



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

“Promoting Equal Employment Opportunities”

Mainstreaming of Educational and Training Practices Tailored to Disadvantaged and Elderly People

Organised by Workability Europe in cooperation with “Marie Curie Association”
9 – 11 July 2007

Hotel “Alliance” ****, 7 “Vassil Aprilov” Blvd., Plovdiv, Bulgaria

Summary Report



On 10 July 2007 Workability Europe in cooperation with Marie Curie Association organised an International Conference entitled ***Promoting Equal Employment Opportunities - Mainstreaming of Educational and Training Practices Tailored to Disadvantaged and Elderly People*** in the city of Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

The day opened with a press-Conference at which several representatives of national newspapers, radio and TV posed their questions to panellists Hans Vrind, Workability Europe President and Tim Papé, Co-Chair of Network Development Group during a session chaired by Petya Grudeva, PR of Marie Curie Association. The questions of the journalists related to the objectives of Workability Europe, the expectations

of the European partners from the event and their general knowledge about the situation of people with disabilities in Bulgaria. In their responses the Workability Europe representatives emphasised the importance of networking, sharing and learning from each other and exchanging best practices. There were two key messages coming out from their contributions: progress in the employment situation of disabled persons is a slow but achievable process and whilst there is no “one-size-fit-all” solution, there are a number of successful approaches in the Workability Europe network which will be presented at this Conference.

The official part of the Conference started with a welcome introduction by Konstantin Piskov Deputy Mayor of Plovdiv who underlined the commitment of his city to equal opportunities for people with disabilities and greeted the initiative of this Conference to further promote their inclusion in social life. The next part featured a selection of interesting presentations on a variety of topics including: own business opportunities for people with disabilities; encouraging employers in hiring people with disabilities; mentoring programmes as a successful instrument for career support of people with disabilities; accessibility of web environment for people with disabilities; vocational improvement pipelines for people with disabilities; Workability Europe: responding to key sectoral challenges; access to professional training and social work; comparative need analysis for people with disabilities and elderly people and others. The presentations were delivered by a representatives of Bulgarian as well as international representatives mainly of NGOs and academia.

A reception and a social dinner in a traditional Bulgaria restaurant contributed to the exchanges, networking and nice atmosphere of the event. Several business meetings were held in the margins of the Conference too. Speaking shortly after the event Hans Vrind, said “This was a very interesting if a little intensive Conference allowing participants to get introduced to a number of interesting topics in a relatively short space of time. We feel that as a result of this event we know much more about the Marie Curie Association and look forward to future common projects.”