



# European Report on attitudes towards disability in employment context

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2020

## PROJECT

**Awareness4Change - Raising society awareness:  
the need for change in disability inclusion**

GRANT AGREEMENT NUMBER 2019-1-PT01-KA204-061383



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# Introduction

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01



# Introduction

There is a very well-established link between negative attitudes to people with disabilities and the barriers to their rights. Disabled people and their families state that negative attitudes affect every area of their lives – in the playground, at work, in shops and in daily life, people with disabilities represent a group of people that is more affected by social exclusion. For instance, in 2016 in the EU-28, the poverty and social exclusion rate of people, aged 16 or over, with some or

severe limitation was 30.1% of the total population. Meanwhile, the exclusion rate of people with no disability was of 20.9%, resulting in a gap of 9.2%.

In relation to the labour market the best way to bring dignity and inclusion for people with disabilities, **Awareness4Change** brings a new perspective of awareness of employers, human resources services and also of society.

The initiative foresees the inclusion of people with disabilities in the mainstream labour market through breaking stereotypes and prejudices that companies and society in general have towards these people. This document gathers information on the first result of the **Awareness4Change**, where, through an online questionnaire 128 employers and human resources services were surveyed in 4 European Countries.

The enterprises that responded to the survey came from a variety of different fields and were different sizes and forms for example social enterprises through to large private companies and micro businesses through to large SMEs. Though the type of enterprises and fields were very heterogenous within each of the partner countries, the results that emerged correlated with one another and were therefore homogeneous among the different countries. The majority of respondents stated that they had experience of employing people with disabilities however there was also a significant number of respondents who had no experience of employing people

with disabilities. It was hoped that this would be the case in order to capture the perceptions of employers from both perspectives.

In general, from the respondents' answers there appears to be a lack of knowledge about how to support people with disabilities and the perception that the employment potential of people with disabilities is limited. This finding is of particular significance to the **Awareness4Change partnership** as it indicates that one of the key aspects of any Awareness4Change campaign should be to raise awareness of the work potential of people with disabilities and success stories from employers about how they support people with disabilities in the workplace.

On the following pages, the results obtained in the different countries will be presented, as well as the reflections and measures presented by employers to better integrate people with disabilities into the labor market and simultaneously in society.



**About**  
*Awareness4Change*  
**Project**

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# About the *Awareness4Change* Project

**Awareness4Change** brings together 6 organisations from 4 European countries (Portugal, Romania, Germany and UK), aiming towards the improvement of everyday interactions and greater public education about disability. The partnership seeks to researching what civil society can do in order to improve attitudes towards disabled people and how can Human Resources departments of certain organisations be encouraged to a more accepting stance on people with disabilities. Therefore, all the partners want to fight the prejudice associated with disability, and promote the knowledge about diversity, human rights and inclusion.

The project targets companies, human resources professionals, employment support technicians, civil society and people with disabilities, with the aiming of diagnosis of the situation of people with disabilities in order to improve everyday interactions and greater public education about disability.

### The goals are:

- Increase understanding and acceptance of disabled people.
- Understand the European current attitudes towards disability and disabled people, focusing on the opinion and attitudes of Human Resources departments of certain organisations.
- Understand the disabled people current perceptions and experiences about civil society's attitudes towards them and their disabilities.
- Launch a transnational campaign to encourage the European public to think about how disabled people can be included more in our lives.
- Improve people with disabilities' experiences when they participate in everyday life areas, such as transport, public services, health services, etc.

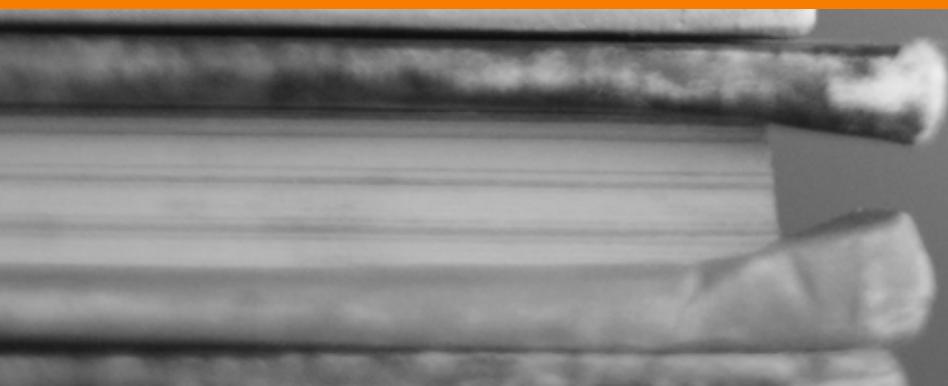
### To achieve the goals proposed, the consortium will develop 3 outputs:





# Intellectual Output 1

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# Intellectual Output 1

*In this document, the partnership will present the country results about the research developed. The IO1- Organisations' Human Resources departments report on current attitudes towards disability and disabled people was designed to understand the attitudes and prejudices associated to people with disabilities in the labour market.*

Firstly, each partner carried out a desk research where the Portuguese, German, Romanian and English relations were analyzed with regard to the number of employed and unemployed people with some type of disability. As well as, the analysis of the legislation in force in each of these countries in support of employability and inclusion of people with disabilities in a normal work context.

As one of the key points of this output, the creation of an online questionnaire aimed at employers and human resources services, each partner, or set of partners by country in the case of Romania and Portugal, also did a survey on prejudice and stereotypical listening tools in order to substantiate the questionnaire to be created.

**Merseyside Expanding Horizons (MEH)** were responsible for gathering all the information collected by the partners and deliver an online questionnaire to apply transnationally to human resources and companies' services in order to assess the vision of these services in the face of disability. The results of this questionnaire, explained in the follow pages, will help to understand the attitudes of companies and employers towards people with disabilities and change them with specific awareness tools.

In this first output, **Aproximar**, as a co-leader, prepared an awareness campaign (Short-movie) to disseminate the findings of the questionnaire. The short-movie collects the information about attitudes of employers and it is intended to be a reminder of employers' needs to hire people with disabilities and the most effective ways to include them in labor market. Overall, wants to be a new strategy to raise awareness of the potential of people with disabilities to work. For this part of the work, each partner made a desk research on awareness campaigns in their country so that the result of this short-movie was as innovative as possible.

# 1. Disability and work



## Germany

*In Germany, a disability is assessed and certified by public authorities upon request. If a disability is established, compensation for disadvantages can be claimed. The extent of these compensations for disadvantages results from the type and severity of the disability, which is defined in numbers from 0-100 and additional markers. The following values refer to people who have been assessed and whose disability has been classified as correspondingly severe (50-100).*

- In 2017 there were about 3.8 million severely disabled people between the ages of 15 and 65 living in Germany. 49% of the 15-65 year old severely disabled people were employed (78% in the total population), 4.2% of the 15-65 year old severely disabled people were unemployed (3.8% in the total population).
- In 2017, there were 164,631 employers in Germany who were obliged to employ people with disabilities.
- 122,413 employers employed severely disabled people, 42,218 employers did not employ severely disabled people.
- The employment rate (proportion of severely disabled people in the company) was 4.6% overall (private employers 4.1%, public employers 6.5%).
- In Germany, a large proportion of people with severe disabilities work in the second labour market, i.e. they are trained and employed in special institutions. Access to the first labour market is particularly difficult for people with disabilities such as learning disabilities or mental illness.

# Portugal

*Employment is the most successful way to promote inclusion and a better quality of life for people with disabilities. However, access to the labour market for people with disabilities is still difficult and limited with the majority of people with disabilities not having any work experience or being in temporary employment.*

## Statistics from the period 2009-2019 in Portugal reveal<sup>1</sup>:

- The number of unemployed people with disabilities registered in job centres has increased by 41%, while registrations from the general population fell from 38%.
- The demand from people with disabilities of specific and general employability support measures, run by job centres almost doubled from 17 103 in 2009 to 32 452 in 2018.
- In 2018, the total amount of people registered in employment centres, 3,58% (12 135) were registered as having a disability, whereas in 2009, only 1.98% of unemployed people registered had disabilities.
- When considering the time period of 2012/2018 there is a smaller increase (+2%) in unemployment rate and it is noted that in 2018 there was a 6% reduction in registered unemployment of people with disabilities. In fact, 13% of people with disability registered in employment centres were placed in 2018.
- People with more severe disabilities, but with the ability to work, have lower employment rates than people with mild or moderate disabilities (35,6%). Out of the 12,135 (numbers of 2018) unemployed people with disabilities, 54,14 % are men and 45,86% are women. Regarding age 12,76% were young people with less than 25 years old and 85,24% were adults with more than 25 years old. Most of them (81,30%) were looking for a new job and 18,70% looking for a first employment opportunity.

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<sup>1</sup> ODDH, 2019; Pessoas com deficiência em Portugal - Indicadores de Direitos Humanos 2019; ISCSP

- The geographical distribution of people with disabilities enrolled in the employment center, the largest number is located in the region of Lisbon and Vale do Tejo - 35.68% and in the North - 31.87%; followed by the Center - 21.24%; Alentejo - 6.87% and Algarve - 4.33%.
- The qualification attainment level of people with disabilities in 2018 was 10.12% with qualifications attainment lower than basic education; 17,22% had completed elementary school, 18.05% had completed 5th and 6th grades; 26,34% had the 7th, 8th and 9th years of education; 22.51% had secondary education (high school) and 5.77% had higher education.
- The percentage of people with disabilities who work in companies with more than 10 workers is less than 1%, even though this number has been increasing over the years. There is a greater number of women (51.68%) compared to men (48.32%), with a greater incidence of people with high and higher education and working in areas such as manufacturing industry (22%), health services and social support (19%) and in commercial activities (14%).
- In the public sector, the number of people with disabilities working in this sector increased by 43% between 2012 - 2018, reaching a ratio of 2.58% of the number of workers in 2018. Despite being residual, the biggest increase is felt in the central administration. As in the private sector, there are more women employed in all structures in the public sector, with the exception of local administration.

# Romania

***In Romania the total number of people with disabilities is 839.632, of which 771.993 are adults<sup>2</sup>. Of these adults, 50,06% people with disabilities are between the ages 18-65 years.***

***Despite the fact that the Operational Plan of the National Strategy “A society without barriers for persons with disabilities” 2016 - 2020 includes the specific measure in “Monitoring the employment of persons with disabilities in the public sector”, however, there is no clear and relevant data.***

Regarding the statistics related to the employment of people with disabilities in Romania, there is a great lack of data, because National Authority for People with Disabilities (NAPD) no longer collects such info related to employment, but only data related to the number of people, types of disability, their distribution by regions, institutionalized / deinstitutionalized, etc. The latest NAPD employment statistics are those reported on December 31, 2017 having as main sources: General Departments for Social Assistance and Child Protection at the country level and at the local level for the districts of Bucharest.

