



**DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

1430 NICOSIA

 REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

 **MINISTRY OF LABOUR**

**AND SOCIAL INSURANCE**

**DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

The Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (DSID) has been established as from 1.1.2009, as a new Department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, according to the Council of Ministers Decision n. 66.763 dated 6.2.2008 and according to the State Budget Law for 2009.

The mission of the Department is to undertake, as a central agent, the formulation, co-ordination and implementation of social policies for persons with disabilities, in co-operation with the co-responsible Ministries and Services as well as the Pancyprian Confederation of the Organisations of Persons with Disabilities. The vision of the Department is the improvement of the quality of life of persons with disabilities and its strategic goal is the formulation and implementation of such reforms, that will create new prospects for social inclusion.

The organizational structure of the Department is based on five sections: a) Management of the System for the Assessment of Disability and Functioning, b) Focal Point for the implementation of the UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, c) Enlightening activities, d) Social Benefits and Services, e) Vocational Training and Rehabilitation.

**Management of the System for the Assessment of Disability and Functioning**

The design and implementation of a New system of assessing disability and functioning in Cyprus is an import project, which aims to establish a scientific, reliable and credible basis for the assessment of disability and functioning, commonly accepted and used by state services and thus minimizing the efforts of persons with disabilities to follow multiple bureaucratic procedures to be assessed in order to fulfill their rights.
The project is co-financed by the European Social Fund and concerns the establishment of a Disability Assessment Centre, the issue of Assessment Manuals based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health of the World Health Organisation, special training of doctors and other health and rehabilitation professionals etc.

The New system will provide credible and reliable comprehensive reports on disability and functioning through professional multidisciplinary and modern assessment procedures. By the end of the assessment, a person will know and have a report not only on special needs for care, technical equipment, facilities, support, but also on capabilities and new prospects for training, employment, inclusion.

**Focal Point for the implementation of the UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

According to the Council of Ministers Decision dated 9/5/2012, the DSID was nominated as the Focal point for the implementation of the UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Convention.

The Department supports administratively the Pancyprian Council for Persons with Disabilities which was nominated as the Coordinating Mechanism for the implementation of the Convention. It will also cooperate with the Office of the Ombudsman and Commissioner for Human Rights which was nominated as the Indemendent Mechanism for the monitoring of the Convention. The Pancyprian Confederation of the Organisations for the Disabled participates in the procedures of all three mechanisms.

The DSID, based on the above Decision, was also authorized to coordinate the preparation of a National Action Plan for Disability in Cyprus for the period 2013-2020, based on the UN Convention and also the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020. So far 53 Contact Points have been nominated from 41 state agencies. For the preparation of the National Action Plan on Disability and its actions, 8 thematic technical committees have been established. The work of the committees will also result in the preparation of the first national report of Cyprus to the UN Committee for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities regarding the implementation of the UN Convention.

**Enlightening Activities**

In 2012 the Department issued informative material about the Services and Social Benefits, [the Recruitment of persons with Disabilities in the Wider Public Sector (Special Provisions) Law of 2009](http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dsid/dsid.nsf/All/F6F04D1FF1A1ED8BC2257AA30026FB41?OpenDocument) and the Vocational Training and Rehabilitation Schemes. The informative material was distributed in Citizen Service Centres, in public hospitals, in some governmental departments and in all institutions and organisations of Persons with Disabilities in Cyprus. Moreover, the Department upgraded and enriched its website with the relevant information in Greek and English, about the Department’ s mission, vision and activities, the Social Benefits Schemes, as well as about the legislation regarding the rights of persons with disabilities, the staff and other information, in order to be more friendly to the user. The Department website can be found at [www.mlsi.gov.cy/dsid](http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/dsid)

**Social Benefit Schemes for the Persons with Disabilities**

The main Social Benefit Schemes of the Department are the following:

* Severe motor disability allowance: Persons with severe motor disabilities are entitled of a monthly allowance of €337,66 (At 31.12.12, 1615 persons were entitled of this)
* Care allowance for persons with paraplegia of €350 monthly (At 31.12.12, 538 beneficiaries)
* Care allowance for persons with tetraplegia of €854,30 monthly (At 31.12.12, 558 beneficiaries)
* Special Allowance for Blind Persons of €316,37 monthly (At 31.12.12, 2816 beneficiaries)
* Mobility Allowance of €51- €102 monthly (At 31.12.12, 430 beneficiaries)
* Financial assistance for the provision of technical aid and wheelchairs (In 2012, 680 beneficiaries)
* Financial Assistance for persons with disabilities in order to buy a car (In 2012, 184 beneficiaries).
* Subsidisation of vacations for persons with disabilities (In 2012 557).

Additional social services schemes are the following:

* Financial assistance to the organizations of persons with disabilities for covering their running expenses and the operation of social programmes.
* Subsidization of organisations of persons with severe disabilities to recruit and manage Social Assistants for their members to support them at visiting state services, hospitals and doctors, banks, day care programmes, shopping, recreation activities etc. The amount of subsidization covers up to 70% of the assistant salary with a maximum annual amount of €10.000.

**Vocational Training and Rehabilitation**

The main Vocational Rehabilitation Schemes provided by the Department are the following:

* Scheme for the creation and operation of small units for self-employment purposes of Persons with Disabilities. The Scheme provides a grant up to €8.543 to persons with disabilities who do not have the financial means for self-employment through the Special Fund of the Vocational Rehabilitation Centre for Person with Disabilities. In 2012, 11 applications were examined, 8 of which were approved and granted €43.569,33.
* The Vocational Training Scheme in fields, which are not offered by the Vocational Rehabilitation Centre for Persons with Disabilities, which funds persons with disabilities with an amount of up to €1.708,60 in order to get training courses of their own choice, which they will increase their employment possibilities.
* The Supported Employment Scheme, which funds Organisations for persons with disabilities with an amount of up to €13.500 yearly for each supported employment program, which intends to help groups of 5-10 persons with disabilities (mainly intellectual disability) to get and maintain a job position in the open labour market, by a special job coach. Presently 22 programmes operate with 236 persons with disabilities in the open labour market. Results are very successful.

Moreover, the Centre for the Vocational Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities operates under the Department and provides employment in the specializations of shoemaking and carpentry in two sheltered workshops. In 2012, a supporting program of indepented living and social inclusion was implemented and 8 persons decided to move in their own houses in the community. Moreover, 2 persons were supported to find a job in the open labour market. Recognizing the need for the Centre´s upgrading in order to have the capacity to design and offer new and modern training and employment programmes for persons with disabilities, the Government by a Council of Ministers Decision in 2009 has decided the reorganization of the vocational training and employment sector with the merge of the Centre together with the Christos Steliou Ioannou Foundation into a new organisation.

Also, the Department, in 2012, prepared as a special and urgent project, a new proposal for the de-institutionalization of 8 people with severe intellectual disability and mental disorders from Unit 14 in Athalassa hospital. The Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance and the Ministry of Health jointly submitted a proposal to the Council of Ministers which was adopted on 4.12.2012 for the implementation of the de-institutionalization project through the co-operation of DSID and the Mental Health Services and also the purchase of services by public procurement of an NGO or a private company.