-to-face training, blended learning and work in small groups in Bulgaria	- Complete accessibility to persons of all types of disabilities (blind/visually impaired, deaf/hard-hearing, physical disabilities)
	Personality traits and inventory <i>(BG-60%, EL-73,7%, RO-84,6%, ES-100%)</i>	Personality traits / Identification of personality traits / Development of personality traits	- once or twice a week (Bulgaria)	- Interactive/stimulating <sup>15</sup>	- Open educational resources (OER), Printable worksheets and Slides for overhead projector(BG).
	Personal values <i>(BG-80%, EL-63,2%, RO-84,6%, ES-66,7%)</i>	Personal values / Identification of personal values / Development of personal values	- modules-oriented training courses that can be selected according to their needs of both themes and time (Spain).	- Pre-assessment activities in order to evaluate their skills and adapt/modify (only to a certain extent) the contents and methodology of	- Audio and video files, Printable worksheets and Infographics (EL)
	Interests <i>(BG-60%, EL-63,2%, RO-73,1%, ES-100%)</i>	Occupational interests / Identification of occupational interests			- Audio and video files, Learning platforms and Internet link lists (RO)

<sup>15</sup> Bulgaria - it is preferred classic/ theoretical/ lecture-based course, but this preference may be influenced by the profile of the respondents (66.7% over 54 years)



Training module	Topic(s) <i>In order of preference</i>	Indicative content(s)	Preferred Length	Pedagogical Method(s)	Preferred technical solution(s)
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the training based on the identified needs.</li> <li>- A similar test should be carried out upon exit of the Programme to compare results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Infographics, Animated presentations, Open educational resources (OER) and Internet link lists (ES)</li> </ul>
<b>Disability and the job market</b>	Identification of jobs and job matching <i>(BG-80%, EL-84,2%, RO-80,8%, ES-66,7%)</i>	Identification of jobs and job matching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- short (i.e. 60 minute sessions)/ with fewer hours per day, but with a longer duration (Romania)</li> <li>- once or twice a week (Bulgaria)</li> <li>- modules-oriented training courses that can be selected according to their needs of both themes and time (Spain).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- online and blended learnings in Spain; group work and blended learning in Romania; online, group work and face to face in Greece and face-to-face training, blended learning and work in small groups in Bulgaria</li> <li>- Interactive/stimulating<sup>16</sup></li> <li>- Pre-assessment activities in order to evaluate their skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete accessibility to persons of all types of disabilities (blind/visually impaired, deaf/hard-hearing, physical disabilities)</li> <li>- Open educational resources (OER), Printable worksheets and Slides for overhead projector(BG).</li> <li>- Audio and video files, Printable worksheets and Infographics (EL)</li> </ul>
	Job search methods <i>(BG-80%, EL-78,9%, RO-84,6%, ES-66,7%)</i>	Job search methods			
	Career exploration <i>(BG-80%, EL-84,2%, RO-76,9%, ES-66,7%)</i>	Career exploration/ Career counselling			

<sup>16</sup> Bulgaria - it is preferred classic/ theoretical/ lecture-based course, but this preference may be influenced by the profile of the respondents (66.7% over 54 years)



Training module	Topic(s) <i>In order of preference</i>	Indicative content(s)	Preferred Length	Pedagogical Method(s)	Preferred technical solution(s)
				and adapt/modify (only to a certain extent) the contents and methodology of the training based on the identified needs. - A similar test should be carried out upon exit of the Programme to compare results	- Audio and video files, Learning platforms and Internet link lists (RO) - Infographics, Animated presentations, Open educational resources (OER) and Internet link lists (ES)
<b>Self-presentation and self-marketing</b>	Promoting the value in me (what can I offer) (BG-80%, EL-78,9%, RO-96,2%, ES-100%)	Promoting the value in me (what can I offer)	- short (i.e. 60 minute sessions)/ with fewer hours per day, but with a longer duration (Romania)	- online and blended learnings in Spain; group work and blended learning in Romania; online, group work and face to face in Greece and face-to-face training, blended learning and work in small groups in Bulgaria	- Complete accessibility to persons of all types of disabilities (blind/visually impaired, deaf/hard-hearing, physical disabilities) - Open educational resources (OER), Printable worksheets and Slides for overhead projector(BG).
	Self-presentation skills (BG-80%, EL-73,7%, RO-96,2%, ES-66,7%)	Self-presentation skills Increasing the motivation, self-awareness, and presentation skills	- once or twice a week (Bulgaria) - modules-oriented training courses that can be selected according to their needs of both themes and time (Spain).		
	The resume and the job interview (BG-80%, EL-73,7%, RO-88,5%, ES-66,7%)	The resume and the job interview / Recommendations for completing a resume and taking a job interview			



Training module	Topic(s) <i>In order of preference</i>	Indicative content(s)	Preferred Length	Pedagogical Method(s)	Preferred technical solution(s)
	Applying for a job (BG-80%, EL-73,7%, RO-80,8%, ES-66,7%)	Applying for a job / Ways of applying for a job / Developing job search skills		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interactive/stimulating<sup>17</sup></li> <li>- Pre-assessment activities in order to evaluate their skills and adapt/modify (only to a certain extent) the contents and methodology of the training based on the identified needs.</li> <li>- A similar test should be carried out upon exit of the Programme to compare results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Audio and video files, Printable worksheets and Infographics (EL)</li> <li>- Audio and video files, Learning platforms and Internet link lists (RO)</li> <li>- Infographics, Animated presentations, Open educational resources (OER) and Internet link lists (ES)</li> </ul>
	Dealing with employers and negotiation (BG-80%, EL-63,2%, RO-80,8%, ES-66,7%)	Dealing with employers and negotiation / Recommendations in dealing with employers and negotiation methods			
	Marketing disability (BG-20%, EL-63,2%, RO-80,8%, ES-100%)	Marketing disability <i>* the preferred/recommended terms should be "personal marketing" (to market the person itself and his/her skills and experience; to strengthen the image and reputation of a professional in the job market)</i>			
<b>At the workplace</b>	Job skills vis-à-vis disability (BG-100%, EL-73,7%, RO-92,3%, ES-100%)	Job skills vis-à-vis disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- short (i.e. 60 minute sessions)/ with fewer hours per day, but with a longer duration (Romania)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- online and blended learnings in Spain; group work and blended learning in Romania; online, group work and face</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete accessibility to persons of all types of disabilities (blind/visually impaired, deaf/hard-</li> </ul>
	Professional development	Professional development			

<sup>17</sup> Bulgaria - it is preferred classic/ theoretical/ lecture-based course, but this preference may be influenced by the profile of the respondents (66.7% over 54 years)



