



14 June 2022

Follow-up to a dedicated social partner hearing on the forthcoming Employment Disability Package

General remarks

- Employers fully support the inclusion of all groups in employment and integration in the workplace, in particular those that are currently under-represented.
- Companies want to take full advantage of all the talents available, particularly considering that we are facing an ageing population as well as labour and skills shortages on our labour markets across the EU.
- It is important to look at what each person with can do – the employment potential of the individual - and not only at the obstacles to be professionally active. This relates to the attitudes and behaviour of employers, workers and their representatives as well as people with disabilities.
- The right balance between necessary protection and policies that enable people with disabilities to be employed should be found. Additionally, labour market integration of such individuals needs to be managed in an appropriate way.
- Having more people in work is also fundamental to financing social protection systems and ensuring their sustainability. We need to make sure that all who can work, are professionally active.
- Unfortunately, the employment rate of people with disabilities remains low compared to the rest of the population.
- This has a negative impact on those individuals that would be able to work in terms not only of earning an income, but also personal development and fulfilment.
- It also has a negative impact on the functioning of our labour markets and social systems, because we are not fulfilling the potential of our labour force and fully contributing to financing social protection.
- We therefore need to find ways to enable more people with disabilities to earn their living on the open labour market, whilst recognising the important role of sheltered employment as a stepping stone to the open labour market.



Comments on the activities proposed in the six key areas

The Disability Employment Package will propose activities in six areas. Overall, we find that these are well identified in terms of the challenges and ways forward to improve employment of people with disabilities and that the approach focusing on tools, guidance and building cooperation and capacities is the right approach:

Our views on each proposed area of activity:

1. Strengthening capacities of employment and integration services

Our comments

- Different services – activation, welfare, education – need to be better connected. And there need to be improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of active labour market policies, especially for those groups that face the largest barriers in entering labour markets, including people with disabilities.
- It is also important to ensure good availability of information on job vacancies, including cross-border and that this is reaching all those able to work.
- More guidance for SMEs and craft sector would help employers from this group to employ people with disabilities. SMEs and crafts are important partners as they usually offer employment opportunities on the local labour markets and in local communities, which may be a decisive factor for people with disabilities to take up professional activity.
- Member states should be encouraged to set up a “One stop shop” – a single point of contact for employees and employers to support employment of people with disabilities. Comprehensive information should be provided in the “company language”. Additionally, such centres could proactively approach companies to inform them about the practicalities related to employing people with disabilities.
- There is a role not only for public but also private employment services to provide services to improve access to labour markets, as well as public-private partnerships to link different services more effectively.
- We welcome the Commission’s proposal to prepare a guide for Member States focussing on career guidance services. This is the right approach taking into account diverse national approaches to labour market and employment policy.

2. Promoting hiring perspectives through affirmative action and combatting stereotypes

Our comments

- We support the approach proposed to combat stereotypes and promote employment, as an effective way forward. We find this more effective than compulsory placement or quotas to manage employment of people with disabilities. Whilst this may work in some member states, in others it has not



been as effective. Therefore, it is better to find positive ways to support and incentivise companies to employ candidates from this group.

- While affirmative action and combatting stereotypes is very important, access to diverse employment contracts and working time regimes is crucial to accommodate their special needs, where this is necessary.
- We welcome the Commission's proposal to produce a catalogue of positive actions to facilitate hiring of persons with disabilities involving employers and including employers' initiatives. However, it would be also important to indicate responsibilities of individuals with disabilities who seek employment as well as co-workers in eliminating stereotypes and adopting appropriate attitudes. All stakeholders need to be involved in supporting employment of people with disabilities.

