

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(79) 572 final

Brussels, 26th October 1979

REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL
ON THE INITIAL COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMME FOR THE
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION OF HANDICAPPED PERSONS
(PERIOD 1974-1979)

COM(79) 572 final

REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL ON THE
INITIAL COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMME FOR THE
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION OF HANDICAPPED PERSONS
(PERIOD 1974-1979)

1. Introduction

The initial Community action programme for the vocational rehabilitation of handicapped persons was adopted by the Council on 27 June 1974 to "improve the opportunities for vocational rehabilitation available within the Community to handicapped persons" (1).

The Commission is responsible for taking specific steps in each area of the programme and also for coordinating and providing general guidelines for this programme; it is assisted in these tasks by a group of representatives of the Member States. The time required to implement the programme and to obtain and assess the first results was longer than estimated and consequently this report is being submitted after the deadline laid down by the Council.

(1) O.J. of the European Communities No C 80/30-32 of 9 July 1974.

2. General review of the implementation of the programme between 1974 and 1979

20. The programme, as drawn up in 1974, provides for:
- the development of and training in new vocational rehabilitation methods (Title II § 1 of the Council Resolution);
 - the qualitative improvement of facilities currently in operation by means of short-term demonstration projects (Title II § 2);
 - the possibility of carrying out longer-term projects extending the measures just referred to (Title II § 3);
 - "concomitant projects" involving research and information campaigns (Title III).

A brief review of steps taken and projects carried out in each of the above areas is given below.

21. As regards the planning and teaching of new rehabilitation methods:

21.1 The Commission has set up the European Network of rehabilitation and training centres envisaged in the programme.

21.2 It has encouraged cooperation between the centres by holding bi-lateral meetings of 4/5 days' duration attended by complete teams and by arranging for the topics discussed there to be followed up subsequently; 14 such meetings have been held since 1977; annual reports summarizing the topics discussed during these meetings are published.

21.3 The Commission has also arranged periodic meetings between the directors of these centres in order:

A. to study the job profile and define the training objectives for rehabilitation staff; this has been done for:

- vocational training instructors;
- staff members in centres who are involved in placing handicapped persons;
- staff members in centres who are involved in giving vocational guidance to handicapped persons (work still in progress);
- the directors of the centres.

The results of the work already completed are at present being applied to training activities organized by the centres;

B. to study certain matters concerning all members of the teams, in particular:

- training these persons in multidisciplinary work,
- assessing the work capacity of handicapped persons.

An agreement has been reached on the general concepts to be applied and on the aims to be pursued in these areas.

21.4 During the period 1974-1979, the Commission was not asked to organize measures of a centralized kind for the training of rehabilitation personnel. Hence, no "advanced courses" have yet been held; in fact, the training of the staff required has taken place as part of the projects aided by the European Social Fund (see § 22.1); these projects implemented the guidelines laid down at the Mulhouse seminar (10-14 December 1973). The experience thus gained in "training instructors" and the harmonization of concepts arrived at during the work mentioned above will now make it easier to organize European courses based on the specific objectives of the programme.

21.5 The directors of centres carry out an annual examination of the activities described in §§ 21.2 and 21.3 (assessment of work done, forecasts for the coming year).

22. As regards the demonstration projects prepared in the Member States in order to improve the quality of rehabilitation facilities currently in operation, many projects meeting the criteria laid down in the action programme have been carried out.

22.1 Under the terms of Article 4 of Council Decision 71/66/EEC, the European Social Fund promoted demonstration projects and training courses concerned with the vocational rehabilitation of handicapped persons, which took place between 1974 and 1977. Details of the finance involved are given in the Fund's annual report. The aims and content of these activities were analyzed by the Commission in 1977 and 1978; a summary of its findings was presented at the Conference organized by the Commission in Luxembourg on 21, 22 and 23 March 1979. It showed that:

- a) there were wide differences in the Community as regards the provision of services required for rehabilitation (quantity and quality of services provided) and the attitude of the public towards the social and vocational integration of handicapped persons;
- b) in this connection, the Member States have responded to the Community action programme by taking measures aimed:
- either at remedying the isolation of handicapped persons in certain communities by means of programmes dealing with the individual rehabilitation of these persons, their social and vocational integration, and the wider provision of services,
 - or at improving the quality of the services provided throughout the country for the guidance, training, placement, social well-being and health of handicapped persons;
- (priority was given to one or other of these aims according to the situation obtaining - see a.);
- c) by promoting these activities, the Community facilitated the implementation of national policies, sometimes to a considerable degree. The demonstration projects provided an opportunity to test new practical measures and sometimes contributed to the early stages of their general application.