Training module	Topic(s) <i>In order of preference</i>	Indicative content(s)	Preferred Length	Pedagogical Method(s)	Preferred technical solution(s)
	(BG-100%, EL-57,9%, RO-92,3%, ES-100%)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- once or twice a week (Bulgaria)</li> <li>- modules-oriented training courses that can be selected according to their needs of both themes and time (Spain).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to face in Greece and face-to-face training, blended learning and work in small groups in Bulgaria</li> <li>- Interactive/stimulating<sup>18</sup></li> <li>- Pre-assessment activities in order to evaluate their skills and adapt/modify (only to a certain extent) the contents and methodology of the training based on the identified needs.</li> <li>- A similar test should be carried out upon exit of the Programme to compare results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- hearing, physical disabilities)</li> <li>- Open educational resources (OER), Printable worksheets and Slides for overhead projector(BG).</li> <li>- Audio and video files, Printable worksheets and Infographics (EL)</li> <li>- Audio and video files, Learning platforms and Internet link lists (RO)</li> <li>- Infographics, Animated presentations, Open educational resources (OER) and Internet link lists (ES)</li> </ul>
	Focus on soft skills (understanding and readiness for application) (BG-80%, EL-68,4%, RO-88,5%, ES-100%)	Focus on soft skills (understanding and readiness for application)			
	Dealing with employee and employer expectations (BG-80%, EL-42,1%, RO-88,5%, ES-66,7%)	Dealing with employee and employer expectations Tackling harassment, stereotyping and discrimination			

<sup>18</sup> Bulgaria - it is preferred classic/ theoretical/ lecture-based course, but this preference may be influenced by the profile of the respondents (66.7% over 54 years)



### Annex – Quantitative questionnaire for SME

We are carrying out a study within the Erasmus+ Project „Beyond Inclusion: Employability for persons with disabilities” N<sup>o</sup>: 2020-1-RO01-KA204-080215, with the main goals of creating:

a) Learning material and tools for SMEs (i.e. HR, managerial/executive level staff incl. consultants who are responsible for recruiting, hiring, retaining employees), that will help to acknowledge and reap the benefits of a disability-inclusive workforce.

b) Learning material for persons with disabilities to get the best out of their professional development opportunities by showing how to demonstrate, acquire, develop job skills, as well as apply transferable soft skills at the workplace.

This questionnaire will take you about 20 minutes to answer. We assure you that the information you provide is of great importance for the analysis we intend to perform and we guarantee that your answers are confidential and are only analysed for statistical purposes.

**In this study, the concept of disabilities is exclusively used in reference to disabilities such as: Hearing impairments, visual impairments, mobility impairments.**

**Respondent profile: HR, managerial/executive level staff incl. consultants who are responsible for recruiting, hiring, retaining employees.**

#### Q1. Which country are you from?

*/Single answer/*

- Bulgaria
- Cyprus
- Greece
- Romania
- Spain

#### Q2. What is the number of employees in your company?

*/Single answer/*

- 1-9 employees
- 10-49 employees
- 50-249 employees
- 250 employees or more – STOP

#### Q3. In what type of industry do you operate?

*/Single answer/*

- Agriculture, food, the living environment
- Architecture, construction, the built environment
- Business, human resources, administrative support
- Education, training, childcare
- Engineering, manufacturing industries
- Finance, insurance, real estate
- Health, human services



- Hospitality, leisure, travel, tourism
- IT, creative, media
- Professional, scientific, technical
- Trade, transport, distribution, logistics
- Non-governmental organisation engaged in an economic activity
- Other industry
- Don't know

**Q4. Do you have any duties within the company with regard to the recruitment, hiring and/or retention of employees?**

*/Single answer/*

- Yes
- No - STOP

**Q5. What is your role in this company?**

*/Single answer/*

- Director / manager / administrator
- HR director / manager
- HR representative
- HR consultant
- Other. Please specify: .....

**Q6. Do you / did you employ persons with disabilities in the company?**

*/Single answer/*

- Yes – *Continue with Q6\_1 and skip Q7*
- No employees with disabilities – *Continue with Q7 and skip Q8, Q9*

**Q6\_0. What types of disabilities did/do your employees have?**

*/Multiple answer/*

- Hearing impairments
- Visual impairments
- Mobility impairments
- Other types of disabilities

**Q7. Please provide the reason(s) why, you have/had no employees with disabilities in the company:**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Q8. What approach did you use in hiring persons with disabilities?**

*/Multiple answer/*

- Recruitment through specialized recruitment and selection agencies
- Through the Employment Office (State Institution)
- Through direct recruitment/recommendations
- Through participation in job fairs
- By using online recruitment and selection platforms
- With the help of organizations/bodies that support the rights of people with disabilities
- Another option. Please specify: .....

**Q9. To what extent are you satisfied with the performance of the persons with disabilities in the workplace?**

*/Single answer/*

- Not at all
- To a small extent
- Neither, nor
- To some extent
- To a very large extent

**Q10. From your point of view, how important is the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the labour market?**

*/Single answer/*

- Not at all important
- Not important
- Neither unimportant, nor important
- Important
- Very important

**Q11. What advantages/benefits have you identified as a company when hiring individuals with disabilities?**

*/Multiple answer/*

- Tax breaks for the company / employer financial or economic incentives
- Better interaction between diverse staff members / a positive workplace culture
- Enhancing and increasing engagement and motivation of the staff members
- A positive effect on the company's workforce, its customer base, and the community/ demonstrate commitment to social responsibility
- A favourable / more attractive company image / employer brand
- Added value for job morale, company culture and social mission
- Employees with disabilities will increase diversity in the workplace / an inclusive and diverse workplace
- Employees with disabilities are a source of high quality work / are very motivated individuals
- Employees with disabilities are as capable as anyone else
- Employees with disabilities create opportunity for organizational learning



- Employees with disabilities have superior retention rates which reduces the high cost of turnover
- Employees with disabilities are less likely to get into work related accidents
- Employees with disabilities bring additional skills and perspectives to the business
- Enhancing and increasing productivity by bringing new and unique skills
- Other advantages / benefits. Please specify: .....
- There are no advantages / benefits
- Not applicable/ we had no employees with disabilities
- I don't know/couldn't say

**Q12. Please state to what extent you agree with the following statements, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means 'Strongly Disagree' and 5-'Strongly Agree':**