3. Ensuring reasonable accommodation at work

Our comments

- Reasonable accommodation concerns work organisation, health and safety, working environment, as well as work relations, including the responsibilities and attitudes of employers, co-workers and people with disabilities themselves.
- A successful integration at the workplace needs to correspond to the specificities of each enterprise, which differ considerably. This concerns, e.g. the size of the company, the available resources, the specific tasks and the actual place of work.
- A balanced approach is needed to adequately and appropriately take account of the needs of the individual, as well as the co-workers and the productivity and competitiveness of the enterprise.
- Opportunities can also be offered by digitalisation and use of digital tools at the workplace, including possibilities provided by automation, robotisation, and telework.
- A further action which could be included in the strategy is promoting exchanges of information, in particular taking account of needs in specific sectors, on realistic adaptation of workstations/workplaces.
- There is a need for public schemes supporting employers in providing reasonable accommodation; it is especially important in case of SMEs.
- We welcome the Commission's proposal to produce guidelines for employers on reasonable accommodation at work. Nevertheless, we would propose to enrich it with information about supportive public policies and/or good practices to support employers in the endeavour of employing people with disabilities. Specific guidelines for crafts and SMEs would also be very useful. Also, guidance should not only be targeted at employers, but also at co-workers, so that there is a good understanding of the specific needs of people with disabilities and that specific changes may be required at the workplace.



4. Securing health and safety at work contributing to prevent disabilities

Our comments

- This point is confusing as it is not clear whether it relates to long-term illness or disability. It is important to make clear that not all diseases, even serious and of a relatively long duration, lead to disability.
- While the probability of disability increases with age, it is important to clearly state that not all disabilities have arisen in the context of work. Moreover, individual condition of older workers varies to an important degree depending not only on the performed work, but also on their lifestyles.
- It has to be stressed that prevention of accidents at work is an important issue in preventing disabilities.
- We welcome the Commissions' proposal to cooperate with EU-OSHA to issue a manual for managing chronic diseases and preventing the risk of acquiring disabilities. It is important that the manual also stresses individual worker's responsibility in ensuring healthy lifestyle and healthy way of working.

5. Securing vocational rehabilitation schemes in case of chronic diseases and accidents

Our comments

- Employers fully support the idea of effective vocational rehabilitation schemes for all employees facing chronic diseases and/or work-related accidents. Special arrangements need to be foreseen for those with disabilities as they may need more assistance to come back to professional activity.
- Employers believe that interinstitutional cooperation is necessary to ensure the best results. While employers' role in the process is very important, they cannot take the whole burden of organising/delivering/financing such schemes themselves.
- We welcome the Commission's proposal to cooperate with EU-OSHA to draft guidelines for effective vocational rehabilitation schemes.

6. Exploring quality jobs in sheltered employment, and pathways to the open labour market

Our comments

- It is necessary to ensure that people with disabilities are equipped with the right skills and training, to ensure their employability and effective integration in the labour market. With the digitalisation of the economy, this must also include digital skills.
- Social economy enterprises and sheltered employment often play an important role in labour market insertion for people with disabilities, which should be a



stepping stone to the open labour market, where this is feasible from the point of view of the employer and the individual worker.

- Depending on the means of companies, support to finance and organize an accessible workplace, including guidance on the most effective and efficient way to do this, is crucial. In addition to wage subsidies and/or assistance to adapt workstations, companies need information on available programmes, tailor-made recruitment campaigns and specific assistance according to their sector / region/ size / nature of the company.
- Raising awareness of sources of financial support to companies is also important, as these are sometimes underutilised. Also, front-loading financial support so that companies have already received it when employing a person with a disability helps to incentivise this by avoiding financing gaps when taking measures to reasonably accommodate people with disabilities at the workplace.
- In terms of social protection, appropriate income should be provided for people who cannot work or find employment, who are transiting between different forms of work, and those facing situations of poverty and social exclusion. We also need to more effectively accompany transitions on labour markets, including making sure that work pays compared to welfare benefits. This means ensuring flexibility in moving between disability benefits and salary to ensure that people with disabilities take up employment and are not afraid of losing their benefits and tapering income support, as people enter or return to the labour market.
- We appreciate that the Commission explores not only sheltered employment options, but also pathways to the open labour market

In all the above-mentioned areas support for companies in terms of providing information, awareness-raising and guidance as well as ensuring access to best practices is very important.

Annex 1.

BusinessEurope members' contributions

- ✓ BDA, Germany
- ✓ Ibec, Ireland
- ✓ Confindustria, Italy
- ✓ Medef, France
- ✓ DA, Denmark



Annex 1.

