

UK/09/LLP-LdV/TOI-163\_285

## Report on Results of VET Contexts Questionnaire

### 1. Is there any legislation that defines disability? If yes, please give the definition below

In all of the partner countries there is some legislation that defines 'disability'. In the UK, Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey, there are specific acts or laws concerned with integrating people with disabilities into society and combating discrimination:

Country	Act/Law	Introduced
United Kingdom	Disability Discrimination Act 2005	1995, revised 2005
Bulgaria	Law of integration of People with Disabilities	2005
Greece	Law 2643/98 "Employment of people with disabilities"  Law 2817/2000 Education of people with disabilities" revised 2008 New Law. 3699/2008	2008
Turkey	The Turkish Disability Act No.5378	2005

Generally, the definitions describe people with disabilities as those with a physical or mental impairment that has a considerable effect on their ability to conduct day-to-day activities (eating, washing, walking, shopping, working etc). In the UK, there is no longer a requirement for the disability to be clinically well recognised although the DDA stipulates that the effect of the impairment should have lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months. In Bulgaria individuals need to be medically assessed as having a reduced capacity of 50% or more to work or to fully integrate into society.

In the Turkish Disability Act it is generally understood that the definition of 'disability' also includes those who are gifted (i.e. in sport, leadership, entrepreneurialism, and music) in Turkey. As per the information provided by the partner in Greece, there does not appear to be a clear, general definition of the term 'disability'. However, within the Greek educational system, the social model definition is referred to, whilst for other departments, such as the Social Affairs Department, the medical model is adopted which describes people with disabilities as being those with physical, psychological or mental impairments who are unable to undertake normal activities as ascertained by medical professionals.

The Biopsychosocial model of disability is gaining acceptance across the partnership. This model describes disability in terms of biological, psychological and social influences rather than using only a medical model description of disability. In all partner states the social model is used in educational system, whilst the medical model is adopted in other departments such as Social Affairs. In the UK and in Turkey the intention is to use social model for all provision except where finances/equipment or other impairment related provision is to be allocated.

## 2. Does the legislation regulate for the education of disabled people? How?

The legislation of the partner countries is in line with EU policies regarding the integration of people with disabilities into education:

Country	Act/Law	Rights	Introduced
United Kingdom	Disability Discrimination Act 2005	Education providers must not treat disabled learners less favourably in terms of the admissions arrangements, the admissions offer/refusal, and the teaching learning and other student services.	1995, revised 2005
Bulgaria	Law of integration of People with Disabilities, Section II (Education and Vocational Training)	The Law for the integration of people with disabilities aims at guaranteeing equality for people with disabilities within a range of sectors including education and vocational training.	2005
Greece	Law 2008 Special Education	The law enforces the provision of special education services to students with disabilities and identified special educational needs, ensuring them integrated education, equal opportunities for full participation and contribution to society, independent living, economic self-sufficiency, and autonomy.	2008
Turkey	Articles 13 (Vocational Rehabilitation), 15 (Education and Training), 16 (Education Evaluation) of The Turkish Disability Act Law No.5378, Turkish Constitution	The right to education of disabled people cannot be prevented for any reason. Disabled children, youngsters and adults have the right to an education equal to non-disabled people and in inclusive environments by taking special conditions and differences into consideration.	2005

## 3. What counts as VET? (E.g. is it formal/informal; school or employment based?)

Generally, the partner countries were unified in defining VET as vocational, technical and professional development within the framework of a formally accredited education system. The objective of undertaking VET is to develop skills and gain recognised vocational qualifications in order to pursue a chosen career to progress to the next level of education. It is usually completed following initial/secondary education in a range of settings (vocational schools, colleges, centres etc).

On the other hand, there are also some differences as to what constitutes VET. In Turkey informal VET can also be apprenticeship-style, work-based learning, although this would not result in a specific qualification, it would enable the learner to gain the skills to be effective within their chosen employment.

In Bulgaria informal VET can be a process of acquiring new skills and knowledge through everyday experience and from the surrounding environment: 'A lifelong learning process (also self-learning) during which one acquires knowledge and skills, attitudes, intellectual values from the everyday experience through educational influence and through the surrounding social and material environment including libraries and mass media.'

Similarly in the UK, there are a range of providers and qualifications that can be regarded as VET. However, in Greece VET is more formal in nature and forms part of secondary education within Vocational High School settings.

**4. What specific rights/entitlements, if any, do disabled VET students have under the law in your country?**

In all of the partner countries VET students have rights/entitlements according to legislation when participating in vocational education.

In the UK VET students have the same rights under law as any other learners on any other courses. The education provider has to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) and has a duty to promote disability equality, take steps to eliminate discrimination and harassment, and to publish a Disability Equality Scheme, setting out how they plan to do so. Education providers have a duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' to meet the needs of disabled students. For most types of education provider, making 'reasonable adjustments' can include: changes to practices or procedures; changes to physical features, and providing extra support (such as specialist teachers or equipment). When deciding whether an adjustment is reasonable, education providers can consider issues such as the cost of the adjustment, the interests of other students, health and safety factors and whether academic standards are maintained. Students have the right to appeal if they feel that their needs are not being met.

In Turkey disabled learners are able to access places in mainstream Vocational Colleges but also have access to places in Vocational Colleges/Centres specifically for people with a particular disability (e.g. centre for visually impaired students). In order to gain access to these centres, individuals are assessed by a panel of experts as to the impact of their disability on their ability to participate in education which is estimated as a percentage.

