

Debrecen Declaration on Work and Inclusion

One in six people in the European Union has a special need that ranges from mild to severe, making around 80 million who are often excluded from taking part fully in society and the labour market, because of environmental and attitudinal barriers. For people with special needs the poverty rate is 70% higher than the average, partly due to limited access to employment.

We, 150 participants of the International Conference on Work and Social Inclusion for People with Disabilities taking place on 16-18 February 2012 in the renowned City of Debrecen, Hungary, from 8 European countries, reaffirm that emerging stronger from the present economic and financial crises requires the effective implementation of the European Union's long term strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The latter means empowering people through high levels of employment, investing in skills, fighting poverty and modernising labour markets, training and social protection systems so as to help them anticipate and manage change and build an inclusive society.

This strategy encompasses the promotion of social innovation for the most vulnerable by providing innovative education, training and employment opportunities particularly for people with special needs. In this way the implementation of the EU strategy also furthers the effectiveness of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) that explicitly recognises the right of persons with special needs to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with special needs.

The importance of the effectuation of the EU strategy and of the CRPD is highlighted by the recent World Report on Disability of the World Health Organisation and The World Bank. According to this report, special needs prevalence is high and growing all over the world. About 15% of the world's population is with a special need. The prevalence of special needs is growing due to population ageing and the global increase of chronic health conditions.

We support the effectuation of the EU strategy by designing and implementing innovative educational and training programmes for persons with special needs and professionals as well as volunteers who are facilitating their employment, moreover by raising awareness and understanding about persons with special needs and their added value to society. In order to achieve the goals of the strategy it is necessary to enable the employer and implement life-long educational and vocational training programmes taking into account long-term career perspective of each person with a special need.

We recognize the value of persons with special needs who enrich society through their active participation in it.

We know that the effectuation of the EU strategy presupposes partnerships including all stakeholders and civil society, and we invite therefore everyone involved to work together in delivering on the vision.

Debrecen, Hungary
February 18th, 2012