

**Study of current state of
vocational training programmes and
methods for visually impaired people
in national environments
and their rate of employment**



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



Workpackage 2: Analyses of current state of vocational training methods for blind and visually impaired persons and their rate/field of employment in national environments

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General note

In all the documents of the project the term »visually impaired people« refers to the whole category of blind and partially sighted people since the blind are only a subcategory of the visually impaired.

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2. General introduction

2.1. Visual impairment in the world

- About 314 million people are visually impaired worldwide, 45 million of them are blind.
- Most people with visual impairment are older, and females are more at risk at every age, in every part of the world.
- About 87% of the world's visually impaired live in developing countries.
- The number of people blinded by infectious diseases has been greatly reduced, but age-related impairment is increasing.
- Cataract remains the leading cause of blindness globally, except in the most developed countries.
- Correction of refractive errors could give normal vision to more than 12 million children (ages five to 15).
- About 85% of all visual impairment is avoidable globally.

There are four levels of visual function:

- normal vision
- moderate visual impairment
- severe visual impairment
- blindness.

2.2. Global trends

Global trends since the early 90s show reduced rates of visual impairment worldwide, and a shift in the causes. Visual impairment caused by **infectious diseases have been greatly reduced** (an indication of success of international public health action), **but there is a visible increase in the number of people who are blind or partially sighted from conditions related to longer life expectancies.**

Globally about 314 million people are visually impaired, 45 million of them are blind.

Presbyopia, the inability to read or perform near work that occurs with ageing, causes visual impairment if it is not corrected. The scope of the problem is not known, but preliminary studies indicate that the problem could be vast, especially in developing countries.

2.3. Who is at risk?

By age: About 82% of all people who are visually impaired are at the age of 50 and older (although they represent only 19% of the world's population).



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Increasing numbers of people are at risk of age-related visual impairment as the global population grows and demographics shift to a higher proportion of older people, even in developing countries.

Child blindness remains a significant problem globally. An estimated 1.4 million blind children below the age of 15 will live in blindness for many years. In addition, more than 12 million children from 5 to 15 years of age are visually impaired because of uncorrected refractive errors (near-sightedness, far-sightedness or astigmatism): conditions that could be easily diagnosed and corrected with glasses, contact lenses or refractive surgery.

By gender: Studies consistently indicate that females are significantly more at risk of being visually impaired than males, in every region of the world, and at all ages.

Geographically: Visual impairment is not distributed uniformly throughout the world.

Approximately 87% of visually impaired people live in developing countries.

(Source: WHO/Prevention of Blindness)

2.4. Causes of blindness

Globally, the leading causes of blindness, in order of frequency, are:

- cataract (a clouding of the lens of the eye that impedes the passage of light),
- uncorrected refractive errors (near-sightedness, far-sightedness or astigmatism),
- glaucoma (a group of diseases that result in damage of the optic nerve),
- age-related macular degeneration (which involves the loss of a person's central field of vision).

Other major causes include corneal opacities (eye diseases that scar the cornea), diabetic retinopathy (associated with diabetes), blinding trachoma, and eye conditions in children such as cataract, retinopathy of prematurity (an eye disorder of premature infants), and vitamin A deficiency.

2.5. Prevention

Globally, about 85% of all visual impairment and 75% of blindness could be prevented or cured worldwide.

Since the 90s, areas of significant prevention progress on a global scale include:

- further development of eye health care services, which has led to increased availability and affordability;
- increased commitment to prevention and cure from national leaders, medical professionals and private and corporate partners;



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- higher awareness and use of eye health care services by patients and the general population; and
- implementation of effective eye health strategies to eliminate infectious causes of vision loss.

Brazil, China, Ethiopia, the Gambia, India, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, and the United Republic of Tanzania, among others, have reported notable progress.

Global partnerships of Member States, nongovernmental organizations and community groups (such as Vision 2020 the Right to Sight and Global Elimination of Blinding Trachoma by 2020) have played key roles in eliminating avoidable visual impairment.

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3. World Health Organization (WHO) - Figures

In 1980, WHO produced the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicap – ICDH), providing the following definitions:

- **Impairment:** concerns any loss or deviation of physiological, neurological or anatomical structure or function.
- **Disability:** any limitation or lack of ability that a person experiences in performing an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a person
- **Handicap:** constraints on the relationship between the person with a disability and the social and physical environment, for example, in the areas of education, occupation, information or communication (social dimension).

In 2001, the World Health Assembly, the most important decisional body of WHO, approved and ratified the new International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health - ICF, recommending the use in Member States.

Therefore, ICF became an instrument of WHO to classify health and disability. The focus shifts from disability to health, implying that any person in any moment of its life may have a health condition that in an unfavorable setting becomes DISABILITY.

In general, European approach in the defense of human rights of persons with disability is based on principles indicate in “Standard **rules for the achievement of equal opportunities** for people with disabilities”, based on a social model of disability, on non-discrimination and on social inclusion policies. However, European Member States are requested to dedicate adequate attention at national level to reinforce and enrich policies in the sector.

As far as Italy is concerned, the European Year was celebrated ten years after the enactment of the framework law for assistance, social integration and rights of handicapped persons, n. 104/92, and in occasion of the second National Conference on policies in favor of persons with disability.

General objectives of this initiative are:

- Awareness of citizens on issues related to non discrimination and integration;
- Support to concrete actions to favor equal opportunities and social inclusion;
- Information on good practices at local, national and European level;
- Intensification of the cooperation among all the operators in the fields of policies in favor of persons with disabilities;
- Spreading of a positive image of persons with disability;
- Promotion of children’s and young’s rights with disability for the equal treatment in education

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At the end of the European Year of people with disabilities, the “Project ICF Italy – WHO’s development strategy, training and use of international classification of functioning, disability and health” was presented during the final conference.

ICF shifts the focus from the causes of disability to the impact on the functioning of the person and it is a universal instrument to measure and describe health and disability of populations.

Through “ICF Project Italy”, the Italian Welfare Ministry started an experimental action to introduce a new culture and philosophy of disability and to promote the adoption and the use of ICF classification in our country.

The obvious answer to this general situation, at local, national, multinational level, is the identification of measures, which will improve the systems of communication not only between different countries, but also between regions of the same country.

The creation of homogeneous database is of fundamental importance, starting from one city, one region, to all the regions of the same country. Since we can notice a lack of IT systems with common forms, VISkiLab intends to provide a project to structure forms for the collection of recommendations and figures, forms to be available via the Internet , with great accessibility from any point of view.

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4. The objectives of this project

There is a need to have complete and reliable database at national, regional and local level, in order to provide selective interventions and services for the disabled in different areas: prevention, assistance and rehabilitation, social integration, school integration, vocational training, work placement, leisure time and social participation.

All Institutions operating in the field of disability at national level, such as:

Italy: National Health Service Local Units, Social Districts, - local education authorities, Municipalities, Public Employment Services

Austria: Association of the blind, schools, Early Intervention Centres, Training Centres etc

Slovenia: Institutions operating at national level in the field of disability: the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Health, non-governmental organizations (clubs, associations ...)

use different tools to create database, to evaluate the state of disability, thus different systems with non-homogeneous figures are established, which are unable to communicate with each other.

That is to say, the results of different surveys, even though extremely accurate, aiming at monitoring the situation in the field of disability from different aspects, both at national and regional level, are hardly comparable and lose efficiency as “they do not speak a common language”.

The result is that the figures concerning different aspects of disability which are available, and we believe are indispensable for monitoring and programming of social policies in this area are deficient or even totally unusable to be compared in order to describe accurately the reality.

4.1. People with disabilities in Italy

The surveys of ISTAT (National Statistics Institute) of 1994, confirmed in 1999, reported the following figures concerning disability:

The number of the disabled in Italy is approximately 2,824,000 (approx. 5% of the population, while the average in Europe is approx. 10%).

There are 964,000 men (40%) and 1,864,000 women (approx. 60%).

Among the newborn, approx. 4% have congenital defects or disabling illnesses.

Disability is present in 14% of the families, that is to say in 2,362,000 out of 20,561,000, of which 3,595,000 are single.

Disability categories are represented as follows:

- Motor impairments: 1,100,000
- **Visual impairments: 350,000**
- Auditory impairments: 800,000
- Mental impairments: 750,000

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In Italy, 167,804 disabled students attended various levels of school education, with the support of 79,000 learning support teachers. There are 9,134 students enrolled at University among them, the figures of visually impaired students who attended University from academic year 2000 – 2001 to academic year 2004 – 2005 are as follows:

- 2000 – 2001: 537
- 2001 – 2002: 567
- 2002 – 2003: 677
- 2003 – 2004: 713
- 2004 – 2005: 764

According to ISTAT, in 1998

- 210,000 were employed as independent or subordinated workers
- 192,000 were employed in public or private companies
- 15,000 were employed by social co-operatives
- 145,000 among them abandoned job opportunities

| | |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Strengths | All pupils of school age have the possibility to attend public schools |
| Weaknesses | Support teachers are not always adequately trained and the schools are not equipped with the latest generation equipment necessary to facilitate the learning process |
| Opportunities | Compulsory work placement for the category of the visually impaired having the competences as receptionists or related professions |
| Threats | As a job placement does not exist in Italy in the form of preparatory training to enter the labour market, those who find a certain job, are not always capable of keeping it. |

4.2. People with disabilities in Austria

According to the report regarding blindness in 2008, about 318.000 persons in Austria live with permanent visual impairment. This definition includes all kinds of ametropia which cannot be corrected by medical devices such as spectacles or contact lenses or by means of surgery (<http://www.oebsv.at/home/aktuelles/aufgaben>). Permanent problems (including all visual impairment persisting even with the use of spectacles, contact lenses or other seeing devices) regarding sight is the third most frequently mentioned impairment. Here again, women are more at risk than men (4.3% vs. 3.4%). 0.8% of the population suffer from minor, 1.8% from moderate visual impairment and 1.2% from severe visual impairment. (



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http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/gesundheit/gesundheitszustand/gesundheitsliche_beeintrachtigungen/index.html

Permanently impaired persons according to age and gender



| Type of permanent impairment | In total | | Männer | Frauen | Männer | | | Frauen | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| | in 1.000 | % | % | % | unter 20 Jahre | 20 bis unter 60 Jahre | 60 Jahre u. mehr | unter 20 Jahre | 20 bis unter 60 Jahre | 60 Jahre u. mehr |
| | | | | | in % der jeweiligen Bevölkerung in Privathaushalten | | | | | |
| Insgesamt (mindestens eine Beeinträchtigung) | 1.687 | 20,5 | 20,2 | 20,8 | 6,2 | 16,3 | 48,3 | 4,5 | 14,7 | 48,5 |
| Probleme beim Sehen *) | 318 | 3,9 | 3,4 | 4,3 | 1,1 | 2,2 | 9,7 | 1,2 | 2,1 | 11,9 |
| Leicht | 68 | 0,8 | 0,9 | 0,7 | 0,0 | 1,0 | 1,7 | (0,7) | 0,5 | 1,3 |
| Mittel | 146 | 1,8 | 1,5 | 2,1 | (0,4) | 0,7 | 5,0 | (0,4) | 1,1 | 5,7 |
| Schwerwiegend | 101 | 1,2 | 1,0 | 1,4 | 0,7 | 0,5 | 2,9 | (0,2) | 0,5 | 4,6 |
| Person ist blind | (3) | 0,0 | 0,0 | (0,1) | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | (0,3) |
| Probleme beim Hören *) | 202 | 2,5 | 2,1 | 2,7 | (0,2) | 1,2 | 7,3 | (0,4) | 0,9 | 8,9 |
| Leicht | 36 | 0,4 | 0,5 | 0,4 | (0,2) | 0,4 | 1,4 | (0,1) | (0,1) | 1,1 |
| Mittel | 102 | 1,2 | 1,0 | 1,5 | 0,0 | 0,5 | 3,4 | (0,3) | 0,7 | 4,3 |
| Schwerwiegend | 62 | 0,7 | 0,6 | 0,9 | 0,0 | 0,3 | 2,3 | 0,0 | (0,1) | 3,4 |
| Person ist gehörlos | (2) | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | (0,1) | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 |
| Probleme beim Sprechen | 63 | 0,8 | 0,8 | 0,7 | (0,4) | 0,6 | 1,7 | (0,6) | 0,6 | 1,2 |
| Leicht | 12 | (0,1) | (0,1) | (0,2) | 0,0 | (0,2) | (0,1) | (0,3) | 0,0 | (0,5) |
| Mittel | 19 | 0,2 | 0,3 | 0,2 | (0,1) | (0,2) | (0,7) | (0,2) | (0,2) | (0,1) |
| Schwerwiegend | 28 | 0,3 | 0,4 | 0,3 | (0,3) | (0,2) | 0,9 | 0,0 | 0,3 | 0,6 |
| Person ist stumm | (5) | (0,1) | 0,0 | (0,1) | (0,1) | 0,0 | 0,0 | (0,2) | (0,1) | 0,0 |
| Probleme mit Beweglichkeit/Mobilität | 1.070 | 13,0 | 11,9 | 14,1 | 1,2 | 9,9 | 30,2 | 1,0 | 9,9 | 34,8 |
| Leicht | 219 | 2,7 | 2,6 | 2,8 | (0,3) | 2,5 | 5,3 | (0,4) | 3,0 | 4,3 |
| Mittel | 500 | 6,1 | 5,6 | 6,5 | (0,3) | 4,4 | 15,5 | (0,3) | 4,4 | 16,6 |
| Schwerwiegend | 351 | 4,3 | 3,7 | 4,8 | (0,5) | 3,0 | 9,4 | (0,2) | 2,5 | 13,9 |
| Darunter auf Rollstuhl angewiesen | 50 | 0,6 | 0,3 | 0,9 | (0,1) | (0,1) | 1,1 | (0,2) | 0,3 | 2,8 |
| Geistige Probleme oder Lernprobleme | 85 | 1,0 | 1,1 | 1,0 | 1,3 | 0,8 | 1,7 | 1,0 | 0,5 | 2,1 |
| Nervliche oder psychische Probleme | 205 | 2,5 | 2,1 | 2,9 | (0,6) | 2,1 | 3,8 | (0,7) | 2,8 | 4,9 |
| Probleme durch andere Beeinträchtigungen | 579 | 7,0 | 7,9 | 6,2 | 4,0 | 5,2 | 20,4 | 1,4 | 4,1 | 15,0 |
| Mehrfache Beeinträchtigung *) | 580 | 7,0 | 6,4 | 7,7 | 1,6 | 4,4 | 18,1 | 0,8 | 4,5 | 20,7 |

Graph 1: Permanent visual impairment according to age and gender :

http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/gesundheit/gesundheitszustand/gesundheitsliche_beeintrachtigungen/index.html

Blindness in Austria:

According to ophthalmologists, the most frequent reasons for blindness in Austria are age-related macular degeneration (50%), glaucoma (18%) and diabetic retinopathy (17%). Less frequent but provoking the most severe consequences is blindness and amblyopia originating in childhood (<http://www.v2020.at/Page2.html>).

