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# GAPS CATALOGUE

Project Title

**Ergonomic workplace design for workers with disabilities and their long-term employment**

Project Acronym: **ERGOART**

February, 2024

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All ErgoArt partners



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## TABLE OF CONTENT

1	Introduction.....	3
2	About the Project .....	3
3	Research methods.....	4
3.1	Desk research.....	5
3.2	Field research.....	14
4	Findings.....	25



## 1 Introduction

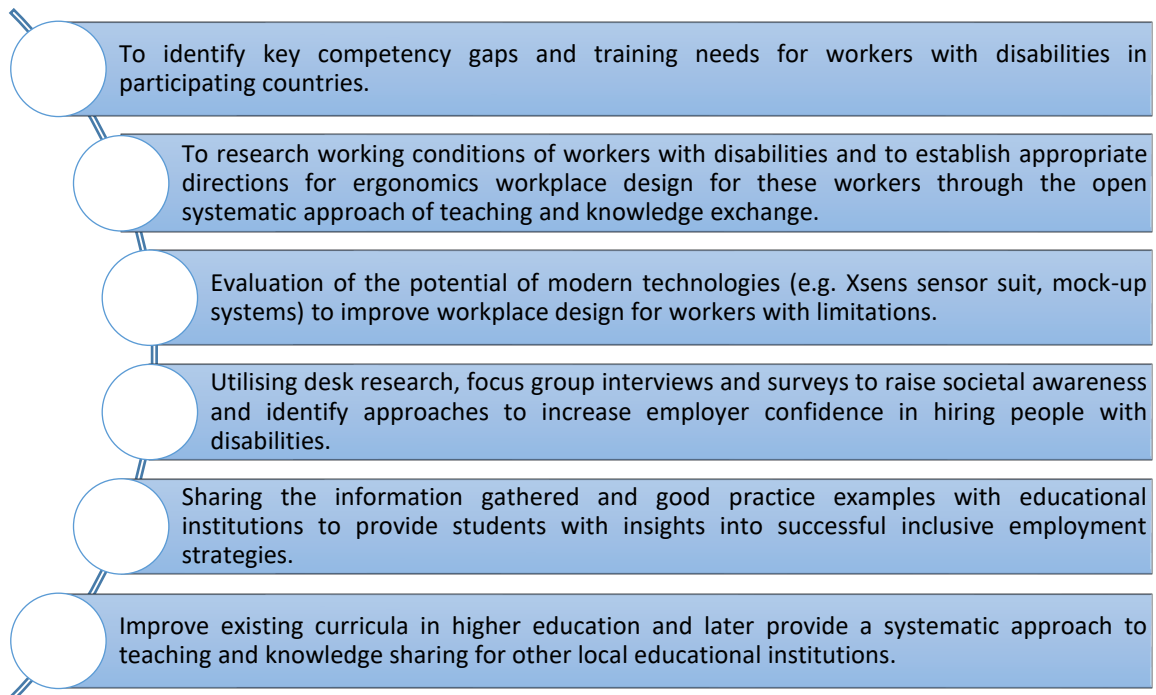
The aim of this document is: a) to provide a description of the research methodology we used in the ERGOART project roadmap (chapter 3: Research methods) and b) present results of the Gap analysis (chapter 4: Findings).

## 2 About the Project

As part of the European Commission's Erasmus+ programme, a project entitled **“Ergonomic workplace design for workers with disabilities and their long-term employment”** (ERGOART) was launched in September 2023. The ERGOART project focuses on finding solutions to improve existing curricula in higher education and later provides a systematic approach to teaching and knowledge sharing for other local educational institutions.

The aim of project was to obtain detailed information on the current situation of people with disabilities in general and specifically in the cultural sector in various countries and in Slovenia. In depth study analyse examples of good practise in the employment of people with disabilities in the cultural sector, to serve as model concepts for educational institutions.

The objectives of the project are:



The project should be completed by the end of February 2026.



### 3 Research methods

The methodology with which the main tasks have been carried out so far is summarised in Figure 1.

