



A review of the situation of disabled people and the welfare system in Greece



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INDEX

1. DEFINITIONS	3
2. STATISTICAL DATA.....	3
3. EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION	4
4. THE GREEK INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM FOR THE DISABLED	7
4.1. THE LAW	7
4.2. WELFARE SYSTEM	7
5. PRESENTATION OF THE REHABILITATION TEAM.....	9
6. REHABILITATION CENTRES	11
7. ASSOCIATIONS OF DISABLED PERSONS AND/OR THEIR FAMILIES .	13

1. DEFINITIONS

World Health Organisation (WHO) has compiled an International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH). This classification corresponds to a concrete progress as far as the term “Health, as the status of full physical, psychological and social wellbeing” is concerned and gives a better view of rehabilitation. Disabilities may refer to mental, kinetic, sensory, haematological, renal and psychological problems. Rehabilitation services aim at not letting disabilities operate as handicaps to the full participation of the disabled person in social life.

2. STATISTICAL DATA

In Greece there are no complete data concerning disabled persons. EUROSTAT reports a percentage of 10.3% on the general population, which is analysed to 10.6% of men and 9.9% of women.

It is estimated that around 10% of the whole population needs rehabilitation services. For example, every year there are about 30.000 survivors of strokes, 25.000 survivors of head injuries and 7.000 with spinal cord injuries and paraplegic.

The findings of the survey lead by the Development Partnership “Proteas” shown in the next table expose the cause of the disability.

CAUSE	PERCENTAGE (%)
Slow effect illness	33.9
Sudden illness	36.3
Traffic accident	5.6
Work accident	4,8
Other type of accident	17.7
Other	1.6

Traffic accidents have victims mostly of the ages 18-35 (already working or going to enter the labour market soon). Persons with mental retardation are estimated to cover 1-3% of the whole population.

According to the National Statistics in Greece the age distribution of people with disabilities is the following:

AGE	TOTAL (%)	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)
0-14	1.1	1.5	0.7
14-24	1.8	2.0	1.6
25-34	2.7	3.0	2.4
35-44	5.1	5.3	5.0
45-54	8.9	9.4	8.6
55-62	17.7	18.5	17.1
65-74	33.9	33.3	34.4
75+	28.8	27.0	30.2
TOTAL	100	100	100

3. EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

Non-active are about 83% of the disabled instead of 58% of the whole population. Unemployed are 8.9% of the disabled.

The following table shows the situation of the disabled persons as far as occupation is concerned.

	Disabled	General population	Disabled/general population
Managers	11.0	10.3	7.7
Scientists/artists	9.2	12.5	5.3
Mechanics	4.4	7.0	4.4
Office staff	5.8	10.7	3.9
Services and salespersons	10.4	13.2	5.7
Farmers	32.0	15.6	14.6
Skilled workers	13.0	15.7	5.9
Machine operators	6.9	7.4	6.7
Unskilled	6.9	6.7	7.4
Other	0.4	1.0	3.0
TOTAL	100	100	7.1

Only 4.8% of the disabled persons say that their disability has derived from their job (6.8% men and 3.2% women).

About 42.5% of the disabled persons declare they fill a problem of social exclusion. Out of them 62.1% refer to poor revenues, 53.6% to unemployment and 51.8% to insufficient social services.

In the next table we see the type of assistance offered to disabled persons at the work place (for those who work) and the type of assistance they would like to have (for those that don't work).

TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED
Kind of job	27.9	31.0
Quantity of work	18.0	8.4
Accessibility to the workplace	1.5	4.1
Mobility within the workplace	13.2	12.1
Assistance and understanding by managers and colleagues	20.2	20.8
Other type	16.4	15.6
No answer	2.8	8.0
TOTAL	100	100

On the Article 22 of the Greek Constitution is based the right of disabled persons to work and the protection of their work such as work conditions, their remuneration, their promotions, their education, their training and the prohibition of discrimination against the disabled *“Work is a right, protected by the State, which looks after the creation of work conditions for all citizens and for the moral and material elevation of civil and rural population. All citizens, no matter their gender or any other discrimination, are entitled to the same reward for providing work of the same value... The State provides for the social insurance of the working people, following the Law”*.

The Law 2643/1998 previews the criteria for the objective recruitment of employees in the public and semi public sector. The minimum percentage of disabled working in these organisations is established at 8%.

As far as education is concerned, there some more or less recent provisions for the education of persons with disabilities such as:

- Special centres in primary and secondary education for diagnosing and training pupils with disabilities (deaf, paraplegic, blind etc)
- Staff with specific studies for the training of persons with learning dysfunctions, working in ordinary schools
- Use of Nemeth code for mathematics and Braille scripture
- Special provisions for entry in Universities for disabled persons
- Facilitation of students with dyslexia
- Facilitation of students with disabilities
- Data base Accessschool

Furthermore all accredited training centres must have provisions of accessibility for persons with disabilities and there are specific training centres accredited especially to train persons with disabilities.

There are numerous initiatives as well of the third sector of employment (co-operatives, non profit organisations, associations etc.) for the employment or even better self-employment of the disabled of certain categories.

4. THE GREEK INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM FOR THE DISABLED

4.1. THE LAW

Greek constitution has Article 21, paragraph 6 that says *“Persons with disabilities have the right to enjoy measures that ensure their autonomy, professional inclusion and participation in the social, economic and political life of the country”*. Several more articles are complementary to this one. For example, the Article 25 is the guideline for a State of Justice and protects disabled persons and Article 5A, paragraph 2 refers to electronic accessibility. It says: *“Everyone has the right to participate in the information society. Facilitation of the access to the information that is electronically available as well as their production, exchange and diffusion is a duty of the State, keeping the guarantees of Articles 9, 9a and 19”*.