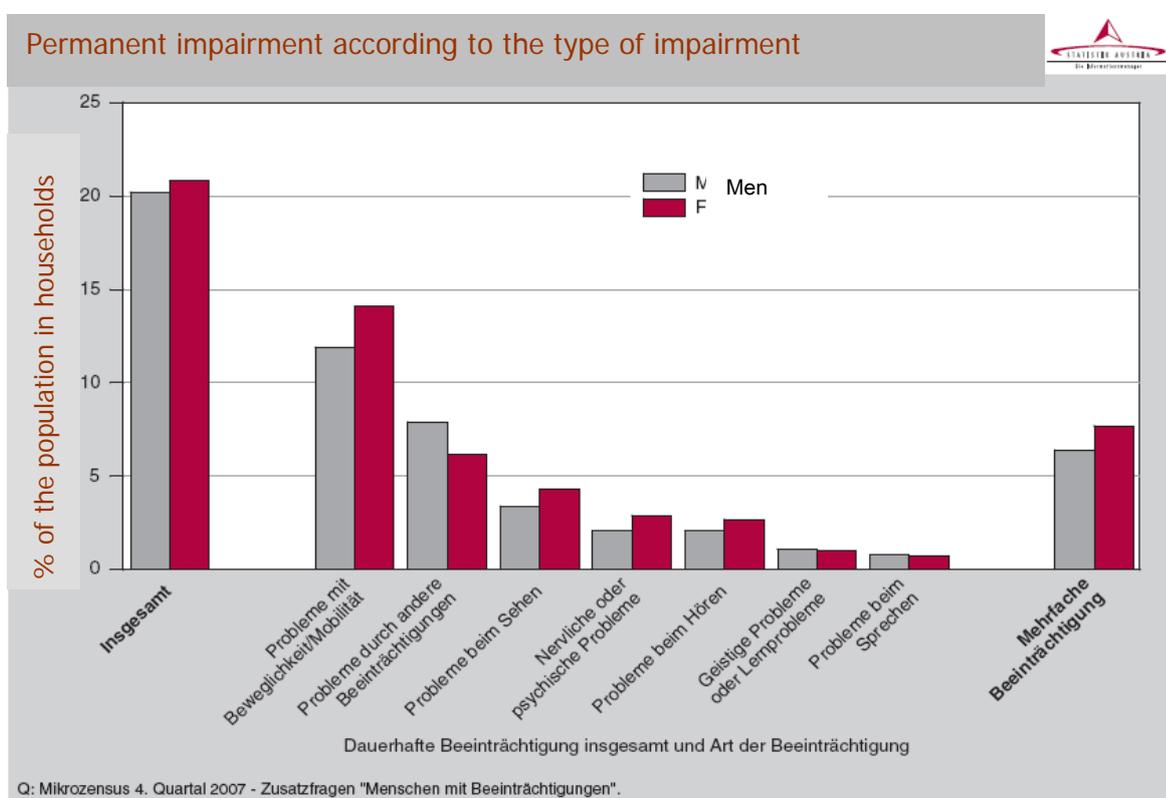
The data of the Austrian central administrative office shows how many people suffer from visual impairment. In June 1995 in the framework of micro census an investigation regarding people with physical impairments was carried out for the third time in Austria (1976, 1986, 1995). (cf. Österreichisches Statistisches Zentralamt (1998) Mikrozensus, Issue 1276).

7.800 Austrians are partially sighted, 4.600 are totally blind, one sixth of which from birth.

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0.1% of the total population are partially sighted. 4.600 Austrians do not have any eyesight. More than every second blind person is blind because the impairment has increased over time or by illness. Every fourth person with blindness of one eye named an accident as the cause of his/her blindness.

5.300 of 7.800 partially sighted people are retired, 800 are employed, 700 of them are pupils or students. 55.5% of partially sighted people are at least 70 years old. In the case of about a third of blind people the major visual impairment began when they were over 60.



Graph 2: Permanent visual impairment according to the type of impairment : http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/gesundheit/gesundheitszustand/gesundheitsliche_beeintraechtigungen/index.html

According to EU estimations 630.000 people in Austria suffer from a severe impairment: About 1.6 million people are classified as "disabled" either in the narrow or broad meaning of the word. According to the EU-wide survey "Pomona" about 0.4 to 0.6% of the population suffer from learning disability. As a more specific definition of disability is not available more detailed information is not possible (Report of the federal government regarding the situation of disabled people in Austria – draft version).

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Two distinct tendencies are observed in Austria:

- a) The target group of people with visual impairment has changed (A decrease in number of people who suffer from visual impairment only – with the exception of age-related macular degeneration) and respectively an increase in number of people (children) with multiple-disabilities due to the increasing survival of extremely premature babies (very low birth weight).
- b) Due to the economic crisis and the tense situation within the labour market of the past few years a general increase of unemployment of people with disability is observed. Thus, in January 2007 the rate of unemployment was by 8.03% higher than in the reference period of the previous year. 5.390 of these people are so called “benefited disabled people”. The percentage of people with disability measured from the total rate of unemployment added up to 14.12%.

However, disability needs to be put into a wider context: 124.000 disabled people or 13 per cent of people with disability suffer from poverty. The number within the overall population is with 6% significantly smaller. Furthermore, the number of people being at risk to be poor is with 17% considerably higher among people with disability at working age than among the overall population (13%).

| | |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Strengths | Entitlements for people with disability, technical developments |
| Weaknesses | Change of the target group with possible focus on occupational therapy Dichotomy between “employable“ and “not employable“ |
| Opportunities | New laws: focus on participation Change of employment conditions for people with disability (easing the dismissal procedure) |
| Threats | Economic crisis and focus of the labour market on the situation of not-disabled people |

4.3. People with disabilities in Slovenia

The incidence of disability in Slovenia is similar to that in Europe. There are approximately 170,000 disabled people (disabled workers, children with special needs, war invalids and people with mental impairment). Another 230,000 people with long term illnesses should be added to this group.

Disabled people are divided into different categories:

- a) blind and partially sighted
- b) deaf and hard of hearing
- c) dystrophics
- d) people with laryngectomy
- e) physical disabilities (paraplegic, tetraplegic, disabled workers)
- f) people with mental impairment
- g) war invalids, war veterans and victims of war violence in the war for Slovenia
- h) people with multiple sclerosis and cerebral palsy

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According to rough estimates there are about 8,000 to 10,000 visually impaired people in Slovenia (Statistics 2004), who represent 0.2% to 0.5% of population. Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted of Slovenia keeps a register of its members. They have 4,062 members, (1,792 partially sighted and 2,270 blind people). By gender there are 2,338 females and 1,724 males. (Data on 31/12/2010)

This data is used as the only relevant in Slovenia nowadays.

| | |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Strengths | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amended legislation has resulted in an improvement of certain legal and other rights of the disabled (e.g. employment quota system, allowances, etc.) • Development of technology and devices |
| Weaknesses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All categories of disabilities have equal opportunities and treatment regarding the existing programmes and actions, and hence employment • Concrete data and analysis on the efficiency of the measures taken for the visually impaired are not available • No opportunities to be employed for the visually impaired with additional disabilities and reduced abilities |
| Opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design changes in the current policy of sheltered employment • Cooperation of the institutions involved • Provision of training and employment opportunities for all categories of disability |
| Threats | The economic crisis further helps to maintain the status quo |

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5. Participation of blind people in society

5.1. Family

Italy

28% of disabled people live alone, compared to 8% of the non-disabled; there is a prevailing number of elder persons, above all widows. The average age of the disabled who live alone is 76 for men and 80 for women. 26% of the disabled up to 44 are married, against 47% of non-disabled. The difference noticed is important for men (only 15% are married) and less for women (38% are married).

Being disabled among the young means that they stay in the family unit; the result is that 34% of the disabled aged 25-44 live with their parents (compared to 19% of non-disabled), and that 17% of the disabled of the same age live with only one relative (compared to 6% of non-disabled).

This involves a more difficult economic situation, and, sometimes, poverty: indeed 42% of the disabled consider their financial resources as poor or insufficient, compared to 27% of the non-disabled.

Family is a point of reference for a disabled person: 90% have a good level of satisfaction regarding family relationships, the percentage being similar to the non-disabled.

However, the level of satisfaction is lower regarding friendships : only 68% of the disabled are satisfied, versus 86% of the non-disabled.

Austria

More than 70% of partially sighted and also more than 70% of totally blind over 60 are supported in their daily or weekly routines and activities such as shopping.

Political Framework

Austria is based on a federal political system, which is characterised by its nine provinces with their own provincial parliaments and a federal government.

Graph 1: Demographische und politische Struktur in Österreich

| Region | Population |
|---------------|------------|
| Burgenland | 282.172 |
| Carinthia | 560.579 |
| Lower Austria | 1.601.183 |
| Upper Austria | 1.409.123 |
| Salzburg | 528.276 |
| Styria | 1.206.206 |
| Tyrol | 702.063 |
| Vorarlberg | 366.777 |



Graph 1: Demographic and political structure in Austria: The nine Austrian regions and their population (numbers from 2008):

http://www.statistik.at/web_de/services/wirtschaftsatlas_oesterreich/oesterreich_und_seine_bundeslaender/021513.html

Regarding the support of people with disabilities this means that the majority of relevant laws concerning this group of people can be found in the legal systems of the nine provinces. This mainly concerns the implementation of concrete support and inclusion procedures for visually



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impaired people, similarly to those employed for all people with impairment. Legally, the communication between the federal political level and the politics on the level of provinces is fixed in paragraph 15 of the constitution. This paragraph describes that if the responsibility is not explicitly assigned to the federal parliament within the constitution or other laws, the responsibility rests with the provinces. Consequently most laws and legal regulations concerning people with disabilities are placed as provincial responsibilities.

Slovenia

Finishing schooling the visually impaired mostly remain in their primary families where they feel most safe and accepted, moreover, their close family members (especially parents) provide all the necessary support (e.g., medical and other). Staying at home, isolated from peers and social environment, their self-esteem is low and the motivation for active participation in work or society is decreasing. They would need additional professional training and assistance in the process of integration in society and at work, strengthening their self-esteem, opportunities to be engaged in appropriate forms of employment, depending on individual abilities and the help of experts in training everyday skills.

The parents are still concerned about the future of their children, concern arising from childhood, but even more they fear their children's future in case they are not able to take care of them due to age, disease ... Therefore, parents need professional assistance and support, particularly in terms of coping with their child being different from the others, helping them to accept this fact and to recognise the abilities of their child with regard to visual impairment. Thus, the state of apathy is growing in the nuclear family which is partly also due to the current economic crisis resulting in reduction of social security rights. The fact is that once the schooling is finished visually impaired people due to their special needs, limited abilities, as well as insufficient training received in the field of independent living skills, are denied equal possibilities to enter the employment market when compared with non-disabled population, consequently most of them remain at home. On the other hand, Slovenia has no relevant professional institution or legal basis to provide assistance in planning the future, necessary training and starting an employment to visually impaired people.

Thus, different institutions try to avoid responsibility shifting it one from another. Although there is no data, but we believe that the visually impaired compared to sighted people less frequently create families, and when they do they often marry within the group of the visually impaired.

5.2. Socializing and relationships

Italy

Social participation of disabled people is the greatest and most difficult challenge to face, since problems the person has to face rise not only from the condition of disability, but also from environmental and cultural contexts and from the level of independence of the person in question. Approx. 18% of the disabled under 44 read newspapers, versus 20% of the non-disabled of the same age (ISTAT, 1999). Approximately 67% of the disabled between 18 and 44 listen to the radio, and 92% follow TV programmes almost every day, compared to 79% and 97% of non-

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disabled (ISTAT, 1999). 38% of the disabled receive information on Italian politics, versus 53% among the non-disabled (ISTAT, 1999).

Austria

The social life of people with visual impairment is on the one hand highly affected by their personal interests and by service provided at different levels on the other.

Legal regulations at federal level

As described in chapter 1., laws are mostly implemented according to the legal system of the individual province. However, some legal frameworks which apply to the whole of Austria can be observed. These legal frameworks particularly concern the integration of people with disabilities in the labour market.

Relevant laws on federal level:

Bundesbehindertengesetz (federal law for disabled people): this law regulates certain services provided for people with disabilities, e.g. a disability-ID or certain benefits regarding public domains. People with visual impairments are entitled to these benefits.

