



**EMCO Policy Analysis Group (PAG)  
Tripartite meeting with EU and national level social partners**

**Brussels, 11 June 2024**

**Inclusion of persons with disabilities into the labour market**

**Minutes  
Final version**

**Introduction**

The EMCO Policy Analysis Group met on **11 June 2024 in a virtual setting with EU and national level social partners** to discuss **the inclusion of persons with disabilities (PW) into the labour market**.

The EMCO PAG Chair Ms Tiziana Lang introduced the meeting, welcoming the EMCO PAG Delegates, Commission representatives as well as EU and national social partners.

In their opening remarks the **representatives of the EU employers' organisations** emphasised the importance of the tripartite meeting in the context of the Commission Communication on Social Dialogue. Persons with disabilities are an often hidden and untapped source of talent. Employers are increasingly recognising the value of equitable, diverse and inclusive work cultures however, persons with disabilities are often absent from workplaces. The inclusion of PwD into the labour market is crucial from a social and equity perspective as well as in view of the current economic situation, demographical developments and challenges related to the labour and skills shortages.

The support from the public actors is needed, while the margins to finance the initiatives are limited. Promotion and enabling of initiatives supporting the employment of PwD should involve all stakeholders. While labour market activation of PwD is essential, the focus should be also put on reintegration of persons experiencing gradual or temporary disability along their active working years. In both cases transparent guidance and financial support for SMEs is needed.

While the social partners, both unions and employers, acknowledge their responsibility to integrate PwD into labour market, the strategy can be achieved only with strong support from the Member States at all levels. The issue is also relevant to address all the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) Action Plan targets including participation of PwD in learning and reduction of poverty among PwD.

The **representatives of the EU Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)** stressed their commitment in addressing the PwD employment related issues to support the European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Employment Package and expressed their general agreement with

their content. Concerning the guidelines on reasonable accommodation, which is an obligation under the Employment Equality Directive<sup>1</sup>, ETUC stated that the approach of addressing the identified challenges merely through guidelines - relying on the goodwill of employers to fulfil their obligations towards workers with disabilities - is dissatisfying and might have limited results. The European Disability Card is seen as important step to achieve inclusion, but the employment aspect of mobility has been overlooked. It is crucial to address the challenges of disability concerning the entitlements to exercise the work and to participate in education and professional training abroad. Therefore, the continuous access to disability support abroad and allowances when relocating within the EU is important. The mid-term review of the Strategy could be an opportunity to assess its scope. Also, the Council's discussion on mainstreaming of the disability policies is welcome, however more transparency and information for the citizens is required.

**The Commission** acknowledged the views of the social partners and stressed the importance of the tripartite discussions and social partners' active participation in the recent discussion on the Strategy and the Employment Package, in particular through the Disability Platform and its sub-group on employment. The appropriate actions need to be implemented across all levels as according to the recent data PwD represent almost 20 % of the EU working population with 45 % of them remaining inactive, and the change over the years is limited. The Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities focuses on employment as one of flagship themes. Disability Employment Package created in cooperation with all key stakeholders includes set of guidelines and practices aiming at the improvement of the situation of PwD on the labour market. The Package does not aim to create new rules but rather aims at systematising the information, guidance and best practices facilitating employment of PwD, while presenting easy to use examples for businesses, employment services, public authorities and civil society. It is particularly relevant also in view of still existing stereotypes about persons with disabilities and misconception of the costs related to e.g., the provision of reasonable accommodation. However, such measures often are not notably costly and require minor adaptations such as working schedules, flexibility in work arrangements, or adaptations of working equipment. The guidance included in the Package is being finalized and it is essential to discuss how to implement it in the most effective way, as well as which additional measures are needed to increase the employment and to set up the national targets for employment of PwD as called for by the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Commission set the scene with the presentation of the Disability Employment Package referring to the situation of PwD in the labour market and the current policy and legal frameworks including the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Employment Equality Directive.