- ***BDA, Germany***

On the quota system

Germany has a quota system obliging employers to hire a minimum proportion of persons with disabilities (companies of 20 or more employees are a subject of a 5% quota). When this quota is not filled, employers need to pay a penalty for every unfilled vacancy. The inadequacy of the system is manifested by the fact that there are approx. 170 000 registered unemployed persons with disabilities, while at the same time there are approx. 340 000 vacancies where penalties are paid.

Challenges of employing people with disabilities

No one knows how many people with disabilities are in training and employment, because employers can only report what they know as part of the notification procedure. Companies that specifically want to recruit people with severe disabilities and have in some cases concluded corresponding integration agreements can state this in job advertisements, but they do not have the right to ask about severe disabilities in the application process.

Employers - both large and small - who want to train and employ people with disabilities are faced with complex legal frameworks and an almost unmanageable funding landscape with many different service providers. In many cases, it is difficult to identify which agency is responsible for which support measures.

Often the employment of people with disabilities does not fail because of the will of employers. Small and medium-sized companies in particular often simply have no experience with this issue. Some are not aware of the support services, others do not know about counseling and information services that are available to them.

On the new inclusion guides

New "Single Points of Contact for Employers" came into force on January 1, 2022. They are now being established gradually by the responsible integration offices in all German federal states.

Their purpose is approach companies on their own initiative and inform, advise and support them on all training and employment related aspects of people with disabilities; e.g. assisting employers with applications to the relevant statutory benefit providers etc. They will form a nationwide network that is independent of any particular agency. Depending on the federal state, the "single points of contact" are located at different agencies. Employers can find their responsible inclusion guide on a dedicated search website.

Previous inclusion projects have impressively shown that such a central point of contact, which speaks the language of the employers and guides the employers to the right advice and support offers of the responsible agencies in the region, contributes significantly to more inclusion.

For several years, the BDA has been advocating for the creation of inclusion guides for employers, who guide companies through the jungle of funding from the various rehabilitation



agencies and who provide free, quick and uncomplicated services. We welcome the new initiative.

More information here: <https://www.bih.de/integrationsaemter/aufgaben-und-leistungen/einheitliche-ansprechstellen/#kdb-client>

Inclusion Business Network:

In addition, BDA is part of the “Unternehmens-Netzwerk Inklusion” which serves as a counselling network for employers on questions related to the employment of, support systems and training for people with disabilities. The network is governed by the central German inclusion actors including the national social partners. Here as well, consultants are active as central points of contact for employers. They offer personal consultations in the company and for HR managers. Among others, they provide legal and technical information and work to improve cooperation between employers and the support systems, such as the integration offices and services.

More information here: <https://www.unternehmens-netzwerk-inklusion.de/ueber-uns/>

Inclusion Award:

Initiated by BDA, the Federal Employment Agency, the Charter of Diversity and UnternehmensForum (inclusion best-practice platform for companies), the Inclusion Award for the Business Community awards once a year companies that have shown in remarkable ways how successful inclusion works. Companies can apply with their best-practice examples for the award and will be evaluated by a jury.

More information here: <https://www.inklusionspreis.de/der-preis.html>

- ***Ibec, Ireland***

Ireland is currently undergoing a review of its Reasonable Accommodation Fund as it needs to be updated to be more effective. There have been issues with the administrative burden and lack of awareness of the fund as well as certain elements no longer as applicable as when developed. Details on the existing offering is attached <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/62fd96-reasonable-accommodation-fund/>

Under the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities, an employer disability information service (Employers for Change) has been set up (piloted for 3 years and now running for 2 years). Its aim is to provide information and advice to employers to support them in hiring, managing and retaining staff with disabilities. In addition to advice and support, Employers for Change have contributed at employer workshops and events; developed tools and guidance on understanding disability; inclusive recruitment; managing disability in the workplace and health and safety.

Next month Ibec in partnership with the Trade Union ICTU and Employers for Change will relaunch our Reasonable Accommodation Passport to enable employees to start the conversation with their employer regarding the flexibilities or accommodations they may need to fulfil their role. The existing Passport which has been in operation for a number of years relied on the medical model of disability and so we have updated it to more the social model of disability.