Bundespflegegeldgesetz (federal law for care money entitlement): this law regulates the number of hours of care-time a certain person with disability is entitled to (http://www.einfachleben.at/297_DEU_HTML.php). In Austria visually impaired people are normally placed at the 3rd level of this 7-level-care-money-chart.

| Level | Number of hours of care-time | Amount |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | More than 50 hours of assistance and help per month on average | Euros 145,40 |
| 2 | More than 75 hours of assistance and help per month on average | Euros 268,00 |
| 3 | More than 120 hours of assistance and help per month on average The levels 3 and 4 are usually approved if the person in need of care is partially sighted or blind, often bedridden or using a wheelchair. | Euros 413,50 |
| 4 | More than 160 hours of assistance and help per month on average | Euros 620,30 |
| 5 | More than 180 hours of assistance and help per month on average and in need of some additional care The levels 5 to 7 are usually approved to a person with serious disabilities or to a person who needs permanent attendance of a care person or to a deaf-blind person. | Euros 842,40 |
| 6 | More than 180 hours of assistance and help per month on average, care tasks which cannot be coordinated temporally and permanent attendance during night and day times. | Euros 1.148,70 |



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| 7 | More than 180 hours of assistance and help per month on average and virtually no ability to move. | Euros 1.531,50 |
|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|

Familienausgleichsgesetz (Family financial adjustment law): this law regulates the financial adjustment as a result of multiple burdens for the family with a disabled child or adolescent. Families with a partially sighted or blind child are entitled to a double amount of family allowance.

In general to enjoy benefits according to all these laws medical expert's reports need to be provided by the persons applying for benefits which describe the degree of disability of a person in question.

Provincial laws for disabled persons

As already mentioned above, most services for people suffering from visual impairment seem to be based on provincial laws for disabled people. Because of Austria's federal structure in this context nine different legal texts exist, which are, however, by and large comparable. Provincial laws for disabled people typically define disability as a lack in or exclusion from participation within socialisation processes in the family, school, at work or in society. Provincial laws for disabled people do not have a scale defining the degree of disability but they generally come into effect on the basis of an impairment that last longer than six months. The concrete service provisions for persons with visual impairment (from specific sensorial early intervention, via family relief programmes, integration services in kindergarten, therapeutic services in school, integration processes into the labour market or assistance services in the labour market through to support regarding independent living and mobility) are paid according to these laws. Adjudication upon services for visually impaired people is granted by a notification which is based on an application by the person with disability. In most provinces people with disabilities are legally entitled to services according to the respective laws for people with disabilities. Furthermore, the medical services ought to be mentioned, which are on the basis of a public health insurance system accessible for all people in Austria. Aids and therapeutic appliances for persons with disability (reading devices etc.) are usually financed in terms of co-financing regulations between different rehabilitation sponsors.

Slovenia

In Slovenia the biggest problem is how to include visually impaired people at work and social environment once that schooling is finished. At home, that means in a well known environment they function relatively well, since the family members and immediate surroundings are familiar with the special needs. They stay at home most of the time alone, at least when their parents are at work, listening to music, reading books, some occasionally attend social events and courses organized by local associations, but otherwise they live in "their world". Furthermore, they are often not sufficiently trained in daily living skills so they depend on their parents in a certain way. They would need additional training in daily living skills, which would greatly increase their independence and confidence. The present situation can lead to a more permanent isolation and depression of all family members.

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5.3. Use of free time

Italy

In Italy free time activities are run by the provincial centres of the Italian Union of the Blind and Partially Sighted (UICI) or associations and institutes for visually impaired people.

Attending shows: 22% of the disabled under 44 went to cinema, theatre or to see other kinds of shows in the last 12 months, compared to 31% of the non-disabled (ISTAT, 1999).

Reading: 20% of the disabled reads books (ISTAT, 1999).

Sports: the number of the disabled enrolled in the Federation of Disability Sports increased in the period 1989-1997 at the same pace with sports organizations, with an average of 5.3 % (CONI, 1989/1997).

Austria

In some provinces people with disabilities are granted so-called leisure-time-assistance. This includes services which are aimed at the active participation of people with disabilities in leisure time activities. Furthermore, especially some individual lobbies for visually impaired people (<http://www.oebsv.at/>) have established and offer diverse leisure activities as for example gymnastics, acoustic shooting, swimming, chess, tandems, cultural activities (visits to the theatre) or holidays.

Slovenia

Visually impaired people in the major urban centers (cities) have a wider choice of leisure activities than those living on the outskirts or in smaller towns of Slovenia. The fact is that their places of residence are scattered all over Slovenia. Some occasionally attend meetings given by local societies of the visually impaired and to a lesser degree sport activities held mostly in a specialized institution in Ljubljana. Some are engaged in music activities, although most of them only listen to music at home. Participation in leisure activities, such as sports that are specific to this population is limited and not accessible to all in the same range, also due to the remoteness of their homes from major cities. As the number of visually impaired people in a specialized institution is decreasing, there is a risk that the existing sports for the visually impaired people will die out. It would be necessary to encourage and support both the local environment and societies to develop leisure activities in remote, small towns of Slovenia or to provide transport to the center, where those activities take place.

5.4. Self advocacy

Italy



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In Italy there are many associations that perform the duties of representation and protection of the moral and materials rights of all the visually impaired Italians. The most important one is the Italian Union of the Blind and Partially Sighted (UICI), founded in Genoa in 1920, currently present with a section in each provincial capital (and sometimes with branches in major towns) that apart from defending the blind's rights also carries out an assesment of disability and consequently grants the allowances and bonuses. It is responsible for education across all stages, by the process for the compulsory employment. Among the associations performing activities for the blind in which people with disabilities (not only visual) may enroll is the Apostolic Movement for the Blind, a Catholic association, that in addition to encouraging the active participation of the visually impaired people within the Church, undertakes activities to promote human and social development of the visually impaired in poor countries in the world, along with the organization of social and recreational activities in Italy.

Other important Institutions, Centres and Associations assisting and supporting people with visual disabilities are:

1. Unione Italiana Ciechi e Ipovedenti – U.I.C.I.
2. Agenzia Internazionale per la Prevenzione della Cecità, Italian section.
3. Istituto per la Ricerca, la Formazione e la Riabilitazione – I.Ri.Fo.R.
4. Unione Nazionale Italiana Volontari pro Ciechi – U.N.I.Vo.C.
5. Centro Nazionale del Libro Parlato
6. Federazione Nazionale delle Istituzioni Pro Ciechi
7. Centro Nazionale Tiflotecnico
8. Biblioteca Italiana per Ciechi “Regina Margherita”
9. Centro di Documentazione Tiflologica di Roma
10. Centri di Consulenza Tiflodidattica
11. Movimento Apostolico Ciechi – M.A.C.

Austria

Diverse stakeholders are active in Austria, such as the ÖBSV (Austrian association of the Blind - <http://www.oebsv.at/home/zentralbereich>). Because of early detection and the empowerment (especially of parents) it is usually easy for visually impaired people to defend their own interests. The situation becomes more complicated and difficult if in the case of multiple disabilities.

Slovenia

Visually impaired people may become members of inter-municipal associations of blind and visually impaired at the local level. There are nine of them in Slovenia. The membership is voluntary. They offer their members support, information, hold various sports and social events, organise courses and help with the purchase of adapted devices. Activities, content and scope of aid by individual association varies depending on the personal engagement of the employees. It would be necessary to increase the impact of the visually impaired on the preparation of the contents. Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted of Slovenia represents its local associations being the main non-governmental organization of visually impaired people in Slovenia.

Furthermore they can be assisted by Office for Equal Opportunity, other non-governmental organizations, forums, websites. However, visually impaired people are not adequately informed

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about the possibilities of integration in the society, how to exercise their rights. The membership of these associations is rather limited and relatively high costs of participation in certain activities (eg, holidays, excursions) pose problems to the members. Close attention should be paid to architectural equipment, the elimination of physical obstacles and adaptation to the external environment. It would make sense to establish advocacy for the visually impaired and provide more information.

5.5. SWOT

Italy

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| Strengths | The intervention of the associations supporting visually impaired people enables a better integration |
| Weaknesses | The participation of visually impaired people in society still remains smaller in comparison to that of the sighted people |
| Opportunities | Differently from the past, the visually impaired people are involved in several sports and free-time activities. There are programmes and projects for an accessible tourism even through a governmental manifesto (i.e. http://www.governo.it/Notizie/Ministeri/dettaglio.asp?d=51392) and activities like skiing, pedalo, scuba diving, martial arts, rowing, tandem have been gradually improved with regards to their techniques to make them accessible for the visually impaired. These activities are usually run thanks to the associations, in particular the UICI, or to institutes or centres for visually impaired people. |
| Threats | While in major towns all these activities are facilitated and offered, this does not happen in smaller towns, where most activities are carried out by volunteers or religious organisations. |

Austria

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| Strengths | Self-advocacy for people with visual impairment is strong. The association of the blind is a powerful »player«. |
| Weaknesses | Federal systems which cause dissimilarity and little homogeneity regarding service provision. In the case of some visual impairments (macula degeneration) which are viewed as age-related, many institutions do not feel responsible. |
| Opportunities | Increased acceptability within society, large number of services. |
| Threats | Financial pressure might be noticed. |

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Slovenia

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| Strengths | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sense of security of visually impaired people in their primary family and immediate environment • the possibility of joining various existing programmes (local associations), a good choice of activities, but only in large centers |
| Weaknesses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the possibility of joining various existing programmes (local associations), a good choice of activities, but only in large centers • low self-esteem, feeling of uselessness, apathy • congestion and depletion of the nuclear family • shifting of responsibilities in terms of assistance / care from one institution to another • relatively high financial participation/fees of the visually impaired when joining some programmes results in their poor physical condition |
| Opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prepare the analysis of the data in order to take into account individual needs of the visually impaired • establish career counseling • develop programmes that will enable the integration of visually impaired people in the active working and social environment with the necessary technical assistance and training |
| Threats | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • economic crisis is causing the reduction of social rights and promotion of new programs needed • increase in distress, isolation and apathy of the visually impaired and their family members |

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6. Education

6.1. Different types of education

According to the policy of integration adopted on National territory, countries may be divided in three categories:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uni-directional approach: it concerns all countries where educational policies and implementation practices tend to include almost all students in the mainstream (regular) schooling. This choice is based on a wide variety of services focused on school. Examples of this practice are Spain, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, Iceland, Norway and Cyprus. |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-directional approach: it refers to countries where there are several approaches in the field of inclusion. They offer a choice between two school systems (mainstream schools and special schools). Denmark, France, Ireland, Luxemburg, Austria, Finland, Great Britain, Lithuania, Liechtenstein, Czech Republic, Estony, Poland, Slovenia belong to this category. |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-directional approach: it refers to countries where there are two different education systems. Disabled students are educated in special schools or classes. Generally speaking, the largest part of students officially recognized as ‘having special educational needs’ do not follow the regular study career . These systems are (till today) ruled by specific law. In Switzerland the system is mixed: on the one hand, there is a specific legislation for schools and special schools (including, services included in ordinary courses). On the other hand, there is a specific system of services in ordinary classes under the Canton. |
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6.2. Education systems

Italy

Italy is one of the few countries where the majority of disabled people is educated in inclusive forms of education.

Over time, the level of education of disabled people has considerably increased, as it has happened for all Italian young people: If we compare people aged 15-44 to those aged 45-64, there has been an important increase in educational qualification. In fact, 38% of the disabled between 15 and 44 have a high-school diploma or a University degree, compared to 14% of the disabled aged 45-64. The increase in educational level has also affected non-disabled people, but among the disabled, the growth was much faster (also thanks to learning support teachers and special educators, adapted equipment – IT support, in particular) and concerned mainly women, who compensated the disadvantage they had in the past, if compared to men.

However, there is a high percentage of disabled people, also young, who remain without any school qualification (this group also includes severe and most severely disabled people for whom it



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is physically impossible to stay at school: approx. 15% of the disabled of age 15-44, while among non-disabled the percentage is close to zero).

One of the basic steps to access the school placement is the assessment of the functional impact of the visual impairment (DF), a document prepared by the Multidisciplinary Unit for Children and Adolescents.

The Multidisciplinary Unit for Children and Adolescents (UMEE) constituted by Local Health Units, equipped with operational planning and organizational autonomy, are formed from at least one operator for each of the following professionals:

- child psychiatrist
- developmental psychologist
- social worker therapist (physiotherapy)
- psychomotrist
- speech therapist.

The UMEE is a service activity responding to the needs of prevention, assesment, treatment and rehabilitation of psychological and physical problems and developmental disabilities of disabled people, that regardless of age, attend schools at all levels. It exerts its action through:

- taking charge of the cases
- planning the career
- continuity of operations
- describing the condition of disability
- assessment of functional impact

U.M.E.E. establishes is a complex document called Functional Diagnosis (Functional assessment) and it consists of two parts:

- Medical diagnosis - medical
- Social and psychological evaluation, aimed in particular to identify the potential of the person.

The Functional Diagnosis (DF) is made at the first request for intervention and special education, and gets updated over the pupil's school career or after significant changes in the condition of visual impairment. The Multidisciplinary Unit for Children and Adolescents, once taking over the case of a cetain pupil and having made its assesment, it issues the documents for assignment of the special educational intervention to the parents who will then arrange to deliver them to the school.

The Functional Dynamics Profile (PDF) is the act following the functional assessment and it allows dynamic inclusion and contextualization of all the elements and the views expressed by the various components:

- • U.M.E.E.



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- school staff
- Parents

The PDF is updated at meetings convened by the Headmaster. It agrees on the dates and time of the activities, regarding all the professionals and institutions that are part of the process, in the following key moments of the pupil's school career:

- at the end of kindergarten
- at the end of primary school
- at the end of secondary school
- and during upper secondary education.

Austria

The general strategy regarding the inclusion of people with visual impairments in Austria is mainly aimed at the provision of mainstream inclusion of this target group. This means that a long-term tradition of a segregated strategy and special assistance within the history of pedagogy in the field of the blind people is no longer predominant. Therefore the majority of support for blind or partially sighted people aims at enabling the visually impaired to lead their life within their own social environment as normal as possible. On the one hand this is accomplished by granting services at a very early stage and located close to home environment in order to achieve the greatest efficiency possible, e.g. the sensorial early intervention takes place within the families. On the other hand, services of institutionalised upbringing and education such as e.g. kindergarten, school and vocational training are decentralised or supported by mobile services (special education itinerant teachers) to a high extent. In this context this means that there are mobile teams in kindergartens or special education teachers who go to see visually impaired children to schools. Consequently this means that big institutions for the blind, starting with kindergarten, school, after-school-care which used to take care for people with visual impairment are not state-of-the-art in Austria anymore although, of course, they still exist in three provincial capitals.