22.2 In 1977, the Council rejected the Commission's proposal that it should continue to assist these demonstration projects under the terms of Article 4. As a result, from 1978 onwards, all aid from the European Social Fund for activities concerning handicapped persons is being provided in accordance with Article 5 in its revised form, under which steadily increasing sums of money are being allocated. Thus, the promotion of projects of an experimental and innovatory character is still possible and is in fact continuing.

23. The programme laid down that the lessons drawn from the above-mentioned demonstration projects should be applied in longer-term projects aimed at improving facilities (i.e. the provision of services) not only qualitatively but also quantitatively. Some of the work currently being carried out under the terms of Article 5 already meets these particular requirements, so it has not yet been thought necessary to submit specific proposals to the Council regarding possible support for long-term projects.

24.1 As regards study and research, the following points should be stressed:

- the Commission has had some reference works prepared: a comparative study on the organization of rehabilitation in Member States and its updated version; a statistical study on the employment of handicapped persons; a study on special education;
- from the beginning of the programme, the assessment of working capacity was marked out as an area in which new knowledge would be needed; experience in this area has been exchanged (described in § 21.3 B) and research projects have been promoted under the ECSC Research Programme on Ergonomics and Rehabilitation;
- in addition, joint projects being undertaken under the first CREST medical research programme should help in preventing disability; these are concerned with the registration of congenital defects in the newborn and the epidemiology of deafness.

24.2 Finally, the programme provides for an information campaign directed at the general public, which has an educational function and aims at facilitating the social integration of handicapped persons. The Commission did not want to take immediate action in this field. However, in the course of many demonstration projects, the public has been involved in the social integration of handicapped persons; with the experience thus gained, the Commission is now in a position to examine what information might actually be of use and to prepare a work plan involving possible collaboration with associations for handicapped persons.

3. Current situation. Future policy

31. While the projects described in section 2 were under way, the situation in the Member States changed. Significant steps were taken during this period. Details of these are given in Appendix I.

32. At present, member countries are faced with employment problems of varying severity.

The number of handicapped persons receiving vocational rehabilitation is greater than the number of such persons who find work after rehabilitation. Handicapped persons who have completed their rehabilitation remain unemployed longer than other people, and the benefits provided by rehabilitation are gradually lost as a result. Must the Community, because of economic constraints, abandon the present aim of its work for the handicapped, namely, to enable these persons "to take up and hold a job, or an occupation as self-employed persons, under conditions and with earnings which are equivalent, or as nearly equivalent as possible, to those of other workers"? (2) Will the Community have to regard handicapped persons in search of work as a category requiring special protective measures rather than normal employment?

The Commission considers that if the attempt to find genuine jobs for handicapped persons who have acquired a real working capacity during their rehabilitation were to be abandoned, this would restrict

(2) Title I, penultimate paragraph, of aforementioned text

these persons' earnings, would prolong their situation as assisted persons and would increase the burden on the community; the Commission therefore believes that the aim set in 1974 should be maintained, that the work already begun should be continued and that the current difficulties must be overcome.

33. To achieve this, it is of prime importance that the principles and concepts to be used in referring to the placement and work of "handicapped persons" should be specified:

- a. the aim of vocational rehabilitation is to provide a person with the capacity to work; it is therefore a preparation for a change in status, which occurs when a job is obtained; at that point, the handicapped person should become just a normal worker;
- b. this change creates adjustment problems; the person concerned has to be prepared, assisted and followed up in a special way; in fact, the real working capacity of the handicapped person can be gauged only when he has been completely rehabilitated; the rôle of his fellow workers is of crucial importance here;
- c. it should be recognized that the effort made by the handicapped person and the community during rehabilitation requires, in return, a guarantee of employment; this is the reason for the legal provision of placement facilities in various countries;
- d. in the case of invalidity (when working capacity is partial or non-existent) the problem of guaranteeing an income arises.

A policy can be worked out on the basis of the above.