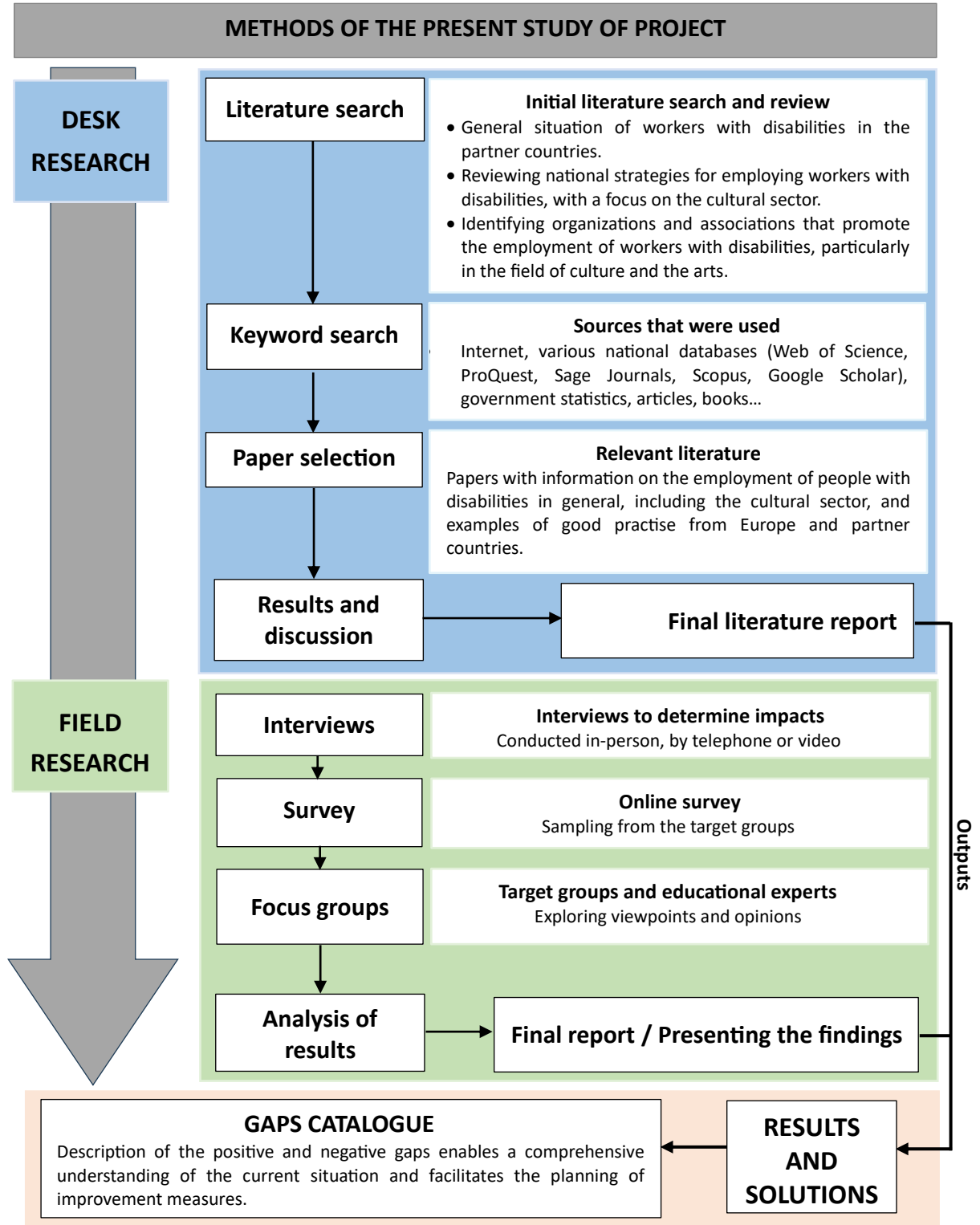


Figure 1: Methodology: Integration of desk and field research

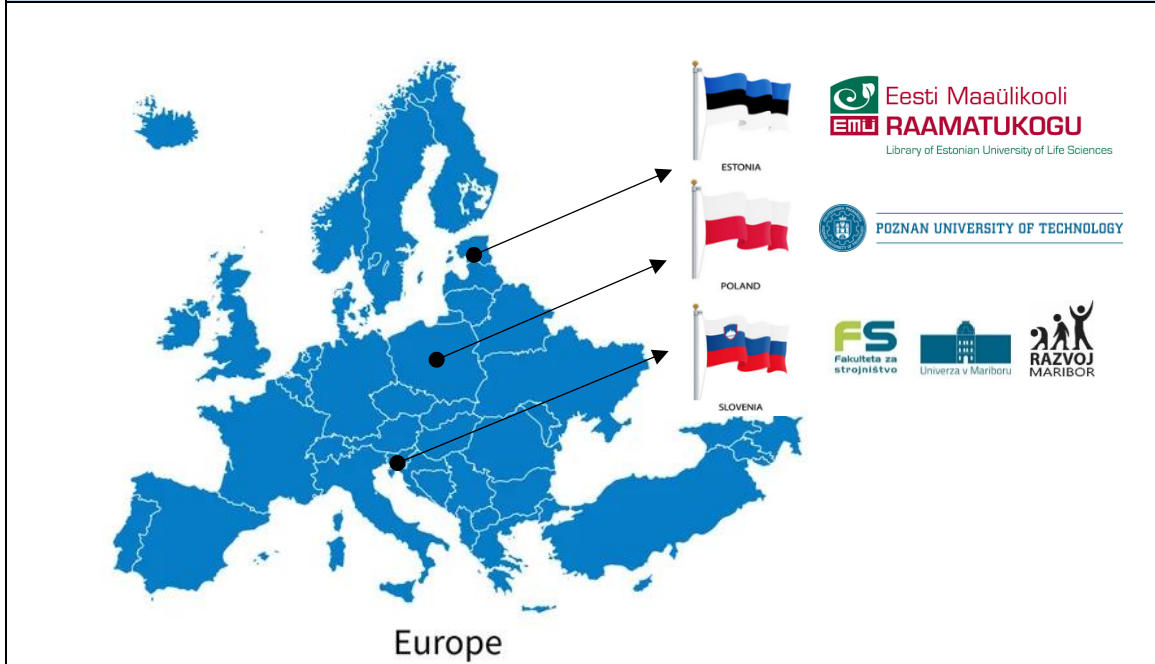


Two main tasks have been carried out for this project so far: desk research (Task 1) and field research (Task 2). In both cases, the main tasks are subdivided into subtasks. The following subchapters summarise the details of the different tasks/subtasks and the progress made on each task by **29 February 2024**.

### 3.1 Desk research

Obtained information: Overview of current state	
<b>Subtask 1:</b>	<b>Literature search: <i>Information/Data Collection</i></b> Collection of information on the general situation of workers with disabilities in the partner countries, including a detailed inventory of the review of legal aspects, national strategies and associations promoting the employment of workers with disabilities, especially in the field of culture and arts.

#### General situation of workers with disabilities as such and those employed in the field of culture and art per partner's country including teaching approaches



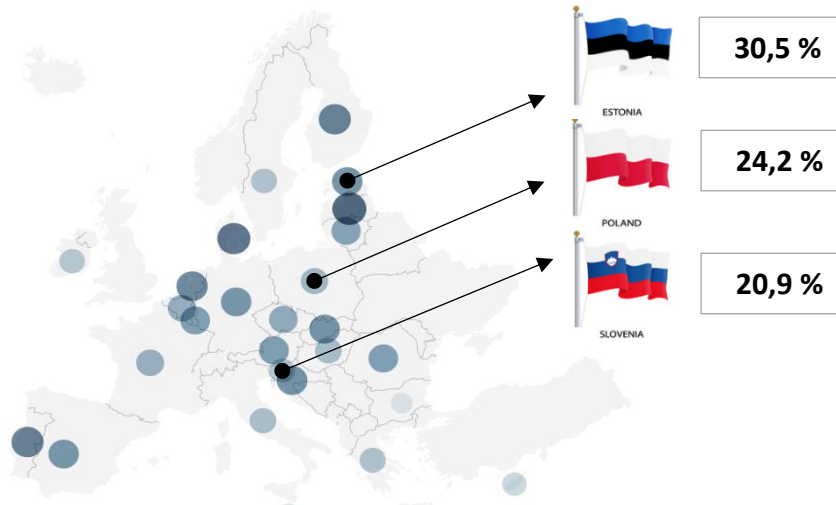
Several relevant laws were identified in the participating countries that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities both in general and in specific areas such as culture and the arts. Comprehensive legislation on the employment of people with disabilities means that governments or legislative bodies take numerous measures to ensure equal opportunities and the inclusion of disabled workers in the workforce.

These laws include:

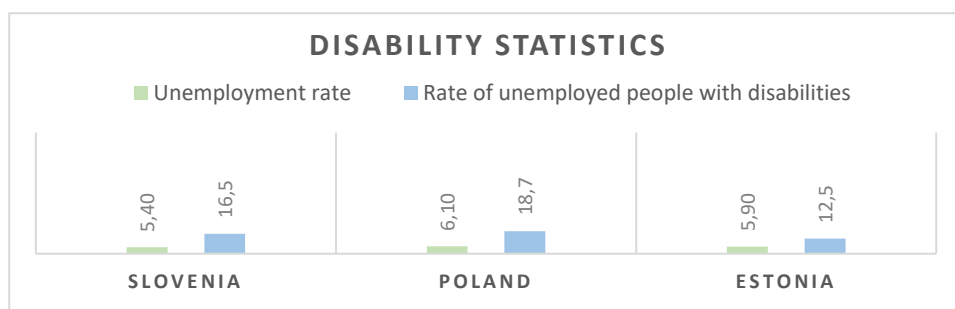
- **provisions for workplace accommodations,**
- **quotas for the employment of people with disabilities,**
- **the prohibition of discrimination in the workplace and**
- **other measures** to promote inclusion.



The diagram below illustrates the prevalence of disabilities in the partner countries in 2022.



Web resource: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/sl/infographics/disability-eu-facts-figures/#0>; (2024, February 29)



The statistics show that the employment rate of people with disabilities is relatively low in all partner countries, as shown by the data presented. In 2022, the unemployment rate for people with disabilities was **16,5 % in Slovenia, 18,7% in Poland and 12,5% in Estonia**, about twice as high as for people without disabilities. Furthermore, there is a noticeable low rate of employment or inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the realm of culture and arts, primarily due to various barriers and challenges they face. This is primarily due to various barriers and challenges they face, such as **limited adaptations, stigmatisation, physical barriers, financial constraints, awareness, social isolation and limited access to information.**



## Existing country strategies regarding the employment of workers with disabilities in general and in the field of culture and art

Reforms and adopted strategies at national level are crucial to effectively promote the employment and inclusion of people with disabilities and create more equal opportunities in the labour market. In addition, concrete policies, programmes, and initiatives implemented in practise play an important role in translating these reforms and strategies into tangible improvements in the lives and opportunities of people with disabilities. The main strategies identified in each partner countries, both in general and in the culture sector, are listed below.



### On general

- Union of Equality: Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2021 – 2030)
- Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities (2022 - 2030)
- Strategic plan of the Federation of Disabled Workers of Slovenia (ZDIS) (2022 - 2026)



### On general

- Zdrowie na tak (Yes for Health) programme
- Project - „Dobre praktyki”
- 7 good practices for the employment of people with a disability certificate
- Report on the evaluation study on the assessment of the implementation of the Government's Accessibility Plus Program 2018-2025



### On general

- Estonia 2035



### In culture area

- Resolution on the National Program for Culture (2022 – 2029)



### In culture area

- The All-Poland CULTURE OF THE VULNERABLE Wrażliwa Kultura



### In culture area

- Estonia 2035



## Identification of organizations and associations dealing with the employment of workers with disabilities in general and in the field of culture and art

As part of the project, we have thoroughly researched and identified key organisations that support the employment of people with disabilities in general and in the cultural sector. The organisations identified include both **governmental entities** (offices, centres) and **non-governmental organisations** (associations, foundations, funds, chambers, communities, associations) as well as **other institutions** that are key stakeholders in promoting equal opportunities and the inclusion of disabled individuals in the workplace and in culture. Below you will find some examples of the most important organisations in each partner country.