For 25 years visually impaired children have been integrated into Styrian regular school system (<http://steiermark.orf.at/stories/399973>). More and more children in Austria are educated in the mainstream school system. Special schools can only be found in the district capitals of Austria (approximately 100 districts). In fact nowadays special schools for visually impaired children exist only in three provinces of Austria (Styria, Vienna, Salzburg). What is the ratio between inclusion and segregation of children with special needs in schools using the example of an 'inclusion index' (specific data for visually impaired children is not available)?



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Graph 1: Inclusion parameter: schools in Austria

The data quite clearly shows that the danger for a disabled child to end in a special school depends on his or her place of residence. This does not depend on whether the child lives in an urban or rural area but is primarily connected to the local school administration in the provinces. Styria (82.4 % of disabled children in mainstream schools) and Burgenland (74 %) show the highest rate of inclusion. The last place goes to Lower Austria with a rate of only 32% regarding the inclusion of disabled children and adolescents (<http://www.kleinezeitung.at/nachrichten/chronik/2466180/abschaffung-sonderschule-bis-2016.story>). The average rate for the whole of Austria in the years 2006/2007 is 52.6 % (<http://www.bizeps.or.at/news.php?nr=11596>).

In the years 1993 and 1994 the main intention of the Austrian legislative body was to open the mainstream school system towards inclusion of children with special needs. It is therefore little surprising that most parents eventually decided to school their children within local mainstream schools.

So-called support teachers belonging to special pedagogic centres (e.g. in Styria from Graz) come for a specific weekly amount of hours as a support service for children with visual impairment into mainstream schools. In this way the mainstream teachers are supported by their specialised colleagues. However, the parents consider this support as not strong enough since the support teachers usually attend the school situation of a visually impaired child for two to four hours weekly.

Alongside the mainstream inclusion there is a system of the so-called special pedagogic centres or special classes, which, as already mentioned above, are located in every district capital. Here also classes for multiply (or severely) disabled children exist where a small number of pupils are educated, mostly in terms of a team-teaching process of two teachers and the support of other therapists. It is, however, generally observed that visually impaired children are educated in inclusive forms of education to a high extent. In the context of necessity of mobility training or daily living skills (e.g. orientation on the way to school) etc. individual services of assistance are financed according to the respective provincial laws for disabled people. Only very few parents decide to enrol their children into still existing institutions like the Odilieninstitut e.g. in terms of a boarding school system. The whole school system has experienced a major change in this context. A rethinking process was also necessary for big institutions.



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Slovenia

In the Republic of Slovenia, visually impaired people are provided with assistance of relevant experts and service of professionals from pre-school period, till the end of upper secondary school. Following the principal of equal opportunities all school-age visually impaired children have the possibility to choose a programme from the wide range of programmes according to their particular needs and conditions which have to be satisfied by their family and their social environment, including nursery or school. Parents have the opportunity to be actively involved in the education process. The choice of a programme is also related to proximity of the school or kindergarten.

Pre-school education

Visually impaired children of the pre-school age may be directed to mainstream pre-school institutions offering programmes with adapted performance and additional assistance of professionals or to special programmes for pre-school children.

a) A programme for pre-school children with “adapted performance and additional assistance of professionals” is carried out in mainstream kindergartens. Children who are enrolled in that programme, remain in their home environment and they are assisted by relevant professionals.

b) Special pre-school programme for blind children is carried out at the Institute for Blind and Partially Sighted Children in Ljubljana. The above mentioned programme ensures the implementation of the curriculum for pre-school children adapted for the visually impaired children regarding toys, tools, communication techniques, forms and methods of work. At the same time children are provided with special education activities in the area of socialization, communication and mobility. These children are offered a programme of better quality than those in mainstream pre-school institutions. However the disadvantages of this programme are:

Most children are from their home.

- The programme is subject to the school calendar which means that during school holidays children have to be provided institutional care elsewhere.
- Because the number of visually impaired children enrolled in this programme is decreasing, there is not enough social interaction with peers, which limits their use of social skills.
- The Institute is not able to provide experts in other fields such as speech therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists.

c) Visually impaired children with multiple disabilities are often involved in special pre-school programme which is run by majority of mainstream kindergartens. Also, these institutions are often away from the child's home. Visually impaired children who are involved in this programme often do not receive assistance of a specialist for visual impairment as they are not entitled to it.

Basic education

- a) Visually impaired pupils are directed to the education programme with “adapted performance and additional assistance of professionals” carried out by the majority of mainstream primary schools. The pupil is provided with additional support of an itinerant teacher or a teacher teaching at the school in question within a limited number of hours per week. Visually impaired pupils are also entitled to additional professional assistance that involves special training.

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- b) Visually impaired pupils can be enrolled in a special education programme with equal standard of knowledge at the Institute for Blind and Partially Sighted Children. The programme is equivalent to the one in mainstream primary schools, however, communication techniques and methods of work are adapted, beside there are all teaching aids and materials needed by visually impaired pupils in a classroom situation. In addition, they are provided special training in the field of communication and orientation and mobility. The weakness of this scheme is the distance of the Institute from their home, so some children stay in the boarding house or their parents bring them daily to Ljubljana from remote locations.
- c) Visually impaired children with minor mental disorders are often enrolled in special education programme with lower standard of knowledge, carried out by the Institute for Blind and Partially Sighted Children. Here as well communication techniques and methods of work are adapted, beside there are all teaching aids and materials needed by visually impaired pupils in a classroom situation. In addition, they are provided special training in the field of communication and orientation and mobility. The weakness of this scheme is again the same as mentioned above.
- d) Some visually impaired pupils are directed into special programme with lower standard of knowledge implemented by special primary schools. Children in these schools focus mostly due to proximity to home. The proximity of the school to their home is the main reason why they decide for this school. These children are not provided with the assistance of a specialist in the field of visual impairment.
- e) A small number of school-age visually impaired children with multiple disabilities, are directed to the special education programme. The programme is implemented at the Institute for Blind and Partially Sighted Children, in all special schools and in social institutions.
- f)

Vocational and secondary education

a) Once the basic education is finished, blind or partially sighted students can be directed to education programmes with “adapted performance and additional assistance of professionals” in vocational and (upper) secondary education. Again the student is provided with additional support of an itinerant teacher or a teacher teaching at the school in question within a limited number of hours per week. Their assistance aims at overcoming obstacles posed by visual impairment. Visually impaired students are also entitled to additional professional assistance that involves special training which is defined in their individualised programmes and implemented by the Institute for Blind and Partially Sighted Children in Ljubljana.

b) The Institute for Blind and Partially Sighted Children offers a special programme of secondary vocational education: a programme for administrative workers and a special programme of secondary vocational - technical education: programme of economic technicians with adapted communication techniques, methods and forms of work availability of teaching aids and materials needed by visually impaired students in classroom situation being their main characteristics. Some students stay in the boarding school due to the distance of the Institute from their home.

The weaknesses of the present education system are.

- Early intervention is not defined by law.

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- Visually impaired children with mental disabilities are not offered the opportunity to continue their education in programmes which would enable them easier access to employment.
- Visually impaired students are no longer supported, when they enrol in colleges and universities.
- There are no rehabilitation programmes for adults who go blind.

6.3. Legal framework, inclusion/integration

Italy

In Italy we have a specific law, commonly known as Law 104 that rules the assistance, social integration and rights of disabled people. The aim of the law is overcoming all the hindrances existing between disabled people and their better integration operating as targeted as possible, with benefits tending to favor the most complete inclusion possible of people with disabilities into the social contest. It is easy to perceive that some benefits can be enjoyed by all the disabled people, while others are given accordingly to the seriousness of the disability.

In reality some benefits are foreseen by other laws that however depend on the recognition of being a disabled person. The benefits that can be gained through the Law 104 are work facilities, work permits for people assisting a disabled person recognized as being in severe health situation (Art. 3 Par 3.), facilities for parents (Art. 1,2,3) in terms of work permits, tax deductions, deductions for medical expenses, Vat rates at 4% for the purchase of prostheses, aids and technological tools, government tax exemptions on mobiles, and the Vat rates at 4% for the purchase and conversion of vehicles to transport people with disabilities as well as the government tax exemption on cars.

The recognition of being a disabled person under Law 104/1992 is gained undergoing **successfully a medical examination by a special joint committee of the Local Health, where together with the doctor other professionals appear such as psychologist / psychiatrist, social worker and another doctor of the medical category concerned in order to evaluate each case from several points of view. The document issued, if favorable, will grant the disabled person the benefits above mentioned.**

This is definitely a »framework« law for everything concerning education, social care and integration of disabled people.

Austria

Until in 1993 the 15th amendment of the law for school organisation brought the right for integration in primary school, dedicated parents and pedagogues had been fighting for integration to become a right rather than 'mercy' for years. In 1996 the integration of disabled children in school from the ages of 10 to 14 (secondary schools) became legally recorded. Since 1993/94, when this amendment was recorded, parents of disabled children or children at risk to be disabled have had the right to enrol their children either in regular/mainstream school or in special school. Generally it can be observed that the majority of parents tend to enrol their children in mainstream schools.

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Slovenia

In Slovenia, visually impaired children have the choice in education provided by the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, the laws on education as the Elementary School Act, the Law on Children with Special Needs, and the Declaration on the Human Rights of the Child, some international agreements and arrangements.

Those laws, visually impaired children allow inclusion in mainstream kindergartens and schools or in specialized institutions. Unfortunately, due to changing economic and social conditions that legislation has become outdated and inflexible, furthermore it changes too slowly to meet the actual needs in the education of visually impaired children. The laws and regulations do not include all necessary and appropriate assistance such as early intervention, a holistic approach regarding work with the family of visually impaired children, the possibility of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach bringing in the education process of the visually impaired other specialists, notably doctors.

Early intervention for children with special needs, e.g. visual impairment and the education of children with special needs are identified in the White Paper on education which is in the process of passing in the Parliament. The amendments to the Law regarding the education of children with special needs are being discussed as well.

Due to the economic crisis the level of social rights of citizens of the Republic of Slovenia is decreasing and consequently the conditions in the field of education of visually impaired children are getting worse.

6.4. SWOT analysis (towards the labour market)

Italy

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| Strengths | One of the main strengths is about 40 years of inclusion that Italy has experienced in education of disabled people |
| Weaknesses | School does not prepare for the working world. It prepares students from a cognitive point of view but not from an operative one, resulting in poor general autonomy. Moreover supporting teachers have the possibility, after some years of supporting disabled people, to access normal posts. This brings about a lack of professionalism because they are replaced with other teachers missing necessary special training. |
| Opportunities | It is positive for the children to be able to attend school together with others of their own age, i.e. with a peer group |
| Threats | Very often it is a placement more than a real inclusion, and children spend more time with their supporting teachers than with the peer group. |

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Austria

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| Strengths | The legal framework offers the parents a free choice. |
| Weaknesses | Additional resources for visually impaired children are viewed as the present ones being too minimal. Mainstream teachers tend to transfer the responsibility to the assisting teachers. Lacking in support after compulsory education (vocational training...) |
| Opportunities | Open to local structures. The school system enables individual learning process. |
| Threats | Financial pressure because of increasing allowance rates (additional resources for 2.9 per cent per age-group needed) |

Slovenia

| | |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Strengths | Slovenia has a 90-year tradition of education for the visually impaired people. It has 10 years of experience in the integration of visually impaired children in mainstream kindergartens and primary schools. The current school system still allows the choice for visually impaired children to be educated, either in segregated or inclusive forms of education.. |
| Weaknesses | Early intervention of newly diagnosed visually impaired children is still not provided. Visually impaired children with mental disabilities are not able to continue their education in programmes which would enable them later to be involved in suitable jobs. Visually impaired university students are no longer provided by assistance of professionals in the field of visual impairment. There is no rehabilitation provided for blind people who have gone blind since there are no legal grounds. The number of children in the adapted programmes for the visually impaired children performed at the Institute for Blind and Partially Sighted Children in Ljubljana, is decreasing and thus the normal process of socialization among peers cannot be experienced, not enough lessons in special educational activities are provided. In mainstream kindergartens and schools, educators, teachers and other professionals are not skilled enough to work with visually impaired children, there is a lack of special equipment, low vision devices, adapted textbooks and other materials for the visually impaired. |

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| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <p>Emphasis is placed on academic knowledge, on the other hand, practical aspect of knowledge, daily living skills is often neglected.</p> <p>There is not enough cooperation between counsellors in mainstream schools / kindergartens and counsellors of the Institute for Blind and Partially Sighted Children in Ljubljana (the cooperation mainly regards vocational orientation of the visually impaired).</p> <p>When visually impaired students finish school, they remain at home because they do not receive adequate service. There is no holistic approach in planning their employment career.</p> |
| <p>Opportunities</p> | <p>Legal basis for the implementation of early intervention of newly diagnosed visually impaired children should be provided. Education programmes for visually impaired children with mental disabilities should be offered in order to continue education which would enable them to find a suitable job. Visually impaired students should be provided with the assistance in the field of visual impairment during their studies at colleges and universities.</p> <p>Legal basis for the rehabilitation programmes for people who have gone blind should be implemented.</p> <p>Educators and teachers should be trained to work with visually impaired children.</p> <p>Primary and secondary schools should be provided with appropriate special equipment and low vision devices giving visually impaired pupils supportive learning environment.</p> <p>More programmes in the field of orientation and mobility, daily living skills, etc. Should be included in secondary school programmes in order to enable them to be more independent.</p> <p>Teachers and educators who teach visually impaired students should have realistic expectations and they should mark them correctly. Cooperation between school counsellors and counsellors of the Institute for Blind and Partially Sighted Children in Ljubljana should be established.</p> <p>New education programmes for visually impaired people with mild intellectual disability should be tailored to develop their practical skills and abilities which would be used for certain simple jobs and greater independence in daily activities and teaching them the right attitude to work at the same time.</p> |
| <p>Threats</p> | <p>There is a danger that with the deepening of economic crisis, rigidity of law and reduction of social rights, social and psychological distress and social isolation of the visually impaired people will increase.</p> |

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7. Employment / Occupation

Italy

Despite legislative innovations for work placement (L.68/99) and many initiatives which were carried out also thanks to European projects and funds, today in Italy the employment rate of the disabled is quite low.