*/Single answer per row/*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
A person with disabilities has a disadvantage on the labour market.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
For a person with disabilities finding a job is mainly determined by the skills and knowledge possessed.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
There are employers who consider physical disability an impediment to employment.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Hiring a person with disabilities brings benefits and advantages to the company.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
A person with disabilities makes a greater effort to find a job than a person without disabilities.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
For a person with disabilities, additional training is needed at work.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Workers with disabilities lack the skills and experience to do our jobs.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Hiring persons with disabilities has positive effects on the image of the company/organization/institution.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
People with disabilities show involvement and dedication in the workplace.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
The quality of the work done by a person with disabilities is the same as that of those without disabilities.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Persons with disabilities may not be as safe and productive as other workers.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
A person with disabilities can integrate very well into the normal work pace.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
A person with disabilities can easily integrate into a team.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
It costs more to employ workers with disabilities than those without disabilities due to accommodations, additional management time, or healthcare and insurance costs.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Supervisors are not comfortable managing people with disabilities.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Supervisors are not sure how to evaluate a person with a disability.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Supervisors are not sure how to take disciplinary action for a person with a disability.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>

**Q13. From your point of view, what are the factors /challenges that limit the entry of persons with disabilities to the labour market?**

*/Multiple answer/*

- Lack of promotion of jobs among persons with various disabilities
- Employers rarely see people with disabilities applying for jobs
- Employers' perception of persons with disabilities / don't know how to handle the needs of a worker with a disability on the job / concerns about attitudes of co-workers toward the person with a disability
- Employers are afraid they won't be able to discipline or fire a worker with a disability for poor performance, because of potential lawsuits
- Other employees' perception of persons with disabilities / concerns about the extra time that supervisors or co-workers will need to spend to assist workers with disabilities
- Particularities of vacancies
- Lack of training of persons with disabilities for job vacancies
- Lack of necessary skills / experience of persons with disabilities needed to fill vacancies
- Poor presentation at job interviews
- Lack of counselling / support at work
- The disability perceived as a deterrent to accomplish the work to the same standards as other employees

- Employers' safety concerns regarding people with disabilities
- The cost of providing reasonable accommodations so that workers with disabilities can do their jobs / other costs, such as increased health insurance or worker's compensation premiums
- Lower earnings than in the case of persons without disabilities
- Improper application of the equal opportunities legislation in recruitment and selection by potential employers / discrimination against job applicants with disabilities
- Other. Please specify: .....

**Q14. From your point of view, what are the issues hindering the process of accommodating employees with disabilities within the company?**

*/Multiple answer/*

- Unfavourable attitude of colleagues
- Unfavourable attitude of supervisors
- Unfavourable attitude of customers
- Special requirements in carrying out the job
- Other. Please specify: .....

**Q15. To what extent are you concerned about the following issues in hiring people with disabilities?**

*/Single answer per row/*

	Not at all	To a small extent	Neither, nor	To some extent	To a very large extent
Discomfort or unfamiliarity regarding hiring people with disabilities	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of knowledge or information about people with disabilities	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Attitudes of co-workers	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Attitudes of supervisors	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Attitudes of customers	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Not knowing how much accommodation will cost	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Actual cost of accommodating disability	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Concern about the cost of health care coverage	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Concern about the cost of workers compensation premiums	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Fear of litigation	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>

	Not at all	To a small extent	Neither, nor	To some extent	To a very large extent
You cannot find qualified people with disabilities	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
The nature of the work is such that it cannot be performed effectively	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>

**Q16. According to your opinion, what measures could lead to an increase in the number of persons with disabilities in employment:**

*/Multiple answer/*

- More adequate policies and standards to take into account the needs of persons with disabilities (e.g. clear policy of inclusive education, enforceable access standards in physical environments, and priority accorded to rehabilitation)
- More financial / economic facilities for employers (e.g. tax reduction in relation to the number of persons with disabilities employed)
- Investments in specific programmes and services for persons with disabilities
- Involving the persons with disabilities in decision-making to enable individuals to communicate their needs and choices
- Increasing public awareness and understanding of disability
- Compelling employers to employ a certain number of persons with disabilities
- Creating specific jobs for persons with disabilities
- Adapting legislation so that it is more inclusive towards persons with disabilities
- Greater support from local authorities through campaigns to promote the professional integration of persons with disabilities
- Training programmes for employers to create an inclusive mindset among SME's
- Involvement of state institutions in helping these categories of persons
- Creating special training programmes for persons with disabilities
- Something else. Please specify: .....

**Q17. From your experience or knowledge, in order to better integrate in the workplace, persons with disabilities need / can benefit from:**

*/Multiple answer/*

- A clear company strategy on disability management in the workplace
- Enforcing policies prohibiting discrimination in the workplace
- Better communication and awareness raising within the workplace in regard to potential challenges for workers with disabilities
- Adaptation of the work environment to provide access to the place of work (e.g. accessible parking, elevators, modified toilets, railings)



- Adaptation of the job, including adjustment and modification of machinery and equipment and/or modification of the job content, working time and work organization (e.g. reduced working hours, light tasks, less demanding jobs)
- Employee orientation to facilitate work experience
- Organizing more team-building events within the company to ensure better integration to the workplace
- Organizing more employer-sponsored training opportunities, manuals and courses targeted to persons with disabilities (hearing impairments, visual impairments, mobility impairments)
- Accommodation measures and / or transportation assistance in order to utilize the residual potential and skills
- Ensuring equal opportunities with other workers at the workplace to acquire the skills and experience necessary to advance in the career
- A personal care attendant or personal assistant
- Any kind of help depending on their disability or health state / a mentor (coach) to ensure support in problematic situations
- Personal development courses
- Courses for the development of different skills and abilities
- Something else. Please specify: .....
- I don't know/couldn't say

**Q18. According to your knowledge, are there any programmes / measures for socio-professional integration of persons with disabilities within the company / institution in which you work?**

*/Single answer/*

- Yes - *Continue with Q19*
- No - *Continue with Q20*

**Q19. If so, please list some examples?**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Q20. Do you consider the legislation in this country supporting the integration of people with disabilities into the labour market to be effective?**

*/Single answer/*

- Not at all
- Very slightly
- Slightly
- Greatly
- Very greatly
- I don't know/couldn't say



**Q21. According to your knowledge, are there any shortcomings in the legislation for the integration of people with disabilities into the labour market?**

*/Single answer/*

- Yes – Continue with Q22
- No – Continue with Q23
- I don't know/couldn't say – Continue with Q23

**Q22. Please mention gaps in the legislation for the integration of people with disabilities into the labour market, which you have faced in your professional activity:**

.....

.....

.....