At that time, the situation was as follows: total employees - persons with disabilities - 33,882, of which adults employed by types of disability:

Type of disability	Number of adults
Physical	9,029
Somatic	14,129
Auditive	3,508
Visual	2,702
Mental	867
Psychic	1,171
Associated	1,774
HIV / AIDS	514
Rare diseases	171
Deafness-blindness	17

<sup>2</sup> according to the latest Quarterly Statistical Report, published in December 2019 by NAPD - <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/ANPD-Buletin-statistic-trim-III-2019.pdf>

Meanwhile, in 2017, the Government issued the Emergency Ordinance no.60 of August 4, for amending and supplementing Law no.448/2006 regarding the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Disabled People which led to changes in the regime of protected units, and to the decline of the number of employees - people with disabilities.

The Ordinance ruled out the possibility of employers to make purchases from protected units, with the increase of the contribution due in case of not employing a percentage of 4% persons with disabilities, from 50% to 100% of the minimum gross basic salary in the country multiplied by the number of places of work in which people with disabilities were not employed.

Although protected units should play a very important role in the occupation to people with disabilities that are hard to hire, they have disappeared from the market with the adoption of this Ordinance which amended the Law 448/2006 regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities. Thus, after Emergency Ordinance from 740 protected units, with over 2000 persons with disabilities, at the date of 20.12.2019, only 31 protected units were authorized and still functioning.

More recent statistics according to the data provided by the National Agency for Fiscal Administration only 30,271 people with disabilities were employed at 31.01.2019, which is about 7.25%, much lower than the European average of 52-54%:

6,472	Public institutions
24,444	In private system
26,675	Full time
4,617	Part-time

### INFO



The 2019 national report - "EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES - an answer to the labour shortage" of the association PRO-Pact from Iasi county shows that in Romania there is an extremely bizarre phenomenon: at this moment no institution collects data and information about employment of persons with disabilities - neither NAPD nor the Agency National for Employment, nor Labour Inspection. Partial data can be found only at the National Agency for Fiscal Administration, but only on request.

# United Kingdom

***In the United Kingdom the number of people with disabilities (aged 16-64) is 7.9 million in July-September 2019, which is 19% of the working age population. In the last year 2019 the number of people with disability employed was over 4.2 million; an increase from 2013, where the number employed was nearly 2.9 million<sup>3</sup>.***

Between July-September 2013 and July-September 2019, the disability employment gap reduced by 5.6 percentage points. This has been because the employment rate for people with disabilities has been rising faster than the employment rate for people without disabilities. In the year to July-September 2019, the gap reduced by 1.6 percentage points.

In 2019 the number people with disability who were economically inactive (not employed and not actively seeking work) was 43% where the corresponding figure was 15.0%. The high rate of economic inactivity, alongside a higher unemployment explains why people with disabilities have a low employment rate. People with disabilities have an employment rate that is 28.6 percentage points lower than that of people without disabilities. This difference is often referred to as the disability employment gap.

The 'disability employment gap' is the difference in the employment rate of people with disabilities and people without disabilities.

In January-March 2020, the employment rate for people with disabilities was 53.8% and the rate for people without disabilities was 82.4%, meaning that the gap was 28.6 percentage points.

Instead, the unemployment rate for people with a disability was 6.7% in July-September 2019. This compared to an unemployment rate of 3.7% for people without disabilities.

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<sup>3</sup> Office for National Statistic - Disability and employment, UK: 2019. Employment outcomes for disabled adults, with analysis by age, sex, impairment type, country and working patterns using Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Annual Population Survey (APS) data.

In July-September 2019, there were 2.4 million women with disabilities in work, an employment rate of 52.4%. During the same period there were 1.9 million men with disabilities in work, an employment rate of 54.3%. Women with disabilities have a slightly lower employment rate than men despite there being more women with disabilities in work. This is because there are more women of working age with disabilities than there are men.

In the UK, people with disabilities had lower employment rates than those without disabilities. The highest employment rate for a health condition group was still 16 percentage points below the equivalent figure for non-disabled working age adults.

The employment rate changes according to the number of health conditions that people with disabilities may have. The people with multiple health conditions had lower employment rates than those with a single health condition. People with one health condition had an employment rate of 63%, but this fell to 25% for those people with five or more health conditions.

People with disabilities with an impairment affecting the musculoskeletal system are among the most common impairment groups, with above-average employment rates compared with the whole disabled population. The employment rate for those with issues affecting the legs or feet is highest at 59.8%, followed by back or neck at 59.0% and arms or hands at 57.2%.

The employment rate for people with disabilities with severe or specific learning difficulties was the lowest rate of any impairment group (17.6%). People with mental illness or other nervous disorders had the second-lowest employment rate (28.5%). This was significantly lower than all other conditions with the exception of epilepsy (34.2%).

The employment rate for people with depression, bad nerves or anxiety was similar at 51.8% to the employment rate for the disabled population as a whole (52.3%).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Office for National Statistics – Annual Population Survey

Regarding the type of job position, people with disabilities in work were less likely to be employed as managers, directors or senior officials, or to be employed in professional occupations. The 25.7% of employed disabled people held these positions in comparison with the 32.3% of employed non-disabled people. People with disabilities in work were more likely to hold elementary positions at 12.6% compared with 10.2% of working non-disabled people.<sup>4</sup>

Public and private sectors have similar proportions of workers (14% and 13% respectively) who reported having a disability (as defined by the Equalities Act 2010). But proportions differ when looking more closely at the largest public sector occupations. Fewer people report disabilities in occupations which are more highly skilled (doctors, teachers and police officers). On the other hand, lower-skilled occupations including cleaners, housekeepers, school crossing patrols and midday supervisors have above-average reports of disabilities.

Regarding the prejudice that people with disabilities experience, the Disability Perception Gap report shows that the public is still stereotyping disabled people in all aspects of their daily lives, including how much care disabled people need and how productive they are.

The gap between people with disabilities and non-disabled people's impression of negative attitudes has trebled over the last 20 years. In details<sup>5</sup>:

- 1 in 3 people with disabilities feel there is still a lot of disability prejudice.
- 1 in 3 people see people with disabilities as being less productive than non-disabled people.
- In 2000, 37% of disabled people and 34% of non-disabled people felt that there was a lot of prejudice around disability. The gap trebled by 2017, with 32% of people with disabilities and 22% of non-disabled people feeling there is a lot of prejudice against disabled people.

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<sup>5</sup> Scope - Disability Perception Gap (2018)



## 2. Legislation regarding people with disabilities and employment

### Germany

*Employers are granted subsidies for the employment of persons with physical and sensory impairments to ensure that their workplaces are equipped for the disabled. Information on subsidies has been disseminated in recent years through increased activity by governmental organisations. New working models such as part-time training is also becoming more widely known. Special burdens on an employee with severe disabilities are compensated financially.*

***Employers have an obligation to employ people with disabilities, otherwise they have to make payments that go towards government measures to increase the employment of people with disabilities.***

There are various laws in Germany which are intended to increase the employment rate of people with disabilities, such as the obligation to employ, the obligation to provide care, and the obligation to provide equal opportunities. People with disabilities are also entitled to compensation for disadvantages such as special protection against dismissal, more leave, special consideration for new hires, reduced overtime. These are seen as a burden by some employers.

### **Obligations of employers by national law:**

- Obligation to employ 5% employers with disabilities for companies with 20 or more employees (§154 SGB IX)
- Appropriate proportion of severely disabled persons who are particularly affected (§155 SGB IX)
- Employer's obligation to notify the Employment Agency of severely disabled employees (§163 SGB IX)
- Employer must check whether free jobs can be filled with severely disabled persons (§164 SGB IX)
- Severely disabled people have a right to employment:
  1. for their skills and knowledge
  2. vocational education
- Disability-friendly workplace design (§164 SGB XI)
- Employer must involve representatives of severely disabled persons and the integration office in case of problems or longer illness (from 6 weeks) (§165 SGB XI).

## Employment obligations:

- Duty of care
- Employers must provide workplaces suitable for the disabled. This can be done with technical or personnel support. Employers can apply for subsidies.
- Equality obligation

No one may be discriminated against because of gender, nationality or disability. Employees must be paid equally.

## Representation of severely disabled persons

Every company that employs at least five severely disabled employees must have them nominated as a person of trust. The severely handicapped representatives are involved in the recruitment of new employees. It takes part in interviews. The representative advises the employer on how to improve the company situation.

## Integration agreement

Companies with more than 5 severely disabled employees must conclude an integration agreement with the severely disabled representatives. The agreement describes how the company intends to hire more severely disabled employees. And how people with severe disabilities can be supported.

- Additional leave  
People with severe disabilities have one week more vacation
- Overtime  
People with disabilities do not have to work overtime indefinitely. In a full-time job, employers must allow employees (at their request) to work no more than 48 hours per week.

Special protection against dismissal

- Termination of an employment contract of severely disabled persons must be approved by the government organisation Integration Office.

When new jobs are filled, the employer must always check whether a suitable person with severe disabilities can work on them.

## **BEM (Company Integration Management)**

All companies are obliged to offer an employee an interview if the employee is on sick leave for more than six weeks. This interview should be conducted with the aim of enabling the employee to make a successful return to working life. The interview must meet certain standards. These standards are laid down by law.

All the duties and rights described are enforceable before the labour court. The labour court can be used free of charge for employees. The labour court offers free legal advice. The Labour Court can impose high fines of up to 10000€ on companies.

If a company employs less than 5% people with a severe disability, it must pay a compulsory fee. For each unoccupied place and month this is between 105€ and 290€.

There is financial support for the company if people with disabilities are hired for the first time.

Newly created jobs for people with disabilities are subsidised in the equipment.

There are integration offices throughout the country. These are government organizations. They monitor compliance with the legal regulations for the employment of people with severe disabilities and pay out subsidies for the employment of people with severe disabilities. Technical aids for workers with severe disabilities are promoted.

The government funds advisory centres for technical assistance and counselling. People with mobility disabilities can apply for a work assistance that takes care of handouts. For people with mobility impairments, mobility aids (transport, acquisition of a driving licence, conversion of a motor vehicle) are financed to reach the workplace.

Companies will be reimbursed for the reduced performance and care costs for employees with disabilities if this exists. These benefits are checked by the integration offices. If people with disabilities are no longer able to carry out their work, they are offered vocational rehabilitation. This can take various forms:

Support in the design of workplaces suitable for people with disabilities or transfer to a new workplace within the company.

- Support in finding a new job
- Training in a new profession
- Advice on new professions
- Wage subsidy
- Disabled workplace design
- Sheltered workplaces in workshops for people with disabilities

**Young people with severe disabilities have a legal right to professional support. This can be offered in different ways:**

- Vocational training with a carrier of vocational integration
- Vocational training with an institution
- Assistance with in-company training
- Support in job search and job coaching and long internships in companies
- Sheltered workplaces in workshops for people with disabilities.

# Portugal

*In Portugal, there are specific measures to protect and develop employment for people with disabilities, namely: rehabilitation support policies (specific measures and general measures); legislation against discrimination on grounds of disability; measures to support normal labor market integration and merit awards for employers.*

Portugal introduced a legal framework in 2001 to establish the employment quota system for people with disabilities, with a degree of functional disability equal to or greater than 60%, in all services and bodies of the central, regional autonomous and local administration (Law 29/2001 of February 3). In 2004, the new version of rehabilitation and participation of People with Disabilities (Law 38/2004, of August 18) equal opportunity measures for people with disabilities by promoting social participation, access to education and employment, access to support services and promotion of accessibility conditions were implemented, these are the legal basis for all the regimentations and actions created to improve life conditions for people with disability.