The employment rate among the disabled is 21%, less than a half of that registered among the non-disabled. However, among the disabled in working age, approx. 27% is totally unfit for work. Disabled women are considerably disadvantaged compared to men: women's employment rate is 11% and men's employment rate is 29%; the same situation exists also among the non-disabled, despite the difference is not so high.

2011: the year of the challenge for employment

Until a few years ago, when we spoke about jobs suitable for visually impaired people, jobs such as telephone operator, massotherapist, teacher, even though the preferred ones were always linked to communication, therefore to telephony.

Even today, half of blind people who are working, approx. 8,500 out of 14,000, work as telephone operators.

However, it is no longer possible to have a single employment career for this category of the disabled.

Finding new ways, new education programmes to reach higher employment rate, is a priority.

Changed conditions lead to a decreased number of available posts in such sectors: there is a true risk that unable to find ways for the employment of the visually impaired, there will not be jobs for all those who ended their vocational training.

Moreover, the profession of massotherapist is exhausting and this reduces the number of job opportunities. In Italy, 1,300 visually impaired people work as physiotherapists, but the introduction of a University degree (BA) for physiotherapists made the diploma obtained in special schools unusable.

Thus University should take into consideration the disability of these students adapting didactic of the course, which does not happen in Italy.

Vitantonio Zito, responsible for the Employment sector at the Italian Union of the Blind, says: "It is necessary to enact operative projects to fight against the reduction of jobs opportunities in different fields of application: this is the reason why it is important to direct the young towards the most requested professions in the labor market.

Indeed, ten years ago, the Salvi decree identified new jobs in the sector of communication, namely:

- Operator for the provision of information to the clients and to Public Relation Offices
- Operator for the management and use of databases
- Operators of telemarketing and tele-assistance service

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- In the last ten years no educational path was activated. Only in the Region Friuli – Venezia Giulia, the Regional Institute Rittmeyer for the Blind and Visually Impaired was able to include operators for the provision of information to the clients and Public Relations Offices in training programmes, this course is expected to start on 3rd March 2011.

Also other occupations will be taken into consideration:

- Evaluator and developer of web pages
- File clerk / document manager
- Operator for electronic filing

These are all good opportunities deserving the acknowledgment of the professional profile and secondly vocational training projects should be started.

The Italian Union of the Blind, in collaboration with the University of Reggio Calabria, developed a course for phonic operator for wire tapping, but it has not been approved by the Ministry yet.

In Italy also the re-launch of handicrafts is desirable.

But to do so, there is a need of an initiative, not only at national, but also at European level, able to update old forms, to open paths into the vocational and experimental working fields, and not only.

Too often we forget that visually impaired people, who are carefully supported during their inclusive process of education, with employment gain personal autonomy, qualification and they will not give up to their job so easily.

Austria

In Austria a person is defined as unemployable if he or she is not able to perform 50% working capacity <http://derstandard.at/1227288694077/Kuendigungsschutz-Schraenkt-behinderte-Menschen-ein>.

This differentiation leads to a high number of people with disabilities who cannot be employed within the first labour market because of legal requirements of the social insurance system. Therefore, people with disabilities are often placed in facilities offering occupational therapy. This especially concerns people with visual impairments and multiple disabilities who, with high probability, cannot be employed within the first labour market and are occupied within such facilities.

Slovenia

In Slovenia, there is no proper data about the number of disabled people and official records about people with disabilities. Therefore, the data is taken from the records of each institution dealing with people with disabilities, and the report on the employment of the disabled in Slovenia, prepared by the Court of Audit, published in April 2011. Thus most of our estimates are made on previous experience in dealing with the visually impaired.

At the state level the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs is responsible for the system of employment of people with disabilities, employment policy of people with disabilities, planning and

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providing resources necessary to implement this policy, drafting legislation, coordinating work among institutions working in this field, monitoring the implementation of regulations. Employment of people with disabilities in Slovenia is an urgent problem because there are a lot of unemployed people with disabilities in the labor market, the number varies from year to year and it is growing.

One of the major laws regarding employment of people with disabilities in Slovenia is the Law on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (ZZRZI) adopted in 2004 and amended later on. Until 2009, the act enforced a series of measures aimed at improving opportunities for people with disabilities, giving them equal rights with other job seekers. ZZRZI introduced vocational rehabilitation, supportive employment, employment in the usual posts, programmes of social inclusion, a quota system for the disabled people and the establishment of the Fund for Promotion of Employment for People with Disabilities. Likewise, various incentives for the employment (e.g. wage subsidies for people with disabilities, to pay the costs of adapting the workplace, exemptions from the tax, rewards for employers for exceeding the quota of disabled employees).

Some important institutions engaged in the operational implementation of employment of disabled people at the country level are:

- Jobcentre: directs unemployed people with disabilities to various programmes of active employment policy and vocational rehabilitation through the public services which have been given a concession.
- Pension and Disability Insurance: is mostly directed to passive measures such as providing compensation for people with disabilities who are not actively seeking employment in the labor market, disabled workers who have acquired rights from Pension and Disability Insurance (vocational rehabilitation)
- Fund for Promotion of Employment of People with Disabilities: is responsible for a quota system of employment for disabled people which promotes and supports active forms of employment of people with disabilities

7.1. Legal situation

Italy

Focused job placement

Which are the modalities foreseen by Italian law for focused placement?

In Italy, focused job placement is defined by Law [12th March 1999 n.68](#) and it sets the modalities of the definition regarding the obligations of public and private companies, that is to say, the fulfillment of the quota of jobs reserved for the disabled and other disadvantaged categories of job-seekers.

Which are the other categories of disadvantaged people who benefit from this law?

Husbands/wives of a person deceased at the workplace, in war or in service, as well as husbands/wives and children of disabled servicemen and of repatriated refugees.

Which is the approach behind this right?

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The new approach starts from the awareness that a possible physical, psychological and/or sensorial handicap does not always correspond to a reduction of working skills. Indeed, through a series of technical and support measures it is possible to evaluate adequately the working abilities of people with disabilities and integrate them in a suitable workplace.

How are suitable jobs identified?

Through the analysis of jobs, support actions, good practice and solutions of problems linked to environments, measures and daily interpersonal relationships at workplaces” (art. 2 legge 12 marzo 1999 n.68) it is possible to integrate a disabled person in a company.

Which are the measures for focused job placement?

Focused job placement consists of a number of measures, such as:

- Supports an adequate evaluation of a person, working environment and interpersonal relationships at the workplace;
- Incentives such as tax reductions and expenses reimbursement;
- Experimentations through re-qualifications and traineeships;
- Agreements enabling to render a job placement suitable in order to achieve a real harmony of the needs of a company and those of a disabled worker, so as to attain a greater effectiveness of the right to work.

Who are the subjects involved?

Directly involved subjects are the disabled, namely:

- People with physical, psychological, sensorial or intellectual disabilities, whose reduction of the working capacity is higher than 45%;
- Disabled workers with a degree of disability higher than 33%;
- Visually impaired people or deaf-mute people, dealt with in the laws 381 and 382/1970;
- War disabled people, disabled people, with disabilities foreseen from 1st to 8th category of the charts attached to the laws concerning war pensions.

Which are the other categories involved?

- Husbands/wives of a person deceased at the workplace, in war or in service,
- husbands/wives and children of disabled servicemen and of repatriated refugees and victims of terrorism.

Those who became disabled because of an injury or illness, can participate in the quota of reserve jobs only if their reduction of working ability is higher than 60%. In any case, these subjects will not benefit from the quota system if, for example, they became disabled because the employer had not followed the hygienic or safety rules.

Who are the beneficiaries of this law?



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To benefit from the rights provided by focused job placement, a disabled person has to have the degree of disability recognized by the local health unit and has to enrol in special lists of the Local Jobcentre.

A “technical committee”, established at the Provincial Commission for focused job placement, has to fill in a form, describing the working abilities of the subject. The criteria used to create a public list of priority are: the subject’s income, the number of family members depending on him, the date of enrolment in the lists.

The enrolment is compulsory also for personnel hiring and also foreign workers, regularly present on national territory, may enrol. In order to be put in the lists, requested documentation must be submitted to the Local Jobcentre and these are:

- Condition of unemployment
- Condition of disability

There is only one enrolment in special lists possible: therefore, it is possible to enrol at the Jobcentre, closest to the place of residence of the subject. Visually impaired operators have the opportunity to enrol in several Jobcentres.

Employment departments dealing with focused job placement offer the following services:

- Information and counseling on requirements to enrol in special lists;
- Assistance in preparing a request to be enrolled in the lists of focused job placement;
- Release of all the certificates demanded by law;
- Interview in order to build a social and working profile, information on job opportunities;
- Creation of rankings concerning job offers;
- Verify company’s insurance coverage and employment obligations;
- Management of administrative documents when subjects from special lists are employed.

Austria

1) Legal Framework

As already pointed out, in this context diverse laws intervene.

Another distinction concerns the Austrian national social insurance system which clearly differentiates between employable people (with the ability to perform at least 50% working capacity) and unemployable people.

By and large two laws regularise the access into the labour market for people with disabilities.

Behinderteneinstellungsgesetz (Law regarding the employment of disabled persons): http://www.bmsk.gv.at/cms/site/attachments/8/5/2/CH0029/CMS1218463129499/behinderteneinstellungsgesetz_folder_a5.pdf . This law regularises the hiring of people with disabilities within the labour market. Two aspects are of importance in this context. On the one hand this law determines the degree of disability on a scale from 0% – 100%. A degree of disability from 50% onwards causes specific employment and dismissal requirements for people with disabilities. Furthermore, this law also regularises compensation payments of companies which depending on the number of

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employees (quota system) are legally obligated to employ a certain number of people with disabilities (compensation tax).

Provincial laws regarding services supporting inclusion: In this context “sheltered” employment or “supported” employment can be provided. This includes assistance at the work place and entitlement to other services which are in most cases completely defined by the provinces (as for example in Styria):

http://www.verwaltung.steiermark.at/cms/dokumente/10019967_4142531/f6d92406/BHG%20LEV%202010%20idF%20LGBI%2016_2010.pdf.

Specific services for visually impaired people are not provided in this context (with the exception of e.g. mobility training or training of daily living skills).

The respective financing situation of supporting services seems very complex as diverse institutions involved (federal bureau for social affairs, labour market services, provincial administrative offices, health insurance companies) usually try to find joint solutions.

Slovenia

One of the major laws on employment of people with disabilities in Slovenia, the Law on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of People with Disabilities, the Law on Pension and Disability Insurance, Employment Act and a range of laws on social security. Slovenia also adopted and signed other agreements and conventions to improve the situation of people with disabilities in the labor market, such as Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol (2008), the National Guidelines for improving accessibility to the built environment, information and communications for the disabled – the so-called "Accessible Slovenia" and the Action Programme for people with disabilities 2007-2013. People with disabilities have a legal right to be involved in various programmes and measures to improve employment opportunities through the Jobcentre (especially the unemployed - an active policy of employment and vocational rehabilitation), or by the National Pension and Disability Insurance (disabled workers - vocational rehabilitation, disability benefit). People with disabilities enjoy special protection under the Labour Relations Act (Employment Law) and other regulations in the field of social security. Fund for Employment of People with Disabilities have also contributed some positive changes in the employment of people with disabilities by introducing a quota system which imposes the duty of an employer with at least 20 employees to employ a certain number of the disabled, or choose an alternative possibility, which is a monthly payment to the fund. They are also some incentives for employers to hire people with disabilities(tax allowances/exemptions or subsidies, assistance in providing technical aids and equipment for the workplace, etc ...)

Disabled workers are also entitled to be transferred to another suitable post, to work part-time, to receive disability pension (disability retirement and work part-time is also possible) and compensation for disability. Pensioners are entitled to an allowance for care and help if they need additional care due to their disability or health problems. We estimate that visually impaired people are given the rights to benefit different programmes and measures, but the waiting time is often too long, the services are not carried out by professionals in the field of visual impairment, and there are not enough adequate jobs available. Therefore, it often occurs that once the procedure is finished (with all the programmes and services included) the person remains at home. For this reason the measures encouraging employers to employ the visually impaired, should be upgraded by professional support and more information on employment opportunities for this group of disabled people. It would be necessary to establish career counseling for the visually impaired,

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with professional staff. The present situation shows that despite all the measures taken, visually impaired people stay at home, unmotivated, apathetic, and dependent on the help of the nuclear family. The economic crisis will contribute further to the reduction of adapted posts, equipped with appropriate equipment and stimulations for being employed.

7.2. Statistics

Italy

With regards to labour force in 2002 the employment rate of people with disabilities was 19.3%, while that of non-disabled people is about 55.8% (ISTAT, 2002), while the unemployment rate for people with disabilities was 9.9% compared to 8, 7% of non-disabled people (ISTAT, 2002).

Employment rates by gender and level of disability. 2002.

| | People with health problems | | People without health problems | Total |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| | People with ongoing reduction of autonomy | People without reduction or occasional reduction of autonomy | | |
| Male | 23,2 | 53,5 | 70,8 | 69,1 |
| Female | 14,3 | 31,2 | 43,4 | 42,4 |
| Male and Female | 19,1 | 42,8 | 57,1 | 55,8 |

Unemployment rates by gender and level of disability. 2002.

| | People with health problems | | People without health problems | Total |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|
| | People with ongoing reduction in autonomy | People without reduction or occasional reduction in autonomy | | |
| Male | 9,2 | 8,9 | 6,7 | 6,8 |
| Female | 11,2 | 11,2 | 11,8 | 11,8 |
| Male and Female | 9,9 | 9,7 | 8,7 | 8,8 |

Compulsory employment: on 31 December 2007 768,394 people were enrolled in the compulsory employment of whom 48% were women. That same year, 30,017 were detected starting to work. (Isfol-Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2009).