While a high incidence of disability among persons of working age is observed, the employment disability gap has not changed substantially in the recent years. PwD are mainly employed in elementary occupations and higher unemployment rates concern women and young persons with disabilities. Persons with severe disabilities face more barriers on the labour market, and large group remains inactive and not registered to benefit from any support. In terms of quality employment only 1/3 of PwD work full time with significant lower share of participation among women despite their expressed availability. Young PwD often work under precarious jobs (temporary contracts), persons with mental and intellectual impairment are often referred to alternative employment forms but the conditions those settings offer differ significantly across the Member States. For example, some do not operate under labour law. Overall, the transition from the sheltered employment to the open labour market is low across the EU. The attitude towards PwD has not changed on the side of demand (lacking awareness, perception of low productivity, non-inclusive hiring process) and supply (low self-awareness and perception of the skills among PwD themselves) as well as in institutional context due to lacking incentives, low flexibility of benefit systems and insufficient support in access to services.

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<sup>1</sup> [Directive - 2000/78 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

The situation has not changed despite the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (in which framework Commission and Member States are all parties), and other measures such as quotas, subsidies, actions aiming at awareness raising and support to businesses.

At the level of EU legal frameworks and actions the most important are the European Pillar of Social Rights, Union of Equality, Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 (currently under midterm review), Employment Equality Directive 2000/78/EC and Disability Employment Package. Discussions at the Disability Platform's sub-group on employment were closed and consequently continued in EMCO and SPC in May 2023.

The Package helps develop national policies that involve persons with disabilities in the fair green and digital transition and is a "knowledge hub" including guidance and practices for all stages of recruitment and employment meant for employers, recruiters, public authorities, social partners and civil society to foster the employment among the PwD.<sup>2</sup> The main deliverables refer to 1) strengthening capacities of employment and integration services, 2) promoting hiring perspectives through affirmative action and combating stereotypes, 3) ensuring reasonable accommodation at work, 4) retaining persons with disabilities in employment: preventing disabilities associated with chronic diseases, 5) securing vocational rehabilitation schemes in case of sickness or accidents, 6) exploring quality jobs in sheltered employment and pathways to open labour market.

The Commission recalled that employment of persons with disabilities cannot be looked at in isolation. In this respect, The Strategy covers comprehensively all areas of lives of persons with disabilities. Its seven flagship initiatives are: Package to improve labour market outcome (important in the context of the discussion), Disability Platform, European resources centre AccessibleEU, Guidance on independent living, Disability Card, Quality frameworks social services and the New Commission HR Strategy.

The Strategy also invited Member States to set up employment targets and adult learning targets for PwD by 2024. In this context, a letter was sent to all Member States inquiring how this call is being implemented and the finding will be presented to the Disability Platform in October 2024.

The questions steering the discussion focused mainly on:

- adequacy of the Package's coverage in view of actions needed to improve employment of PwD, also in the context of the mid-term review;
- set up of a monitoring system of the employment of PwD;
- quality aspects of the employment of PwD;
- involvement of stakeholders.

The representatives of the **EU employers' organisations** stated that:

- Participation of PwD in labour market is an area in which Member States play important role and their performance differs across the EU.
- Member States need to identify in a clear way what kind of support is available as employers' approach is based often on "good will" to find the solutions, and while the guidance on measures and practices is useful for some issues related to technology or infrastructure the commitment generates additional management responsibility or investments in costly tools.
- To facilitate the implementation of the guidelines it is necessary that public authorities consider how to provide the support to the employers in an effective, non-bureaucratic, well

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<sup>2</sup> [Disability Employment Package to improve labour market outcomes for persons with disabilities - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/equality/disability-employment-package)

communicated, user-friendly way. The current tripartite discussions and the non-legislative approach is much appreciated but still the public sector plays a major role in this process.