One of the actions presented in this document to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities is supporting the general and specific measures for employability, being that regulated in Decree-Law No. 290/2009 October 12th; which produced the Employment and Support Program for the Qualification of People with Disabilities and implemented with the financial and technical support of IEFP (employment center in Portugal).

## **The specific measures to support the employment of people with disabilities are as follows:**

- Support for integration, maintenance, and reintegration into the labour market;
- Information, assessment and guidance for qualification and employment;
- Post-placement monitoring;
- Granting of financial support;
- Adaptation of jobs and elimination of architectural barriers;
- Supported Employment;
- Mark for Inclusive Employers;
- Financing to support the purchase, adaptation or repair of support products.

## The general measures are:

- Employment Contract (Program to support job inclusion for vulnerable people);
- Professional internships (with a rise in the case of interns with disabilities);
- Quota of 5% of vacancies in the public administration for disabled people.

When looking at data on specific measures and general employment support measures, it appears that in the total number of people supported by these measures (38 408) 84% resorted to specific measures and 16% to general employment measures. Despite an increase in people supported by both general (+1%) and specific (+19%) measures, this is far superior comparing to the specific measures.

Recently it was created the Law n° 4/2019 of January 10th, which establishes the employment quota system for people with disabilities, with a degree of disability equal or greater than 60% in the private sector. It defines that medium-sized companies with 75 employees or more must admit disabled workers, in a number of not less than 1% of the employed staff, and large companies must admit workers with disabilities, in a number of not less than 2% of the personnel at their service. Employers have four to five years as a transition period.

Legislation gives companies the responsibility to adapt jobs when hiring workers with functional limitations. To do so, the employer must use the National Institute for Rehabilitation (INR) and the Employment and Vocational Training Institute (IEFP), which will indicate and provide the necessary technical support. Nonetheless, is possible to companies not to follow the law if they submit a request to the Authority for Working Conditions (ACT) and be exempted from the application of this law, by providing proof issued by INR, with the collaboration of the services of the IEFP, IP, of the impossibility of its effective application in the respective work place or an insufficient number of candidates with disabilities, registered in the employment services that meet the necessary requirements to fill the jobs. If companies and private organisations, with the characteristics defined in the law, do not present in their annual report (single report) the percentage of 1% to 2% of employees with disabilities it is considered a serious offense. In these cases, financial sanctions are applied.

In the case when companies and organizations do not carry on a recruitment and selection process appropriate to the needs of candidates with disabilities that will constitute a minor offense. But if this is a recurrent infraction it will be provided an accessory sanction of deprivation of the right to participate in public applications for a period of up to two years, under the terms of article 562 of the Labour Code.

By law it is possible that companies and organizations, both public and private, have added benefits in hiring disabled people, such as:

- Obtaining financial support;
- Contract-Employment Measure;
- Open Market Supported Employment Contract;
- Discount on the Single Social Rate;
- Adaptation of Workstations and Elimination of Architectural Barriers;
- Exemption from payment of Single Social Tax for first job and long-term unemployed;
- Mark for inclusive Employers;
- Promotion of the company's public image;
- Improving the organizational climate, creativity and productivity;
- Promotion of diversity and contribution to the sustainable development of the company.

Regarding discrimination, in 2006 was published the **Law 46/2006 August 28th**, which prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in accessing employment and in all life contexts. That underlines the need to ensure "reasonable accommodation" in the various contexts of the life of the people with a disability.

# Romania

*In Romania there are 2 categories of legislation:*

- *specific legislation, which refers directly to persons with disabilities*
- *legislation that regulates different fields, but which has specific provisions regarding persons with disabilities.*

*a) Law no. 448/2006 Of December 06, 2006* regarding the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Disabled Persons -this law regulates the rights and obligations of disabled persons granted for the purpose of their social integration and inclusion. The law has a complex character, comprising provisions on various aspects including a chapter dedicated to Orientation, Professional Formation, Occupation and Labour Employment.

*b) Government Decision No. 655/2016 of September 14, 2016* for the approval of the National Strategy “A society without barriers for persons with disabilities” 2016 - 2020 and its Operational Plan. Strategy has a chapter “Employment”, with the general objective: “Ensuring access for people with disabilities to an open, inclusive and accessible working environment, both in the public and in the private sector, while ensuring their effective access to support services to increase employment on the labour market”.

*c) O.G. no. 68/2003 on social services, approved by Law no. 515/2003* with the subsequent modifications and completions establishes the measures of special social protection for children, respectively adults with disabilities:

- social facilities - (allowances, tax and tax exemptions, transport facilities, etc.) for health and recovery, education, housing, culture, sports and tourism, transport, employment, payment of personal assistant;
- social services - activities organized “to meet social, individual, family or group needs, in order to prevent and overcome situations of difficulty, vulnerability or dependence.

d) **Law No. 76 of January 16, 2002** on the unemployment insurance system and the stimulation of employment.

e) **LAW No. 219 of July 23, 2015 on the Social Economy.**

According to this legislation there are two types of support and facilities for people with disabilities employment:

- A. support for persons with disabilities, who wish to be employed;
- B. support for employers who employ persons with disabilities.



- Any person with disabilities who wants to integrate or reintegrate into work has free access to professional evaluation and guidance, regardless of age, type and degree of disability. The person with a disability participates actively in the process of professional evaluation and orientation, has access to information and the choice of activity, according to his wishes and aptitudes.

- Persons with special needs have the right to benefit from all the conditions for choosing and exercising their profession, occupation or occupation, to acquire and maintain a job, as well as to promote professionally.

- Persons with disabilities have the right to work and to receive the monthly allowance, the complementary budget and the companion allowance.

- There is no legal provision in the sense that a person with a severe disability, with an attendant loses his or her degree of disability and the attendant if he / she becomes employed. Being classified as disabled has nothing to do with work capacity.

- People with disabilities who are looking for a job or are in employment have the following rights:

- vocational training courses;
- reasonable adaptation to the workplace;
- counselling during the period prior to employment and during employment, as well as in trial period, by a specialist labour mediation counsellor;
- a probationary period for employment, paid, of at least 45 working days;
- a paid notice, of at least 30 working days, granted at the termination of the individual employment contract at the initiative of the employer for reasons not attributable to him/her;
- the possibility to work less than 8 hours per day, according to the law, if they benefit from the recommendation of the evaluation commission in this regard.

Financing of the rights provided above for persons with disabilities looking for a job - they are supported by the insurance budget for unemployment, according to the law.

- Fiscal code indicates some exemptions for the following taxpayers - persons with severe or accentuated disability are exempt from paying income tax for the income obtained from: independent activities, carried out individually and/or in a form of association; revenues from intellectual property rights; salaries and assimilated to salaries; pensions; agricultural activities, forestry and fish farming, made individually and/or in a form of association without legal personality.

- Only within the project "Facilitating the insertion in the labor market of persons with disabilities" project implemented by the National Authority for People with Disabilities (NAPD) in partnership with the National Agency for Employment, co-financed by the Human Capital Operational Program (POCU) - Priority axis 3 - Jobs for all - a voucher is granted, at the request of the persons with disabilities who benefit from active employment measures, registered on the county employment agency or of the municipality of Bucharest agency. This voucher is for purchasing of assistive products, recommended by the specialist doctor, which can be found in the List of assistive technologies and priority access devices for employment. Project duration is 3 years (2019-2022).



## The authorized protected units benefit from the following rights:

- a) exemption from the payment of the authorization fees for setting up and re-authorizing;
- b) exemption from payment of the corporate income tax, provided that at least 75% of the fund obtained by exemption to be reinvested for restructuring or for the acquisition of technological equipment, machinery, machinery, work equipment and/or fittings/ adaptation of protected workplaces.

## Other employers:

Employers who have employees with disabilities benefit from several tax facilities. The following expenses are deductible from the calculation of the taxable profit: the expenses incurred to adapt the work place, to purchase the equipment used in the production process by the disabled person, to transport the disabled persons from home to the workplace, for the transport of raw materials and finished products to and from the home of the disabled person, employed for working at home.

The specific expenses of training and professional orientation are deductible from the unemployment insurance budget that the employer pays to the state budget.

At the same time, organizations which, in relation to the number of employees, have fulfilled their obligation, according to the law, to employ persons with disabilities, as well as organizations which are not obliged by law to employ persons with disabilities, they will receive for one year period the minimum wage in the economy, monthly, for each disabled person employed, provided that the employer keeps employed this disabled person at least 2 years.

Moreover, the employers who conclude a contract with indefinite duration with graduates among persons with disabilities are exempted from paying unemployment insurance and receive monthly, for 1.5 years different amounts, depending on the level of education of the young person with disabilities:

- a) 1 minimum gross basic salary in the country for the graduates of the lower cycle of the high school or of the arts and crafts schools;
- b) 1,2 minimum gross basic salaries in the country, for the graduates of upper secondary education or post-secondary education;
- c) 1.5 minimum gross basic salaries in the country, for the graduates of higher education.

### Insertion social enterprises<sup>6</sup>:

They can be financed from public and/or private sources, national or international, according to the legal norms applicable to each of the categories from which they depart of the financing sources and benefits from free of charge for the issuance of the social trademark and registration in the Register of Social Enterprises.

The social insertion companies can receive free advice on setting up and/or business development, through specialized departments at the employment agency level, and they can benefit from facilities from the local public administration authorities, respectively:

- a) the allocation of spaces and/or lands in the public domain of the units/subdivisions administrative territorial, in compliance with the provisions of the Law of local public administration no. 215/2001, republished, with the subsequent modifications and completions, for the purpose of development the activities for which the social mark was granted;
- b) support, in promoting the products realized and/or provided, to the services provided or works performed in the community, as well as in the identification of some markets thereof;
- c) support in promoting tourism and its activities, by capitalizing on its local historical and cultural heritage;
- d) other facilities and exemptions of taxes granted by the public administration authorities local, according to the law.

<sup>6</sup> According to LAW no.219 of 2015 on the Social Economy

# United Kingdom

In 2009 the UK ratified the UN Convention on the rights of people with disabilities. The Single Equality Act came into force in October 2010, bringing together different laws that cover discrimination into one in order to prohibit both direct and indirect disability discrimination in employment and recruitment.

Direct disability discrimination occurs where an employer treats a disabled person less favourably because they are disabled. Indirect disability discrimination occurs where an employer applies a policy, criterion or practice which has the effect of putting a disabled person at a particular disadvantage as compared with non-disabled persons. Indirect discrimination may be lawful if it can be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Discrimination arising from disability occurs where an employer treats a person unfavourably because of something arising in consequence of their disability. It differs from direct discrimination in that the unfavourable treatment is because of something arising from the disability, not the disability itself. Furthermore, unlike indirect discrimination the person does not need to show that the employer was applying a provision that puts (or would put) persons sharing that person's disability at a particular disadvantage. It is sufficient to show that they were treated unfavourably because of something arising from their disability.

Discrimination arising from disability may be lawful if it can be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. The Act also prohibits employers from harassing or victimising disabled people.

## Reasonable adjustments

As part of the Equality Act 2010, employers must make reasonable adjustments to support disabled job applicants and employees. As stated in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) guidance:

This means ensuring disabled people can overcome any substantial disadvantages they may have doing their jobs and progressing in work.