34. In order to facilitate the employment of handicapped persons after their rehabilitation, the Commission proposes the following policy lines:

- A. To assist firms in attaining the objectives suggested to them in this area and in improving the facilities placed at their disposal
- since rehabilitation is intended to improve vocational skills, firms should be involved in this process and both management and labour should take an interest in it;

- firms should be helped when the recruitment of handicapped persons involves difficulties or drawbacks;
 - specific measures must be taken to encourage small firms which take on handicapped persons for rehabilitation purposes, particularly during the first few years of employment.
- B. To increase the effectiveness of normal placement, training and vocational guidance facilities, so as to make them more easily accessible to handicapped persons. In particular, vocational training centres should be able to cater for more handicapped persons, in addition to other trainees; this presupposes the removal of certain obstacles and - in the longer term - modifications in teaching methods.
- C. To create links between employment policy and the other policies affecting social and vocational integration (education, housing, transport, health, social assistance, etc.) by planning the social/health services at local level, i.e. for limited groups (between 100 000 and 200 000 people) and with the participation of these groups.
- D. Within this context, to raise to a satisfactory level the quality and capacity of the facilities provided for the severely handicapped and of special rehabilitation facilities. In the rehabilitation process and particularly in the vocational guidance given to handicapped persons, emphasis should be shifted from the concept of deficiency towards the identification, development and use of individual abilities, as is indicated at the end of Title I of the programme.

4. Implementation of this policy

41. In order to implement the above policy, the Commission will attempt to increase the coherence, scope and effectiveness of its measures for the vocational integration of handicapped persons, the training of personnel attending to these persons and the social integration of handicapped persons.

42. For each of these areas, and especially for vocational integration, the Commission:
- will direct the activities which it organizes in the appropriate manner,
 - will ask the representatives of the Member States who are helping it to implement the programme to coordinate more effectively the projects which receive financial aid from the Community,
 - will, if necessary, propose activities going beyond the present framework of the action programme.
43. The following comments can be made about the ways and means employed in the various parts of the programme (discussed in section 2 of this report):
- a. To be completely effective, the rôle of the network should include, in addition to the exchange of practical experience and the training of personnel, special research and the preparation of information required for disseminating the results of the programme. Courses at European level will be planned in the light of specific objectives relating to the areas listed in § 41.
 - b. In order to enable a steady improvement of the rehabilitation facilities currently in operation to take place, the European Social Fund will continue to provide the demonstration projects with financial aid and to seek the best ways of taking action by means of studies and pilot schemes. As stated above, these activities could be better prepared and coordinated, in line with the aims of the policy put forward in § 33.
 - c. It is desirable that joint research projects should in future cover an increasing number of topics, in particular those likely to assist the primary and secondary prevention of disability and those which may facilitate social integration. In addition, the Commission will, in the short term, take action on information in accordance with the work plan described in § 24.2.
 - d. Finally, the Commission attaches great importance to the assistance it receives from the Working Party on Vocational Rehabilitation of Handicapped Persons, which consists of representatives of the Member States.

In the course of its work, this Working Party has concentrated on three tasks:

- helping the Commission,
- informing governments and national associations,
- attempting to reach agreement on problems of common concern.

The Commission hopes that the latter rôle will be extended, both in order to bring about a better coordination of national measures and in order to work out joint positions.

-11-

APPENDIX I

Vocational rehabilitation of handicapped persons

MEMBER STATES: SITUATION AND FORECASTS

This report is a summary of the vocational rehabilitation and employment facilities for disabled persons in each of the member countries, divided into the following sections:

1. Programmes in progress and facilities provided as part of these programmes.
2. ESF-supported demonstration projects for the programmes under 1.
3. Present problems and future plans.
4. Suggested Community policy (to provide assistance in meeting priority needs and solving problems encountered).

Use has been made of information already available to the Commission departments and (in the case of sections 3 and 4) of information collected for the purpose.

BELGIUM

1. Under the Act of 16 April 1963, a special body the "Fonds national de reclassement social des handicapés" (National Fund for the Social Reintegration of Disabled Persons), was set up in Belgium. The Fund is financed by a levy on accident insurance contributions and is responsible for the financing and practical organization of rehabilitation; in particular, this involves:

- the drawing up of an individual rehabilitation programme for each handicapped person;
- the use, adaptation and extension of existing facilities throughout the country.

As regards vocational training, handicapped persons to a large extent use the same facilities as able-bodied persons: the handicapped person may be given assistance in resuming his studies, may attend training courses organized by the "Office national de l'emploi" (National Labour Office) (Royal Decree of 20 December 1963), may receive training in an undertaking (via individual "special apprenticeship" contracts) and, finally, may attend vocational rehabilitation centres.

Taken together, these facilities satisfy the demand for training, in terms both of quantity and quality. At present there are nine vocational training centres for handicapped persons, with a total of approximately 350 places.

2. The demonstration projects carried out in Belgium between 1974 and 1976 were quality-orientated; the aim was to improve the standard of rehabilitation for persons with specific handicaps: blindness, serious speech and/or writing problems (aphasia), heart disorders.