**Q23. Please rate each of the following, in terms importance, for developing learning tools for SMEs (i.e. HR, managerial/executive level staff incl. consultants who are responsible for recruiting, hiring, retaining employees) to create an inclusive workforce (1 means Not Important and 5-'Very Important?)**

*/Single answer per row/*

	Not at all important	Not important	Neither unimportant, nor important	Important	Very important
Digital training modules for SMEs to facilitate knowledge and to recognize the benefits from employing persons with disabilities	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Learning material and tools to assist SMEs in creating a disability-inclusive workforce	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>

**Q24. How important do you consider each of the following topics to be included in these learning tools for SMEs to create a disability-inclusive work force?**

*/Single answer per row/*

	Not at all important	Not important	Neither unimportant, nor important	Important	Very important
Benefits of hiring people by looking at all labour markets	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Persons with disabilities as a source of high work quality	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>

	Not at all important	Not important	Neither unimportant, nor important	Important	Very important
The inclusive and diverse workplace as driver for increased consumer market and revenue	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
The added value for job morale, company culture and social mission	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Enhancing and increasing productivity (products and services) by bringing unique skills, creativity, experiences and understanding	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Employees with disabilities as a means to reduce employee turnover (longer tenure of employees with disability leading to reduced training and recruitment costs)	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Responding to government guidelines and initiatives	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Personnel strategy (e.g. recruiting, retention, talent identification, professional development strategies and practices etc.)	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Promoting and communicating equal opportunity commitment on the ground of disability as company's business differentiator and driver	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Building synergies and partnerships with recruitment sources promoting persons with disabilities as prospect employees	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Creating the right work environment and providing workplace flexibility (including time, place, task)	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Workplace mentoring for employees and employers for a	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>

	Not at all important	Not important	Neither unimportant, nor important	Important	Very important
disability-inclusive and disability-friendly workplace					

**Q25. How important do you consider each of the following type of information to be included in these learning tools for SMEs to create a disability-inclusive work force?**

*/Single answer per row/*

	Not at all important	Not important	Neither unimportant, nor important	Important	Very important
Information showing how hiring people with disabilities has benefited other companies	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Information showing how hiring people with disabilities has benefited nationally recognized companies	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Information showing how hiring people with disabilities can benefit company's bottom line	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Information showing how hiring people with disabilities can increase company's productivity	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Information that is supported by statistics or research	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Information on satisfactory job performance, attendance, and retention of people with disabilities	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Testimonial information of senior executives/human resources managers/ line managers attesting to the success for their companies	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>

**Q26. If you were to take professional training courses, what approach would you be interested in?**

*/Multiple answers /*

- Face-to-face training
- Remote / online training
- Blended learning



- Group work
- Self-learning
- Something else. Please specify: .....
- I don't know/couldn't say

**Q27. According to your needs / preference, which of the following means of presentation are most relevant / useful for your learning process?**

*/Multiple answers /*

- Printable worksheets
- Infographics
- Animated presentations
- Slides for overhead projector
- Open educational resources (OER)
- Internet link lists
- Audio and video files
- Learning platforms
- Other, please specify .....

**Q27. Are you agree to be invited later on to:**

*/Multiple answers /*

- Participate at an interview by your preferred method (phone/skype/VoIP) to elaborate on the aspects addressed in the quantitative survey. The interview will take up to 20 min.
- Participate in pilot-testing sessions of the developed learning material and tools. The pilot-testing sessions will be organized during 2022.
- Participate at a half day online focus-group to discuss key topics of interest and explore feasible recommendations that align with EU and national policies. The focus-group will be organized during 2022.
- Participate in multiplier events. The multiplier events will be organized in February 2023.
- Receive information about this project
- None of these
- I don't know/couldn't say

**CONTACT DETAILS:**

Company name: .....

Respondent name: .....

e-mail address: .....

**BY CLICKING *FINISH*, YOU CONFIRM THAT YOU HAVE READ THE INFORMATION SHEET AND THE CONSENT FORM, THAT YOU UNDERSTAND THEM AND THAT YOU AGREE THAT YOU GIVE YOUR EXPRESS AGREEMENT FOR DATA PROCESSING, OTHERWISE YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SEND THE QUESTIONNAIRE.**



### Annex – Quantitative questionnaire for Persons with disabilities

We are carrying out a study within the Erasmus+ Project „Beyond Inclusion: Employability for persons with disabilities” N<sup>o</sup>: 2020-1-RO01-KA204-080215, with the main goals of creating:

a) Learning material and tools for SMEs (i.e. HR, managerial/executive level staff incl. consultants who are responsible for recruiting, hiring, retaining employees), that will help to acknowledge and reap the benefits of a disability-inclusive workforce.

b) Learning material for persons with disabilities to get the best out of their professional development opportunities by showing how to demonstrate, acquire, develop job skills, as well as apply transferable soft skills at the workplace.

This questionnaire will take you about 20 minutes to answer. We assure you that the information you provide is of great importance for the analysis we intend to perform and we guarantee that your answers are confidential and are only analysed for statistical purposes.

**Respondent profile: Persons with disabilities (hearing impairments, visual impairments, mobility impairments) and support actors.** The support person will answer on behalf of the person with disabilities they represent.

#### D0. Which country are you from?

/Single answer/

- Bulgaria
- Cyprus
- Greece
- Romania
- Spain

#### D1. To which gender identity do you most identify? (non-compulsory)

/Single answer/

- Male
- Female
- Gender Variant/Non-Conforming
- Prefer Not to Answer

#### D2. How old are you?

/Single answer/

- Under 18 years - STOP
- 18 – 24 years
- 25 – 34 years
- 35 – 44 years
- 45 – 54 years
- Over 54 years

#### D3. Which disability or health condition limits you?

*/Single answer/*

- Vision impairment
- Deafness and/or auditory impairment
- Mobility impairment
- Other - STOP
- None - STOP

#### **D4. What is your status on the labour market?**

*/Single answer/*

- Employee with one or more jobs
- Unemployed/looking for work
- Stay-at-home/No job/I'm not looking for a job - STOP
- Self-employed/I have my own business
- Other. Please specify: .....

#### **D5. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, highest degree received.**

*/Single answer/*

- No formal schooling completed
- Nursery school to 8th grade
- Some high school, no diploma
- High school graduate, diploma or the equivalent
- Some college credit, no degree
- Trade/technical/vocational training
- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Professional degree
- Doctorate degree

#### **D6. In which industry do you work?**

*/Single answer/*

- Agriculture, food, the living environment
- Architecture, construction, the built environment
- Business, human resources, administrative support
- Education, training, childcare
- Engineering, manufacturing industries
- Finance, insurance, real estate
- Health, human services
- Hospitality, leisure, travel, tourism

- IT, creative, media
- Professional, scientific, technical
- Trade, transport, distribution, logistics
- Non-governmental organisation engaged in an economic activity
- Other industry
- Don't know/Don't have a job

**Q1. How do you usually look for a job (if you don't currently have a job) / how did you manage to find a job?**

*/Single answer/*

- By applying online for an available position
- By directly contacting the employer
- Through recommendations (with the help of family, friends, acquaintances)
- Recruitment and selection agencies
- Participation in job fairs
- With the help of organizations/bodies that support the rights of persons with disabilities
- Through the Employment Office (State Institution)
- I started my own business
- Other Please specify: .....