The DWP has published guidance on Employing disabled people and people with health conditions. It states that:

- The costs of making reasonable adjustments to accommodate disabled employees are often low.
- The benefits of retaining an experienced, skilled employee who has acquired an impairment are usually greater than recruiting and training new staff.
- Examples of reasonable adjustments included in the guidance and on the gov.uk page Reasonable adjustments for workers with disabilities or health conditions are listed below. This is not an exhaustive list of potential adjustments.
- Making changes to a disabled person's working pattern. Allow those who have become disabled to make a phased return to work.
- Doing things another way, such as allowing someone with social anxiety disorder to have their own desk instead of hot-desking, or allowing someone with a wheelchair to work on the ground floor.
- Providing training or mentoring. This will include training to nondisabled workers on how they can be more inclusive to disabled people.
- Either employing a support worker to assist a disabled worker, or arrange for a colleague to assist them with certain tasks.
- Making alterations to premises, like installing a ramp for a wheelchair user or an audio-visual fire alarm for a deaf person.

- Ensuring that information is provided in accessible formats, for example in Braille or on audio tape.
- Modifying or acquiring equipment, such as special keyboards for those with arthritis.
- Changing the recruitment process. Modify procedures for testing or assessment to ensure they don't disadvantage people with particular disabilities.
- Allowing extra time during selection tests.

Access to Work funding can be applied for towards the cost of making such reasonable adjustments. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has provided Examples of reasonable adjustments in practice.

# 3. Results of attitudes of HR companies



## ***3.1 Methodology to implement and disseminate the questionnaire***

The methodology for the survey implementation is a result of teamwork within the European Awareness4Change partnership. The aims of the survey are:

- To identify the current European attitudinal trends towards disability specifically unemployment contexts in Germany, Portugal, Romania and the United Kingdom.
- To capture the prejudices and the perceptions of Human Resource Professionals and Business Leaders in recruiting and supporting people with disabilities in the workplace.

Social desirability bias is a type of response bias that motivates survey respondents to answer questions in a manner that will be viewed favourably by others for example in coherence with socially acceptable views. This was a key consideration for the partnership in developing the survey as it was necessary to try and avoid this occurring.

To reduce social desirability bias, the survey was structured by using indirect or structured projective questioning (questions which are purposefully designed to uncover people's deeper feelings on a topic, by asking the questions in an indirect way), a technique suggested in the literature and found to be effective in reducing social desirability bias.

The survey consists of 19 multiple choices questions and 1 open question. To maximize anonymity, no information about the individual or the employer was collected on the questionnaires or provided to the researchers. The first question aimed to understand the type of enterprise that the respondent worked for:

- micro enterprise (1-9 people)
- small-medium enterprise (10-250)
- large enterprise (+250)

The following two questions focus on which field the enterprise works in and if the enterprise has previous experiences in recruiting people with disabilities. The rest of the questions were used to understand the perceptions and prejudices related to recruitment and support of employees with disabilities (perceived challenges and concerns in recruitment and retainment of employees with disabilities).

The final questions were different as it asked respondents to provide 3 suggestions to overcome identified challenges and to support companies to recruit people with disabilities more easily and effectively.

**MEH** developed the survey on a Google form and an engagement letter was used to accompany and explain the purpose of the survey.

Each partner was responsible for the translation in their own language. The minimum objective in terms of responses was of 20 responses. In order to achieve this objective, each partner created a tailored engagement campaign to share within their own network and with the use of social media campaigns, emails and by phone contact.



## 3.2 Overview Country Results

Country	Nr. of responses	Type of companies	Sector of activity	Experience of hiring people with disabilities
Germany	<b>25</b> RESPONSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 Micro enterprises</li> <li>• 12 small-medium sized enterprises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Metal industry</li> <li>• 5 Service companies</li> <li>• 1 Trade and sales</li> <li>• 7 Crafts</li> <li>• 1 Health and social services</li> <li>• 1 Agriculture</li> <li>• 2 Logistics</li> <li>• 2 Electronic</li> <li>• 3 Education and social affairs</li> </ul>	<p><b>20</b> HAVE EXPERIENCE</p> <p><b>5</b> HAVE NO EXPERIENCE</p>
Portugal	<b>56</b> RESPONSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 micro enterprises</li> <li>• 14 Small and medium sized enterprises</li> <li>• 27 large enterprises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 Social Sector</li> <li>• 14 HR/Business and Banking</li> <li>• 4 Beauty and sport</li> <li>• 8 Food</li> <li>• 2 Construction</li> <li>• 8 IT</li> <li>• 3 Education</li> <li>• 4 Energy</li> <li>• 3 Retail</li> <li>• 1 public sector</li> </ul>	<p><b>33</b> HAVE EXPERIENCE</p> <p><b>23</b> HAVE NO EXPERIENCE</p>
Romania	<b>24</b> RESPONSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 Micro enterprises</li> <li>• 11 small-medium sized enterprises</li> <li>• 1 large enterprise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountancy</li> <li>• Marketing</li> <li>• Constructions</li> <li>• Consultancy</li> <li>• Engineering</li> <li>• Consulting</li> <li>• HoReCa</li> <li>• Implementation of social projects</li> <li>• entrepreneurship, training</li> <li>• IT/Management consulting</li> <li>• Mass media</li> <li>• OSH services</li> <li>• Production and services</li> <li>• Protected unit - social economy</li> <li>• Public institution</li> <li>• Sales</li> <li>• Services</li> <li>• Software developmen</li> <li>• Telecommunications, Security</li> <li>• Tourism</li> </ul>	<p><b>11</b> HAVE EXPERIENCE</p> <p><b>13</b> HAVE NO EXPERIENCE</p>
United Kingdom	<b>23</b> RESPONSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 Micro enterprises</li> <li>• 10 Small-medium sized enterprise</li> <li>• 3 Large enterprise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Business and education</li> <li>• 1 Clothes retail</li> <li>• 1 Computer consultancy</li> <li>• 1 Education</li> <li>• 4 Insurance</li> <li>• 2 Public</li> <li>• 1 Radio</li> <li>• 11 hird sector</li> <li>• 1 Timber Merchants</li> </ul>	<p><b>17</b> HAVE EXPERIENCE</p> <p><b>6</b> HAVE NO EXPERIENCE</p>

The data presented below refer to the perceptions that employers and HR services have regarding the work of people with disabilities in the 4 European countries. It will be taking into account their knowledge, awareness and stereotypes regarding the employability of people with disabilities.



### 3.2.1 Perceptions of employers and business leaders towards employing people with disabilities:

Could a Lack of knowledge and information about people with disabilities be a problem for some companies in recruiting people with disabilities? (Fig. 1, 1.1)

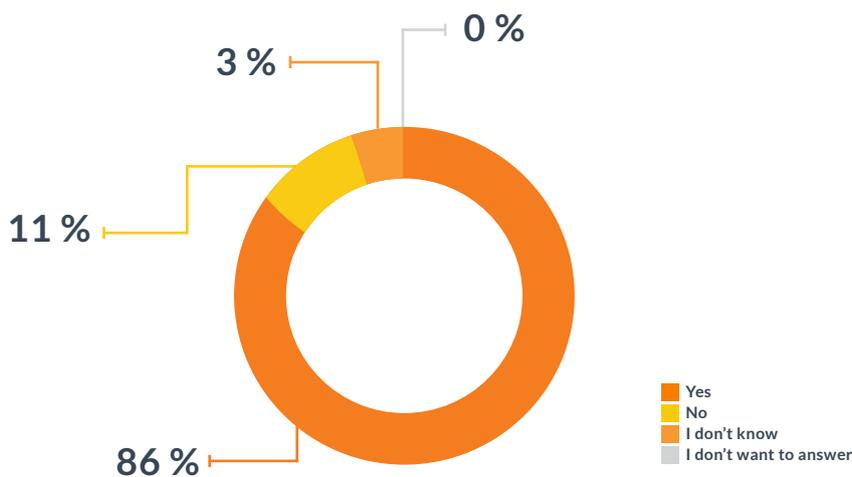


Fig.1.1 Total of responses

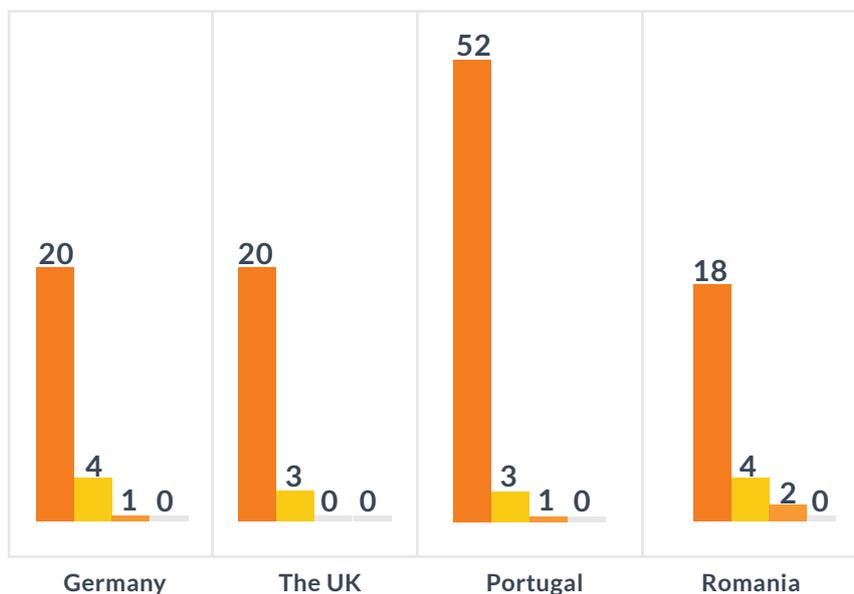
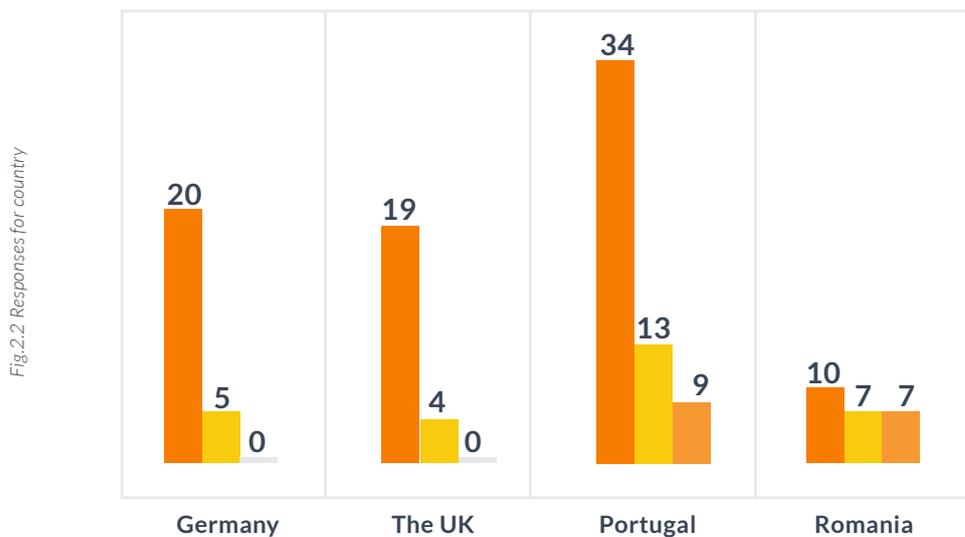
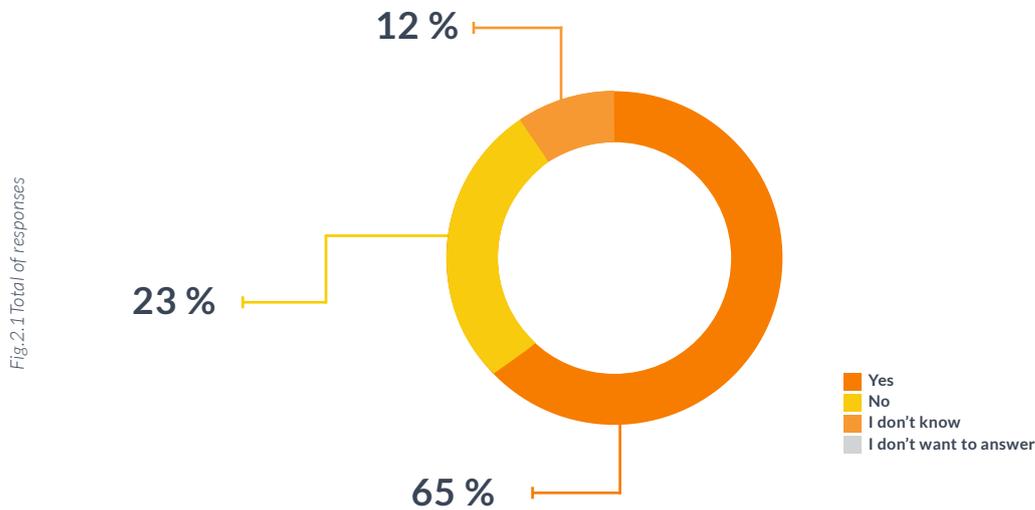