People with a health problem, between 15 and 64, employed because they belonged to a protected category with a certain level of reduction in autonomy. 2002. Per 100 people with the same level of reduction in autonomy.



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| | People with ongoing reduction in autonomy | People without reduction or occasional reduction in autonomy | Total |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Yes, belonging to protected category | 17,5 | 10,4 | 11,2 |
| No, not belonging to protected category | 81,3 | 88,2 | 87,4 |
| Not known | 12,7 | 1,4 | 1,4 |
| Total | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 |

Austria

About one fourth of visually impaired people who cannot be assisted by spectacles/glasses or other low vision devices are economically active (employed) <http://www.braille.at/braille/augenmedizin/statistik>. In this context, in the past few years a rise in the unemployment rate of people with disabilities can be observed (e.g. by 1.8% from 2006 to 2007).

| | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Total | 11,30% | 12,10% | 14,12% | 14,73% | 13,70% | 14,22% | 13,42% |
| Women | 9,40% | 10,30% | 12,20% | 12,66% | 12,13% | 12,54% | 12,91% |
| Men | 12,70% | 13,60% | 15,64% | 16,36% | 14,80% | 15,45% | 13,73% |

Table 1: Number of people suffering from disability among unemployed population
<http://www.arbeitundbehinderung.at/de/arbeitsmarkt/arbeitsmarktdaten/gesamtarbeitslosigkeit.php>

The unemployment rate among people with disabilities compared to non-disabled people is therefore significantly higher. However, it has to be mentioned that the numbers displayed in the chart only show the data for “employable” people. Persons who are placed in facilities offering

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occupational therapy are excluded from this statistics. If these persons were included into the statistics dealing with unemployment rates the numbers would be increased considerably.

There is a directive from the Ministry of Social Affairs, being effective since 2004. With this directive personal assistance at the work place was introduced in Austria. Persons who are entitled to receive care money from level three to seven are eligible for this benefit. In the cases of persons who are entitled to level three and four of care allowances it is once again checked whether assistance is necessary or if the disability can be compensated by means of technical devices. The organisations executing the project assess the necessary degree of assistance which is then approved or rejected by the federal bureau for social affairs and in case of a positive evaluation the assistance process can begin. <http://derstandard.at/2788993/Menschen-mit-Behinderung-koennen-ganz-normale-Leistung-bringen>

Slovenia

There are no official records of the number of people with disabilities, registers or a communication system collecting these data in Slovenia. We estimate the number of people with disabilities according to figures which appear in partial data for specific categories of disability and surveys conducted by the Jobcentre. According to estimates of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, in 2009 there were 8% of people with disabilities (160,000), of which about 114,000 inactive and about 46,000 in the labor market. According to the estimates of the Jobcentre there were 13,000 unemployed people with disabilities, and according to the Fund's estimates 33,000 people with disabilities were employed (Chart 1). On average, 57% of the disabled finished primary school or a two-year programme vocational upper secondary school and only 2% higher or university education, almost half of them being over 50. Between 2006 and 2009 there were 4% of people with disabilities among all employees. The number did not change within this period, however, the number of sheltered companies decreased from 6441 to 5708 (11%) and the number of employment centers/ sheltered workshops have increased from 112 to 223 (50%). On average, the Jobcentre employed 1770 people with disabilities using measures of active employment policy and vocational rehabilitation. (Chart 2). From 2006 to 2009 the number of unemployed people with disabilities increased from 9,138 to 13,132 (Chart 3).

There are also no data on the category of visually impaired people, which could be useful to improve and design new programmes needed, particularly in terms of entering the labour market. Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted of Slovenia keeps the only register, but it does not give a real picture of the situation since it depends on its membership, which is voluntary. According to rough estimates, the number of visually impaired people in Slovenia range from 0.2 to 0.5% of the total population. According to the Central Register of the Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted of Slovenia on 31st December, 2010 there were 4021 members of which 1,739 partially sighted and 2282 blind. 2325 of them were women and 1696 men (chart 4). According to the records of the Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted of Slovenia 300 visually impaired people are employed, of whom 181 partially sighted (89 women and 92 men) and 119 blind (51 women and 68 men) (chart 5). 22 of them finished primary education, 31 finished primary education as adults, 64 two-year vocational education, 61 three-year vocational education, 51 upper secondary education, 20 higher education, 50 have a university degree or 1 has a PhD. (chart 6). The Data on membership of the Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted of Slovenia is currently used as relevant data on the number of visually impaired people in Slovenia. (chart 7). It is estimated that it would be necessary to establish an official register of people with disabilities for different categories of disability (e.g., visually impaired people, etc ...) and analyse cost

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effectiveness of existing programmes and measures. The existing records of the Jobcentre do not show the rate of involvement into existing programmes and services specifically for visually impaired people. Party owing to economic crisis the situation has remained unchanged over the past 5 years.

7.3. Preparation for the labour market / occupation

Italy

Generally in Italy, apart from the study courses, there is no support provided for visually impaired job seekers, with only a few exceptions. The only form of job placement for visually impaired people is the so-called SIL (Servizio per gli Inserimenti Lavorativi – Engl. “Job Placement Service”) that gives employment grants for 20 working hours per week with a €250 monthly support. We estimate the newly employed would need orientation and mobility training in order to learn the routes from home to work. The working environment is not adequately prepared either.

Austria

2) The training situation

Generally one must differentiate between people with disabilities being regarded as “employable” and people with disabilities being regarded as “unemployable”. In the first case he or she may be employed in the first or second labour market (second labour market means jobs that are characterised by “secure” or “supported” structures). In the second case, training programmes in facilities offering occupational therapy can be offered in order to change the state. A manual job training (apprenticeship) is organised twofold in Austria (at work and at vocational training school). Trainees with disability also have the possibility to complete an apprenticeship with partial qualification (where the goal is to complete the apprenticeship e.g. for some specific competences).

Adolescents who want to complete an inclusive vocational education moreover have to run through a process of clearing before they can start the apprenticeship.

Specific education and courses/trainings for blind and visually impaired persons are offered by four main institutions in Austria.

a) The Federal Education Institute for the Blind in Vienna <http://www.bbi.at/> offers professional training e.g.

- in the office sector: a one-year-training-course for telecommunication or
- a three-year commercial college
- in the manual sector: “classical” basket- and furniture weaving or brush and paintbrush manufactory
- in the medical health sector: professional training in therapeutical massage techniques

b) The Odilieninstitut (institute for visually impaired and partially sighted people in Graz)



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



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- in the field of vocational preparation –I orientation at work
- in the field of professional training
 - Information technology 3 ½ years
 - Metal machining and manufacturing engineering 4 years
 - Weaving 3 years
 - Basket- and furniture weaving 3 years

Next to those trainings there is also a general re-educational course which lasts one year with the focus on orientation and mobility, training of daily living skills, use of low vision devices and communication skills, specific writing systems for the blind, hard- and software for visually impaired users.

Next to this professional training system different specific options in the field of occupational therapies are available for persons who are not (yet) employable (timber, cafe/quality food, brush and broom production, metal, arts...). They are offered with different intensity of support and training of daily living skills. These possibilities in the field of occupational therapy can also be carried out at other facilities of service providers not specifically aiming at the occupation of blind or partially sighted people.

c) The RISS (BBRZ) offers:

http://www.bbrz-riss.at/cps/rde/xchg//SID-CCCBA00-21C149E2/bbrz/hs_DEU_HTML.xsl/1038_DEU_HTML.htm

Besides programmes offering training in the field of daily living skills, mobility, communication and assistance given in the process of making a decision on future occupation, there are also the following options for training/courses:

1. EDV for visually impaired people (basic training)
2. EDV-training ECDL/MCSA/MCSE
3. EDV-training IT-technician IT-scientist respectively (duration 30 months)
4. Training to become an accountant (duration 8 months)
5. Training to become an office administrator (duration 8 months)
6. Office assistant (duration 18 months)

d) SEBUS <http://www.oebsv.at/>

7. EDV for visually impaired people (basic training)
8. EDV-training ECDL/MCSA/MCSE
9. EDV-training IT-technician IT-scientist respectively (duration 30 months)
10. Training to become an accountant (duration 8 months)
11. Training to become an office administrator (duration 8 months)
12. Office assistant (duration 18 months)

In cooperation with the [***Blinden- und Sehbehindertenförderungswerk GmbH \(BSFW\)***](#) (***Society supporting blind and visually impaired persons***) SEBUS offers:

13. Training to become a basket- and furniture weaver (742h)



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14. Certificate of secondary education (CSE) (10 months)
15. Inclusive training to become an office manager with ECDL core (892 units)
16. Screen-reader COBRA 9 intensive – Training & Workshop (40 units)
17. ECDL Core – European Computer Driving License (234 units)
18. ECDL Advanced - European Computer Driving License Advanced (166 units)
19. C+ - for starting or changing careers (360 units)
20. MS Excel, E-mail - MS Outlook and internet basics, MS Word – basics in text processing

Next to the above possibilities also some other trainings/courses are offered, e.g.

21. Orientation at work and training in application
22. Basics in office work and office organisation
23. Braille (130 units)

Etc.

Generally the intention is to create a transferability between the field of occupational therapy and the field of professional training. However, reality shows that the way into occupational theory is usually a “one-way-street“ leading away from the labour market.

Slovenia

In our experience, many visually impaired people used to be educated in vocational programme for the profession of telephone operator, which lasted 3 years. Some even used to get a suitable job. We believe that the development of technology brought about that the employment of telephone operators stopped, so that almost everyone who finished the education after 2004 was left jobless. At the moment special upper secondary education programmes, for the visually impaired are offered only by a special institution for the visually impaired in Ljubljana. There are two programmes available: the one for administrative workers and another for economic technicians. The population is small. Most of them continue with education at a higher level because they do not get a decent job.

Employers are not sufficiently familiar with all existing options, which facilitate the employment of people with disabilities. They know for the Fund to promote employment of people with disabilities and financial incentives, which are also most welcomed, but they are less well informed about the possibilities of financing the adaptation of the workplace, subsidies, measures in case of failure to achieve operational efficiency and professional support for the disabled. (adapted from the audit report). We estimate that some employer still fear to employ a blind or partially sighted person. Therefore, more attention should be paid that employers are given professional information and that they are provided with expert assistance in case a blind or partially sighted person is employed. We believe that the situation regarding the employment of the visually impaired has not improved significantly because there are no suitable forms of adapted involvement in the labor market. Thus, the isolation and exclusion of visually impaired people only intensifies.

7.4. Entering labour market

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Italy

Except for the switchboard operators category, all the other visual disabled people (teachers, lawyers, computer technicians, etc.) find the same difficulties, if not bigger ones, that are experienced in every field by now. Whereby, although owning a higher educational preparation, most of the visually impaired people attend training courses for switchboard operators in order to have the opportunity to work.

Austria

Legal obstacles do not make the employment of people with disabilities easier. If a company hires an employee with disabilities he or she is entitled to be protected against dismissal – a fact that is discouraging for many. On the other hand, the law regarding the employment of people with disabilities offers different measures to facilitate the career entry, e.g. by

1. Wage bill benefits
2. Assistance at the workplace
3. Adaptation of the workplace
4. More holidays or other benefits (e.g. regarding public transport...)

Similar to other European countries Austrian companies are, depending on the number of employees, legally obligated to employ a certain number of people with disabilities. If this obligation is not fulfilled a compensation tax has to be paid in terms of a “penalty tax”. Companies hiring people with disabilities therefore on the one hand save this tax and on the other hand might also receive partial wage payments.

The aim of the personal assistance at the workplace for people suffering from visual impairment is the counteraction to the exclusion of this group of people due to rising competition within the labour market.

Adaptation of the workplace (e.g. technical devices/low vision devices) is usually implemented by means of co-financing systems of diverse stakeholders. The employer is not obligated to provide specific devices for people with visual impairment.

Slovenia

The fact that the situation of people with disabilities has slightly improved in the labour market is probably due to the adoption of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons Law (2004), which has contributed to positive changes particularly in:

- integration of people with disabilities in vocational rehabilitation, in regular jobs, sheltered employment, social inclusion programmes, sheltered workshops and employment centres,
- their involvement in various programmes of active employment policy and vocational rehabilitation of unemployed carried out by the Jobcentre



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- the establishment of the Fund to promote employment of people with disabilities (quota system)

Through a number of years Slovenia has developed a compulsory system of pension and invalidity insurance which covers the risk of disability for whatever reason it may occur. It is a compulsory insurance against occupational injuries and occupational diseases (occupational risks) and for injuries and illnesses outside of work (general risks). According the Law on Pension and Invalidity Insurance (2003) a disabled worker is entitled to several types of compensation and the right to vocational rehabilitation. The experience of working with the visually impaired shows that additional training for those who have completed their studies should be provided and new forms of work integration should be developed, tailored to their individual abilities and needs. Economic crisis is partly slowing the necessary changes and is not contributing to improving the situation. According to our experience visually impaired people who finish school, in most cases still remain at home without adequate income, with no social security, and what is most important without being an active member of the society.

7.5. Keeping the job

Italy

In Italy there is no support provided, neither in the initial phase, nor with regard to keeping the job, so it lies with the individuals to find appropriate forms and measures to keep a job. The only possible support is, like said at point 7.3, the possibility to obtain monthly grants from SIL.

Austria

Besides counselling services the assistance at the workplace also offers precautionary measures to “disarm” problems which might occur. The duration of the supervision by the assistance is limited to one year but can be prolonged depending on the demand and on individual needs,.

<http://www.odilien.at/de/Dienstleistungen/Arbeitsassistentz>

However, the main focus of labour market policy for people with disabilities is in general given to recruiting and employment rather than to assistance. As already mentioned above, the employment of people with disabilities is liable to an increased dismissal protection. This law has however been changed in the past few months (now in some cases from 4 years onwards). A dismissal requires the approval of the board for people with disabilities.