- Another important issue is creation of a welcoming attitude to the PwD. At the other hand, solutions need to be found in relation to the social security system to eliminate measures discouraging PwD to work and ensure flexible and adaptable benefit system that would support PwD in their active participation in the labour market.
- Actions aiming at raising awareness and increasing the clarity about existing schemes should be more visible in Member States.
- Essential is also the continuity of the funding for employers and PwD, employers' involvement in design of the grants and their accessibility for SMEs to ensure a better outreach and understanding at national level.
- Telework and flexible working arrangements are useful in enabling PwD professional activity to a possible extent and both can be used also in alternative employment settings.
- Further effort is needed to create accessible social services including long term care.
- In cases where PES have difficulties in territorial outreach and given the limited PES capacities and the structural underinvestment, the challenges need to be addressed in the context of the European Semester. Cooperation with private employment services shall be considered, whenever appropriate.
- The inclusion of PwD into available schemes and established best practices is crucial in view of demographic ageing and related increase in number of elder people facing disabilities and therefore it needs to be seen as part of long-term social solutions.
- Monitoring of structural investments for social services and care in the Member States is needed.
- In addition to the focus on the inclusion of PwD into the labour market, it is important to align also efforts in linking it to the elements of mainstream inclusive and accessible education and training, up- and reskilling and general increase of PwD employability i.e. via available support for children and young persons with disabilities along their whole education pathway and career counselling provided at an early stage.
- While educational and vocational training, and apprenticeships support the inclusion into labour market, more attention needs to be paid to the development of entrepreneurial skills of PwD.
- Further, development of digital tools for learning, financial support for assistive technologies can help employers in making their workplace more inclusive and the capacity of the social partners plays a significant role in continuous awareness building of existing opportunities and schemes.
- In the context of non-occupational health and safety it is necessary to provide tailored training and information to the employers on the professional inclusion of PwD in form e.g., mutual learning on the reintegration practices.
- The holistic approach should also be reflected in the increased accessibility of the transportation systems, buildings that support independent living, and reaching the workplace. Some of the national RRP's included those aspects and the social partners hope that the resources were used to support this purpose in a proper way.
- The role of EMCO and SPC is perceived as important in this process in the context of the economic governance.

These statements were echoed in the contributions provided by the representatives of the **national level employers' organisations** and complemented by additional points:

- The Commission is invited to explore further challenges in disaggregated data collection process to better inform national policy makers.

- In the context of guidance for businesses and replicable examples at the national level some actions have been mentioned such as the Reasonable Accommodation Passport<sup>3</sup> initiative (IE) that focuses on the social and institutional barriers that restrict the PwD.
- The continuously existing problem of attitude towards disability requires more efforts both at employers' and employees' side.
- Benefits compensating for PwD to be in employment need to be carefully reviewed in the context of their support of active labour market participation.
- Low educational level of PwD must be a starting point of the debate on how efficiently meet the needs and skills of PwD and the demand at the side of businesses. The “usefulness of the activity” is a central issue in the debate on labour market inclusion of PwD. This means that the working activity must be a concretely valuable and useful activity for the company (not just “any” activity). This aspect moreover recalls the need that Public Employment Services should always address their action towards this objective.
- When addressing the issue of labour market inclusion of PwD, it is necessary to promote and preserve a flexible regulatory framework, which is a condition ensuring the best possible matching of demand and supply.
- Increased public effort and investments are needed for the support of the employment and public services as often recruitment services do not have the sufficient knowledge to understand the various disability severity degrees.
- Inclusive and accessible recruitment and selection is necessary to capture employment potential of PwD. Avoiding stigma, fighting against discrimination, and supporting the PwD along their chosen career is essential. Upskilling and lifelong learning are key to design different pathways and cooperation and dialogue with all stakeholders is crucial.