**Q2. What prompted you to look/apply for a job?**

*/multiple answer/*

- Lack of financial means
- The desire to be part of a social group
- So I don't get bored at home
- The desire to pursue the profession for which I prepared
- To be creative
- To learn new things/Acquiring new skills
- Because I want to be useful to my family
- To be financially independent from the family
- To be a model of an active citizen and exercise my rights
- Something else. Please specify: .....

**Q3. Who supported/advised you in finding a job?**

*/multiple answer/*

- My family
- My friends
- My former classmates or co-workers
- My teachers/my former teachers
- Counselling or recruitment specialists

- I did not receive any support
- Others. Please specify: .....

**Q4. How would you assess finding and sustaining work, for persons with disabilities (hearing impairments, visual impairments, mobility impairments)?**

*/Single answer/*

- Very challenging
- Somewhat challenging
- Neither, nor
- Somewhat effortless
- Effortless

**Q5. How important is for you to have a job?**

*/Single answer/*

- Not at all important
- Not important
- Neither unimportant, nor important
- Important
- Very important

**Q6. To what extent do you think your current job is right for you?**

*/Single answer/*

- Not at all
- To a small extent
- Neither, nor
- To some extent
- To a very large extent
- I don't have a job

**Q7. According to your opinion, what measures could your employer take to make your job easier?**

*/Multiple answer/*

- A clear strategy on disability management in the workplace
- Enforcing policies prohibiting discrimination in the workplace
- Better communication and awareness raising within the workplace in regard to potential challenges for workers with disabilities
- Employee orientation to the job to facilitate work experience for persons with disabilities
- Adaptation of the job, including adjustment and modification of machinery and equipment and/or modification of the job content, working time and work organization
- Adaptation of the work environment to provide access to the place of work, to facilitate the employment of individuals with disabilities

- Accommodation measures in order to utilize the residual potential and skills of the workers with disabilities
- Ensuring equal opportunities with other workers at the workplace to acquire the skills and experience necessary to advance in the career
- Providing a mentor (coach) to ensure support in problematic situations
- Organizing more team-building events within the company so that the members of the organization interact more with the workers with disabilities to ensure better integration to the workplace
- Organizing more employer-sponsored training opportunities, manuals and courses targeted to persons with disabilities (hearing impairments, visual impairments, mobility impairments)
- Something else. Please specify: .....
- Not applicable, I am Self-employed/I have my own business

**Q8. What changes would you like to occur in the attitude of your colleagues / peers?**

*/Multiple answer/*

- No change, everything is fine
- To be more tolerant of the difficulties I have
- To be more supportive / understanding when I make mistakes
- To have more patience with me
- To support and encourage me in my initiatives
- To respect and understand my right to privacy
- To be treated as an individual because all people should be treated equally
- To avoid showing pity or being patronizing
- To have the courage to ask about my disability rather than to presume knowledge
- To avoid focussing on my disability and act as they would normally act
- To always ask if I need help before actually helping
- To acknowledge that I can accomplish whatever task is at hand
- Others. Please specify: .....

**Q9. From your point of view, what are the factors /challenges that limit the entry of persons with disabilities to the labour market?**

*/multiple answer/*

- Lack of promotion of jobs among persons with various disabilities
- Employers rarely see people with disabilities applying for jobs
- Employers' perception of persons with disabilities / don't know how to handle the needs of a worker with a disability on the job / concerns about attitudes of co-workers toward the person with a disability
- Employers are afraid they won't be able to discipline or fire a worker with a disability for poor performance, because of potential lawsuits
- Other employees' perception of persons with disabilities / concerns about the extra time that supervisors or co-workers will need to spend to assist workers with disabilities

- Particularities of vacancies
- Lack of training of persons with disabilities for job vacancies
- Lack of necessary skills / experience of persons with disabilities needed to fill vacancies
- Poor presentation at job interviews
- Lack of counselling / support at work
- The disability perceived as a deterrent to accomplish the work to the same standards as other employees
- Employers' safety concerns regarding people with disabilities
- The cost of providing reasonable accommodations so that workers with disabilities can do their jobs / other costs, such as increased health insurance or worker's compensation premiums
- Lower earnings than in the case of persons without disabilities
- Improper application of the equal opportunities legislation in recruitment and selection by potential employers / discrimination against job applicants with disabilities
- Something else. Please specify: .....

**Q10. In the process of my job search, employers/recruiters displayed:**

*/Single answer/*

- A positive/encouraging behaviour with regard to the integration of persons with disabilities
- A negative/discriminatory/discouraging behaviour with regard to the integration of persons with disabilities
- Both, i.e. both positive and negative/discriminatory behaviour
- Does not apply / I am looking for a job but have not participated in an interview

**Q11. Please recommend some measures that could lead to an increase of the number of persons with disabilities in employment:**

*/multiple answer/*

- More adequate policies and standards to take into account the needs of persons with disabilities (e.g. clear policy of inclusive education, enforceable access standards in physical environments, and priority accorded to rehabilitation)
- More financial / economic facilities for employers (e.g. tax reduction in relation to the number of persons with disabilities employed)
- Investments in specific programmes and services for persons with disabilities
- Involving the persons with disabilities in decision-making to enable individuals to communicate their needs and choices
- Increasing public awareness and understanding of disability
- Compelling employers to employ a certain number of persons with disabilities
- Creating specific jobs for persons with disabilities
- Adapting legislation so that it is more inclusive towards persons with disabilities
- Greater support from local authorities through campaigns to promote the professional integration of persons with disabilities
- Training programmes for employers to create an inclusive mindset among SME's

- Involvement of state institutions in helping these categories of persons
- Creating special training programmes for persons with disabilities
- Something else. Please specify: .....