- Employment Service of Slovenia
- The National Council of Disability Organizations of Slovenia
- Federation of Disabled Workers of Slovenia
- Association of Vocational Rehabilitation Providers of the RS
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Clubs Association of Slovenia
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Clubs Association of Slovenia
- and others



- Polskie Forum Osób Niepełnosprawnych
- Biuro Pełnomocnika Rządu do Spraw Osób Niepełnosprawnych
- Fundacja Avalon
- Państwowy Fundusz Rehabilitacji Osób Niepełnosprawnych
- Polska Federacja Zatrudnienia Wspomaganego
- and others



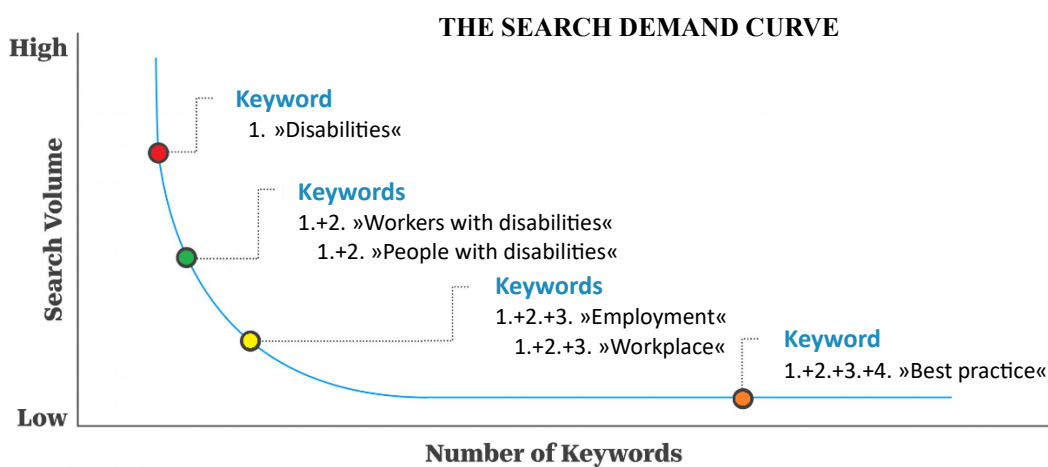
- Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund
- The Estonian Chamber of Disabled People
- Employers' Community
- Astangu Vocational Rehabilitation Centre
- NGO Ligipääsetavuse foorum





<b>Subtask 2:</b>	<b>Keyword search: <i>Information/Data Collection</i></b> Gathering and reviewing relevant literature on the employment of people with disabilities in general and in the field of culture and arts in various sources, including the Internet, national databases (Web of Science, ProQuest, Sage Journals, Scopus, Google Scholar), government statistics, articles, and books.
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**National reports, studies, research projects, available products and services dealing with employment of workers with disabilities on general and in the field of culture and art**



The scientific literature on the employment of individuals with disabilities, both in general and in the culture sector, was thoroughly reviewed and analysed. The research specifically focussed on good practises in the employment of individuals with disabilities in the cultural sector in the partner countries and in Europe. A total of **353 relevant results** were identified in the databases, of which we have included the following in the final analysis:

- **16 good practises** for the employment of people with disabilities **in general** in Europe,
- **8 good practises** for the employment of people with disabilities **in the culture sector** in Europe.

Based on the analysis, we observe that the topic of employment of people with disabilities in the cultural sector is **well documented in scientific literature**. The number of identified instances of good practices in Europe and partner countries indicates active efforts in addressing the issue and the existence of numerous successful cases of integrating disabled individuals into the cultural work environment. However, it is notable that certain databases provided a limited number of results compared to general online searches, suggesting potentially uneven coverage of the topic across different sources of information. This challenge may hinder a comprehensive understanding of the issue and identification of good practices. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that the identified instances of good practice serve as valuable resources for the development and enhancement of strategies for employing individuals with disabilities in the cultural sector.



<b>Subtask 3:</b>	<b>Paper selection: <i>Relevant literature</i></b> Selection of key research on the employment of people with disabilities, including the cultural sector, with examples of good practise from Europe and partner countries.
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**Employment of workers with disabilities on general and in the cultural sector, including examples of good practices.**

The literature covers a wide range of studies dealing with the employment of people with disabilities both in general and in the cultural sector. It provides insights into the challenges faced by people with disabilities in accessing employment opportunities and outlines possible strategies to promote their inclusion.

Key topics highlighted in the literature include:

- **Promoting access to culture:** Policies and initiatives by cultural institutions improve access and participation in culture across Europe.
- **Enhancing education and training:** Good practices in education and training for adults with learning disabilities focuses on motivation, inclusion, and technology.
- **Corporate social responsibility:** Employing people with disabilities as part of CSR initiatives involves various implementation measures.
- **Financial incentives for employment:** Evaluation of financial incentives for promoting employment retention and promotion of persons with disabilities.
- **Employee-directed approach to supported employment:** Features and good practices for long-term support in supported employment for individuals with significant disabilities.

In addition, the review identifies several examples of good practise in the employment of people with disabilities in partner countries in the field of culture. The most important of these are highlighted below.



General /Culture topics	Title	Short summary
Inclusion and Accessibility	Project "4ALL"	The project focuses on promoting inclusion and improving accessibility for people with disabilities.
Employment and Training	Handbook "Employment of People with Disabilities on the Farm"	Provides guidance and resources for employers on hiring people with disabilities.
Awareness	Project "Involved World"	Promotes awareness of deficits in the labour market and advocates for long-term changes that enable the full integration of people with disabilities.
Community Inclusion and Volunteering	"The Deaf Served in Slovenian Mountain Huts"	Emphasises successful integration into the community and voluntary activities to overcome stereotypes.
Access to Cultural Heritage	Project "Museum in Sign Language"	Focuses on the education of the deaf and hard of hearing to improve cultural accessibility.
Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups in Cultural Activities	Project "Access to Cultural Heritage for Vulnerable Groups"	It provides training and employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups in museums and galleries.
Employment Opportunities in the Cultural Sector	Project "ZVITOREPEC"	Enabling the employment of people with disabilities in cultural activities.
Education for Active Participation in Cultural Activities	Project "Film for All"	Enabling disabled people to actively participate in film-related activities.
Promotion of Inclusive Cultural Activities	Institute "Ažmurk"	Focuses on promoting and conducting cultural activities with the inclusion of vulnerable groups such as disabled individuals.



General /Culture topics	Title	Short summary
Disability Strategy	"Strategy for people with disabilities"	Focuses on integrating people with disabilities into social and professional life to ensure their rights as per the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
Independence of People with Disabilities	Project "Active people with disabilities"	Proposes legislative changes and introduce new instruments for social rehabilitation to improve the independent functioning of people with disabilities.
Good Practices in Public Sector Employment of People with Disabilities	Publication "Good practices in the field of employment people with disabilities in the public sector"	Addresses employing people with disabilities in public administration and measures to increase it.
Good Practices in Employment of People with Disabilities for Local Governments	Handbook "Good practices in hiring people with disabilities Handbook for local governments"	Offers solutions for public administration entities to enhance disability employment and serves as inspiration for other sectors.
Development of Social Entrepreneurship	Report "Development of Social Entrepreneurship in Poland and Selected Countries"	Report on social entrepreneurship, including aspects of employing people with disabilities.
Needs of People with Disabilities	Study "Needs of People with Disabilities"	Aims to diagnose the needs of people with disabilities.
Accessibility in the Cultural Sector	Research in the cultural sector	Focuses on analysing accessibility in cultural organizations to ensure inclusive activities through efficient cooperation with people with special needs, artists, and coordinators.
Employment of Persons with Disabilities in the Cultural Sector	Project "Employment of persons with disabilities in the cultural sector"	Increase the presence of people with disabilities in cultural institutions and promote inclusive cultural offerings.