The representatives of the ETUC stated that:

- European Strategy for Rights of PwD is much welcome and the role of social partners is crucial to increase the labour market participation.
- The focus of the initiatives and measures should be particularly put on PwD in vulnerable conditions, especially women and young people, lacking quality of the employment opportunities and discriminatory practices experienced in accessing and maintaining employment.
- Measures proposed by the Commission such as reasonable accommodation, retention schemes, practical employment service toolkits are steps in the right direction, but their lack of bindingness may leave all the remaining challenges unaddressed at the companies' level.
- PwD should have access to the regular working environment – with respected minimum wage and salaries in line with the exercise functions and the collective agreements in the sector.
- The European Disability Card is an important initiative guaranteeing higher mobility and opportunities, but the employment context is overlooked. It is essential that PwD do not lose their benefits until status is reassessed in the country of destination. Also, discontinuation of some specific benefit entitlements once starting the work is discriminatory as PwD may have extra costs of mobility and living.
- In the context of monitoring the Eurostat data base on PwD should include statistics on the PwD situation in labour market by the severity of disability.
- Social partners acknowledge and support the monitoring exercise of the Social Convergence Framework (SCF) which in several Member States focused on the PwD inclusion in social and working life.

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<sup>3</sup> For more details see document in Annex 1.3.

The contributions provided by the **national representatives of trade unions** complemented the above with additional points:

- In the context of measures at national level an example of 2023 law on employment aligning working conditions protection for PwD, collective rights including trade union rights and individual rights and health protection (FR) was mentioned.
- However, in view of the EU minimum wage directive, the law foresees the covering of PwD' salaries, unfortunately some Member States do not apply the minimum wage to workers in sheltered employment which contradicts anti-discrimination legislation and therefore represents practice that should be banned.
- There is a need of better utilisation of resources between national and EU level. Given the new EU Governance Framework and European Social Fund Plus 2021-2027 a better remuneration and coverage need to be ensured in particular for those that might lose their benefits and entitlements. The Article 6 of the Minimum Wage Directive Art 6 could improve equal treatment of PwD in future.
- Best practices at EU level exist but at national, regional or local level, both the Cohesion Funds and the principle of partnership in cohesion policy to ensure the involvement of social partners in the design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of Cohesion Funds to improve the support to initiatives in the area of transport or access to the workplace for PwD could play more significant role in supporting initiatives in the area of transport, and access to the work.
- Gender equality plans should include specific provisions for women with disabilities.
- Setting up measures for workers with disabilities to avoid discriminations should also better reflect the specific severity of disability and possibly setting quota for persons with severe disability.
- The obligation of publishing vacancies in companies is a straightforward means to combat discriminatory practices. By making vacancies public, the selection process becomes transparent, and companies are encouraged to adhere to anti-discriminatory obligations (enshrined in national legislation under EU law). Initiatives meant to hire PwD should be complemented by the measures facilitating the transition into the ordinary labour market.
- Rules and incentives applied to alternative employment settings need to be revised to ensure quality employment. There is a need of public policies regarding acquired disability in the context of the ageing population.
- Also, mainstream, inclusive education for pupils and students is crucial as most of them are represented in the public educational system.
- More targeted investments into PES are needed. In some countries there are specific active labour market policies (ALMPs) covering PwD, but more support is also necessary within companies (tutors, mentors providing training both for PwD and managers). Disability management officers and reasonable accommodation have a role in a social inclusion of PwD.
- Education and training need to be adapted accordingly to the PwD profile, as the recruitment profile is often very low when hiring PwD. In this context also lifelong training and career progression opportunities are essential for PwD. It is a fact that companies lag in terms of necessary digitalisation which is an obstacle for successful inclusion of PwD into labour market.

The **representatives of the Member States in the EMCO PAG** confirmed that the Package correctly covers the necessary elements. The next EU Presidency will focus also on inclusion of PwD and related social and labour market aspects including reasonable accommodation and rehabilitation. The additional target will be focused on PwD education and training. Students with special educational needs deserve more support also during transitions from education/training to labour market.