**Q12. Do you consider the knowledge and understanding of the legislation regarding the employment of persons with disabilities would improve your work situation?**

*/Single answer/*

- Yes
- No
- I don't know/couldn't say

**Q13. In general, in your opinion, what do you think are the determining factors for getting a job?**

*/multiple answer/*

- Skills acquired during studies
- Personal relationships (family, friends, acquaintances)
- Proper preparation for interviews, competitions
- Consistent tracking of job postings
- Experience in the field
- Personality traits
- Occupational interests
- Other. Please specify: .....
- I don't know

**Q14. Please state to what extent you agree with the following statements, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means 'Strongly Disagree' and 5-'Strongly Agree':**

*/Single answer per row/*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
A person with disabilities has a disadvantage on the labour market.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
For a person with disabilities finding a job is mainly determined by the skills and knowledge possessed.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
There are employers who consider physical disability an impediment to employment.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Hiring a person with disabilities brings benefits and advantages to the company.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
A person with disabilities makes a greater effort to find a job than a person without disabilities.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
For a person with disabilities, additional training is needed at work.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Workers with disabilities lack the skills and experience to do our jobs.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Hiring persons with disabilities has positive effects on the image of the company/organization/institution.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
People with disabilities show involvement and dedication in the workplace.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
The quality of the work done by a person with disabilities is the same as that of those without disabilities.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Persons with disabilities may not be as safe and productive as other workers.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
A person with disabilities can integrate very well into the normal work pace.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
A person with disabilities can easily integrate into a team.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
It costs more to employ workers with disabilities than those without disabilities due to accommodations, additional management time, or healthcare and insurance costs.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Supervisors are not comfortable managing people with disabilities.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Supervisors are not sure how to evaluate a person with a disability.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Supervisors are not sure how to take disciplinary action for a person with a disability.	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>

**Q15. To what extent do you find your participation in programmes supporting professional development for inclusion in the labour market (courses, trainings, seminars / workshops, etc.) useful?**

*/Single answer/*

Not at all



- To a small extent
- To some extent
- To a large extent
- To a very large extent

**Q16. Have you been involved in training programmes before?**

*/Single answer/*

- Yes - continue with Q17 and then 19
- No - continue with Q18

*/If the answer to Q16 was 'yes' /*

**Q17. Please mention the way(s) in which you participated in training programmes.**

*/Multiple answer/*

- Payed on my own
- Organized by the employer
- Organized by the faculty/educational institution
- Organized in European fund projects
- Organized by institutions/organizations supporting the rights of persons with disabilities
- Another type. Please specify: .....

*/If the answer to Q16 was 'no' /*

**Q18. What prevented you from attending training courses?**

*/Multiple answer/*

- Lack of time
- They did not meet my needs
- I didn't know where to turn
- I did not find out in time about their support
- Limited number of seats
- Cost of the course
- They were not adapted to the type of disability I have
- Other reasons. Please specify: .....

**Q19. In the following period, would you be interested in being involved in a training program with topics such as: showing how to demonstrate, acquire, develop job skills and /or apply transferable soft skills at the workplace?**

*/Single answer/*

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**Q20. If you were to take professional training courses, what approach would you be interested in?**

*/Multiple answer/*

- Face-to-face training
- Remote / online training
- Blended learning
- Group work
- Self-learning
- Something else. Please specify: .....
- I don't know/couldn't say

**Q21. According to your needs / preference, which of the following means of presentation are most relevant / useful for your learning process?**

*/Multiple answer/*

- Printable worksheets
- Infographics
- Animated presentations
- Slides for overhead projector
- Open educational resources (OER)
- Internet link lists
- Audio and video files
- Learning platforms
- Other. Please specify: .....

**Q22. If you were to take professional training courses, what would you be interested in?**

*/Single answer/*

- Interactive/stimulating the involvement of participants
- Classic, theoretical, lecture-based course

**Q23. If you were to take training courses, it would be useful if they helped you in:**

*/Multiple answer/*

- Professional growth
- Personal growth

**Q24. How important do you consider each of the following to be in terms of developing learning tools for persons with disabilities to be better equipped in finding and maintaining a job?**

*/Single answer per row/*

	Not at all important	Not important	Neither unimportant, nor important	Important	Very important
Personality traits / Identification of personality traits / Development of personality traits	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>

	Not at all important	Not important	Neither unimportant, nor important	Important	Very important
Occupational interests / Identification of occupational interests	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Personal values / Identification of personal values / Development of personal values	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Life skills / Identification of life skills / Development of life skills (E.g.: Self-awareness, Critical thinking, Decision making, Problem solving etc.)	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Career exploration/ Career counselling	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Job search methods	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Identification of jobs and job matching	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Applying for a job / Ways of applying for a job / Developing job search skills	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
The resume and the job interview / Recommendations for completing a resume and taking a job interview	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing with employers and negotiation / Recommendations in dealing with employers and negotiation methods	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Self-presentation skills	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Promoting the value in me (what can I offer)	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Marketing disability	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Job skills vis-à-vis disability	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Focus on soft skills (understanding and readiness for application)	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>

	Not at all important	Not important	Neither unimportant, nor important	Important	Very important
Dealing with employee and employer expectations	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>
Professional development	1. <input type="checkbox"/>	2. <input type="checkbox"/>	3. <input type="checkbox"/>	4. <input type="checkbox"/>	5. <input type="checkbox"/>

**Q25. Which of the following skills and abilities do you consider to be the most important to be developed in a person with disabilities, for employment?**

*/multiple answer/*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extraversion           | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive Thinking            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agreeability           | <input type="checkbox"/> Stress and Resilience        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conscientiousness      | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy and Vitality          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stability              | <input type="checkbox"/> Curiosity and Self-awareness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Openness to Experience | <input type="checkbox"/> Connection to Others         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding Change         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Objectiveness          | <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptability                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resilience             | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-efficacy                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tenacity               | <input type="checkbox"/> Openness                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation            | <input type="checkbox"/> Motivation                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Courage                | <input type="checkbox"/> Teamwork                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tolerance              | <input type="checkbox"/> Networking                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Generosity             | <input type="checkbox"/> Interpersonal Skills         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humble Character       | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness               | <input type="checkbox"/> Interdisciplinary Skills     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility            | <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiation Skills           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ambition               | <input type="checkbox"/> Taking Initiative            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discipline             | <input type="checkbox"/> Time Management              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caution                | <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patience               | <input type="checkbox"/> Change Management            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Respect                | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning from Experience     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sincerity              | <input type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Responsibility         | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friendliness           |   |

**Q26. Do you agree to be invited later on to:**

*/Multiple answers /*

- Participate at an interview by your preferred method (phone/skype/VoIP) to elaborate on the aspects addressed in the quantitative survey. The interview will take up to 60 min.



- Participate in pilot-testing sessions of the developed learning material and tools. The pilot-testing sessions will be organized during 2022.
- Participate at a half day online focus-group to discuss key topics of interest and explore feasible recommendations that align with EU and national policies. The focus-group will be organized during 2022.
- Participate in multiplier events. The multiplier events will be organized in February 2023.
- Receive information about this project
- None of these
- I don't know/couldn't say

### CONTACT DETAILS:

Respondent name: .....

e-mail address: .....

