

Conference Presentations

Workshop no 3 "Examples of Good Practices of Inclusion in the Labour Market of People with Motor Disabilities"

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In the third workshop, we had the pleasure to hear very interesting and very practical examples regarding people with motor disabilities. We heard the tool In the framework of year 2003 devoted to people with disabilities for preventive approach in the labor market. This tool is based on true facts and allows the companies to include, incorporate in their business strategies the employment of people with disabilities. Because it tries to sensitize the employers concerning some forthcoming directives of the European Union. About discrimination, it gives practical advice regarding the employment of disabled people based on the experience of a group of working disabled people in different working environments.

A comment that was made is that in Europe at this very moment there so many inequalities as far as the employment of the disabled people is concerned, but as time goes by and information becomes more extensive, he believes that very quickly these inequalities will be overcome.

We had a very interesting presentation by the representatives of COCO-MAT that gives emphasis to its people. For in many years now, this company has been employing people with disabilities, and a very tangible example we had here with us, Eugenia, she is one of the workers in the company. She, in the little time she has been working with COCO-MAT, she managed to become one of the 5 top executives in the company.

The company employs people of 30 nationalities in many regions, but this has not been proven to be a hindrance but it has helped the company to develop. All of them feel that they belong to the same family. 10% of the employees are disabled people. The message that the company gave us is that the employer should be better and more informed on the possibilities of employing people with motor disabilities and that was the conclusion of the specific presentation. Finally, there was the presentation regarding the case of the social co-operatives in Italy where in the social sector, 700.000 people are employed in the co-operatives of which 400.000 are employees and 300.000 are full time volunteers.

The Italian legislation created social co-operatives which are divided to 2 categories. One of them is the regional co-operatives. What makes these social co-operatives to be successful, is they give the possibility and the opportunity to the employees to gain skills, to have self-confidence and self-esteem and this is a step towards the next phase which is the incorporation in the social environment and then afterwards in the labour market.

Although these social co-operatives are non-profit organizations, they some of them at least, are found in part of the market in which they have developed activities and services for which they get paid. And she mentioned to us an example of a co-operative that offers internet services that are used all over Italy.

Concluding, I would like to mention a remark that was made regarding whether we should use terminology of talking about people with special needs, of people with special qualifications or qualities. My personal belief is that the characterization given, that we talk about people of that have a specific personality, is much better because everybody understands and includes this concept in our society.

The practices that were shown to us were just the tip of the iceberg, and we believe that there are many more companies that employ disabled people and have this experience. We believe that the 2 programmes PROTEAS and SDV-NetJob characterize these examples and can promote these examples in a way that would include provide information to the employers to promote the idea of employing people with disabilities. Thank you very much.