The **Commission** took note of presented challenges and suggestion of a holistic approach towards the PwD starting from education and including long-term care needs. While the scope of the Disability Employment Package was mainly labour market inclusion/participation of PwD, other flagship initiatives address other areas of necessary action (as suggested by the participants in the PAG meeting). In terms of information, the Commission referred also to the analysis/research of the European Disability Expertise, a database of EU and national studies about the situation of persons with disabilities <sup>4</sup>, LFS database including GALI indicator comparable data. The Commission informed that it is currently analysing the Member States responses to the Commissioner Dalli letter enquiring about setting up national employment targets for persons with disabilities. The synthesis note will be presented at the Disability Platform meeting and the HU Presidency conference, in autumn 2024. The discussion on indicators took place in EMCO and will continue in the future. Further there are several studies on the support available for PwD in Member States, reports by ECE using EU SILC, LFS, national data sources report on inclusion of PwD in the labour market. Finally, a study on incentives and compensatory benefits, focusing on quality employment is under preparation which will review the policies and legal frameworks as well as the challenges related to funding.

## **Member States case studies – Germany, Latvia, Spain**

During the second block of the agenda, experts from DE, LV and ES presented the measures, challenges and achievements in the relevant policy area in their countries. Those were broadly discussed with all participants [supporting presentation attached in Annex 1.2].

Most important practices from the Member State case studies are presented below.

### **Germany**

The German delegate referred in the presentation to the single contact points for employers, mandatory employment quota and compensatory levy, and inclusion companies as well as the reform of workshops for PwD as current project.

- The single contact points are designed as counseling and service centers for employers and provide support with all issues relating to inclusive employment. They have been in place since 2022 and are present across all federal states (108 in total).
- Mandatory employment quota introduced in Germany foresees that companies with at least 20 workplaces are legally obliged to fill at least 5% of their jobs with persons with severe disability. In case the company does not meet this quota, a compensatory levy needs to be paid which is staggered depending on the fulfillment rate.
- Further, there are around one thousand inclusion companies in the open labour market which employ 30-50 % quota of persons with severe disability. They provide special support for employees, benefit from special state support and pay under certain circumstances reduced VAT rate.

### **Latvia**

Latvian representative provided overview of the national regulatory framework including the Law on support for unemployed persons and persons seeking employment, regulations regarding the procedures for the organizing and financing of active employment measures and preventative measures for unemployment reduction and Principles for the selection of implementers of measures.

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<sup>4</sup> [European Disability Expertise - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://european-commission.europa.eu/european-disability-expertise-employment-social-affairs-inclusion)

- The central role of the State Employment Agency (PES) is significant as all unemployed persons able and wanting to work and receiving benefits (incl. PwD) must be registered with PES and actively seek work, individual job-search plans are signed with each unemployed person and are revised regularly.
- Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) provided by PES also to PwD include vocational guidance, psychological support, training measures, also leading to a new or improved qualification, subsidized employment, public works, business startup measures, regional mobility, vocational rehabilitation measures and other.
- The objective of the current social security and labour market policy Guidelines 2021-2027 is to increase the inclusion of the most disadvantaged unemployed and economically inactive people in the labour market. This resulted in increase of employment rate to 80%, including for persons with disability up to 50 %.
- Other frameworks include plan for promoting equal opportunities for persons with disability 2021- 2023 and Plan for promoting equal opportunities for persons with disability 2024- 2027.
- The established consultation centres on disability issues (for unemployed, employees and employers) are providing job search support to PwD and supporting employers in filling vacancies. It provides consultations to employers (on such topics as - the specifics of communication and employment of the unemployed with disabilities according to the severity of disability - movement, sight, hearing, mental nature); consultations on workplace adaptation; reduction of communication barriers and stereotypes in the working environment, conflict and problem solving etc.; mentoring services for PwD to provide support during the job search and start-up phase; support services to persons with mental disorders.
- Subsidies measures for the most vulnerable groups incl. PwD include written legal employment contract from the first day of participation, provision of a qualified work supervisor, workplace adaptation, ergo therapist consultation, support personnel (if needed). The financial support usually is granted for a period up to 12 months. The employer (except NGOs) has an obligation to retain working relations at least for 3 months after the termination of the subsidy period or to compensate expenses of the 3-month subsidy if employment is terminated without any reason.
- Additional support measures include set of vocational guidance services for LTU and PwD (3 and more consultations), individual and group psychologist consultations, consultation on the occupational suitability, health checks etc, silent language interpreter, ergo therapist and other specialized support etc.
- There are also specific measures to support regional mobility.