Finally, the Houses of the Oireachtas has developed an OWL Programme which provides an opportunity for employment in the Civil and Public Service for those with an intellectual



disability by increasing their skills through work placements. It is an applied learning, development and socialisation programme for 10 young adults with intellectual disabilities. The Houses of the Oireachtas service facilitates the programme in collaboration with 2 disability organisations KARE and WALK and the City of Dublin Education & Training Board. The OWL graduates have developed skills that allow them to be work ready and offers help and support to find meaningful and viable employment in the wider Civil and Public Service. To support this they have developed useful guides for other government departments or public sector organisations to get involved including one on promoting inclusive employment. <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/how-parliament-is-run/houses-of-the-oireachtas-service/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/owl-programme/>

- **Confindustria, Italy**

1/ Strengthening capacities of employment and integration services

The EU Strategy 2021-30 highlights the following: “*Having the right skills and qualifications is a prerequisite for accessing and succeeding in the labour market*”.

One of the main obstacle to the participation in the labour market of people with disabilities is the low cultural level and the lack of professional skills they present when trying to access it.

According to the last national available report (2016-18) in 2018, only 2,9% of people registered in the placement lists hold a university degree. Only 0,6 holds a first level university degree, the 40.8% has a high level school degree or a professional diploma, the 17% holds a primary school certification.

Moreover, it is also necessary to evaluate the consistency of all these certifications with the professional competences requested by companies (indeed, this aspect refers to all workers, not only to disabled persons).

So, the lack of competences represents the first critical issue and this aspect cannot be solved with the activation of short professional training paths.

Other factors must be considered: even if professional skills occur, disabled persons are not available to preserve their job for an adequate (for the company) period of time; and the time required for a professional training might not correspond to the rapidly changing organizational needs of the company.

For all these reasons, it is necessary to focus the attention to the issue of professional qualification before entering the labour market, of its orientation towards the needs of the market, and to the introduction of a legislation that shall enhance the needs of flexibility of both the disabled person and the companies (differently from today’s situation).

The strengthening of the employment opportunities is to be promoted through an upgrading of the cultural and professional level of persons with disabilities. But the same is also positively influenced by the full involvement of employers in the process of analysis of people’s employability profile. This aspect is, in fact, missing and could effectively improve the matching opportunities between the individual and the companies.

2/ Promoting hiring perspectives through affirmative action and combatting stereotypes



The positive actions aimed at improving the inclusion of people with disabilities must necessarily be implemented through a flexible regulatory model, to be concretely based on a “system of employment quota for disabled people“, referred to the public effort to ensure the matching of the needs of disabled people with the professional positions available in companies.

The distinction between public and private employment must be made, according to the UN Convention. Whilst a legal obligation is provided for the public sector, a different action for promotion is referred to the private one.

The legislation must be adapted to this fundamental distinction, by incentivizing the action for promotion.

The main lacking action is the acquisition of the full acknowledgement of the needs of disabled persons (eg conditions of disability, skills and professional interests) and of companies (company’s activities, available positions, possible negative effects on safety and health aspects), and the action for promoting the matching between companies and (disabled) persons. This approach would also help overcoming possible stereotypes.

So, any possible positive actions being adopted towards employers should refer to supporting the matching between the qualifications effectively available in the company, indicated by the employer, and the characteristics of people registered in the placement lists. Only this approach can really implement the principle stated in the EU Strategy “diversity and inclusion enrich and strengthen organisations”.

3/ Ensuring reasonable accommodation at work

The innovative concept of “reasonable accommodation” must be correctly interpreted and implemented.

In particular, on the basis of the consolidated national jurisprudence (lastly, Court of Cassation, 2021), the principle of balanced consideration of both the worker’s and the company’s position must be formally ensured.

The interests of both parties must be evaluated: on the disabled worker’s side, his/her interest to maintain a job compatible with his/her psychic and physical situation, in an objective and guiltless difficulty. On the employer’s side, the interest to a useful working activity for the company must be ensured. This last aspect is of central importance: not just a whatsoever job, not useful even in the worker’s perspective, but a useful job in the company’s perspective. This aspect strongly impacts on the tasks of the placement offices, which must always be guided by the above mentioned principles.

In Italy, the Government has adopted guidelines (Ministerial decree 11 March 2022 n. 43) which are not in line with these principles. In fact, the guidelines do not provide the exclusion of the employers’ obligations for the cases in which the placement lists do not include any worker able to perform the tasks available in the company.