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General /Culture topics	Title	Short summary
Sustainable Employment Practices	Project "I Care"	Highlighting initiatives that offer meaningful employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, emphasizing their contribution to society and economic empowerment.
Inclusive Workplace Policies	Code of Conduct in a supportive team	Providing model documents and guidelines for employers to create supportive work environments, ensuring equal rights, and treatment for all employees, including those with disabilities.
Promotion of Inclusivity	"SIIA SAAB"	Encouraging employers to signal their commitment to inclusivity through visible symbols like badges in job ads, promoting equal access and opportunities for individuals with diverse needs.
Workplace Accessibility and Support	Friendly employer guide	Offering practical guidance on making workplaces accessible and supportive for employees with disabilities, fostering an environment where everyone can thrive and contribute effectively.




















### 3.2 Field research

Obtained information: Extracting Insights	
<b>Subtask 1:</b>	<p><b>Interviews: Insights</b></p> <p>Conducting interviews with employers who hire individuals with disabilities and employees with disabilities to explore their experiences, practises and challenges in employment and inclusion in the workplace.</p>

**Interviewing employers and disabled workers in partner countries to explore their experiences, practices, and challenges in employment and inclusion in the workplace.**


Interviews with employers and employees with disabilities in the partner countries were based on a set of questions that were answered to varying degrees by the companies and employees. The advantages and disadvantages that emerged from the interviews are presented below for each partner country.

INTERVIEWS WITH EMPLOYERS	
<div style="text-align: left;">  </div> <div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"><b>ADVANTAGES</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> The inclusion of people with disabilities is important for their <b>existence, acceptance and sense of usefulness.</b></li> <li> The factors emphasised are <b>motivation and willingness to acquire new knowledge</b>, not just restrictions.</li> <li> With appropriate support, work performance is <b>comparable, satisfactory</b> or even <b>exceeds</b> that of employees without restrictions.</li> <li> Employers are willing to invest in <b>professional support, workplace adaptations, training and awareness-raising</b> for the employment of people with disabilities.</li> </ul>	<div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"><b>DISADVANTAGES</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Longer introduction time</b> to knowledge acquisition.</li> <li> <b>Limited financial resources</b> are an important factor in adapting the working environment and access to it.</li> <li> <b>Poorer health status</b> of people with disabilities.</li> <li> <b>Selection of employment</b> according to degree of disability.</li> <li> Several <b>individual workplaces.</b></li> </ul>


<div style="text-align: left;">  </div> <div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"><b>ADVANTAGES</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> The factors emphasized are motivation and willingness to acquire new knowledge, and stable workforce</li> <li> With appropriate support, work performance is comparable, satisfactory.</li> <li> Diverse perspectives lead to enhanced creativity and innovation in problem-solving.</li> </ul>	<div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"><b>DISADVANTAGES</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Longer adaptation</b> period to new work environments and specific tasks due to the need for additional learning and support .</li> <li> Limited financial resources, when adapting the working environment for workers with disabilities</li> <li> <b>Poorer health status</b> of people with disabilities can lead to more frequent absences and potential interruptions in work .</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Inclusion fosters a positive, accepting workplace culture, boosting team morale and cohesion.</li> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Selection of employment according to the degree of disability, often leading to <b>limited job opportunities</b> and not many positions possible for people with disabilities.</li> <li>✗ Several individual workplaces may require specific adaptations, which can be costly and complex to implement.</li> <li>✗</li> <li>✗</li> </ul>
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 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"><b>ADVANTAGES</b></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"><b>DISADVANTAGES</b></div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Loyalty and stability:</b> Disabled employees tend to be highly loyal, contributing to job stability and reducing turnover rates, which can be particularly beneficial for the organization.</li> <li>✓ <b>Support programs in large companies:</b> Many large corporations offer internship programs and provide need-based support for disabled employees, helping to integrate them smoothly into the workplace.</li> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ <b>Team acceptance:</b> The existing team must be prepared to accept and work alongside a disabled colleague, which can require adjustments in team dynamics and training on inclusivity.</li> <li>✗ <b>Disclosure challenges:</b> Approximately 50% of candidates do not disclose their reduced work capacity during job interviews, which can create challenges in assessing and accommodating their needs from the outset.</li> <li>✗ <b>Hiring limitations:</b> Employers may face limitations in hiring when the required accommodations become financially or logistically burdensome for the company.</li> <li>✗ <b>Recruitment of intellectually disabled individuals:</b> Recruiting individuals with intellectual disabilities poses significant challenges. This often necessitates extensive preliminary research and adjustments to ensure a suitable fit for both the employee and the organization.</li> </ul>




INTERVIEWS WITH EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px; text-align: center;"><b>ADVANTAGES</b></div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"><span style="color: green; font-size: 1.2em;">✔</span> The key factors for successful employment are <b>desire, willingness, initiative, support from the employer, successful communication, good mutual relations, an appropriate salary, tolerance, the opportunity for further training and personal development and a relaxed working environment.</b></li> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"><span style="color: green; font-size: 1.2em;">✔</span> Flexible workplaces are not necessary in many cases, but where they are necessary, they include <b>personal support, ergonomic adjustments and varied work.</b></li> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"><span style="color: green; font-size: 1.2em;">✔</span> Employees are willing to familiarise themselves with several tasks, which has an impact on the variety of work.</li> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"><span style="color: green; font-size: 1.2em;">✔</span> Problems at workplace they solve by <b>talking to their superiors and colleagues.</b></li> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"><span style="color: green; font-size: 1.2em;">✔</span> Suggested improvements are <b>larger spaces, enabling work from home, ergonomic solutions.</b></li> </ul> </div> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px; text-align: center;"><b>DISADVANTAGES</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"><span style="color: red; font-size: 1.2em;">✘</span> Difficulties in integrating into a new working environment include <b>limited social skills, sensory problems, adjustment and training at the start of employment, communication problems, adapting to a new workplace and new colleagues may take longer.</b></li> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"><span style="color: red; font-size: 1.2em;">✘</span> The main challenges are <b>the inflexibility of managers, the rapid burnout, the lack of understanding when health problems arise, communication, solving problems on the spot, dealing with new things, the chaotic working environment.</b></li> </ul>

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px; text-align: center;"><b>ADVANTAGES</b></div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"><span style="color: green; font-size: 1.2em;">✔</span> Many employees highlighted the <b>supportive nature of their colleagues and superiors.</b> This support helps them manage work-related challenges effectively. Interview people mentioned that they have received help from her colleagues when necessary, which is crucial for integration into the workplace.</li> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"><span style="color: green; font-size: 1.2em;">✔</span> Several employees noted that their employers provide opportunities for <b>personal and professional growth.</b> Participation in various projects and workshops helps them develop new skills.</li> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"><span style="color: green; font-size: 1.2em;">✔</span> Employees appreciate the opportunity to be self-reliant.</li> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"><span style="color: green; font-size: 1.2em;">✔</span> Employees with previous experience or specific skills related to their disabilities find these factors beneficial in securing and succeeding in their roles.</li> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"><span style="color: green; font-size: 1.2em;">✔</span> Having a stable job with a contract for an unspecified period is appreciated by employees.</li> </ul> </div> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px; text-align: center;"><b>DISADVANTAGES</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"><span style="color: red; font-size: 1.2em;">✘</span> Some employees report that their work can be <b>monotonous and routine.</b></li> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"><span style="color: red; font-size: 1.2em;">✘</span> Communication barriers with colleagues and management were noted as a significant challenge.</li> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"><span style="color: red; font-size: 1.2em;">✘</span> Some employees feel that there is a <b>lack of necessary adjustments and support.</b> Physical constraints in the workplace can pose challenges.</li> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"><span style="color: red; font-size: 1.2em;">✘</span> Employees with visible disabilities often face <b>prejudice during the hiring process.</b> Employees mentioned low wages as a disadvantage.</li> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"><span style="color: red; font-size: 1.2em;">✘</span> Working in environments that require constant emotional regulation, especially when dealing with diverse groups, can be stressful</li> </ul>
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<p>✔ Remote work options provide employees with flexibility, allowing them to create a comfortable and controlled work environment..</p> <p>✔</p>	<p>✘ Limited opportunities for career advancement were also mentioned. While there are opportunities for personal development, advancement within the company can be restricted.</p> <p>✘ Often a lack of understanding and appropriate response from colleagues and superiors regarding the needs of disabled employees.</p>
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 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"><b>ADVANTAGES</b></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"><b>DISADVANTAGES</b></div>
<p>✔ <b>Self-confidence, along with open-mindedness and a positive attitude,</b> appear to be crucial for successful employment and overcoming daily obstacles.</p> <p>✔ <b>Flexible Work Arrangements:</b> Flexible work hours and remote work options accommodate the health needs of disabled employees, allowing them to manage their conditions while still contributing productively to the organization.</p>	<p>✘ <b>Accessibility Challenges:</b> Despite progress, accessibility issues, ranging from physical barriers like heavy door closers to environmental factors such as snow-covered streets, pose obstacles to the inclusion of disabled employees</p> <p>✘ <b>Reliance on Personal Connections:</b> Securing employment opportunities for disabled individuals often relies heavily on personal connections, potentially disadvantaging those without robust networks and perpetuating inequalities in the job market.</p>

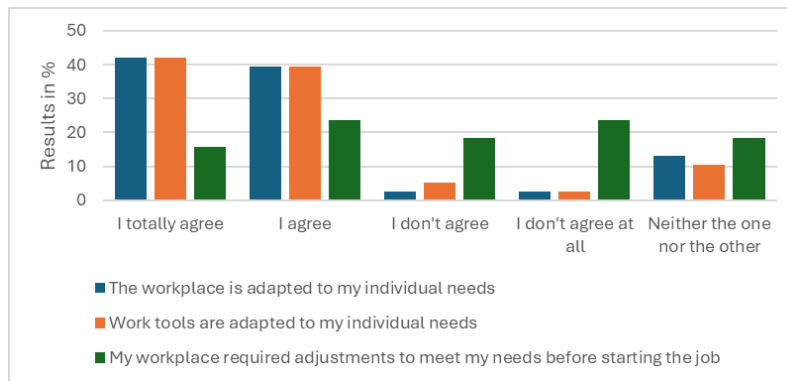


<b>Subtask 2:</b>	<b>Online survey: Discoveries</b> Implementation of online survey with trainers and workers with disabilities.
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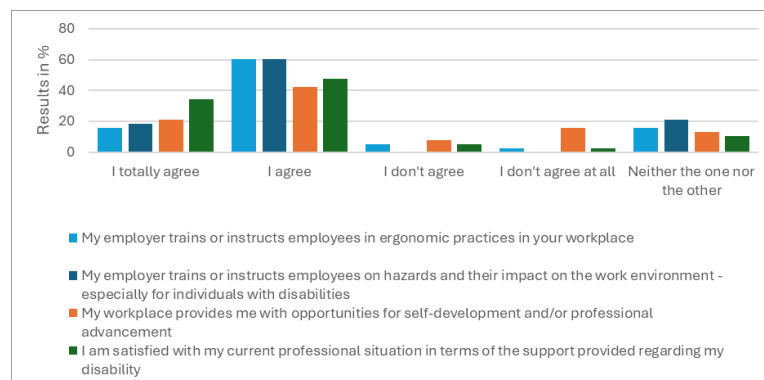
**Implementing an online survey of employers and disabled workers in partner countries to gain insights into employment practices and identify areas for improvement in workplace inclusion.**



The survey included 40 participants with a balanced gender distribution. Most respondents have to 10 years of work experience, while a smaller group had over 30 years of work experience, often with limitations or disabilities. Most of them are permanently employed, which indicates stable employment. Companies of different sizes equally employ people with disabilities, which emphasises inclusivity. Most of these companies operate in the primary and manufacturing sectors. The survey results indicate that the working environment and equipment are adapted to people's needs, with adjustments often required before they start work and effectively contribute to their performance.



It can be seen that employers are successfully adapting to the needs of people with disabilities. More than 80% of respondents say they have been trained and educated about ergonomics and workplace hazards, especially those related to disabilities. Most believe they have the opportunity for advancement and promotion and are satisfied with the support provided to people with disabilities in the workplace.



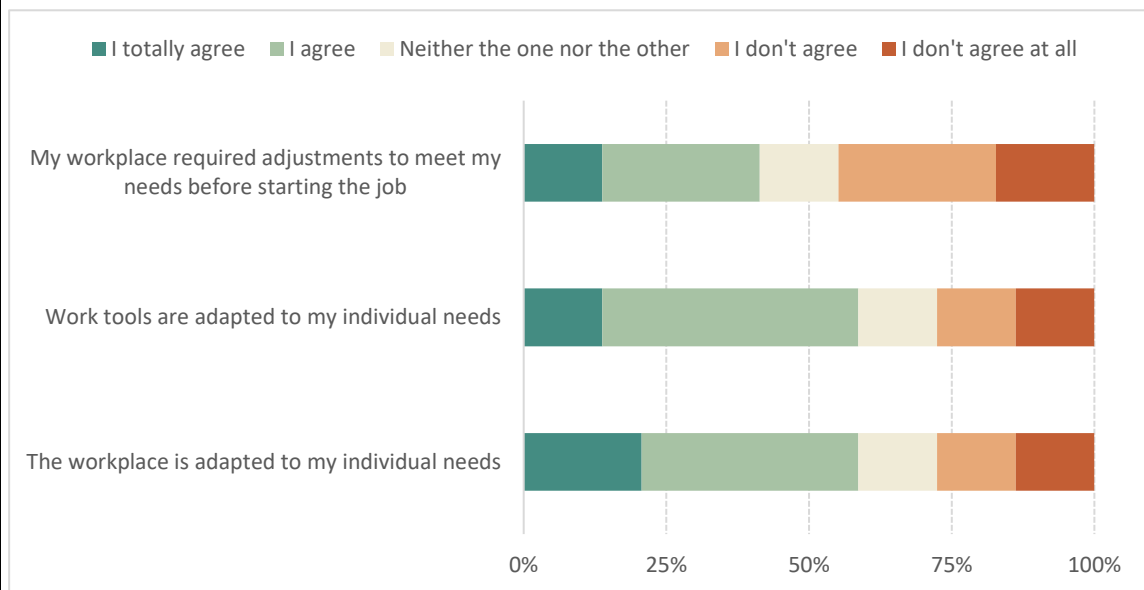
Most respondents (87%) agree that the current workplace ergonomics meet their needs. Similarly, the majority (82%) report that their employer or management



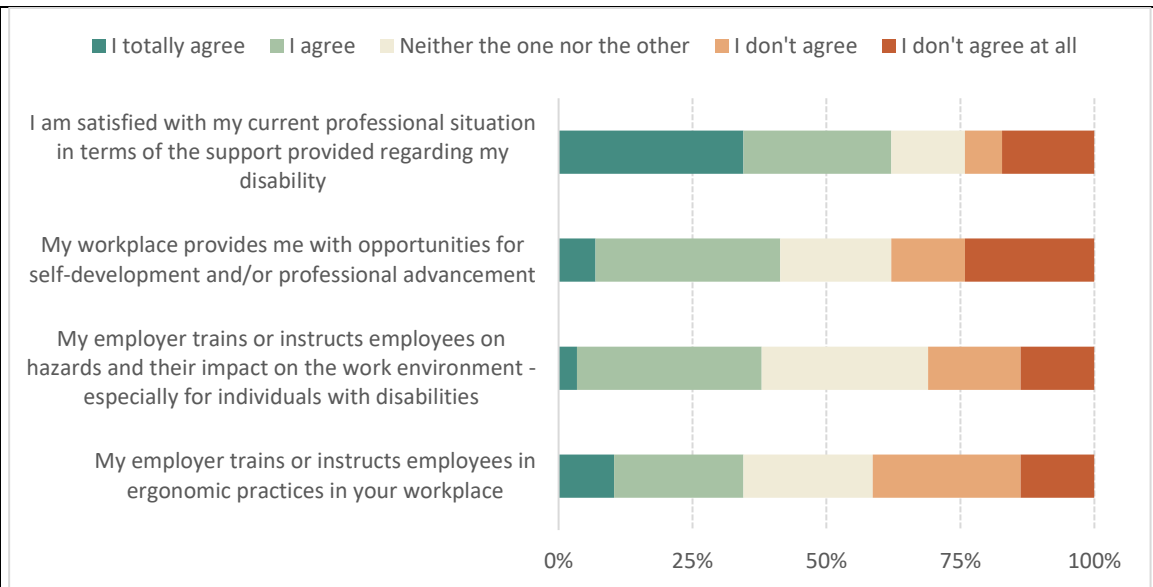
responds to requests for ergonomic adjustments. In terms of workplace safety, most feel safe and are aware of evacuation procedures. However, some recognise that their disability has an impact on their working life. Challenges include prejudice and employer awareness affecting employment opportunities for people with disabilities.



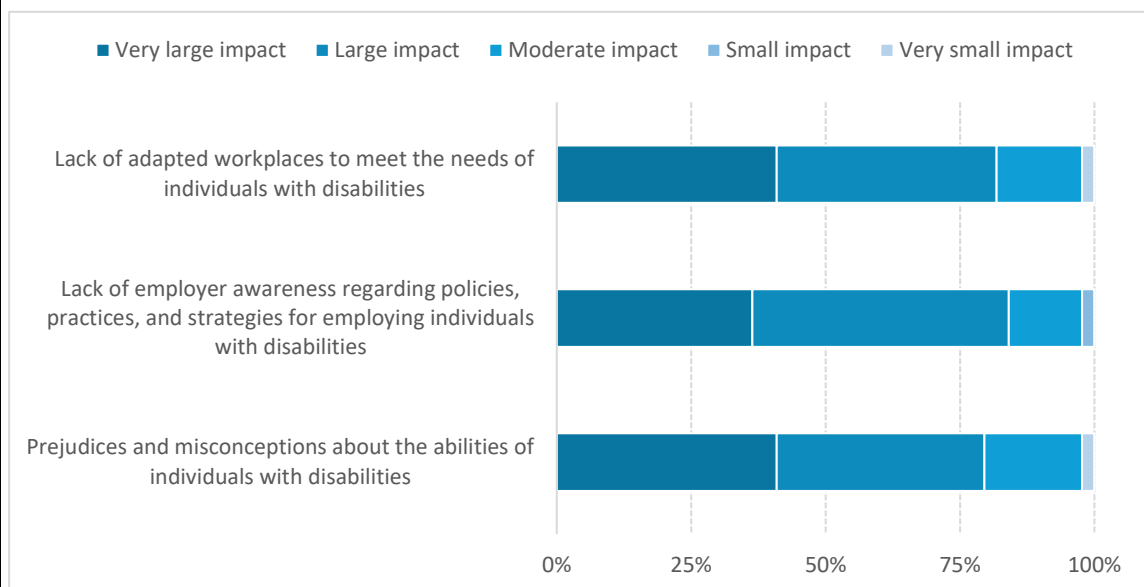
The survey included 44 participants with diverse work experience and gender distribution. Most respondents have up to 10 years of experience, and a smaller group has over 30 years, often with disabilities. Most are employed permanently, indicating employment stability. Companies of all sizes employ people with disabilities, emphasizing inclusivity, mainly in the primary and manufacturing sectors. The work environment and equipment are adapted to the needs of the employees, and adaptations are often necessary before work starts. Respondents assessed barriers to implementing ergonomic solutions and identified affected body functions. There were also comments on good practices in employing people with disabilities.



It can be seen that employers are successfully making adjustments to meet employees' needs before starting the job, with 30% of respondents totally agreeing and 25% agreeing. Similarly, 35% totally agree and 30% agree that their work tools are adapted to their individual needs. Additionally, 40% totally agree and 25% agree that the workplace is adapted to their needs. However, 20% neither agree nor disagree, 10% disagree, and 10% totally disagree with these statements, indicating that while progress has been made, further improvements are necessary to fully accommodate all employees' needs.



It can be seen that employers are making efforts to support employees with disabilities, with about 30% of respondents totally agreeing and 25% agreeing that they are satisfied with the support provided. Similarly, around 20% totally agree and 30% agree that their workplace offers opportunities for self-development and professional advancement. However, satisfaction levels drop slightly regarding training on hazards and ergonomic practices, with approximately 20% totally agreeing and 25% agreeing. Nonetheless, a notable percentage of employees remain neutral or dissatisfied, highlighting areas for improvement in workplace support and training.



Significant challenges remain in adapting workplaces for individuals with disabilities, as indicated by about 40% of respondents citing a very large or large impact due to the lack of adapted workplaces. Similarly, around 45% report a very large or large impact from the lack of employer awareness regarding relevant policies and strategies. Prejudices and misconceptions about the abilities of individuals with disabilities also have a notable impact, with roughly 40% of respondents indicating a very large or large impact. These



findings highlight the critical areas needing improvement to better support employees with disabilities.



The survey included 30 respondents with a gender distribution of 30% male and 70% female, with the majority being females. Most respondents were employed, with only one unemployed at the time of the survey. The respondents were roughly equally distributed across four employment length categories: less than 10 years (18%), 10-20 years (25%), 20-30 years (29%), and more than 30 years (29%). Additionally, half of the respondents worked in the public or social sector.

Only about a quarter of respondents felt that their workplace needed adjustments to meet their needs when they started their current job. Given that about two-thirds of the respondents claim their work tools and workplace are generally adapted to their individual needs, it is likely that the need for workplace adjustments might be a limiting factor when starting a job. Respondents may have chosen, or been selected for, positions where workplace adjustments were not required. Another potential explanation is that some aids that help manage disabilities, such as hearing aids, are also necessary during leisure time, reducing the need for additional adjustments at the workplace.

The majority of respondents are satisfied with opportunities for self-development and professional advancement, indicating that there are likely no significant differences compared to their able-bodied colleagues. A vast majority (80%) are satisfied with their current professional situation in terms of the support provided regarding their disability. However, the three questions that specifically mention ergonomics and safety show the highest share (about 30%) of neutral answers, suggesting that general awareness of ergonomics in Estonia may be low.

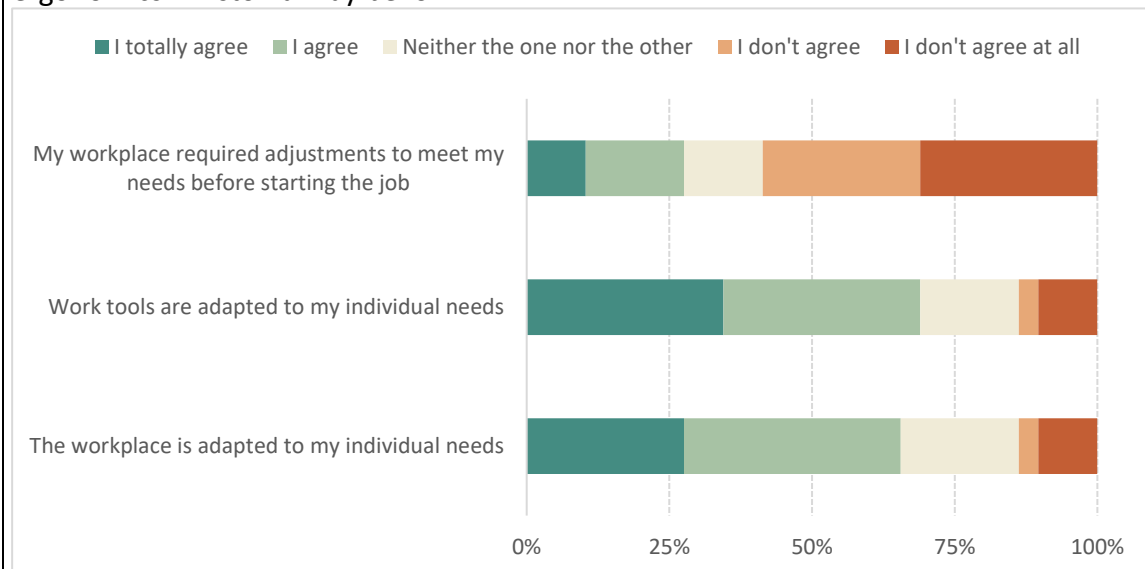


Figure. Distribution of answers about the need for workplace adjustment

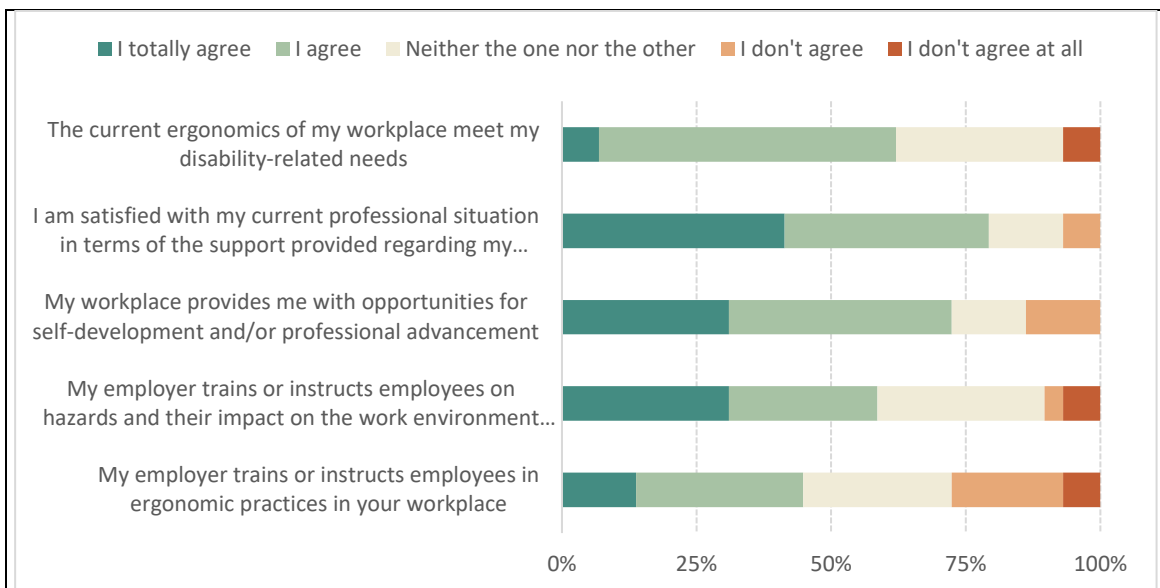


Figure. Distribution of answers about being satisfied with various aspects of work

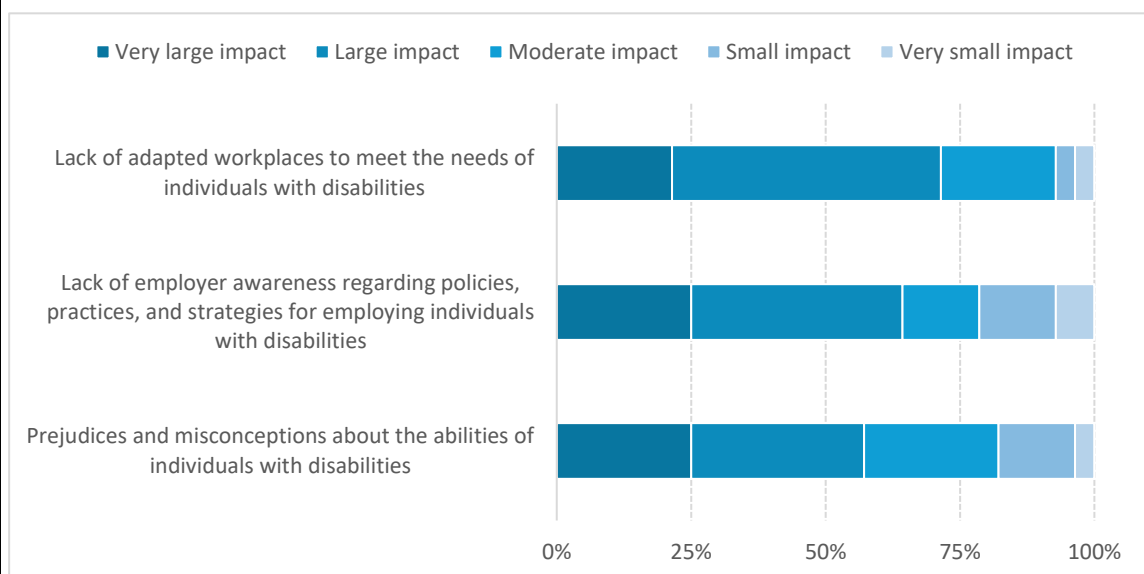


Figure. Distribution of answers about barriers of employment

The responses to the question about the availability of adapted workplaces indicate that approximately 75% of respondents believe the lack of suitable workplaces for individuals with disabilities has a large to very large impact on the employment of disabled people. This supports the hypothesis that individuals with disabilities may end up in workplaces where no adjustments are needed, potentially forcing them to lower their employment standards. Consequently, they may have a higher appreciation for the work they do have. Unfortunately, prejudices and misconceptions about the abilities of individuals with disabilities are still perceived to have a significant impact on their ability to gain employment.

The open-ended question at the end of the survey elicited a few responses that reinforce some aspects discussed in the interviews. One respondent emphasized that there is no monolithic group of disabled people; each individual is unique. Another highlighted the



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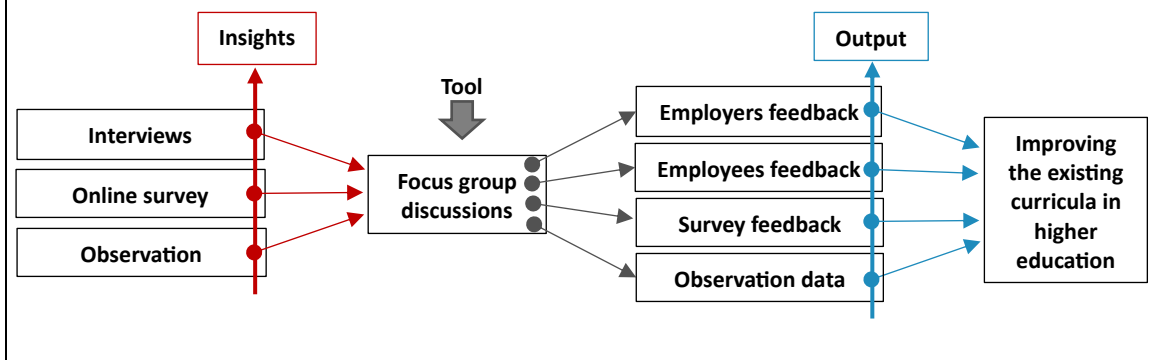
importance of confidence and determination. A third respondent mentioned the need for better negotiation skills and patience to achieve the best outcome for both parties, but stressed that reducing prejudices, starting from schools may be a priority.



Obtained information: Exploring viewpoints and opinions through focus groups	
Subtask 3:	<b>Focus groups: Target groups and educational experts</b> Exchange of ideas and experiences that enables researchers to better understand the complexity and contextual aspects of the topic under discussion.