## Spain

While an increase in share of PwD in the working-age population has been observed since 2014, this group shows a lower participation in the labor market and higher employment rates. Despite difficulties of inclusion in the labour market, there is some improvement over the last 9 years.

In the context of the relevant policies and reforms, the ES representative provided references to:

- Reform of the Constitution (approved in February 2024), as a framework to enhance and update the “protection” of PwD. The Article 49 now foresees that PwD exercise their rights in conditions of real and effective freedom and equality. It mandates public authorities to promote policies of autonomy, inclusion and accessibility, paying particular attention to minors and women.
- White Paper on employment and disability (July 2023) fostering reflection, analysis and proposals for change in the legislative and public policy framework. It analyses the right to work of PwD focusing on: 1) employment as a tool to promote equal treatment, 2) identification



of main challenges and regulatory barriers, 3) proposals for the construction of a new legislative, organizational and public policy framework.

- On May 2024 the Ministry of Labour approved a Reform on Dismissal, in agreement with the most representative national platform of PwD (CERMI). The reform aims at elimination of some cases of supervening permanent incapacity as an automatic cause for dismissal (when reentry to the job place was not possible) and prioritization of workplace adaptation or change of tasks and duties.

The **representatives of the Member States** raised following points:

- Lack of consistent definition of “disability” across the Member States is an obstacle to the mobility of PwD within EU labour market. While in several countries there is a clear definition of disability severity degrees, in some others the classification of the degree is determined on a case-by-case basis. In Germany for example persons are considered to be “severely disabled” if the authorities have determined a degree of disability of at least 50 %.
- The compensatory levy for companies not hiring the PwD proved to work well in some Member States. However, there is a consideration that it might also rather negative consequences in particular for companies not able to hire PwD according to quota (i.e., Micro and SMEs).
- Despite existing disability classification, the treatment of PwD should be based on an individualised approach. This applies also to subsidies or benefits that are not differentiated based on severity of disability and do not correspond the challenges of PwD in the labour market. More attention should be paid to persons with mental impairment that need individualised solutions, as some of them would be ready to participate in the open labour market.

The representatives of the **national trade unions** stated that:

- In some cases, legislation is not properly enforced and also employers are still reluctant to hire PwD. In Member States with relatively low expenditure on ALMPs the impact on the disadvantageous situation of PwD in the labour market is significant. This applies also to the education sector. Further, collective agreements should also cover PwD for their successful (re)integration.
- More attention should be also paid to the prevention of chronic diseases which are work-related and that progressively lead to disability.
- Most of the PwD are not active and/or unable to benefit from the recruitment systems in place employment without inclusive and accessible support, which needs to be reviewed in a greater detail as many of the applied measures have not increased the PwD participation in the labour market. This requires the change to a more inclusive approach in policy defining.
- In some Member States social partners are persistently excluded from the design of labour market policies aiming at the inclusion of workers with disabilities in the labour market – this concerns in particular trade in the context of negotiated strategies and initiatives. Trade unions see their important commitment to monitor the working conditions, equality, accessibility of work, provided accommodation, as well as development of working relations and cross-cutting issues which are crucial for the proper PwD inclusion.
- While in some Member States the policies in place are positively assessed, their real impact due to lack of enforcement is seen more critically. This is confirmed by the relatively unchanged employment disability gap.
- In some Member States, actions should aim at decreasing the number of separate educational institutions and sheltered employment for persons with intellectual disabilities in order to increase their participation and work in the open labour market.