3. As a result of employment incentives (sharing in the cost of adapting workplaces; wage subsidies for handicapped persons during the adjustment period and before normal efficiency is achieved), handicapped persons are not at a disadvantage vis-à-vis other workers.

The Fund has had to provide financial support for sheltered workshops to compensate for the recession; there has, therefore, been no reduction in the number of places available (11 011 in 1977, i.e. 0,111 % of the total population).

Belgium has no reason to change the rehabilitation system chosen in 1963. New bills on vocational training and apprenticeship are being drawn up.

All the vocational rehabilitation centres for handicapped persons are represented on a working party which discusses problems of common concern, including in particular the subjects which are being investigated by the European network of rehabilitation and training centres (inter alia, the training of staff).

4. Experience in Belgium has shown that handicapped persons can successfully follow various types of training (resumption of studies, apprenticeship within an undertaking, adult training centre or special centre for disabled persons) as long as they are helped.

In Belgium emphasis is placed on the preparation of the handicapped person for the actual demands of a job. Discussions on the subject would be welcomed and it is hoped that the conditions for receiving aid from the ESF may be made more flexible to cover the whole range of training methods mentioned above.

The training of rehabilitation staff needs encouragement. It is important to go on sheltering severely-handicapped and disabled persons from the effects of economic recessions on their chances of employment.

DENMARK

1. On 1 April 1976 the Social Assistance Act (lov om social bistand) came into force; several acts, including the Rehabilitation Act, were repealed at the same time and the Social Assistance Act gathered several forms of social support into one system.

The guiding principle is that all social assistance, including vocational rehabilitation, is treated as a whole, so that assistance is provided on the basis of a total assessment, with all the features of the claimant and his circumstance (family, workplace etc.) being taken into account. The principle underlying the Social Assistance Act is that entitlement to assistance depends solely on the existence of need and not on the origin of the need. A second principle is that every attempt is made to find a solution to the problems in the general system and that only when these attempts have been exhausted is recourse had to institutions established in accordance with social welfare legislation providing for the special needs of individual groups.

A key principle of the Social Assistance Act is that an individual should apply to only one agency in order to obtain help in solving his problems. Persons with vocational problems should therefore go to the authorities of the municipality in which they are resident and these authorities should make the necessary enquiries and give the person in need of vocational assistance the advice on which to base decisions about the extent to which vocational rehabilitation assistance should be provided. The municipality itself authorizes support for measures of vocational assistance other than some forms of aid which may be authorized only by a board under a county authority (amtskommuner).

It is the duty of the county authority to ensure that the necessary institutions are provided for vocational rehabilitation and training and the assessment of working capacity and also that sheltered workshops are available where required.

Special care services for the blind, deaf, epileptics, speech defectives, the crippled and the mentally handicapped continue to be provided in the day care and residential institutions of the State or similar State-recognized institutions, but from 1 January 1980 will be decentralized and become the responsibility of county and local authorities.

2. In 1978 Denmark received a grant from the European Social Fund for the implementation of a pilot project intended to determine the reasons underlying failures of the existing rehabilitation arrangements and to devise alternative procedures which would correct such shortcomings.

3. In 1977 the age limit for the allocation of the early old age pension was brought down to 55, thus making persons between the ages of 55 and 60 eligible for this pension when special social and labour market circumstances warranted it. A condition for the award is that the applicant cannot at the time in question be placed in a job. The pension is considered as a benefit provided for persons who, irrespective of the prevailing economic climate, would find themselves without a job because of structural changes in a particular branch.

4. The opinion in Denmark is that, although they should not be viewed as formal proposals to the Commission, the following items should be considered:

- the needs of older persons (adaptation of the rehabilitation system);
- closer participation of undertakings in the rehabilitation process (training at the workplace, measures to encourage a speedy return to work);
- new approaches to sheltered employment.

GERMANY

1. There are two aspects of government action:

- legislation which now gives the same financial benefits and employment rights to all handicapped persons (Acts of 1 May and 7 August 1974) and which makes a single institution, the "Bundesanstalt für Arbeit" (Federal Labour Office), responsible for vocational rehabilitation and the placement of handicapped persons;
- the Action Programme to promote the rehabilitation of handicapped persons, adopted in 1970, which aims to provide the necessary facilities throughout the country.

One of the aims of the programme is to set up a network of 21 "Berufsförderungswerke" (occupational promotion centres), to provide special training opportunities for severely handicapped adults, with a total of 12 000 places. 18 of these centres are in operation and 3 under construction.