Fig.1.1 Responses for country

The graphs show that in all the 4 countries, 86% of respondents consider that the lack of information about disability can be a problem for companies. Only 11% of the respondents felt that it would not be a problem.

**Could the cost of making reasonable adjustments to the workplace be a barrier for some employers to recruit people with disabilities? (Fig. 2, 2.1)**



The majority of respondents (65%) considered costs associated to the implementation of reasonable adjustments to be one of the barriers to recruiting people with disabilities. In Germany and the UK, every respondent gave a clear response to the question (yes or no). This may be linked to the fact that in both countries employers are obliged to make reasonable adjustments for employees with disabilities and though. There are schemes in both countries to subsidise these costs employers may not know about these schemes at indeed want the extra hassle of making the applications. However in Portugal, approximately 40% of the respondents consider it a problem or did not know whether this was an issue or not. Furthermore, in Romania more than the 50% either said that it was not a barrier or. did not know how to answer this question. These figures may be significant in understanding the need within these countries to raise awareness of what support is available or necessary to help employers be more inclusive.

Could other perceived costs on hiring people with disabilities be a barrier for some employers? (Fig. 3, 3.1)

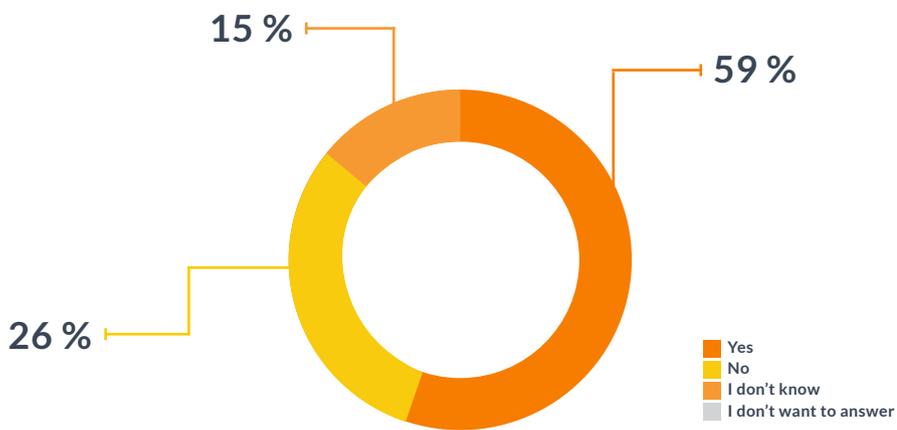


Fig.3 Total of responses

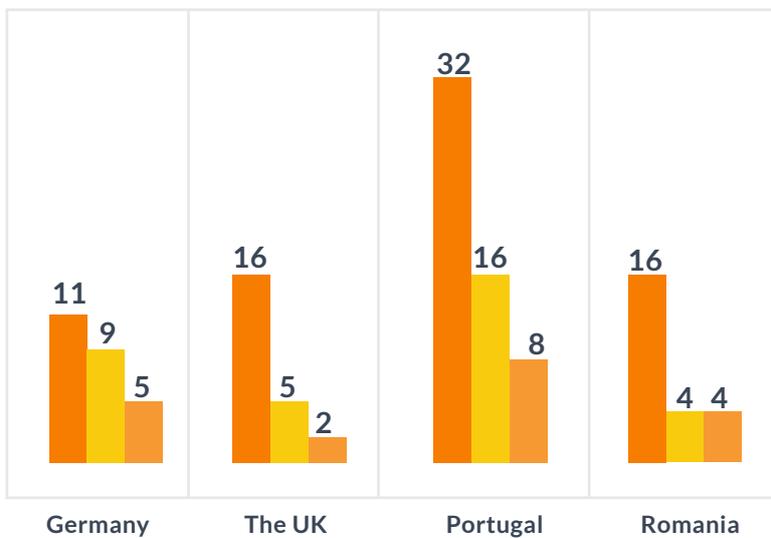


Fig.3.1 Responses for country

Regarding the other perceived costs (such as the extended protection against dismissal for people with severe disabilities or the restrictions on overtime, etc.) the UK and Romania show the same trend with 59% who consider it to be a problem and the rest that do not consider it to be a problem or do not know if it is or isn't a problem. In Portugal 32 respondents consider that these costs are relevant to the decision to recruit people with disabilities, 16 do not agree and 8 do not know if this factor has an impact on recruitment. In Germany the situation has no clear trend as the number of people who have answered yes or no are very similar (44% - Yes, 36% - no and 20% who do not know).

**Could the perception of how difficult to manage the needs of employees with disabilities in the workplace be a barrier for employers? (Fig. 4, 4.1)**

Fig.4 Total of responses

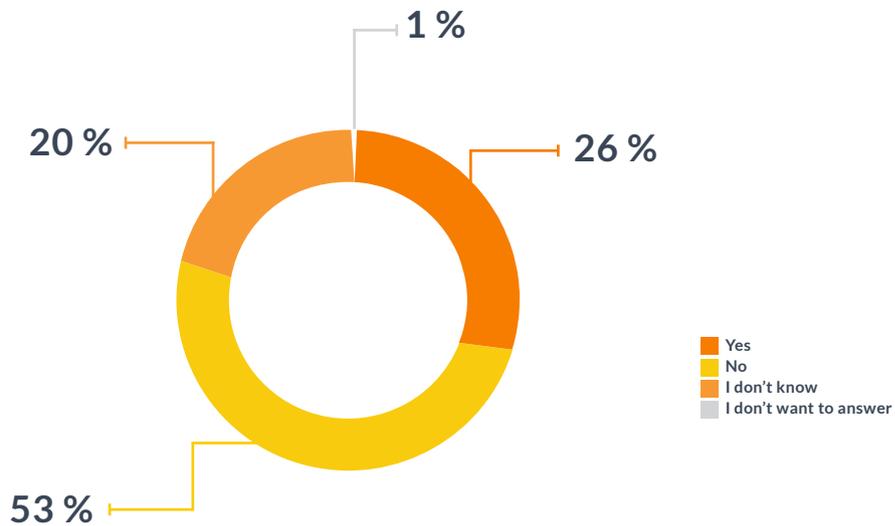
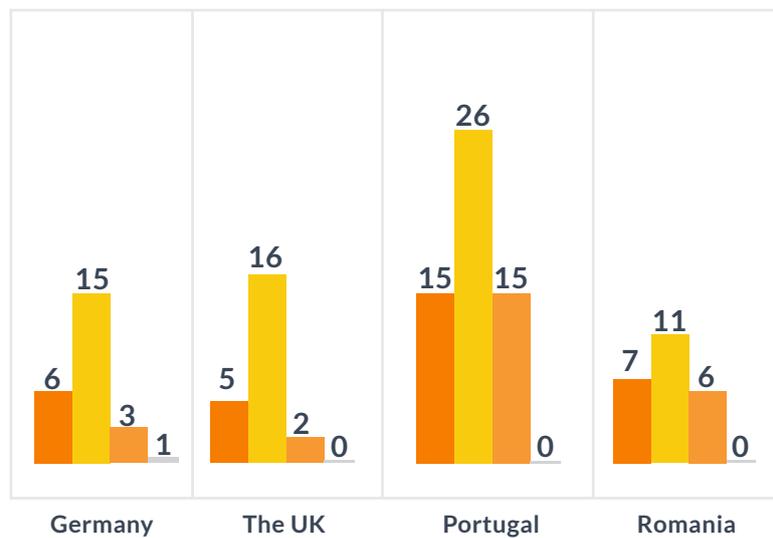


Fig.4.1 Responses for country



These graphs show an encouraging result as in all 4 countries the 46% of respondents do not consider that the difficulty of managing the needs of employees with disabilities is a relevant issue/barrier in recruiting people with disabilities. However, in each country there is still a significant proportion (between 30-55%) who did consider it to be a relevant or who do not know how to answer this question. It should also be noted that this question was the first to motivate the response “I do not want to answer” with one respondent from Germany answering in this way.