- While law and regulations in place should be implemented more rigorously, the implementation is challenging due to different approaches observed in Member States.<sup>5</sup>

The representatives of the **national employers' organisations** stated that:

- Challenges related to the PwD inclusion and the support of funding programs are very complex. The responsibilities are often not clear, procedures very bureaucratic, information accessible. Therefore, permanent points of contact are crucial in view of the support and training for the employers.
- Implementation of quotas cannot be always effective as it is often impossible for the companies to meet them. The quotas should also be applied in public sector.
- Collective bargaining and social dialogue are key to guarantee the effectiveness of policies as well as define areas that need improvement.
- More attention should be paid to the needs of the persons with medium degree of disability as those cases are more complex and require individual approach.
- The perception of the PwD and their skills needs a fundamental review. Inclusion of PwD into labour market also plays a crucial role in their integration into the social and economic life hence also support from the government in the areas beyond the labour participation is crucial.

The **Commission** acknowledged the observations shared by the participants and reflected on the ongoing character of the changes and reforms. It was confirmed that guidance and legislation need to be adjusted both to the current long-term challenges and the rapidly changing conditions. There is need to put regular monitoring of measures in place and apply a holistic approach in the inclusion of PwD into the labour market. Once again, the importance of collective bargaining was emphasised. Actions aiming at raise employers' awareness of the regulations/rules and support also available at local level play a significant role. Given the regional discrepancies, full implementation of the Disability Employment Package at national and local level is necessary.

### **Concluding remarks:**

The exchanges allowed to identify the following issues:

- Still existing low employment rates and employment gaps of PwD show the need to improve the effectiveness of the guidance.
- Measures should be developed and implemented during the entire life cycle of PwD starting with the education stage, since education and training are at the basis of a successful inclusion and (re-)integration in the workplaces.
- Support provided to employers, but also actions and measures encouraging PwD integration are crucial. Framework strategies are fundamental as well as individualised support for PwD, also at the PES.
- Cross-cutting approach to disability in collective bargaining and monitoring tools need to be established.
- All Member States have elaborated strategies and action plans for the inclusion of PwD in the labour market, but the implementation is still lagging behind.

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<sup>5</sup> As example provided by the ETUC, the current federal government's coalition agreement in Germany includes important measures for increasing labour market participation for persons with disabilities. These plans include improvements in accessibility, the reintegration of employees on long-term sick leave, increased pressure on companies that do not employ any individuals with severe disabilities, better support for companies starting in 2023, and an increase in the equalization levy for companies with a 0% employment rate beginning in 2025. The DGB has welcomed these plans but notes that their implementation remains to be seen.

- The employment measures already introduced (re-integration, subsidisation, mandatory employment quotas, etc.) often lack of effectiveness due to insufficient enforceability and monitoring.
- Persistence of sheltered employment needs to be addressed by Member States in favour of open labour integration of PwD.
- Public awareness campaigns have shown their efficacy, therefore should be continued and replicated regularly.
- It is necessary to analyse the role of technology in facilitating the inclusion at work of PwD.
- The Cohesion Funds and RRF should be used more to sustain home-domotics and deinstitutionalisation of PwD, to make public transport accessible, to finance hiring incentives, to implement the reasonable accommodations for PwD as foreseen by the EU Disability strategy and to finance VET and entrepreneurial training/coaching for PwD.
- The role of social entrepreneurship and social economy institutions for the work inclusion of PwD should be also considered especially in the case of scarce adaptability of workplaces to the specific needs of some PwD.
- The role of EMCO and SPC was recalled by the trade unions representatives to monitor what and how Member States are developing services devoted to the integration of PwD in labour market and society.

### Next steps:

EMCO PAG will inform EMCO Members on the discussion's outcome during the upcoming EMCO meeting on 19-20 September 2024.

## Annex 1.

### 1.1. Disability Employment Package - ppt



Disability  
Employment Package

### 1.2. EU Member States case studies



DE\_MS case  
study.pptx



ES\_MS case  
study.pptx



LV\_MS case study.pdf

### 1.3. Supporting documents



IT\_Documento  
Unitario Seminario EN



Reasonable  
Accommodation Pass