Another aim is to set up a network of "Berufsbildungswerke" (occupational training centres) to provide initial vocational training for young handicapped persons. 24 of these centres, with 7 000 places, are to be built initially, to be followed later by a further 14, with 3 000 places, primarily for those educationally subnormal persons whose disability poses special problems. At present, 15 occupational training centres are wholly or partly in operation, 10 are under construction and 9 are at the planning stage.

2. Pilot schemes in Germany have been concerned with providing the occupational promotion centres and occupational training centres with an integrated system of educational aids, comprising:

- films for vocational training (using television linked by cable with a film library);
- progress assessment programmes (used individually by the pupils with terminals linked to a central computer).

In addition, the ESF has already provided aid for the training of staff for the occupational promotion centres and associated institutions.

3. Handicapped persons are not immune to the effects of the general employment situation: the number of severely handicapped persons who are unemployed has increased from 10 090 (January 1974) to 50 454 (Nov. 1978). Young handicapped school leavers have been particularly affected. However, this increase in the number of unemployed severely handicapped persons is first and foremost related to the fact that "the "Schwerbehindertengesetz" (Severely Disabled Persons Act) of 1 May 1974 extended the category of persons eligible to receive benefits.

On the basis of this Act, the Federal Government and Länder carried out a special programme, lasting from 1 November 1976 to 1 September 1977, which was aimed at increasing the number of jobs and training places available to severely handicapped persons. The programme gave employers financial incentives to engage more handicapped persons (in normal or specially adapted workplaces). It was a major factor in bringing about the occupational re-integration of approximately 8 700 unemployed severely handicapped persons. Owing to the great success of the first special programme, the Federal Government and the Länder introduced on 1 January 1978 a second special programme which has the same objective and is due to run until 31 December 1978.

Under the second special programme, 7 329 severely handicapped persons found jobs in the period 1 January - 31 October 1978.

The number of places in sheltered workshops, which stood at 20 441 (0,033 % of the total population) in 1974, is to be increased to 60 000 to cope with the increase in demand.

4. Without losing sight of the aim of giving handicapped persons a suitable vocational training, it is suggested that the Community action programme should be extended to cover:

- exchanges of views on the problem of unemployment among severely handicapped persons;
- more extensive use of the ESF to deal with this problem;
- more careful examination of the problem of sheltered employment, and consideration of the financial aid which the Community (ESF) could provide for the setting up and maintaining of facilities for sheltered employment.

FRANCE

1. The main guidelines are laid down in the 'Loi d'orientation en faveur des personnes handicapées (outline law on behalf of handicapped persons) of 30 June 1975; plans implementing this law have to be drawn up and additional measures have to be worked out.

The following accessory rehabilitation bodies are defined by this law:

- the 'Commissions départementales d'orientation' ('Département' Guidance Boards) are renamed 'Commissions techniques d'orientation et de reclassement professionnel' (Technical Vocational Guidance and Rehabilitation Boards) (COTOREP) and their membership is enlarged to include representatives of handicapped persons' associations and trade unions; their job is to determine who is entitled to receive benefits as a 'handicapped person', to draw up individual programmes, and to decide which institutions are to provide the relevant benefits (these institutions are bound by COTOREP decisions);
- these Boards work in association with the 'Département' employment offices (which have disablement resettlement officers) and with the newly-created 'Centres de préorientation' (Preliminary Guidance Centres) and 'équipes de préparation et suite du reclassement' (rehabilitation, preparation and follow-up teams).

In addition, the law guarantees an income to handicapped persons in employment. Thus the Government helps undertakings and sheltered workshops to bear the costs involved in employing handicapped persons. This should result in more jobs becoming available to handicapped persons.

2. There are two kinds of pilot scheme in France:

- remedial training for handicapped persons who have a very low level of education, as a preliminary to normal rehabilitation (this applies particularly to immigrant workers who have been the victims of occupational accidents); assessment of needs, establishment of methods;
- the work of the rehabilitation preparation and follow-up teams (multi-disciplinary, responsible for a Département, recruited locally). This project, which started in 1974, has led to the creation of an initial group of teams; the aim now is to improve the capacity of these teams to assist in occupational integration and to create more teams so that the whole of the country may be covered.

These activities form an integral part of the whole described in § 1.

3.4. A group concerned with handicapped persons has been set up within the "Délégation à l'emploi" (a department attached to the Ministry of Labour).

The aim is to influence both the training and the employment of handicapped persons.

At present, the supply of vocational training for handicapped persons meets half the demand. This situation is to be remedied by appropriate action in the establishments concerned (rehabilitation centres and sections for handicapped persons in the centres run by the AFPA - the Adult Vocational Training Association) and by improving the use of individual retraining contracts.