**BY CLICKING *FINISH*, YOU CONFIRM THAT YOU HAVE READ THE INFORMATION SHEET AND THE CONSENT FORM, THAT YOU UNDERSTAND THEM AND THAT YOU AGREE THAT YOU GIVE YOUR EXPRESS AGREEMENT FOR DATA PROCESSING, OTHERWISE YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SEND THE QUESTIONNAIRE.**



### Annex – Interview guide for Persons with disabilities

We are carrying out a study within the Erasmus+ Project „Beyond Inclusion: Employability for persons with disabilities” N°: 2020-1-RO01-KA204-080215, with the main goals of creating:

- a) Learning material and tools for SMEs (i.e. HR, managerial/executive level staff incl. consultants who are responsible for recruiting, hiring, retaining employees), that will help to acknowledge and reap the benefits of a disability-inclusive workforce.
- b) Learning material for persons with disabilities to get the best out of their professional development opportunities by showing how to demonstrate, acquire, develop job skills, as well as apply transferable soft skills at the workplace.

This interview will take you up to 1 hour to answer. We assure you that the information you provide is of great importance for the analysis we intend to perform and we guarantee that your answers are confidential and are only analysed for statistical purposes.

At the end of these discussions, we will have to prepare a report with the conclusions to be drawn: what we have learned and what needs to be done next. In order for it to be as faithful as possible, we will use the audio recording of our discussion, if consent has been given.

***Respondent profile: Persons with disabilities (hearing impairments, visual impairments, mobility impairments) who have/had a job or are looking for a job, and support actors. The support person will answer on behalf of the person with disabilities they represent.***

**Note. The Information Sheet and Consent Form should be sent to the interviewee prior to the interview.**

**The Consent Form should be resent signed.**



Name of interviewee	Date	Time	Reference code	Recorded?
				Y/N

Section: <b>Introduction</b>		Timing: <b>5 mins</b>					
		Personal notes	Done (Y/N)				
Welcome and thank you.	Personal introduction to the interviewee, and thank them for participating in the research.						
Recording.	Confirm that the interviewee is happy that the conversation is being recorded <sup>19</sup> . Ask if they would like a copy of the transcript after it is produced (could be about a week to 10 days). Ask if they approve of their name being added to quotations, or if they would object to their name being included in an appendix of interviewees.						
Introduction to the project.	The project is cofounded by the European Commission under the frame of the Erasmus+ Programme. Our task is to gather your opinion about the key factors on creating learning material for persons with disabilities to help them to get the best out of their professional development opportunities by showing them ways to demonstrate, acquire or further develop job skills (including job seeking skills, self-marketing, job expectations, self-presentation skills), as well as apply transferable soft skills at the work-place. The final report of the project will be published by the end of august 2021 on the project's website.						
Person with disabilities.	For the purpose of this project, the categories of disabilities we pursue are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Visual impairment</li> <li>2. Deafness and/or auditory impairment</li> <li>3. Mobility impairment</li> </ol>						
Interviewee profile.	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;"><b>Country</b></td> <td> <input type="checkbox"/> Bulgaria  <input type="checkbox"/> Cyprus  <input type="checkbox"/> Greece  <input type="checkbox"/> Romania  <input type="checkbox"/> Spain               </td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Gender</b></td> <td> <input type="checkbox"/> Male  <input type="checkbox"/> Female  <input type="checkbox"/> Gender Variant/Non-Conforming               </td> </tr> </table>	<b>Country</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Bulgaria <input type="checkbox"/> Cyprus <input type="checkbox"/> Greece <input type="checkbox"/> Romania <input type="checkbox"/> Spain	<b>Gender</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Gender Variant/Non-Conforming		
<b>Country</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Bulgaria <input type="checkbox"/> Cyprus <input type="checkbox"/> Greece <input type="checkbox"/> Romania <input type="checkbox"/> Spain						
<b>Gender</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Gender Variant/Non-Conforming						

<sup>19</sup> If the interviewee does not wish to be recorded, it will be necessary to take notes of the conversation. This inevitably will slow the discussion and probably reduce the amount of information that can be collected. Explain to the interviewee that there may be gaps in the conversation while you make notes.

Section: Introduction		Timing: 5 mins	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer Not to Answer		
	<b>Age</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 years - STOP <input type="checkbox"/> 18 – 24 years <input type="checkbox"/> 25 – 34 years <input type="checkbox"/> 35 – 44 years <input type="checkbox"/> 45 – 54 years <input type="checkbox"/> Over 54 years		
	<b>Disability</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Vision impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Deafness and/or auditory impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility impairment <input type="checkbox"/> Other - STOP <input type="checkbox"/> None - STOP		
	<b>Status on the labour market</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Employee with one or more jobs <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed/looking for work <input type="checkbox"/> Stay-at-home/No job/I'm not looking for a job - STOP <input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed/I have my own business <input type="checkbox"/> Other. Please specify: .....		
Interviewee consent.	Confirm that the interviewee is participating freely in the interview, has read the Information Sheet and signed the Consent Form. Provide any further information if required.		

Section II: ISSUE - Which are the perceived impeding factors/challenges that limit the entry of persons with disabilities to the labour market?				
Timing: up to 15 mins				
			Personal notes	Done (Y/N)
Topic	Sought outcomes	Sample questions		
Disability as a constraint for employability.	To get the interviewee's opinion about the challenges of the employment of persons with disabilities.	Tell me a little about you. Family status, education level, where you live, interests etc.		
	To get the interviewee's opinion about the disability and labour market integration.	Tell me about your disability? When you acquired your disability? How does it impact your daily life? How does it impact work for you?		
	To get the interviewee's opinion about the core area of intervention to fight social exclusion by promoting employment opportunities.	Tell me about your past work experience. What did you think about those past jobs? <i>(If applicable)</i> Why did you stop working? Have you thought about going back to work?		
	To clarify the following aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background and how the disability is perceived</li> <li>• How the persons usually look for a job / how did they manage to find a job? (Q1)</li> <li>• What prompted them to look/apply for a job? (Q2)</li> <li>• How challenging is finding and sustaining work, for persons with disabilities? (Q4)</li> </ul>	What keeps you from working? (anticipate answers such as my disability, education, employers won't hire me, lose my benefits, etc.) This may elicit some discussion around external barriers.		
		If you haven't worked/are not working now, tell me about your dream job. What would it be like to work and how would you feel about working? How important is for you to have a job?		
		What does "society" tell you about working as a person with a disability? According to you are there enough employment opportunities for persons with disabilities?		

Section II: ISSUE - Which are the perceived impeding factors/challenges that limit the entry of persons with disabilities to the labour market?