<http://wien.arbeiterkammer.at/online/bequengstigte-behinderte-menschen-22922.html>

Slovenia

Experience shows that in most cases, visually impaired employees in the regular working environment, who were included in the labor market ten years ago or even earlier, have maintained the jobs. However, there is a significant fact that the number of employees with disabilities in 2009 remained at the same level as in 2006. We believe that when employing people with disabilities,



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more attention should be paid to the support, adequately adapted workplaces and how to ensure appropriate technical devices in regular working environment. On the other hand, new employment opportunities should be created, tailored to the individual needs of those who for whatever reason (visual impairment, multiple disabilities, reduced ability, etc ...) can not be engaged in existing employment programmes for people with disabilities. The number of workers with disabilities in sheltered workshops decreased by 11%, from 2006 to 2009, only the number of workers with disabilities in employment centres increased, which is probably due to the adoption of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Law in 2004. We estimate that there is an opportunity to increase the employment rate of visually impaired people through career planning, advisory service (to the visually impaired and employers), providing appropriate jobs and other appropriate forms of inclusion in the labour market. We believe that there is a risk that people with disabilities will be included in more flexible forms of employment (sheltered workshops, etc ...), rather than in the regular employment environment.

7.6. Carrier planning

Italy

The most frequent career is, as said before, the one of a switchboard operator, which does not offer big chances of improvement for the person, only recently the Region Friuli Venezia Giulia made calls for training courses for similar jobs to the switchboard operator one, but with higher qualifications, according to a national law that has not been applied in the rest of Italy. Upon the Ministerial Decree dated 10/01/2000 the new professions contemplated for visually impaired people are phone operator responsible for customer information in public relations offices, phone operator responsible for database management and use and phone operator for telemarketing and helpline services.

Austria

In general (with the exception of the above mentioned courses and trainings) there are rarely any initiatives or possibilities noticed regarding career planning for visually impaired people. This issue is in Austria still in its early stages of development.

Slovenia

In Slovenia, there is no public service dealing with long-term career planning of the visually impaired and systematic training and support in the involvement in the appropriate forms of employment. As it is known, after leaving education system visually impaired people apply at the Jobcentre as unemployed, where they can join programmes of active employment policy or vocational rehabilitation as disadvantaged people. For most, joining these programmes does not imply a positive result, i.e. employment. The providers of existing programmes do not have adequate professional staff in the field of visual impairment. In Slovenia, the number of employments of people with disabilities in employment centres increased in 2006, but the data

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does not specify which categories of disabilities are involved since there are no data showing how many of these were visually impaired. It might be assumed that they are in minority. It is believed that by establishing an effectively functioning career planning, training, planning, and involvement in the visually impaired in the labour market would improve. We also consider that the integration of visually impaired people in the existing programmes is not carried out on equal terms with other groups of special needs, in particular because they are not supported by professionals adequately qualified to work in the field of visual impairment. Besides that, the opportunities of the visually impaired regarding employment are very limited. It could be noticed that those living in larger cities have better opportunities than those living in the country.

7.7. SWOT

Italy

| | |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Strengths | The existence of a category that can have access to compulsory employment |
| Weaknesses | A lack of possibilities to plan a career, scarcity of available jobs for visually impaired people apart from the work of switchboard operators even if there is an existing Decree ruling the possibility for visually impaired people to develop better professional skills like managing database or helplines. |
| Opportunities | The possibility to work as switchboard operators notwithstanding, it is highly difficult for a visually impaired person to actually carry out the occupation for which he/she has prepared |
| Threats | Following the technological progress the switchboards are slowly disappearing and it is necessary to think about new alternative occupations. |

Austria

| | |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Strengths | The legal framework offers visually impaired people the possibility for a professional training also in fields not traditionally associated with the blind. |
| Weaknesses | The separation into “employable” and “not-employable” people is a hardly conquerable barrier. “Unemployable” people are excluded from the professional world and all associated interests such as social insurance or wage. |
| Opportunities | Change within the system of dismissal protection. |
| Threats | Financial pressure |

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Slovenia

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Strenghts</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inclusion of unemployed visually impaire people in programmes designed to promote employability (the Law on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of People with disabilities, active employment policy, etc. ..) • some positive feedback from employers to establish programmes and measures • disabled workers are entitled to retraining or vocational rehabilitation and some compensation • |
| <p>Weaknesses</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Act in force is not beneficial at the same level to all categories of people with disabilities disabled- the visually impaired are not adeqately treated in case of inclusion in existing programmes • Lack of trained staff in the field of visual impairment • visually impaired people do not have enough opportunities to be involved in the labour market- lack of official records concerning disabilities and not enough analysis performed, including with cost-effectiveness analysis |
| <p>Opportunities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to establish an appropriate professional service to implement the existing programmes • provide opportunities to engage in the labour market also those visually impaired with multiple disabilities and reduced abilities • cooperation of all institutions within the state and employers • develop more efficient methods, techniques and measures to promote employment of people with disabilities |
| <p>Threats</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is a danger that the isolation and social exclusion of the visually impaired will increase • unemployed visually impaired people remain without their own means and depend on financial support of their relatives |

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8. Conclusion

4.

Ways how we measure disabilities differ between countries. Data is difficult to compare because of different categories.

In theory ratio of people with disabilities is comparable. In general, there are some tendencies that can be seen, specifically, the number of people with congenital blindness is decreasing, however the number of people with multiple disabilities including visual impairment is increasing.

It is difficult to gather data because of stigmatization, privacy protection, political reasons (history)...

Recommendations for future projects: WHO Framework ICF categorization should be provided to establish the forms of visus determination for visually impaired people in the three different countries. A framework useful to indicate the characteristics of the visually impaired person's visus usage and his/her difficulties/relational forms.

5.

All countries provide services to enable visually impaired people to participate in the society thanks to different associations providing self advocacy for visually impaired people. It could be noticed that services are centrally located or in large centres or depending on provincial laws.

There is an increased number of possibilities for sports and free time activities for visually impaired people, however it might depend on financial contributions.

In most countries social inclusion and issues of self-esteem remain open. In Slovenia there is a lack of programmes for inclusive approach in society and labour market .

Economic crisis presents major threat for programmes in all countries.

6.

All three countries are trying to achieve inclusion but with some differences. In Italy the path of inclusion is already done at a formal level. In Austria and Slovenia parents can choose between special school or mainstream inclusive forms of education but the tendency is toward inclusion, the number of special schools is decreasing.

Teachers in mainstream schools are not trained enough and they lack equipment and teaching devices. Support teachers are present in Italy and Austria in mainstream schools but in Slovenia there is no support teacher present in the classroom.

Social inclusion is very difficult especially during adolescence.

Recommendations for future projects: Specifically trained teachers and adapted technological devices could be an important asset for improving school environment.

7.

The quota systems for employment of people with disabilities exist but many companies avoid employing people with disabilities, they rather pay compensation fine.

Unemployment rate of people with disabilities is increasing in all three countries.



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Recommendations for future projects: We must try to prepare both on skill side and on behavioral side visually impaired people to carry out the job for which they are in charge of. We hope that in this way we can avoid problems of possible dismissal.

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9. Statistics

Italy

Distribution of students in Italy s.y. 2009/2010

School year 2009/2010: Enrolled students per school level and Region in public schools

Source: Ministry of Education

Disabled students 2010

Source: Tuttoscuola

| DISTRIBUTION | REGION | Infant school | Primary school | Junior high-school | High-school | Total | Disabled students | |
|--------------|---------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------|----------------|
| North West | Piedmont | 69,212 | 176,696 | 108,532 | 155,618 | 510,058 | 12,745 | |
| North West | Aosta Valley | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| North West | Lombardy | 113,113 | 408,916 | 241,114 | 331,19 | 1,094,333 | 26,738 | |
| North Est | Trentino-Alto Adige | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| North Est | Veneto | 43,576 | 216,394 | 130,997 | 183,671 | 574,638 | 12,883 | |
| North Est | Friuli-Venezia G. | 17,428 | 48,215 | 28,929 | 45,006 | 139,578 | 2,593 | |
| North West | Liguria | 19,859 | 55,218 | 36,24 | 55,329 | 166,646 | 4,112 | |
| North Est | Emilia Romagna | 50,874 | 175,089 | 103,354 | 160,337 | 489,654 | 11,869 | |
| Center | Tuscany | 65,092 | 144,236 | 90,532 | 143,9 | 443,760 | 9,309 | |
| Center | Umbria | 17,872 | 36,359 | 22,586 | 36,905 | 113,722 | 2,279 | |
| Center | Marche | 33,972 | 67,383 | 42,067 | 69,637 | 213,059 | 5,016 | |
| Center | Lazio | 84,51 | 229,309 | 151,687 | 238,126 | 703,632 | 20,812 | |
| South | Abruzzo | 27,712 | 55,104 | 36,779 | 60,845 | 180,440 | 4,936 | |
| South | Molise | 5,926 | 13,523 | 9,202 | 16,529 | 45,180 | 898 | |
| South | Campania | 130,597 | 295,618 | 211,319 | 318,603 | 956,137 | 20,875 | |
| South | Apulia | 91,437 | 204,693 | 135,233 | 220,517 | 651,880 | 13,205 | |
| South | Basilicata | 12,279 | 27,327 | 17,872 | 33,681 | 91,159 | 1,554 | |
| South | Calabria | 42,779 | 94,303 | 64,231 | 111,359 | 312,672 | 6,232 | |
| Islands | Sicily | 112,959 | 251,084 | 175,426 | 256,687 | 796,156 | 20,755 | |
| Islands | Sardinia | 27,453 | 66,545 | 45,897 | 80,184 | 220,079 | 4,366 | |
| | | | | | | Total | 7,702,783 | 181,177 |

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Chart 1 – People with disabilities and non-disabled people of age equal or over 15, per qualification and gender. Quotient of 100 persons of the same gender – School year 1999-2000

| Qualification | Males | | Females | | Males and females | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | Disabled | Non-disabled | Disabled | Non-disabled | Disabled | Non-disabled |
| Without qualification | 26.3 | 3.2 | 36.6 | 6.5 | 33.1 | 4.9 |
| Primary and junior secondary degree | 59.0 | 55.5 | 55.2 | 55.1 | 56.5 | 55.3 |
| High school degree | 14.7 | 41.2 | 8.2 | 38.3 | 10.4 | 39.8 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: ISTAT, Survey on health conditions and recourse to health services, 1999-2000.

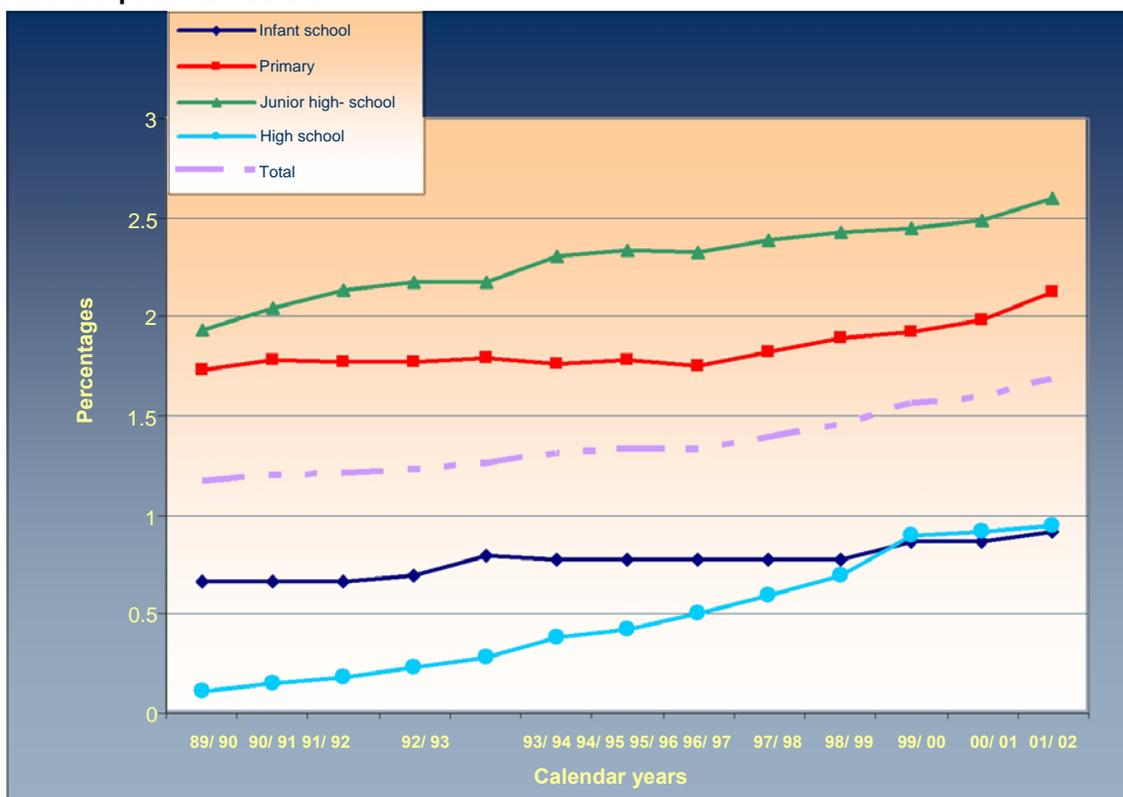
**Chart 2 – Students with disabilities per school level and type of school
School year 1999-2000**

| School level | In normal schools | In special schools or special places | Total | Percentage of students with disabilities of the total of students |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Infant school | 12,789 | 234 | 13,023 | 0.88 |
| Elementary | 52,826 | 1,735 | 54,561 | 1.86 |
| Junior high-school | 43,201 | 508 | 43,709 | 2.37 |
| High school | 21,330 | 406 | 21,736 | 0.87 |
| Total | 130,146 | 2,883 | 133,029 | 1.52 |

Source: MIUR⁴ Handicap and school: figures on integration, s.y. 1999-2000.