The action of the Commission should ensure and enhance the respect of the principle of usefulness of the job in the employer’s perspective, on the basis of the job descriptions available in the company.

4/ Securing health and safety at work and preventing work accidents that can lead to disability



Obviously, like for all other workers, the workplaces must be safe.

With reference to workers with disabilities, the necessary consistency between type of disability and specific health and safety procedures required by the type of disability, must be taken into account.

On the other side, the employment of people with disabilities in workplaces presenting particular risks must be obviously excluded, without considering this situation as a violation of legal provisions.

Another aspect to consider is the prohibition to employ disabled people in jobs which are not compatible with their health situation. This aspect (e.g. in case of modification of the health conditions or of the work organization) could impact on the possibility to maintain the job, but it is necessary to exclude that this would provide replacement duties or economic costs for the company, when no adequate positions are available.

Any possible EU action in this context should address the matching between health and safety issues and the placement of people with disabilities, by stating that the employment opportunities in companies characterized by high level of danger can only be referred to jobs to be performed in the administrative context.

5/ Securing vocational rehabilitation schemes in case of chronic diseases or accidents

The rehabilitation path in this case is predominantly referred to health aspects and does not have anything to do with job placement, but, instead, it might refer to the possible maintenance of the job after an accident, a situation which is fully guaranteed, for an adequate period of time.

6/ Exploring quality jobs in sheltered employment and pathways to the open labour markets

This is a central aspect.

The UN Convention stresses “the right to work of people with disability on the basis of equality with others”, thus referring to an open labour market.

This fundamental principle impacts firstly on the cultural and professional level of workers: the level and the type of education and professionalism must be evaluated with regard to the needs of employers, on an equal basis with respect to all the other workers who are looking for a job.

Additionally, employing people lacking the required professional and cultural skills would not meet the ratio of this kind of placement. Moreover, assigning an individual to a job which is not consistent with the worker’s capacities and expectations would neither be consistent with the constitutional principle according to which work must ensure the full development of the human being.

For this reason, the model provided by the UN Convention for the private employment gives priority to the procedures of involvement and promotion of employment, by excluding a legal obligation.

In Italy, the requirements of this specific kind of employment are not yet adequately implemented; the Commission should foster the simplification of the legislation and increase



the matching paths between companies and bodies which offer protected employment opportunities.

Any examples on quotas for employing people with disabilities or any other actions at the national level are also of interest.

In Italy, once the matching has been successfully done, companies employing from 15 to 35 workers should hire one person with disabilities, two persons if they employ from 35 to 50, and 7% of the whole workforce if they employ more than 50 workers.

The national legal framework is quite complex, and a simplification is required. Moreover, even though the system is based on the principle of the matching between worker's and company's needs, this is not concretely in line with the principles stated by the UN Convention. In fact, it must be reminded that "promoting the employment" doesn't involve a legal obligation to hire.

The Commission should promote – through the involvement of the employers' representatives – the ratio of the useful employment in the company's perspective, as well as the idea that a correct employment is the condition for an effective human development and for a real participation of disabled persons to social life.

- **Medef, France**

Legal framework in France

- **Quotas** for the employment of disabled persons are a legal obligation in France: this is called the « **obligation to employ disabled workers** » (OETH).

The Labour Code provides that « *any employer with **at least 20 employees must employ disabled people in a proportion of 6% of the total workforce*** ». This employment obligation concerns all employees regardless of the nature of their contract. Since 1st January 2020, the employer has to declare each year the number of jobs occupied by a disabled worker to justify that he is complying with his employment obligation. If the employer does not comply with the employment obligation, he must pay an annual contribution.

- There also exist « **adapted companies** », that is to say ordinary companies subject to the provisions of the Labour Code, which employ **at least 55% of disabled workers** among its production staff. These workers are recruited from among the unemployed who are furthest from the labour market. The purpose is to define and accompany a professional project for the disabled employee, within or outside the adapted company.
- The **Freedom to Choose One's Future Occupation law** provides for the appointment of a « **disability referent** » within any company employing at least 250 employees, who is "responsible for guiding, informing and supporting people with disabilities" (Article L5213-6-1 of the Labour Code). This referent (usually within the Diversity or HR departments) is in charge of the company's disability policy, and produce **action plans** submitted to the ESC. The objective is to reach the 6% quota, so the action plans range from recruitment policies to career development, awareness-raising, support for the employees concerned, and so on.

