



From Disability Benefits to Gainful Employment

A sub-regional conference

organized by the ILO

Sub-Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe, Budapest
in cooperation with
the Skills and Employability Department, Geneva

**Reumal Center, Fojnica,
Bosnia-Herzegovina**

October 6th-8th, 2005

This conference is sponsored by

The Federal Ministry of Social Affairs and Generations, Austria
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South Eastern Europe”, supported by the Government of France**

The ILO Sub-Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe, Budapest
REUMAL Center, Fojnica

Rationale:

Policy for persons with disabilities is an important issue for all European countries (and beyond, of course), to provide equal opportunities for persons disabled for whatever cause. Many countries in South-Eastern Europe, which suffered severely from regional conflict in the Balkans over the last decade, still have to integrate persons disabled as a consequence of those conflicts, both former soldiers as well as civil victims of war. Providing social assistance, social services and medical as well as vocational rehabilitation for those disabled persons, but also for those disabled due to unsafe workplaces and other accidents, still is a paramount challenge to policy makers.

With economic and political transition progressing, though not yet completed, priority has to shift now from the provision of income substitution to the reintegration of persons with disabilities into the world of work.

This request poses several challenges to policy makers:

- it requires them to narrow the scope of policy to compensating for disability related loss of income, thus not to use social assistance policies for other purposes (e.g. labour market policy, veteran entitlement policy etc.)
- it requires them to shift from a medically defined approach to disability towards focusing on the work capacity (recruitment, job retention and return to work)
- to examine existing provision for persons with disabilities with regard to disincentives to employment and to return to work
- to review the existing provision of medical rehabilitation and develop and strengthen its linkages to vocational rehabilitation

This conference is to examine national efforts to shift the focus of support for persons with disabilities towards measures that shall enable them to achieve their full potential.

The conference is to build upon work undertaken in the field of management of vocational rehabilitation by the ILO in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2002 (legislation and its effects on work incentives and support for rehabilitation services offered).

A survey of disability employment policies in South Eastern Europe will be presented by a team consisting primarily of disability NGOs from across the region.

Objectives of the conference

- to come to a common understanding of the linkages – both mutually reinforcing and tensions – between employment, labour market and social protection (benefits) policies
- to come to a common understanding of the incentive/disincentive functions of disability benefit systems with regard to labour market integration of beneficiaries
- to identify the potential benefits of shifting from benefit-based approaches to labour market integration approaches in disability policy
- to come to a common understanding of factors which support the attractiveness of entering employment or returning to work of the particular needs of persons with disabilities who wish to become employed or return to work
- to develop a first set of next steps for disability policy reform towards employment integration

Participants:

The conference will address 30 participants from BiH, both from Federal, regional entity and municipal level, as well as two representatives from Albania, Croatia, FYROM, Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia, who are

- policy makers, or
- senior civil servants of labour market and social security/assistance institutions, or
- managers of service delivery and rehabilitation institutions in the area of disability policy or areas related to that, or
- NGOs working in the field of disability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and other South Eastern European countries.

Languages:

English and the official languages of Bosnia and Herzegovina provided v.v. in simultaneous interpretation

Thursday, 6th October 2005

- until 17.30 arrival of participants at Reumal Center, Fojnica
- 15.00-17.30 Conference registration
- 17.30 Conference opening
- Welcome address by Mr. Eldan **Lokmic**, Director of the Reumal Center
- Welcome address by **Mr. Safet Halilovic**, Minister of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Welcome address and conference opening by Ms. **Petra Ulshoefer**, Director ILO SRO Budapest
- Keynote presentation 1:
 Ms. Barbara **Murray**, ILO/SKILLS
Policy in transition. An Overview of European experience regarding the employment of persons with disabilities
- 18.30 Dinner hosted by the ILO

Friday, 7th October 2005

- Chair: Ms. Petra **Ulshoefer**, Director, ILO SRO Budapest
- 08:45-09:15 Mr. Eldan **Lokmic**, Director of the Reumal Center
Best practices and experiences acquired during the implementation of the ILO project “Job creation for war-disabled persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina”
- 09.15-09.30 Mr. Franz **Gundacker**, ILO SRO Budapest
Employment programs for persons with disabilities: good practice and side effects
- 09:30–09:45 Ms. Elaine **Fultz**, ILO SRO Budapest
Linking disability benefit systems with employment integration policies
Introduction to ILO survey of countries in South Eastern Europe:
- 09:45–10:15 Mr. Cristian **Toma**, Romanian Labour Ministry
Overview of ILO Survey on current law and practice on employment integration of persons with disabilities in South-Eastern Europe
- 10.15-10.45 Coffee break
- 10:45–12:00 **Panel session**, chaired by Ms. Elaine **Fultz**, ILO SRO Budapest
Short **round of statements** from ILO survey team followed by discussion
- 12:00 – 12:30 Keynote presentation 2:
Mr. Jean-Luc **Simon**, President, Groupement Français des Personnes Handicapées
Approaches to employment integration in Western Europe

- 12:45-14:00 Lunch break
- 14:00-14:30 Comments by World Bank representative Ms. Jeanine **Braithwaite**, ECA Disability Coordinator
- 14:30-16.00 **Parallel workshop sessions** to identify what is needed to promote the integration and reintegration of persons with disabilities and to formulate the next steps (specific guidelines will be circulated during the conference)
- 16.00-16.30 Coffee break
- 16.30-18.00 **Panel session**, chaired by Mr. Jean-Luc **Simon**, President, Groupement Français des Personnes Handicapées
Presentation of the findings of the workshops
- General discussion**
- Day's conclusions** by Ms. Elaine **Fultz** and Mr. Franz **Gundacker**, ILO SRO Budapest
- 18:30 Reception hosted by Reumal Center followed by artistic performance

Saturday, 8th October 2005

- 08.30-09.30 Chair: representative of the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Essential elements of successful transition from benefits to employment
Comments on the workshops' finding by Ms. Barbara **Murray**, Ms. Elaine **Fultz** and Mr. Franz **Gundacker**, ILO
- 09.30-10.00 Coffee break
- 10.00-11.00 Panel chaired by Ms. Barbara Murray, ILO SKILLS
Moving towards the employment integration of persons with disabilities: pathways, obstacles, benefits
- Short statements by**
- a representative of the **Ministry of Civil Affairs** of Bosnia and Herzegovina
 - a representative of **employers'** organizations
 - a representative of **workers'** organizations
 - a representative of an **NGO** active in the field of disability policies
- Discussion**
- 11.15-11.30 Summary and conclusions by Ms. Barbara **Murray** and Ms. Elaine **Fultz**, ILO
Summary and conclusions by **Mr. Safet Halilovic**, Minister of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Farewell address by Mr. Eldan **Lokmic**, Director of the Reumal Center
- 11.30 End of conference
Departure of participants