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Chart 1 – Historic series of percentage of students with disabilities of the total of students per school level



Source: MIUR Handicap and integration in the school, 2003.

Chart 3 –Distribution of students with disabilities per school level and type of disability. Public and non public schools – School year 2001/2002

| School level | Psychophysical | Visual | Auditory | Total |
|---------------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Infant school | 0,84 | 0,02 | 0,06 | 0,92 |
| Primary | 2,00 | 0,03 | 0,08 | 2,12 |
| Junior high school degree | 2,50 | 0,03 | 0,07 | 2,60 |
| High school | 0,85 | 0,03 | 0,06 | 0,95 |
| Total | 1,58 | 0,03 | 0,07 | 1,68 |

Source: MIUR Handicap and integration in the school, 2003.



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Chart 4 – Students with disabilities per type of Institute – Public and non public high schools – School year 2001/2002

| Type of Institute | Of which situation handicap | in % on the total of students |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Institutes with a focus on humanities, sciences and education | 2,020 | 0.24 |
| Technical Institutes | 4,081 | 0.46 |
| Professional Schools | 13,366 | 2.81 |
| Artistic schools | 2,092 | 2.43 |
| High school | 21,559 | 0.95 |

Source: MIUR, Handicap and school: figures on integration, s.y. 1999-2000.

chart 5 - Historic series with handicap attending Public Universities per type of disability

| Type of disability | Absolute values | | | Values per 100 enrolled students | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| | 2000-2001 | 2001-2002 | 2002-2003 | 2000-2001 | 2001-2002 | 2002-2003 |
| Blindness | 537 | 567 | 677 | 11.16 | 9.53 | 9.70 |
| Deafness | 314 | 368 | 449 | 6.52 | 6.19 | 6.43 |
| Dyslexia | 131 | 95 | 92 | 2.72 | 1.60 | 1.32 |
| Motor disabilities | 1,724 | 1,837 | 2,302 | 35.82 | 30.89 | 32.98 |
| Mental disabilities | 144 | 134 | 207 | 2.99 | 2.25 | 2.97 |
| Other | 1,963 | 2,946 | 3,253 | 40.79 | 49.54 | 46.60 |
| Total | 4,813 | 5,947 | 6,980 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 |

Source: Database of CINECA¹⁰-MIUR, year 2002-03

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Chart 6 – Distribution of population with serious and moderate disability and without disability per higher qualification achieved and country. Percentages per 100 persons with the same state of disability and country of residence. Year 1996¹³

| Serious disability | B | DK | D | EL | E | F | IRL | I | L | NL | A | P | FIN | UK | EU-14 |
|------------------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|------------|-----------|--------------|
| Still at school and not applicable | | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | 5 | 1 | 16 | 4 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 3 |
| Third level | 14 | 14 | 14 | 8 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 11 | 10 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 11 | 9 |
| Second level | 28 | 24 | 49 | 15 | 5 | 29 | 20 | 12 | 12 | 50 | 51 | 4 | 35 | 29 | 30 |
| Less than second level | 56 | 60 | 36 | 75 | 90 | 58 | 76 | 69 | 73 | 40 | 46 | 96 | 57 | 60 | 58 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Moderate disability | B | DK | D | EL | E | F | IRL | I | L | NL | A | P | FIN | UK | EU-14 |
| Still at school and not applicable | 8 | 2 | 1 | 0 | - | 8 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 3 |
| Third level | 25 | 25 | 18 | 9 | 5 | 14 | 6 | 3 | 10 | 13 | 6 | 2 | 22 | 18 | 14 |
| Second level | 23 | 32 | 50 | 25 | 8 | 30 | 30 | 14 | 25 | 53 | 59 | 7 | 37 | 35 | 35 |
| Less than second level | 44 | 41 | 31 | 66 | 87 | 49 | 62 | 71 | 61 | 32 | 35 | 91 | 41 | 47 | 48 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Non disabled | B | DK | D | EL | E | F | IRL | I | L | NL | A | P | FIN | UK | EU-14 |
| Still at school and not applicable | 14 | 3 | 2 | 3 | - | 13 | 8 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 1 | - | - | 4 |
| Third level | 25 | 32 | 20 | 20 | 18 | 20 | 13 | 7 | 16 | 18 | 7 | 6 | 31 | 25 | 18 |
| Second level | 27 | 39 | 50 | 31 | 24 | 34 | 34 | 35 | 28 | 54 | 65 | 15 | 41 | 37 | 38 |
| Less than second level | 33 | 27 | 28 | 46 | 58 | 32 | 45 | 57 | 49 | 25 | 28 | 78 | 28 | 38 | 41 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: European Community Household Panel (ECHP), 1996.

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**Chart 7 – Number and dimension of special schools per different European Member States
Year 1999**

| | Number of special schools | Special schools every 100,000 persons in school age (primary and junior high school)** | Dimension and average of special school (students) | Percentage of private special schools | Number of students per teacher |
|-----------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Austria | 317 | 41.4 | 49.4 | 3.8 | 3.03 |
| Belgium | 313 | 31.4 | 124.9 | 65.81 | 4.39 |
| Czech Republic | 785 | 72.4 | 60.6 | 6.50 | 6.96 |
| Finland | 285 | 48.4 | 39.6 | 1.40 | 4.54 |
| Germany | 3.397 | 37.4 | 115.1 | 15.70 | 5.92 |
| Greece* | 147 | 14.1 | 21.9 | non available | 5.04 |
| Hungary | 271 | 25.3 | 107.8 | 1.10 | 4.24 |
| Ireland* | 119 | 21.0 | 63.3 | 0 | 6.90 |
| Italy | 71 | 1.6 | 24.5 | 0.30 | 2.27 |
| The Netherlands | 946 | 48.0 | non available | non available | 9.13 |
| Portugal | 85 | 6.3 | 88.8 | non available | non available |
| Spain | 491 | 12.8 | 37.6 | 59.10 | 3.27 |
| Switzerland | 350 | 45.2 | 35.9 | 54.60 | non pervenuto |
| Turkey | 128 | 2.0 | 58.6 | 4.70 | 5.83 |
| United Kingdom | 1.565 | 21.1 | 73.1 | 7.00 | 6.10 |

* Only Public schools.

** The number of special schools per 100,000 students from junior and high schools. Figures of Belgium include students from high schools; figures of Finland are from 1996; figures of Greece and Portugal refer to all national categories included in national definition; figures of Portugal refer only to the schools under the protection of the Ministry of Education (there also are schools under the protection of Solidarity Ministry and Social Assistance); figures of Turkey refer only to the period of compulsory education.

Source: OECD, Special Education Needs. Statistics and Indicators, 2000

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Chart 1 : Estimations of employed and unemployed people with disabilities 2009

| | al | Unactive | Unemployed | Employed | Tot |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | disabilities in the labour market | | | | |
| Estimations of employed people with disabilities | 33.000 | 0 | 0 | 33.000 | 33.000 |
| Estimations of unemployed people with disabilities | 127.000 | 114.000 | 13.000 | 0 | 13.000 |
| Estimations of people with disabilities | 160.000 | 114.000 | 13.000 | 33.000 | 46.000 |

Source: Records of the Jobcentre and Fund for Promotion of Employment of People with Disabilities, estimations of the Ministry, after enforcing ZZRZI and quota system in 2009.

Chart 2 : Number of employed people with disabilities in Republic of Slovenia from 2006 to 2009

| Število zaposlenih invalidov | 2009 | 2008 | 2007 | 2006 | Povprečje |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|
| Regular employment environment | 26.305 | 27.346 | 26.590 | 26.129 | 26.593 |
| Sheltered employment | 5.708 | 6.358 | 6.307 | 6.441 | 6.204 |
| Employed in employment centres | 223 | 187 | 161 | 121 | 171 |
| Total of employees with disabilities | 32.236 | 33.891 | 33.058 | 32.682 | 32.967 |
| Total of all employees | 829.551 | 866.710 | 849.416 | 819.519 | 841.299 |
| Percentage of employees with disabilities | 3,89 | 3,91 | 3,89 | 3,99 | 3,92 |
| Newly employed people with disabilities | 1.629 | 1.776 | 1.746 | 1.927 | 1.770 |
| Number of terminated contract of employment | 913 | 572 | 723 | 599 | 702 |

Source: Ministry, Fund, ZKS



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Chart 3: Number of unemployed people at the Jobcentre and number of new employments from 2006 to 2009

| | 31. 2009 | 12. 2006 | 31. 12. 2008 | 31. 12. 2007 | 31. 2009 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|----------|
| Unemployed and employed people with disabilities | | | | | |
| Unemployed people with disabilities | 13.132 | 11.025 | 11.025 | 9.138 | |
| Number of unemployed people with disabilities involved in programmes of active employment policy of the Jobcentre | | | | | |
| | 2.236 | 1.589 | 1.589 | 2.715 | |
| Number of unemployed people with disabilities involved in Vocational Rehabilitation | 969 | 1.165 | 1.165 | 1.112 | |
| Number of new jobs at the Jobcentre | 1.629 | 1.776 | 1.776 | 1.927 | |
| Percentage of newly employed people with disabilities at the Jobcentre | 12,4 | 16,1 | 16,1 | 21,1 | |
| Number of supported employments | 37 | 29 | 29 | 21 | |
| Number of sheltered employments | 73 | 54 | 54 | 170 | |
| Number of decisions about unemployability | 163 | 118 | 85 | 165 | |

Source: Jobcentre

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Chart 4: Membership in the Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted of Slovenia on 31.12.2010

| MDSS | Gender | Total | 1 st group | 2 nd group | 3 rd group | 4 th group | 5 th group |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| CELJE | Female | 254 | 77 | 35 | 48 | 46 | 48 |
| | Male | 210 | 49 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 50 |
| | Total | 464 | 126 | 71 | 85 | 84 | 98 |
| KOPER | Female | 217 | 81 | 45 | 29 | 44 | 18 |
| | Male | 184 | 52 | 41 | 21 | 43 | 27 |
| | Total | 401 | 133 | 86 | 50 | 87 | 45 |
| KRANJ | Female | 233 | 77 | 47 | 38 | 47 | 24 |
| | Male | 180 | 44 | 32 | 45 | 31 | 28 |
| | Total | 413 | 121 | 79 | 83 | 78 | 52 |
| LJUBLJANA | Female | 645 | 197 | 80 | 175 | 147 | 46 |
| | Male | 394 | 94 | 53 | 74 | 120 | 53 |
| | Total | 1039 | 281 | 133 | 249 | 267 | 99 |
| MARIBOR | Female | 508 | 151 | 736 | 96 | 122 | 66 |
| | Male | 350 | 101 | 45 | 58 | 82 | 64 |
| | Total | 858 | 252 | 118 | 154 | 204 | 130 |
| MURSKA SOBOTA | Female | 118 | 23 | 20 | 38 | 24 | 13 |
| | Male | 92 | 17 | 15 | 15 | 21 | 24 |
| | Total | 210 | 40 | 35 | 53 | 45 | 37 |
| NOVA GORICA | Female | 132 | 27 | 30 | 32 | 26 | 17 |
| | Male | 108 | 20 | 25 | 18 | 21 | 24 |
| | Total | 240 | 47 | 55 | 50 | 47 | 41 |
| NOVO MESTO | Female | 115 | 33 | 22 | 19 | 29 | 12 |
| | Male | 97 | 20 | 11 | 10 | 43 | 13 |
| | Total | 212 | 53 | 33 | 29 | 72 | 25 |
| PTUJ | Female | 116 | 42 | 23 | 30 | 17 | 4 |
| | Male | 109 | 33 | 21 | 24 | 21 | 10 |
| | Total | 225 | 75 | 44 | 54 | 38 | 14 |
| TOTAL | Female | 2338 | 708 | 375 | 505 | 502 | 248 |
| | Male | 1724 | 430 | 279 | 302 | 420 | 293 |
| | Total | 4062 | 1138 | 654 | 807 | 922 | 541 |

Workpackage 2: Analyses of current state of vocational training methods for blind and visually impaired persons and their rate/field of employment in national environments

Source: **Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted of Slovenia**

Chart 5: Employed visually impaired people on 31.12.2010

| MDSS | Partially sighted female | Partially sighted male | Blind female | Blind male | TOTAL |
|--------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| MDSS NM | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 8 |
| MDSS MB | 23 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 49 |
| MDSS CE | 9 | 12 | 5 | 4 | 30 |
| MDSS KP | 9 | 15 | 4 | 7 | 35 |
| MDSS KR | 15 | 13 | 4 | 9 | 41 |
| MDSS LJ | 18 | 25 | 24 | 30 | 97 |
| MDSS MS | 3 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 8 |
| MDSS NG | 3 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 19 |
| MDSS PT | 7 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 13 |
| TOTAL | 89 | 92 | 51 | 68 | 300 |

Source: **Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted of Slovenia**

Workpackage 2: Analyses of current state of vocational training methods for blind and visually impaired persons and their rate/field of employment in national environments

Chart : People with disabilities per age groups from 2005 to 2009 (estimated)

| Age | Total number the employed | Percentage | Total number of the unemployed | Percentage | Total number of unemployed people with disabilities | Percentage | Number of people with disabilities (estimated) | Percentage |
|--------------|---------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 15 to 29 | 152.193 | 19 | 25.227 | 31 | 894 | 8 | 17.600 | 11 |
| 30 to 39 | 248.507 | 30 | 15.405 | 19 | 1.563 | 15 | 25.600 | 16 |
| 40 to 49 | 250.721 | 31 | 16.763 | 21 | 3.259 | 31 | 48.000 | 30 |
| 50 to 59 | 154.674 | 19 | 21.609 | 27 | 4.598 | 44 | 65.600 | 41 |
| 60 and over | 9.314 | 1 | 1.436 | 2 | 241 | 2 | 3.200 | 2 |
| TOTAL | 815.409 | 100 | 80.440 | 100 | 10.555 | 100 | 160.000 | 100 |

Source: Jobcentre, Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia