



MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL POLICY
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES IN BULGARIA
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

EIGHT NATIONAL FORUM OF SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

KK GOLDEN SANDS - VARNA

4-6 June 2013

*“EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP FOR MORE SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL
TO EMPLOYMENT“*

REPORT

The Eighth National Forum of Social Service Providers was held on June 4 to 6, 2013, in Golden Sands - Varna. The event was organized by the National Alliance for Social Responsibility /NASO/ in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy /MLSP/, the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria, the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities /EASPD/ and the National Federation of Employers of Disabled. The Forum has been carried out for the eighth consecutive year.

This year's edition was dedicated to "European partnership for more successful transition from school to employment". The Forum's topic garnered more than 15 experts from 10 countries, representatives of European organizations and social service providers - BITSE project partners, and more than 170 participants, representatives of social service provider organizations, employers, municipalities and local governments and all institutions in the country concerned with the issues of social services and people with disabilities. The Forum's program offered a rich variety of presentations which gave the speakers the opportunity to share their experiences in the transition from school to employment for persons with disabilities and to compare the best practices in Bulgaria and Europe. The barriers which inhibit people with disabilities from their active accessing to employment were identified and an interesting discussion was developed making suggestions for eliminating the barriers.



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Giving a special address and welcome to the Forum, the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Hasan Ademov, emphasized that disability employment policy was a national priority of the new government. Minister Ademov drew special attention to the fact that through their social activity, persistence and initiative the national organizations had the potential for changing Bulgaria and making its civil society more active and effective, and that the European partnership was a guarantee of success.

The need to create a large variety of new forms and opportunities to support people with disabilities, employers and service providers was identified as one of the main concerns of the Forum. The main focus of the experts' assessment is on the urgent introduction of supported employment for people with disabilities as a way of achieving successful realization of their potential on the labor market and as one of the most modern employment tools in Europe, which has not been implemented in Bulgaria yet. It was agreed that there was a great need for a stronger partnership between employers and social service providers, as well as need for the State to improve the legal framework in this regard.

The participation of a large number of international experts gave the opportunity to see the contrast between the situations in Bulgaria and Europe. Once again the alarming finding was noted that there is much difference in living standards between Bulgaria and Europe, the former has been suffering from low funding, poverty and unemployment. These are some of the important messages which the Forum directed to the state and local governments.

Although in recent years there has been a positive development in the social inclusion of people with disabilities in all spheres of life, there is still much work to be done before the people with disabilities could be full and equal members of our society. On behalf of all the participants in the Forum suggestions are due to be made to the MLSP to take measures for the development of social services and more effective support for persons with disabilities and other groups in need

For comments, suggestions and more information: office@naso.bg and www.naso.bg



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