Secondly, it is hoped to improve employment opportunities in undertakings and sheltered workshops by means of financial measures which guarantee employed handicapped persons a minimum income and enable the undertakings where they are employed to obtain help in bearing the costs involved in providing supervision and adapting workplaces. This will be backed up by attempts to ensure that employers are better informed.

Finally, various working parties are studying the measures which should be taken in order to extend the work of sheltered workshops, whose capacity (2 600 places in 1978, corresponding to 0,005 % of the total population) is much lower than what is needed (1).

(1) In France, the law gives a very strict definition of 'sheltered employment'. The places mentioned should not be confused with the places provided by the 'Centres d'aide par le travail' (work centres) which are intended for persons whose working capacity is reduced by more than two thirds. (the latter numbered 31 000 in 1978).

IRELAND

1. The 1970 Health Act made the Health Boards, which cover the eight administrative areas of Ireland, responsible for providing the services necessary for training handicapped persons and adapting jobs to their needs. This is carried out with the help of a central organization, the National Rehabilitation Board. In 1974 there were two aims:

- to initiate an action programme for the training and employment of handicapped persons; this programme, drawn up by a group of experts, was approved by the Minister in 1975;
- in application of this programme, to increase rehabilitation facilities by close cooperation between the Government and the voluntary associations concerned; as a result of this cooperation, financing methods and staff training have improved.

2. The European Social Fund has enabled the opening of about twenty new community workshops and has helped to improve the working conditions and remuneration of the handicapped and their trainers in other workshops. It has also contributed to an important degree to the restoration to a normal working life in their community of hundreds of mentally ill, mentally retarded and physically handicapped persons who had been previously dependent on being maintained by the State either in residential centres or by State financial allowances.

3. Work must continue in Ireland on the 1975 programme. One of the problems is motivating handicapped persons to undergo training and take up employment; the other is the standard and scope of existing facilities. The main aims are:

- a. to improve the arrangements for tracing handicapped persons who could be employed, for evaluating their capacities and for guiding them;
- b. to improve training facilities
 - at AnCO centres (training of handicapped persons in association with able-bodied persons);
 - in sheltered workshops (training of handicapped persons for open employment);
- c. the upgrading of the standards of performance of all workshops providing training and employment services for the handicapped (in 1974 Ireland had 737 places in sheltered workshops, i.e. 0,024 % of the total population);
- d. the provision of incentives to employers to encourage them to employ handicapped persons.

4. Ireland feels that Community action should be along the following lines:

- the provision of financial support (for the creation of basic training facilities);
- the identification by the Network of the most suitable and effective training programmes for the different categories of handicapped persons;
- the development of policies which would give emphasis to the restoration or introduction of the handicapped person to work rather than to his financial support by the State.

ITALY

1. Vocational rehabilitation has developed against the following background:

- a. A shift of responsibility for vocational training, health care and social assistance, education, etc. from central State institutions to local public bodies (regions, "comprensori" (2), communities in mountainous districts, municipalities). This process derived its main impetus from two events:
 - in 1972, special decrees gave the regions responsibility for certain matters, including vocational training;
 - decentralization was completed by Decree No 616 of 24 July 1977, introduced by the Government in pursuance of the Act on the regions and the organization of the public service (Law No 382 of 22 July 1975). The latter decree not only shifts responsibilities, personnel and services away from the centre; it also gives a precise definition of the rôles allocated to central government, the regions and local authorities.
- b. The extension of regional legislation within the framework of two outline laws. The Outline Law on vocational training (No 845 of 23 December 1978) defines the areas in which action at regional level is to be taken and the principles on which such action should be based; these areas include "the professional qualifications of disabled and handicapped persons and the measures needed to enable them to exercise their right to vocational training" (Article 4 d.). Law No 833 of 23 December 1978 sets up a national health service, guaranteeing health care

(2) The "comprensorio" is a territorial unit used in social and economic planning which is halfway between a region and a municipality.

for every citizen on an equal basis, with a view to promoting personal, family and community life. In specific geographical areas, existing institutions are expected to work together in a "local health unit" which provides health care.

- c. A reorganization at local level of the services providing social and health benefits. The geographical framework is the same both for social and health services. Within this framework, planning is done independently; users are allowed to participate and account is taken of special needs. This enables an overall health programme to be established, linking prevention with therapy and rehabilitation. In this way handicapped persons find their needs as members of the community met by the services designed for the whole community, and remain integrated during their rehabilitation. Help towards their integration is provided by Law No 517 of 4 August 1977 on the integration of handicapped pupils into schools, and by Law No 180 of 13 May 1978, which regulates preventive measures, treatment and rehabilitation for the mentally ill within the general health services.
- d. The problem of integrating handicapped persons, thus envisaged, directly affects the community and is linked to the problems of the population as a whole; although posed at local level, it has in fact a wider political and practical context. The collective agreements deal with those aspects of the problem which are connected with work.

2. The demonstration projects supported by the ESF provide the sort of aid mentioned above and often concern mentally-handicapped persons. They are sponsored by local authorities (regions, provinces) and are concerned not only with the training and integration of handicapped persons, but also with influencing the social environment; the initiators are gradually led to define their policy. The training of rehabilitation staff forms an integral part of such projects.

A project carried out in the period 1974-1977 and involving experiments conducted by different groups (in Rome, Bologna and Verona) in collaboration with a national body (ENAIIP) has shown that the forging of new links between the handicapped person and the community

(the "socialization" of the handicapped person) is a prerequisite of rehabilitation and not an inevitable result of the acquisition of vocational skills; a method based on this principle has been proposed as a result of this project.

It is intended to apply this method widely during the period 1977-1980 by means of measures taken throughout the country. This development has been planned with the support of the trade unions; it involves the exchange of experience and the training of instructors at national level.

3. Current problems include:

- a. ensuring that local authorities actually perform the tasks assigned to them by law, and reorganizing services at local level;
- b. intensifying vocational rehabilitation measures on behalf of victims of occupational disease and accidents, so as to guarantee them continuity of employment;
- c. doing more to expand the provision of vocational rehabilitation facilities in the Mezzogiorno, on the basis of measures now under way;
- d. supporting the individual efforts of instructors and staff engaged in current projects with a peripatetic training programme.

4. Aid from the ESF is essential for the progress of rehabilitation in Italy. It is hoped that there will be much closer cooperation at Community level, in particular within the European Network.

LUXEMBOURG

1. The Grand-Duchy is becoming less dependent on foreign countries for rehabilitation services. Recent activities comprise:

- a. a new hospital in Luxembourg with surgical, traumatology and orthopaedic services equipped for functional rehabilitation;
- b. vocational rehabilitation for mentally handicapped young adults (in the sheltered workshop at Capellen) and the physically handicapped (at a new centre in Dudelange).

2. The ESF provides financial aid for these demonstration projects.

3.4. To provide continuity between medical and vocational rehabilitation, exercise training and preliminary occupational retraining services are planned. In the same context, a cardiovascular rehabilitation centre at Mondorf is planned.

NETHERLANDS

1. So far, the main object has been to offer to all citizens whether or not they come under a contributory scheme:

- medical treatment and rehabilitation in the event of sickness;
- an adequate income if employment is interrupted;
- specially adapted employment for persons unfit for normal work.

The 1976 General Disability Insurance Act (AAW) brought the benefits guaranteed to workers by the Disability Insurance Act (WAO) into general application: one person in ten will benefit in 1980. In 1978 there were 70 000 jobs in sheltered workshops in the Netherlands (corresponding to 0,5 % of the total population, which is the highest rate in the Community).

2. The Netherlands has asked for aid from the ESF for one demonstration project.

3. Rehabilitation policy as a whole has been examined by the Government, which in June 1978 put before Parliament a general paper containing short-term plans.

The difficulty now encountered in placing handicapped persons in normal workplaces could be overcome by:

- a. measures enabling those who become handicapped to remain in the firm where they are working (now being studied);
- b. financial measures to facilitate placement: wage subsidies, paid when handicapped persons are placed in open employment; application of Article 44 of the Working Incapacity Insurance Act (placement with gradually diminishing wage subsidies);

24'

- c. more pressure on undertakings to employ handicapped persons (at the moment there is no clear definition of what constitutes a handicap or any compulsory registration; the percentage of places compulsorily available in undertakings - 2% of the workforce - is too low; there are no formal employment obligations);
- d. supply of temporary staff by a private non-profit-making organization working in close collaboration with employment offices. This enables employers to employ handicapped persons over a six-month trial period without entering into any commitments;
- e. taking into consideration the special training requirements of adult handicapped persons (there are no special training facilities in the Netherlands).

4. An establishment on the lines of the "Berufsförderungswerke" is to be opened as part of the Lucasstichting in Hoensbroek. A similar centre, for young handicapped persons, is about to open in Groesbeek ("Werkenrode"). Generally, it is thought desirable that the European Network should be more active, particularly in the training of instructors and in research.