In practice, the other most frequent activities in the function of disability adviser are the following :

- organising the **management of disability throughout the recruitment** and integration process



- informing / guiding / **supporting employees with disabilities**, particularly at certain key moments (entry into training, return after a long break, organisational evolution, professional development, etc.);
- **raising awareness** and equipping internal players to use adapted companies
- organizing **information and awareness-raising activities** for all employees or targeted activities (executive committee, recruiters, managers, support services, etc.);
- **Internal communication** on the disability action plan, results, successful experiences, etc.
- Developing/monitoring **external partnerships** (Occupational Health Services, training organisations, associations, suppliers, disability specialists, etc.);
- Keeping a watch on this area (news, techniques, legal issues, benchmarks, exchanges of practices, the Disability Referents Network, clubs, etc.);
- **External communication** (events, awards, conferences, forums, etc.);

Awareness-raising activities :

- Many French companies are proactive in raising-awareness and launching promotional activities on this subject.
- Among those initiatives :
 - Every year in November, during the **European Week for the Employment of People with Disabilities**, French companies are very active : they organise events, awareness campaigns for their employees, participative in actions in favour of people with disabilities, etc. The aim, in addition to recruiting people with disabilities and raising awareness of these issues, is also to support disabled employees within the company.
 - As part of this week , in France, the « **Duoday** » is organized. This is a day during which people with disabilities join companies and form a duo with company directors, managers, etc. The aim is to raise awareness by helping to change the way people look at disability and to **integrate disabled people into their teams**. For example, the Medef has been organizing Duoday for three years and integrates every year at least one of the people received during this day.
 - 3 June is the "**Inclusiv'Day**" in France : the whole day, activities about disability and inclusion are organized at La Défense (Paris). This event brings together **high-level experts** who will debate on issues such as « how to create a disability-friendly environment ? » or « Innovating in the recruitment of disabled workers ». For example, for the 2022 session, an escape game has been created to raise awareness on disability.

Promoting good practices :

- In France, the AFNOR (French standardization authority) **Diversity Label** was created by the state in 2008 with social partners and HR experts. To obtain this label, companies must report on the actions implemented in favour of people with disabilities in their companies.



- The « **AGEFIPH** » (the French association responsible for managing the fund to promote employment of disabled persons) has been established to **promote the professional integration and retention in employment of disabled people** in companies.

To achieve this mission, the AGEFIPH :

- Collects and manages the contributions of private companies subject to the 6% employment obligation.
 - Establishes and leads **partnerships with national and local public players** (regional councils, employment centres, etc.) to amplify public policies in favour of people with disabilities.
 - Offers a range of services including **advice, support and financial aid** to disabled people and companies. For example, an "**Activ box**" for companies wishing to carry out internal awareness-raising/communication actions on disability. Each month, the box contains five customisable contents (video, posters, infographics, practical guide, testimonies) dealing with a different disability.
- Last March, an **Employment and Disability barometer** was published. This barometer allows company managers, on a voluntary basis, to publish raw data on a few items selected as key indicators. The Employment & Disability Barometer is based on six themes :
- employment rate of disabled people
 - staff awareness and support for a structured disability policy
 - inclusive recruitment
 - retention of disabled employees
 - inclusive purchasing
 - digital accessibility

Each theme has one or more **criteria selected by a panel of employers** of various sizes and sectors. This barometer constitutes a useful tool for companies, the Medef communicates actively on it. The aim is to help companies to give greater visibility to their actions relating to the employment of people with disabilities.

- **DA, Denmark**

DA (Confederation of Danish Employers) and Disabled People's Organisations Denmark jointly sent eight proposals with the aim of reducing barriers and increase the chances for employment of people with disabilities to the Minister of Employment. The accompanying letter also stressed the reasons for the Confederation of Danish Employers and the Disabled People's Organisations Denmark for the joint proposals, in particular highlighting that while companies across the country are experiencing an acute shortage of employees, many people with disabilities are not in jobs, despite being ready to work. This paradox needs to be addressed, both for the sake of companies who have difficulty finding employees for vacant positions and for the sake of people with disabilities who want to be part of the workforce.