According to the Greek partner, disabled students have the same rights as non-disabled students; in addition, positive discrimination is in place ensuring that 5% of disabled students are able to enter vocational education colleges/institutions without successfully completing entrance exams based on their high school grades. Disabled students also have the right to be examined orally or in writing depending on their capabilities.

In Bulgaria, disabled students who are assessed to have more than 70% incapacity in a particular function can be admitted into education on passing an exam (each institution has different entry requirements based on national legislation) and are then eligible for certain levels of support e.g. hearing impaired person may have a signer provided by the education provider. The students may also get financial support and additional support during the course.

**5. Is there any financial support available to disabled people for their daily living? Please give details.**

The state in each country provides different kinds of financial support to people with a range of disabilities; however, the level of support varies.

In Turkey, individuals with disabilities receive quarterly disability payments as part of the Social Security system. In addition, they are entitled to funding from the Social and Solidarity Fund for disability living aids if this is not fully provided by the state. A range of tax rebates are also available for disabled people (income tax, property tax, motor vehicle purchase tax, customs levies). Disabled people who live independently are entitled to financial support for home care; additionally people living in state rehabilitation centres are funded by the state. In practice, however, these measures lack consistency and are implemented in varying degrees.

The following table summarises some of the benefits available in Turkey:

Allowance	Qualifying levels
Car allowance	If disability rated above 90% disabled
Homecare	If disability rated above 50% disabled and income below 2/3 min wage
Property tax	House less than 200m <sup>2</sup> and only 1 house
Disability allowance	If disability rated above 40% and below 70%, if above 70% and are dependent on family carer then carer is entitled to allowance as well.

There are a number of financial support schemes available in the UK and Bulgaria, some of which are specifically targeted at disabled people and others are targeted at people whose capacity to work is reduced.

In the UK, disabled people under the age of 65 are entitled to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Employment Support Allowance (ESA) is payable to people with disabilities and/or health issues whose ability to work is reduced. Some disabled people also qualify for the Motability scheme; this funds low cost vehicles (cars, wheelchairs, scooters) for those who qualify for the Higher Rate Mobility Component (HRMC) of the DLA. For financial support to enable people to live independently in the community rather than in residential care, there is the Independent Living Fund (ILF). Dependent on income, disabled people can also be entitled to other social benefits (child tax credits, housing benefits, income support).

In Bulgaria, those with reduced employment capacity are entitled to a reduction of housing tax (75%), vehicle tax (which is dependent on the size of the vehicle) and income tax (50%). Those people assessed as being 70-100% disabled are entitled to free train travel and a 'vignette' (exemption sticker for toll road payments). Those with certain physical disabilities receive a monthly transport allowance. Additionally disabled people are also entitled to allowances for spa-therapy, telephone usage, purchase of medication and grants are available for to fund adjustments to physical access in an individual's residence.

In Greece, state funding is only to available to disabled people who have been assessed as having 67+% capacity who are not insured through the Greek Public Insurance Organisation. The state does, however, cover the cost of those living in residential care. Disabled people are also entitled to financial support for car fuel and a 50% reduction on public transport.

**6. Is there any financial support available to disabled students to support them in their studies? Please give the details.**

According to the information supplied by the partners (from mainland Europe), whilst some funding is available to support students in secondary/compulsory education (normally paid directly to the parents or the school), there is a lack of financial support for disabled people involved in post 16 vocational education.

Financial support is available in Further Education in the UK. Disabled learners aged 16-19 are eligible for the Education Maintenance Allowance and older disabled learners are entitled to the Adult Learning Grant. Further Education colleges also receive government funding to provide support to disabled learners which is regulated by a number of organisations (Learning and Skills Council in England, National Council for Education and Training in Wales, Scottish Funding Council and the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland).

In Turkey it is the responsibility of the education provider to apply to the Ministry of Education at the start of the academic year for the aids needed to support students or for a grant to make

physical adaptations to the building. Often this procedure is bypassed by the education provider and they seek sponsorship or donations from parents to fund it.

**7. Is there any practical support available to disabled students to support them in their studies? Please describe (formal and/or informal) and give examples.**

The provision of practical support available to disabled students in VET varies greatly between the partner countries. In Greece and Bulgaria there is no specific provision.

In Turkey VET students receive free transport to their place of learning and awareness raising is conducted for their peers.

In the UK, practical support can include:

- transport to the institution;
- access to buildings and rooms;
- specialist equipment (e.g. a computer and associated software);
- teacher training and awareness raising;
- provision of teaching and learning assistants;
- interpreters for deaf students;
- adapted materials in different formats.

**8. Conclusions.**

This survey across the partnership has identified that the Biopsychosocial model of disability is gaining acceptance across the partnership.

Legislation has been enacted in all partner countries to ensure equal access to education for disabled people.

There is a generally unified definition of VET across the membership, namely vocational, technical and professional development within the framework of a formally accredited education system. In some countries, an informal approach to VET is important such as apprenticeship-style work related learning that does not lead to a specific qualification.

In all of the partner countries VET students have rights/ entitlements according to their national legislation when they participate in vocational education. The state in each country provides different levels of financial and practical support to people with a range of disabilities; however, the level of support varies. The support is allocated using the medical model of disability. Each country has its own set of medical assessments and qualifying levels of impairment for the support available. The nature of the financial and practical support varies greatly across the partnership.