*Do you think that some employers feel that people with disabilities cannot work to the same standards as other employees? (Fig. 5, 5.1)*

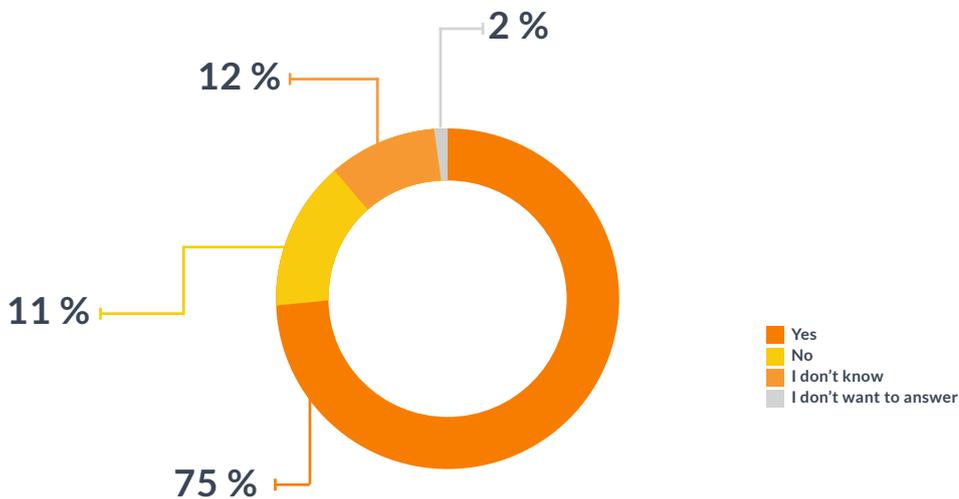


Fig.5 Total of responses

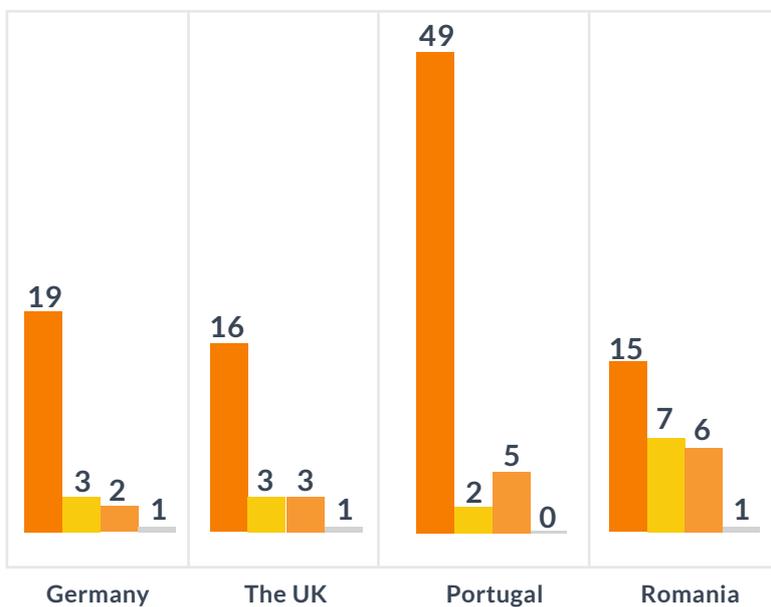


Fig.5.1 Responses for country

The 75% of the respondents from all countries perceive that this may be the perception of some employers. In Romania, a higher proportion of respondents do not agree (than in other countries, and A very low number from Germany, UK and Romania have chosen not to answer to this question which may indicate that the proportion that consider it to be yes is even higher.

**Do you think employers might feel uncomfortable and do not know how to behave around and treat people with disabilities? (Fig. 6, 6.1)**

Fig.6 Total of responses

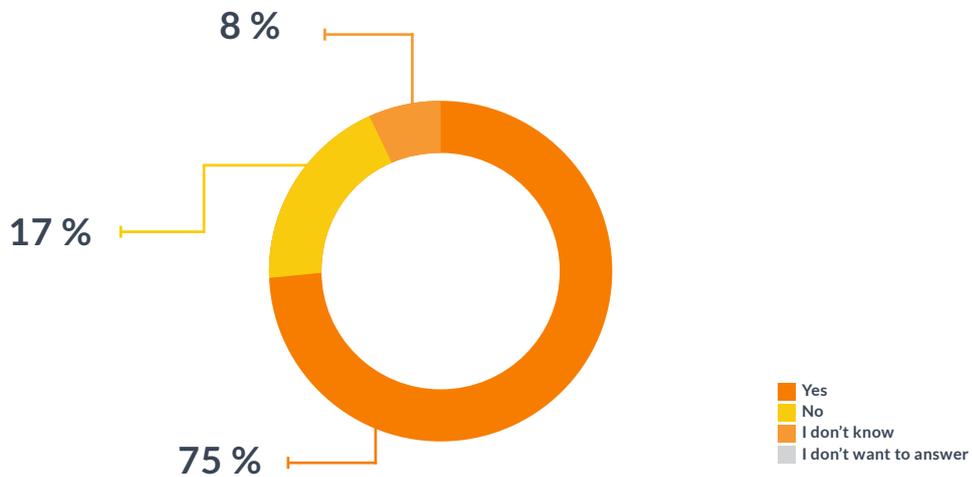
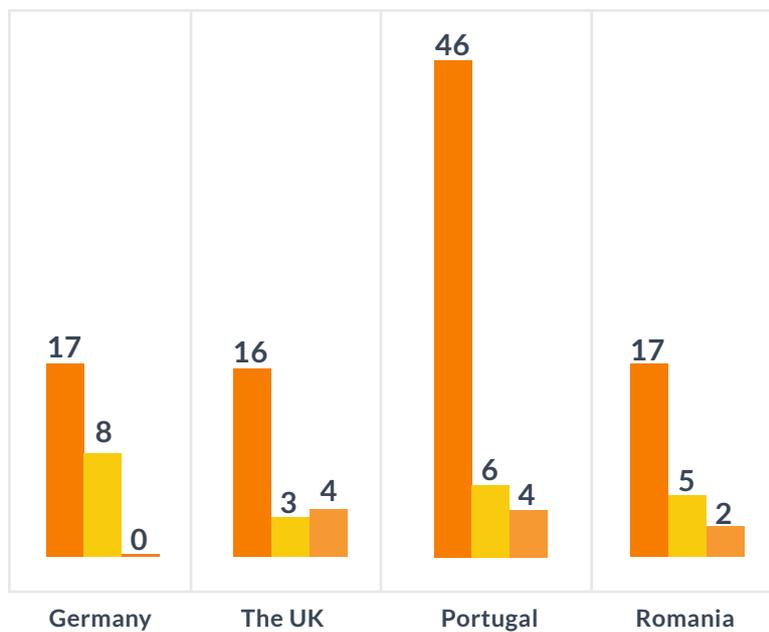


Fig.6.1 Responses for country



Regarding employers’ ability and confidence to behave and treat people with disabilities appropriately. The question sort to understand whether respondents felt employers might feel uncomfortable when managing a person with a disability and not know how to deal with that person, and that this might be a barrier to recruiting people with disabilities in the first place. In all the 4 countries the 75% of respondents who said they agreed that some employers may not feel confident or have the skills to manage people with disabilities, however in Germany the data showed a more encouraging picture as a considerable number of replied that they did not think this was the case.

*Do you think some employers think that workers with disabilities require extra time/ support from supervisors or co-workers? (Fig. 7, 7.1)*

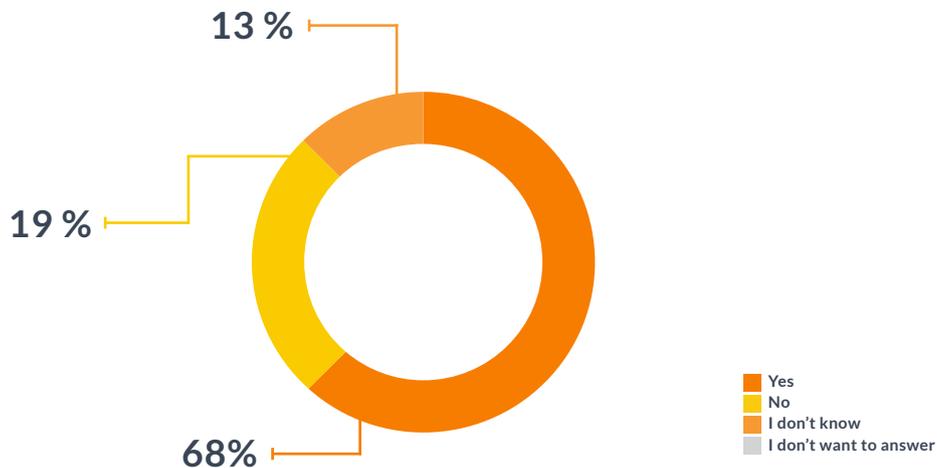


Fig. 7 Total of responses

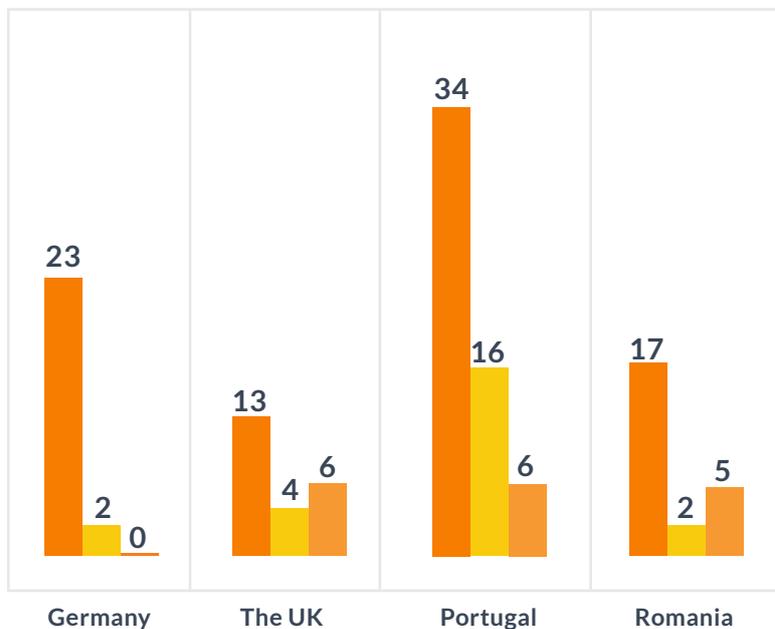


Fig. 7.1 Responses for country

In relation to perceptions of extra time and support needed by people with disabilities the 86% of the respondents in all the country agreed that people with disabilities need more time and extra support and supervision. In Germany an overwhelming majority of respondents stated that this is an issue (87%). A similar result was received in Romania (70%) however in Romania there was a significant percentage who said they did not know (21%). In Portugal and the UK the percentage of people who answered yes was quite similar (60% and 56% respectively) however in Portugal there was a higher number of respondents who think that answered it is not a problem (28%) and a higher proportion in the UK who said they did not know (26%).