Timing: up to 15 mins

		<p>Are you satisfied with your life as it is right now? Does that influence your decision to work or not?</p>		
		<p>How challenging is/was for you searching employment? Tell me a little about your experience. How challenging do you think is looking for employment for a person with disabilities? Can you think of some examples of barriers/challenges a person with disabilities may encounter when looking for employment?</p>		
		<p>Can you tell me about experiences going about searching for jobs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Where</li> <li>● What do you look for</li> </ul> <p>Can you specify the directions in which you feel you may need support to find a job that suits your needs.</p>		
		<p>Can you share your experiences about being called in for a job interview?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Can you share your experiences if you did not get called in</li> <li>● How open were you about your own disability?</li> <li>● How do you go about gaining information about the job.</li> </ul>		

Section III: **ISSUE - Which are the needs in acquiring or developing develop soft job skills, as well as apply them for persons with disabilities?**

**Timing: up to 20 mins**

			Personal notes	Done (Y/N)
<i>Topic</i>	<i>Sought outcomes</i>	<i>Example questions</i>		
Employability not as determined by disability, but influenced by aspects relevant with specific job, competences, personal characteristics etc.	To get the interviewee's opinion about the core area of intervention for the persons with disabilities for labour market inclusion and career development. To clarify the following aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impeding factors in hiring persons with disabilities in the SMEs (Q9)</li> </ul>	When looking for employment, what kind of behaviours have you observed from the employers/recruiters (a positive/encouraging behaviour with regard to the integration of persons with disabilities, a negative/discriminatory/discouraging behaviour with regard to the integration of persons with disabilities or does not apply / you are looking for a job but have not participated in an interview)? Please state in a few words what your positive experience (if any) was, in relation to your interaction with employers/recruiters. Please state in a few words what your negative experience was, in relation to your interaction with employers/recruiters.		
		According to you what are the most important aspects to find and keep employment (e.g. studies, previous work experience, consistent tracking of job postings, proper preparation for interviews, personality traits, hobbies and interests, personal values, my life skills etc.)		
		How do you promote yourself when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>applying for a job,</li> <li>dealing with employers and negotiation,</li> <li>promoting the value in me (what can I offer – e.g. being respectful, using good work ethics, being committed to the job, demonstrating diligence in their work etc.)</li> </ul>		

Section III: ISSUE - Which are the needs in acquiring or developing develop soft job skills, as well as apply them for persons with disabilities?

Timing: up to 20 mins

		<p>What are the main means that you use when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● explore possible careers,</li> <li>● search, identify and match jobs to your needs or personality.</li> </ul>		
		<p>Can you give some examples of social- and work-related attributes essential to securing employment and maintaining a job in the long run?</p> <p><u>Note for interviewer – possible examples:</u>  <i>Soft Job Skill = Also known as interpersonal skills, soft skills are core competencies that define how you work. These transferable skills come in handy regardless of your job and are useful in any professional environment. If you've already held employment, chances are you've developed a set of soft skills.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Attention to Detail</li> <li>● Communication Skills</li> <li>● Conflict Management Skills</li> <li>● Problem Solving Skills</li> <li>● Professionalism</li> <li>● Teamwork Skills</li> <li>● Time Management Skills etc.</li> </ul> <p><i>Hard Job Skills = Unlike soft job skills, hard skills relate specifically to the job you're hired to perform. In other words, they're the expertise and knowledge you need to do your job to the best of your ability. A few examples of hard job skills include accounting, carpentry, engineering, and technical writing.</i></p>		
		<p>If given an opportunity in acquiring or developing soft job skills (through training, coaching etc.), as well as apply them would you be willing?</p> <p>What kind of soft skills do you feel you need to acquire/further develop?</p>		

Section III: **ISSUE - Which are the needs in acquiring or developing develop soft job skills, as well as apply them for persons with disabilities?**

**Timing: up to 20 mins**

		Can you give other examples of attributes essential at the workplace for a person with disabilities (e.g. skills vis-à-vis disability, dealing with employee and employer expectations, professional development?)		
Disability as not affecting employability of a person and thus considered as a resource.	To get the interviewee's opinion about the untapped potential and talent of the persons with disabilities, as valuable resource in the work environment. To clarify the following aspects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measures for an inclusive workplace (Q7);</li> <li>Skills and abilities to be developed in a person with disabilities (Q25)</li> </ul>	Do you see yourself as a person with a disability?		
		What do you think about your ability to work? What you hear yourself saying inside about working. What fears do you have about going to work?		
		According to you what are some characteristics that make a person with disabilities as a source of high work quality?		
		What are your characteristics that make you a source of high work quality?		
		What skills or attributes do you mostly rely on when dealing with an employer (either during job hunting or at the workplace)?		
		Have you had a positive influence on the way in which your co-workers/peers have committed to a more inclusive workplace? If so, can you elaborate?		
		What changes would you like to see about your colleagues or peers in creating an inclusive workplace? What about your employer? What chances/improvements would you propose?		

Section IV: <b>ISSUE - Which are the preferred, most effective learning pathways for persons with disabilities?</b>				
<b>Timing: up to 20 mins</b>				
			Personal notes	Done (Y/N)
<i>Topic</i>	<i>Sought outcomes</i>	<i>Example questions to be freely discussed.</i>		
Most effective learning pathways	<p>To get the interviewee's opinion about the most effective learning pathways for equipping the persons with disabilities with the appropriate skills sets and attitudes for labour market inclusion and career development.</p> <p>To clarify the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training approach (Q20) and preferences (Q21)</li> <li>• Topics and contents (Q24)</li> </ul>	<p>Inside the project we will be developing learning materials for persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Could you provide your opinion and ideas on what would you like to know more of within the following learning topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About myself: Personality traits and inventory, interests, personal values, my life skills</li> <li>• Disability and the job market: Career exploration, job search methods, identification of jobs and job matching</li> <li>• Self-presentation and self-marketing: applying for a job, the resume and the job interview, dealing with employers and negotiation, self-presentation skills, promoting the value in me (what can I offer), marketing disability</li> <li>• At the workplace: job skills vis-à-vis disability, focus on soft skills (understanding and readiness for application), dealing with employee and employer expectations, professional development</li> </ul>		
		<p>What is your preferred approach in learning? (e.g. Face-to-face training, Remote / online training, Blended learning, Group work, Self-learning).</p> <p>Would you like to add anything else about the most effective learning pathways for equipping the persons</p>		



		with disabilities with the appropriate skills sets and attitudes for labour market inclusion and career development?		
		<p>To reach a significant level of comprehension, for example for a topic previously discussed, could you please tell us how many hours would you be willing to dedicate?</p> <p>How would you prefer a training course to be organized. For ex.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>more intensive</i>: more hours a day, shorter duration</li> <li>• <i>more relaxed</i>: fewer hours a day, longer duration</li> <li>• other ways.</li> </ul>		





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