UNITED KINGDOM

1. The United Kingdom government has encouraged rehabilitation in the fields of public health and employment.

In recent years it has been policy for medical rehabilitation services to be improved and expanded. Money was allocated to enable hospitals and centres carrying out good rehabilitation practice to be designated as Demonstration Centres to show what could be done to rehabilitate patients and provide professional training for staff. There are 21 such centres. The recruitment of therapists has been encouraged, salaries improved, and institutes researching into aspects of rehabilitation developed. Therapists have been assigned to give advice on planning district remedial services. Medical rehabilitation continues to be a priority in planning guidelines for health service development.

The Manpower Services Commission (MSC) took over responsibility for the operation of employment and training services for disabled people from the Department of Employment in July 1976. The MSC operates through its Employment Service Division (ESD), Special Programmes Division (SPD) and Training Services Division (TSD). In February 1978 the MSC published its Programme "Developing Employment and Training Services for Disabled People", which set out in broad terms the aims and objectives for the service over the next 5-10 years. Plans for the future include:

- a. A review of the statutory 3% quota scheme for the employment of registered disabled people, which will be undertaken by MSC in late 1979. MSC is aware of the fact that there appears to be an increasing disinclination among disabled people to register as such, and there are currently more unemployed unregistered disabled people (72 000) than there are unemployed registered disabled people looking for work (about 66 500).
- b. Improvements in training of specialist placement staff (DROs), and a National Training Centre was set up to this end in 1975.
- c. Improvement in the use of Employment Rehabilitation Centres (ERCs). 27 ERCs are now in operation, and about 2 200 people are taking rehabilitation courses in one month. Some 15 000 courses were completed in 1977-1978. Rehabilitation methods are being reviewed by the special Research Centre set up in 1976, and it is intended to undertake a wider review of the future role of ERCs.
- d. Developing the training services for disabled people operated through TSD, and improving the access of disabled people to existing training services. TSD directly supports four residential training colleges (RTCs) for disabled people run by voluntary organizations. A review and research programme is to be undertaken to test possible additions to current training provision and to indicate the extent of unmet training needs among disabled people.
- e. The provision of special aids to employment for individual disabled people will continue. Financial assistance can also be given to disabled people setting up business on their own account. Special attention is being given to the reading needs of blind employees, and the means whereby the provision of aids can benefit from advances in modern technology.

- 26.
- f. Continuing support for the provision of sheltered employment by Remploy Ltd., Local Authorities and other organizations. In 1977-1978 there were about 13 350 severely disabled people working in sheltered conditions (about 0,024 % of the total population). MSC aims to make greater use of sheltered workshop capacity in the near future, and to review standards of entry into such workshops. It also promotes industrial enclaves (currently 23 exist) which give severely disabled people the opportunity of working in open industry under controlled conditions.
 - g. Developing the "Positive Policies" campaign started in the summer of 1977, whereby direct contacts are set up between DROs and employers with a view to persuading employers to adopt and implement policies favourable to the recruitment, induction, training and retention of disabled people. Two schemes also introduced in 1977 to provide financial assistance to employers who adapt premises or equipment to enable disabled people to be employed or retained and a scheme to give temporary financial aid, at the discretion of the DRO, to an employer taking on a disabled person who would not otherwise have been offered a job, have been extended beyond their initial trial periods.
 - h. Action as necessary in the light of a report produced by the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Disabled People concerning the rehabilitation and resettlement of mentally ill people

Provision of vocational rehabilitation services for disabled people in North Ireland follow a similar pattern to those in Great Britain.

2. During the period of the initial Community action programme, the ESF supported programmes and projects included pilot hospital centres and medical rehabilitation; DRO training; employment rehabilitation in ERCs and through agencies; training projects and a project concerned with the resettlement of severely disabled young persons and the problems they encounter when they leave school.
3. Future plans have been described in paragraph 1.

4. The following are suggested elements of future Community policy:

- Development of advice and guidance to employers on the employment of disabled people and the spread of knowledge about good employment practices for disabled people at work.
- Encouragement of national policies aimed at providing supportive services, in all aspects, for disabled people in the labour market; and encouragement for modification/adaptation to these to meet changing patterns of need.
- Ensuring that disabled people benefit as much as possible from job creation, work experience and similar programmes.
- Ensuring that vocational training for employment is made available to disabled people who need it.
- Encouragement and spread of information, study and research on the provision and effectiveness of resettlement, rehabilitation and training policies within the Member States.
- Intervention of the ESF to ensure maximum benefit for the largest possible number of disabled people.