**Do you think that people with disabilities are less likely to apply for a job? (Fig. 8, 8.1)**

Fig.8 Total of responses

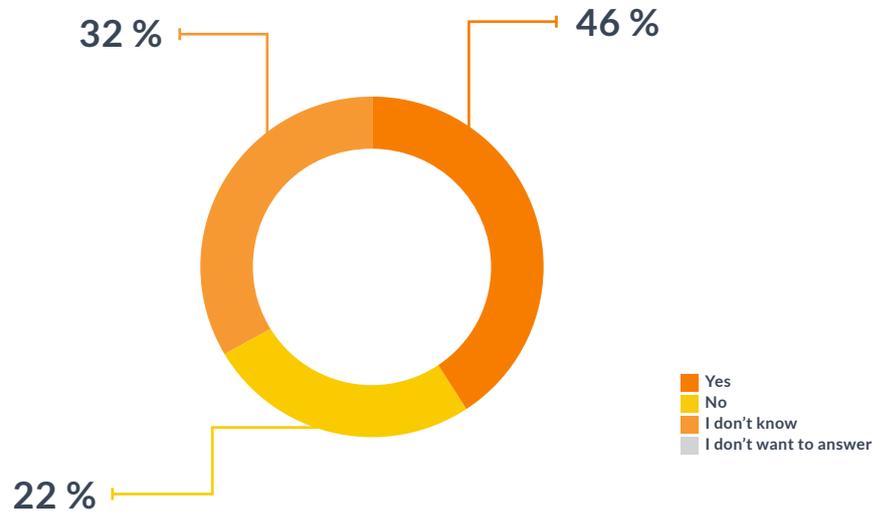
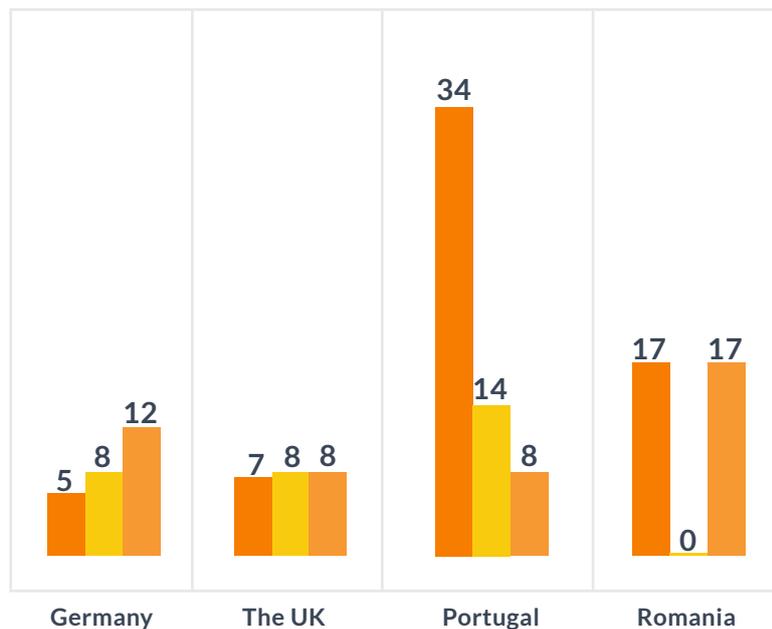


Fig.8.1 Responses for country



Out of all the survey questions this one was the one where there was no clear answer from 3 of the 4 countries. In the UK there was a very even spread between 3 answers yes, no and I don't know, and this was a similar in Romania where half of the participant stated yes and half no. The significant different between the 2 being that a significant number in the UK were unsure. In Germany the majority of respondents replied "no" and conversely in Portugal the trend shows a high number of positive replies, but also a considerable number of "no" and "I don't know".

**Do you think that some employers think that applicants with disabilities do not have the necessary skills and experiences to fulfil the role? (Fig. 9, 9.1)**

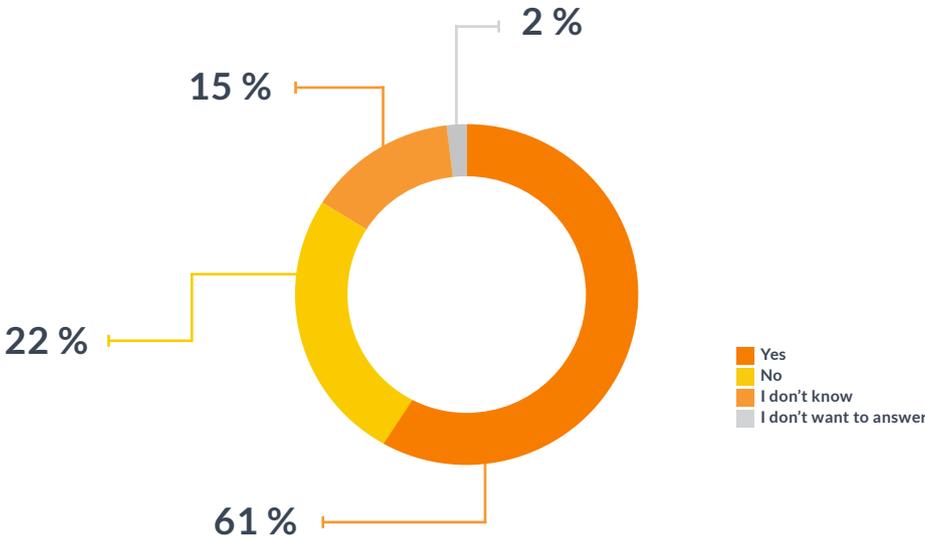


Fig.9 Total of responses

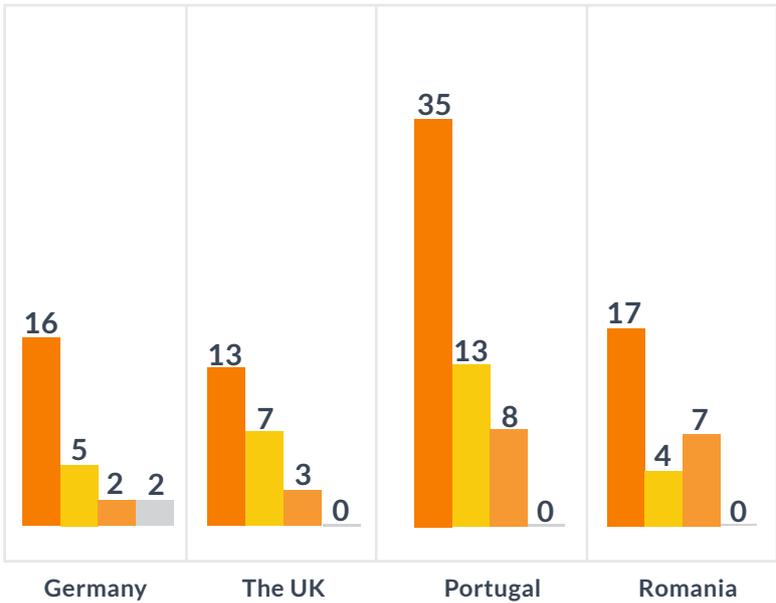
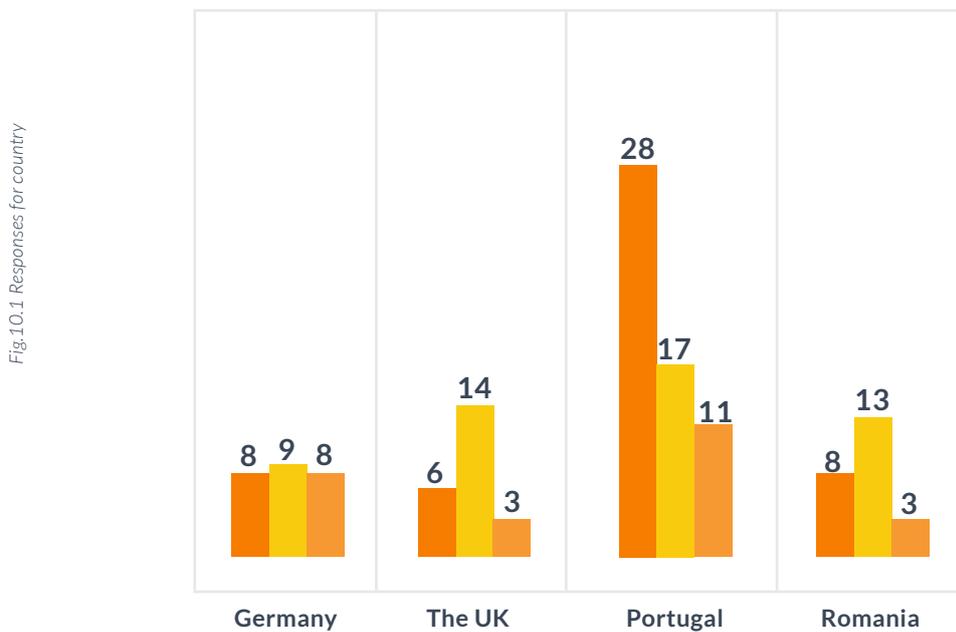


Fig.9.1 Responses for country

The 61% of the respondents in all the countries think that people with disabilities do not have the necessary skills and experiences to fulfil the role. In each of the partner countries respondents suggest that employers' perception of people with disabilities is that they do not have the necessary skills and experiences to fulfil job roles. This provides the partnership with a key element to the content of the awareness campaign.

**Does current National employability legislation encourage employers to take on people with disabilities? (Fig.10,10.1)**



Again this question provide a significant contrast between each of the countries, with the majority of respondents in the UK answering “no”, a similar trend can be seen in Romania. Whereas in Germany the answers are evenly split in Germany with only a small majority of respondents saying that it didn’t. Portugal is the only country where there is a majority of respondents who say that legislation does support employers to recruit people with disabilities.



### 3.2.2. Attitudes

The following section presents respondents answers to the next series of questions which aimed to ascertain the levels of challenge that the barriers, identified in the above section were to employing people with disabilities. In particular about attitudes of the supervisor, other employees, customers and partners, accessibility and the existing legislation in matters of disability. Each respondent was asked to analyse how challenging each item was for them, using a grading system which rated 1 as the lowest grade of challenge to 5 being the highest grade of challenge.

In general all countries' answers, in all criteria, are concentrated in grade 3 and 4, middle-high challenging. The employers generally find that employing people with disabilities is challenging in terms of accessibility and support provided, and also in relation the attitudes of their stakeholders and legislation. The attitudes of supervisors and issues related to workplace accessibility are considered more challenging. In turn, issues related to promoting reasonable adjustments and the attitudes of customers and partners were the items that respondents presented as least challenging.

It should be noted that both Germany and Romania were not able to answer the questions related to the “cost of providing reasonable adjustments” (Germany and Romania) and “workplace accessibility” (Romania only). In both cases they felt that these questions were not applicable.

Perceived level of challenge to employers in recruiting and employing people with disabilities in relation to the:

- *Cost of providing reasonable adjustments;*
- *Attitudes of the supervisor;*
- *Attitudes of other employees;*
- *Attitude of customers or partners;*
- *Workplace accessibility and Legislation.*

The grading was between 1 – 5 1 being the lowest level of barrier and 5 being the most sever barriers.

# Portugal



In Portugal the factors that the largest number of respondents stated posed the biggest challenges were: attitudes of supervisors and other employees and workplace accessibility. However if we take the second ranked figures as well the cost of providing reasonable adjustments is also a serious challenge. In correlation to the answers in the second section respondents from Portugal answered that legislation caused the least amount of challenge for employers.