The Eight Proposals:

- 1. New advisory function on recruitment of people with disabilities**

Uncertainty about what a disability entails can discourage companies from hiring people with disabilities. A national advisory service should therefore be set up to provide businesses with rapid information about the challenges and limitations of employing a person with a specific



disability - such as an anxiety diagnosis - and the solutions and available support. The advice can be provided by specialists from the member organisations of the Disabled People's Organisations Denmark. A voluntary network of companies is also involved. An employer considering, for example, hiring a person with anxiety, will thus be able to get good advice from a company with concrete experience ("peer-to-peer" advice).

2. Help must be guaranteed at the forefront

It is important for companies to have clarification on aid measures and support schemes when they are considering hiring a person with disabilities who requires special consideration. Currently, aid measures are only granted at the back end of the recruitment process. This is too late and creates a barrier to employment. People who need an aid measure, workplace equipment or personal assistance at work must be guaranteed support up front, so that companies do not have to be uncertain about whether the workplace and the working day can be adapted to the individual's needs.

3. Better possibility to keep aids at transitions

It is inappropriate that aid measures used in training should be handed back three months after the end of training if the aid measures are still needed for job search and work itself. An aid measure used during training should be made available to be taken further in the job search and later once the job found.

4. Job portal for unemployed people with disabilities

It is important to improve opportunities for businesses and jobseekers with disabilities to meet. A voluntary job portal for people with disabilities should therefore be developed - either linked to an existing job database or as a stand-alone portal. The job portal could provide access to CVs etc. of the unemployed people with disabilities, thus facilitating contact between them and companies seeking employees.

5. Unemployed people should be screened for disability

Local authorities should identify whether the unemployed people have disabilities so that they can receive targeted employment services, focusing on the right business match and assessing whether aid measures can be brought into play. Experience from trials of screening all unemployed suggests that this gets more people with disabilities into jobs.

6. Easier access to permanent jobs

Access to continue work under the flexible time regime with the previous employer must be eased. The current requirement of 12 months' prior employment under social chapters or special conditions should be abolished for all age groups. This will make it easier for companies to retain employees who - for one reason or another - have become disabled and can no longer work under ordinary conditions.

7. Guarantee for the unemployed flexible workers

It is essential that the unemployed flex workers - in line with other unemployed people - receive qualified help from the job centre to find employment quickly. At present, help is in many cases inadequate and has too little focus on jobs. Unemployed flexible job seekers must therefore be given a guarantee. The guarantee will, among other things, entitle unemployed flexible jobseekers to advice in connection with job-seeking, close follow-up and qualification of job-seeking activities and to a personal job coach with knowledge of job opportunities in the local labour market.

The guarantee will also ensure that the unemployed flexible workers have a CV drawn up in good time to reflect their skills. If the municipality does not provide such an assistance, the



citizen can use another support at the municipality's expense. The other support can be, for example, provided by a disability organisation or a private actor.

8. Better knowledge of efforts towards the unemployed flexible workers

There are big differences in how well municipalities are at assisting the unemployed flexible workers to find employment. In the best cases, the unemployment rate among flexible workers is on a par with the general unemployment rate, while in others it is much higher. At the same time, the data on the municipalities' efforts to help the unemployed flexible workers is not nearly as good as for other unemployed people. There is a need for better knowledge about job search among unemployed flexible job seekers, as well as about how many are temporarily unable to work due to health problems, etc. This can help to understand municipal differences. It can also provide a basis for making it an employment policy objective to reduce the flexible job unemployment and to work towards all municipalities achieving the same results as the best.

Concerning the issue of quotas

The social engagement of enterprises is based on voluntary basis in Denmark. Partly for the sake of companies - the capacity of companies to employ people with disabilities depends on the sector, size, location, etc. In addition, currently Danish labour market is experiencing a widespread shortage of employees. This means that most likely it would be difficult for some companies to meet quotas, as there are not enough unemployed people with disabilities available. With quotas, there would be a risk that they could experience some kind of labeling - even employees who have not previously perceived themselves as persons with disabilities. Moreover, it is also generally in the interest of employees to be hired on the basis of qualifications and not as part of a quota.