There are numerous provisions for the disabled in the Civil Law, referring to:

- Their right to undertake legal transactions
- Indemnification by those who have caused the disability
- Judicial assistance
- Inheritance law

The Penal Code previews some exceptions for example in the case the person has sensory or psychological problems or as far as the execution of sentences is concerned.

There is a range of Laws concerning the General Buildings Regulation aiming at improving the accessibility of buildings, lifts, toilets, pavements, post boxes etc.

4.2. WELFARE SYSTEM

Some of the provisions of the clerical Code are:

- A person is hired for a certain job if he or she can perform it with the adequate technical support.
- If an employee is dismissed because of her/his disability he/she is rehired taking into account some prerequisites.
- Parents of a child, who needs periodic hospitalisation or medical treatment or is mentally retarded or has Down syndrome, are entitled to additional 22 days holidays per year.
- A disabled person with disability over 50% has 6 days of additional holidays per year.
- There are many provisions for leaves according the case.

Persons suffering from permanent or not inability to work are entitled to take a long period leave or even a pension, which is renewed after checking if the conditions are met every year.

The common Ministerial Decision 115750/3006/81 previews the non-contributory pensions as well payment of expenses for hospitalisation and treatment for persons that cannot work.

Welfare system includes grants to non profit organisations, school buses for pupils and University students, buildings for hosting persons with psychological and psychiatric disabilities etc.

5. PRESENTATION OF THE REHABILITATION TEAM

1. Physician specialised in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (P.M.&R)

He/she defines rehabilitation objectives following thorough diagnosis and study of the situation of the patient. Prescribes medication, supervises and guides the whole rehabilitation team.

2. Rehabilitation nurse

He/she undertakes the health care of the disabled person, following the doctor's instructions aiming at reducing problems and conserving basic body functions and preparing physical rehabilitation. He/she trains the disabled person under the doctor's supervision.

3. Physical therapist

He/she applies the physical/movement rehabilitation programme, in close co-operation with the doctor aiming to upgrade the physical situation of the disabled.

4. Occupational therapist

He/she undertakes the training of the disabled to use functionally his/her hands and to be self-content by using altered or non-altered devices and accessible premises. He/she also uses tests, trains disabled to use mind functions in order to perform certain actions.

5. Speech and language therapist

He/she trains the disabled to use all forms of communication, focusing on verbal communication. He/she also retrains him/her how to use mind functions e.g. attention, memory and speech.

6. Clinical Psychologist

He/she support the disabled and his/her family and sometimes uses group dynamics.

7. Social worker

He/she cares about the needs of the disabled and his/her family linking rehabilitation with social welfare

8. Vocational counsellor

He/she uses tests, defines professional profile and skills and performs as a link with other services.

9. Rehabilitation engineer

In close co-operation with the doctor and the patient he/she produces devices and additives aiming at rehabilitation.

Sometimes rehabilitation requires multi-disciplinary co-operation with other medical staff such as neurosurgeons, orthopaedists, urologists, psychiatrists etc. Rehabilitation demands the synergy of all the above with the patient and his/her family.

6. REHABILITATION CENTRES

Some of the rehabilitation centres all over Greece are:

Al-anon

Al-anon family groups in Greece

Anadisi

Mental health, mental disabilities, development of disorders, child, speech therapy, occupational therapy, psychometrics.

ARGO Therapeutic program

Alternative therapeutic programme for addictive individuals from the Psychiatric Hospital of Thessaloniki, therapeutic philosophy, services, actions

Anelixi

Rehabilitation daily care centre. Physiotherapy, hydrotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy

Audio-Psycho-Phonology-Center

Pathology of listening

Community Mental health centre of Katerini

Psychiatric Hospital Petra Olympus.

Greek centre for the education and the Rehabilitation of the Blind

Rehabilitation services for the visual impaired

Kentavros

Centre for daily hospitalisation and integrated rehabilitation services including psychologist and sociologist.

Kinitiki exelixi

Treatment for children and adults with kinetic problems.

Logou xarin

Speech therapy

National institution for the rehabilitation of handicapped

Orthopaedic Center

Oxygen, ozone, laser and cell therapy centre

PMR Physica Medical Rehabilitation Center

Medical psychiatrist, paramedical physiotherapists, therapeutic gym department, kinisiotherapy, isokinetic training department.

Proseggisi

Support to disabled to live independently and become a productive member in society with attendant care.

Spyros doxiadis-Research for the kid

Special diagnostic and therapeutic unit

Therapeutic tourism para thin alos

It is based in Chania, Krete. Therapeutic tourism for mentally ill and people with special psychosocial needs

7. ASSOCIATIONS OF DISABLED PERSONS AND/OR THEIR FAMILIES

Here-below we present the main second and third grade organisations of the disabled and of their families. As a matter of fact, there are numerous first grade associations all through Greece.

National Confederation of Disabled Persons

Tel: +302109949837, e-mail esaea@otenet.gr

Panhellenic Association of Blinds

Tel: +302105245455

Greek Federation of Deaf persons

Tel: +30210994983, e-mail info@omke.gr

National Federation of Kinetic disabled

Tel: +302105224974, e-mail email@eoka.info

National Federation of the blind

Tel: +302105228333, e-mail pab@otenet.gr

Panhellenic Federation of parents of persons with disabilities

Tel: +302109949837, e-mail posgamea@otenet.gr

Other useful sites are :

<http://www.e-accessibility.gr>

<http://www.disabled.gr>

<http://www.eoka.y2.org>

<http://www.disabled.gr/lavda/index.html>

<http://www.pasipka.gr>

<http://www.autismhellas.gr/>

<http://pst.gr/>

<http://www.the-wolves.org>