# Germany



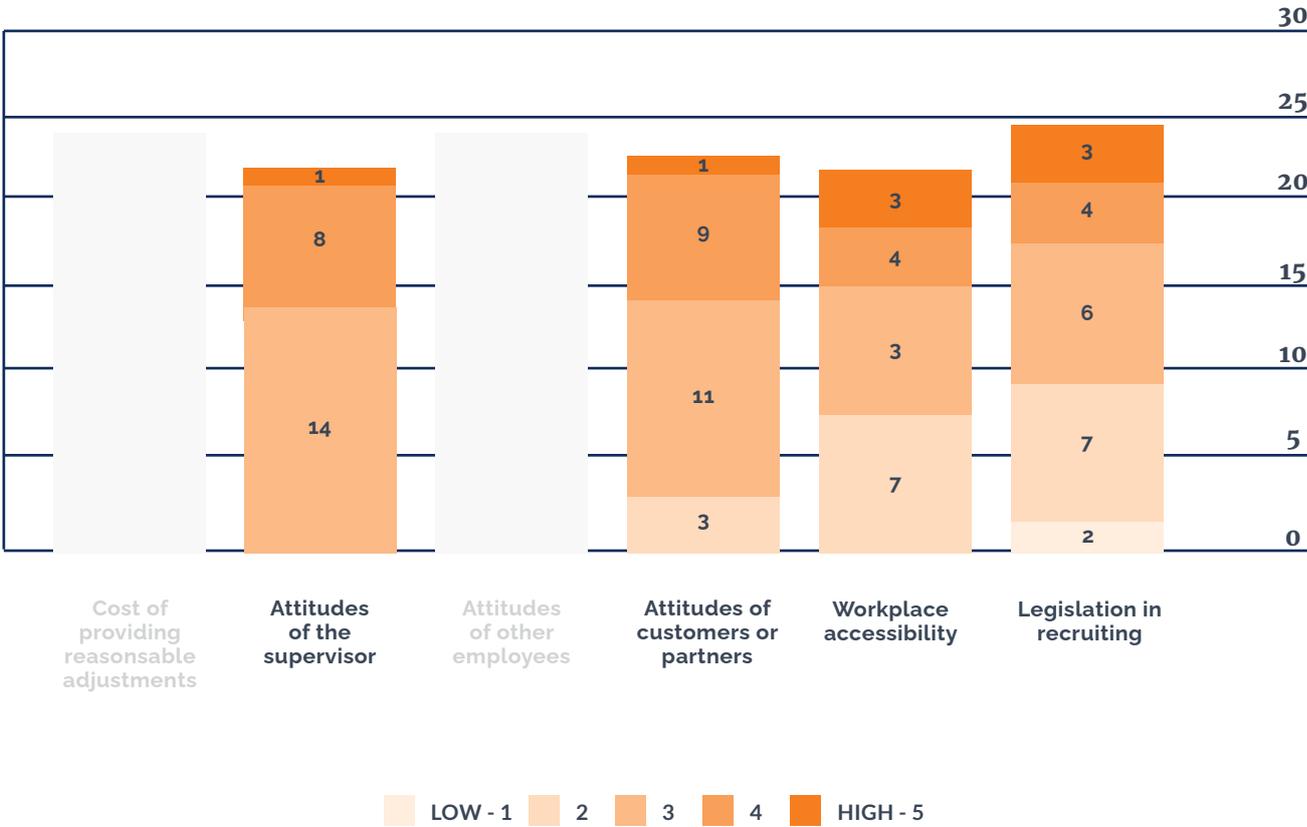
As mentioned above the German partner felt that it was not appropriate to ask this question in relation to the cost of providing reasonable adjustments and workplace accessibility as they were not appropriate for their context. The only 2 categories where respondents scored the highest level of challenge was attitudes of employees and attitudes of customers and partners weigh this category scoring the second highest weighting as well.

# United Kingdom



In the UK an interesting aspect to the results were that the highest graded factors were the costs of providing reasonable adjustments and workplace accessibility. This is interesting because in the UK as mentioned in the Legislation of this report the UK have a scheme called Access to Work which provides financial support to employers to provide reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities which includes making workplaces accessible. Therefore respondents either do not know about the scheme or have not used it for another reason for example it is perceived to be too time consuming.

# Romania



In Romania the most weighted answers were legislation in recruiting and however the other 3 questions which were asked. (Reasonable adjustments were not considered appropriate) were all closely weighted together.



### **3.2.3 Measures respondents think are most suitable for recruiting people with disabilities.**

At the end of the survey each respondent were asked to contribute at least 3 measures that they felt could support and /or facilitate the employability of people with disabilities more effectively. The results of surveys in each of the country showed a common measure that could support and/or facilitate the employability of people with disabilities. Taking into account the responses obtained in this field, the type of measures presented can be shown in the following paragraphs.



#### **3.2.3.1 Disability Awareness and information**

One of the most common suggestions which emerged in all the countries is related to the lack of information and awareness about people with disabilities.

The respondents suggested that the creation of good practices and cases studies around the employment of people with disabilities would help to motivate employers to implement their own good practice and overcome barriers. At the same time, the promotion of awareness campaigns and information can help to raise awareness at different levels and with different target groups: legislation, policy makers, employers, employees, people, etc. Below are some of the suggestions stated by the respondents:

***“More information and awareness.” Or “Case Studies available from various areas of the working world.” (UK)***

***“Generating success stories especially from multinational companies regarding employees with disabilities” (RO)***

***“Awareness and extended clarification sessions: all HR and Managers (Top, Middle and Managers)”(PT).***

***“Awareness that they are and can have the same opportunities, is a right.” (UK)***



### 3.2.3.2 Services to support the employability of people with disabilities

The emphasis on promoting social change in the area of employment of people with disability was also placed on the organizations and services that support them, as described below:

*“Strategies: partnerships with NGOs, workshops / courses on reasonable adjustment, sessions with people with disabilities through which HR departments have access to useful information about what it means to work with a person with mental / physical disabilities, etc.” (RO)*

The focus suggested by the respondents is described in the following actions:

- **Education and training** of different target groups at different levels for example from other employees through to business leaders and legislators. It is important that employers, HR professionals, and employees are trained to understand, be aware of related issues, can provide and facilitate support to people with disabilities in the recruitment phase and in the workplace. At the same time, it is important that also people with disabilities have tailored courses and training to be able to take advantage of the same opportunities as people without disabilities.
- **Support and connection** that can support and guide people with disabilities to job search and in the workplace by using the technologies resources. At the same time the creation of platform, or other specialized services monitoring people with disabilities integrated in the labor market, disclose individual talents and their suitability to the context of the company, the purpose of the function and a quick access to adequate information in the case of access to incentive measures.
- **Tailored recruiting** where the information is provided in accessible formats, the HR have experience in this field, being able to achieve a professional profile for the person with disabilities according to skills, needs, and to support the employer to adapt the workplace/tasks of this person.

In the following paragraph are listed some of the answers of the questionnaire that shows several interesting suggestions for measures regarding support services for the employability of people with disabilities, such as:

*“1) In the first phase, working with a partner for the recruitment and initial adaptation of the job position for the hired person 2) Awareness and extended clarification sessions: all HR and Managers (Top, Middle and Managers) 3) Mentoring Programs with Job Shadowing and short-term professional insertion programs (type of approach to working life)”(PT)*

*“Distance learning programs for people with disabilities” and “Modernization of education for people with different” (RO)*

*“More Information, knowledge and advice. support in the form of intensive advice before and after hiring” (GE)*

*“Ideas/advice to write recruitment advertising to promote and encourage applications from those with disabilities (useful phrases/the right sort of wording that is clear and non patronising) Training to learn better how to support people with mental health challenges” (UK)*

*“Greater support for integration and monitoring for at least one year” (PT)*

*“Less bureaucracy and low administrative costs” (GE)*

*“The existence of a vocational counselor”;*

*“Support from social services for an easy integration process in the work team of a person with disabilities” (RO)*

*“More awareness or training in different disabilities, training on how to support people with disabilities in the work place” (UK)*

*“Distance learning programs for people with disabilities”,  
“Modernization of education for people with different needs”  
“Training programs for people with disabilities” (RO)*

*“Educate managers. Supervisors around disabilities and the hidden ones and more so their employees disability”(UK)*

It also emerged the suggestion to create a **specific job exchange for candidates with disabilities and platforms to help in the recruiting process.**

*“The management of mediation between job vacancies on an online platform that aggregates information regarding the offer (companies) and demand (candidates).” (PT)*

*“A platform where those with disabilities can be registered, which should include areas of interest” (RO)*



### 3.2.3.3 Legislation and funding

The most popular suggestions in each of the countries are related to the legislation and access to grants. Popular answers suggest more support for the promotion of reasonable accommodation and accessibility, funds, internship measures for people with disabilities and awards for inclusive companies.

*“Fiscal facilities for employment and partial subsidization of costs for infrastructure changes over a certain amount”,*

*“Fiscal facilities for hiring people with disabilities during the employment contract”,*

*“Financial support for investments” (RO)*

*“Funding to facilitate changes to accommodate disabilities”,*

*“Grant’s for changes of premises”,*

*“Grants available for adaptations to working environments, enabling people with disabilities access to all areas” (UK)*

*“Financial support to converse the workplace and workplace equipment.” (GE)*

In Portugal it emerged from the respondents answers that measures of government responsibility are poorly known about and disseminated, and do not have the intended impact on employment rates for people with disabilities.

*“Adequate legislation; Information about it; and material and immaterial incentives for its implementation.”*

*“Legislation that reduces the taxes of companies that hire disabled people. State services that adapt the workplace and prescribe technical aids. TV advertising / educational spots about people with disabilities.” (PT)*



# Conclusions

SECTION  
04



The previous paragraphs presented the results of 128 questionnaires about prejudices and perceptions of HR professionals and business leaders regarding the employment of people with disabilities in four different countries (Germany, Portugal, Romania and United Kingdom).

The methodology adopted for the questionnaires was effective to show the variety of the differing perceptions in the four countries and when put against the desk based research into the position of people with disabilities in the labour market and national legislation related to the topic it provides an interesting insight into what the content of future awareness raising campaigns should be across in general and what is necessary in specific countries. Of course, the questionnaires had some limitation due to the different frameworks and backgrounds of four different countries.

The type of enterprises and fields were very heterogenous within the same country but the results that emerged are homogeneous among the different countries. The respondents with previous experiences in employment of people with disabilities were the majority within the four countries even if there were a substantial number of respondents without experience.

In general, from the respondents' answers there appears to be a lack of knowledge about how to support people with disabilities and the perception that employment potential of people with disabilities is limited, in particular there is a prevalent perception that people with disabilities do not work to the same standards as people without disabilities and a perception that employers may feel uncomfortable and not know how to deal with a disabled employee. For employers, the least significant barrier to integrating people with disabilities into the workplace is managing their needs.

The employers generally find that employing people with disabilities is challenging in terms of accessibility and adequacy of support, regarding the attitudes of all stakeholders and the legislation.

In conclusion, one of the clear findings of the questionnaire is there is a lack of awareness and knowledge about the employability of people with disabilities. There also seems to be a lack of awareness about government support schemes for employers which are in place with certain countries (Germany and the UK) as the respondents in these countries suggested the costs of changing the workplace and current legislation did not support them to employ people with disabilities and there are specific schemes designed to overcome these barriers in each partner country.

**The Awareness4Change project** aims to contribute to change employers' perceptions and to identify the area where it is important to focus and address more. Thus, the answers and opinions of the respondents represent a suitable foundation for the conception and development of the awareness campaign, of training materials, and of the format of the training program. Through conducting this consultation the partnership will use the result to ensure that other project results and products have the highest impact at the level of these target groups (managers of companies of various sizes, as well as Human Resources professionals).

This study shows quite clearly what should be the elements that might be highlighted in the campaign and training, what are the sensitive points on which to build within both the campaign and the training program. In this way it will be possible to identify the best types of messages, the most appropriate way of communication, the most relevant way to prepare and deliver the training program.

Thus, the **Awareness4Change** initiative will work to promote knowledge in areas such as the functionality of people with disabilities and the existing support for their better integration into the labour market.



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