**To gain a deeper insight and understanding of the viewpoints, ideas, experiences and perspectives of people connected to the topic of the project.**

The focus of our project was on employers and disabled people employed in different sectors, with a particular emphasis on the culture sector. This includes different companies, organisations and self-employed individuals who employ people with disabilities. Our main focus was to gain insights from both employers and employees to better understand their experiences, challenges and perspectives related to employment and inclusion. By sharing ideas and experiences in focus discussion, we aimed to improve our understanding of the complexities and contextual nuances surrounding the employment of people with disabilities. Gaining insights from these discussions is essential in order to integrate them effectively into the pedagogical process.








## 4 Findings

This chapter presents the most important results of the gap analysis carried out as part of this research project.

	Current state	Gaps	Desired future state
<b>Employment and inclusion</b>	<b>Low employability</b> of individuals with disabilities in general and in the cultural sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited adaptations</li> <li>• Stigmatization</li> <li>• Physical barriers</li> <li>• Financial constraints</li> <li>• Awareness</li> <li>• Social isolation</li> <li>• Limited access to information</li> </ul>	Increased employment and inclusion of disabled individuals in culture and arts through barrier-targeted measures.
<b>Promotion employment and inclusion</b>	There are several country strategies for the employment of workers with disabilities in general, but <b>few that are specifically focussed on culture and the arts.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited focus on employment strategies for workers with disabilities in the cultural sector.</li> </ul>	Effective implementation of reforms and strategies at national level that lead to tangible improvements in the employment and inclusion of workers with disabilities.
<b>Focus of Study</b>	There is a <b>wealth of literature</b> on employment and inclusion of individuals with disabilities across different sectors, including the cultural sector; however, <b>good practices are adequately recognized.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many areas that could be further addressed to improve conditions for the inclusion of employees with disabilities in work environments.</li> </ul>	Recognise and give visibility to good practises in the employment and inclusion of individuals with disabilities, alongside the use of modern technological approaches.
<b>Insights through interviews</b>	Employers acknowledge the importance of including people with disabilities for their acceptance and sense of usefulness. Motivation and willingness to acquire new knowledge are emphasized as strengths among employees with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Longer introduction time for knowledge acquisition.</li> <li>• Limited financial resources affecting workplace adaptations.</li> <li>• Health issues among individuals with disabilities impacting work.</li> </ul>	Improve understanding and flexibility of employers. Implementation of ergonomic solutions and larger workspaces. Integration of employees with disabilities into new workplaces with greater ease.



	<p>With appropriate support, work performance of employees with disabilities can meet or exceed that of employees without restrictions. Employers express willingness to invest in professional support, workplace adaptations, training, and awareness-raising for employing people with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection of employment based on the degree of disability.</li> </ul>	<p>Better support for employees in dealing with health problems and communication difficulties.</p>
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<p><b>Insights through surveys</b></p>	<p>Based on the survey findings, employment prospects for individuals with disabilities appear positive. Most respondents hold permanent positions, indicating stable employment. Companies of all sizes are employing individuals with disabilities equally, reflecting inclusive hiring practices. While many workplaces are adapted, some adjustments are still needed for optimal performance. Employers are effective in accommodating disabilities, with over 80% of respondents receiving training on ergonomics and related hazards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited financial resources hinder workplace adaptations and accessibility improvements.</li> <li>• Biases and lack of employer awareness pose barriers to employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.</li> <li>• Despite awareness, not all requests for ergonomic adjustments and adaptations are met.</li> <li>• Opportunities for further training and career advancement require enhancement to fully support individuals with disabilities in the workplace.</li> </ul>	<p>Increase financial support for workplace adaptations to improve accessibility and accommodation. Implement initiatives to raise employer awareness and reduce biases against hiring individuals with disabilities. Ensure universal responsiveness to requests for ergonomic adjustments and accommodations. Enhance career development programs and training opportunities to support the professional growth of individuals with disabilities in the workplace.</p>
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	Current state	Gaps	Desired future state
<p><b>Employment and inclusion</b></p>	<p><b>Low employability</b> of individuals with disabilities compared to other EU countries and rather low level of maturity of Polish companies in hiring people with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of adapted workplaces.</li> <li>• Low awareness and training of employers.</li> <li>• Prejudices and misconceptions about the abilities of people with disabilities.</li> <li>• Insufficient support and resources (e.g. assistive technologies, flexible working hours).</li> </ul>	<p>Fully adapted workplaces that meet diverse needs, comprehensive employer training on inclusive policies and practices, and the elimination of prejudices and misconceptions. Support systems and resources, such as assistive technologies and flexible work arrangements, should be readily available. There should be ample</p>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited opportunities for professional development.</li> <li>• Lack of comprehensive inclusion policies and practices.</li> <li>• Legal and structural barriers.</li> <li>• Low representation and lack of advocacy for people with disabilities.</li> </ul>	<p>opportunities for professional advancement, backed by strong, inclusive policies. Legal and structural barriers need to be addressed, ensuring equal opportunities and protection. Finally, increased representation of people with disabilities in decision-making processes is essential to creating inclusive workforce.</p>
<p><b>Promotion employment and inclusion</b></p>	<p>Many programs in this field especially from PEFRON side</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are still significant gaps and challenges in awareness, adaptation, and inclusivity</li> </ul>	<p>Universally adopted inclusive policies, widespread use of advanced assistive technologies, comprehensive employer training programs, and a cultural shift towards valuing diversity, ensuring equal opportunities, and full participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce.</p>
<p><b>Insights through interviews</b></p>	<p>Workers face significant challenges in obtaining employment due to unrecognized disabilities and insufficient job offers. Self-initiative is often required, with minimal support from employment offices, leading to reliance on personal networks. Workplaces are not fully adapted, though some employers prepare the environment beforehand, with further improvements suggested by employees. Employees often manage work-related challenges independently or with informal support from colleagues, highlighting a lack of structured support systems. Job satisfaction varies, with limited opportunities for personal development and career advancement. Employers generally lack awareness and understanding of the needs and capabilities of disabled employees, with persistent prejudices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient number of job offers adapted to the abilities of persons with disabilities.</li> <li>• Necessity for disabled persons to search for work on their own.</li> <li>• Insufficient adaptation of workplaces to the needs of persons with disabilities.</li> <li>• Lack of systematic support from employers and colleagues.</li> <li>• Limited opportunities for professional development and promotion.</li> <li>• Low awareness among employers of the needs and capabilities of people with disabilities.</li> <li>• Persistent prejudices and misconceptions about the abilities of people with disabilities.</li> </ul>	<p>Full recognition of disability by employment offices, more job offers adapted to their abilities, effective support in finding employment, full adaptation of workplaces and systematic support of employers and co-workers. There should be expanded opportunities for career development and promotion, high awareness among employers and the elimination of prejudices and misconceptions about the abilities of people with disabilities.</p>



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	and misconceptions affecting hiring and integration.		
<b>Insights through surveys</b>	People with disabilities still face significant difficulties in obtaining suitable employment, adapting jobs and support from employers, despite some progress in terms of inclusion and awareness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low awareness of ergonomics and its role in developing good working conditions</li> <li>• Prejudices and misconceptions about the abilities of people with disabilities continue to have a significant impact on their ability to find employment.</li> <li>• Lack of adapted workplaces for people with disabilities.</li> </ul>	Systematic and widespread training on ergonomics and inclusivity in workplaces. Effective education campaigns to eliminate prejudice and promote diversity and the employment of people with disabilities. Comprehensive support programmes and grants for employers to adapt workplaces to the needs of people with disabilities.



	<b>Current state</b>	<b>Gaps</b>	<b>Desired future state</b>
<b>Employment and inclusion</b>	The unemployment rate for disabled individuals is approximately twice as high as that of the general population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited adaptations</li> <li>• Stigmatization</li> <li>• Physical barriers</li> <li>• Financial constraints</li> <li>• Awareness</li> <li>• Social isolation</li> <li>• Limited access to information</li> </ul>	The gap between the unemployment rates of the disabled population and the general population has decreased.
<b>Promotion employment and inclusion</b>	The employment and inclusion of disabled workers are primarily supported by general measures that promote equal opportunities in education and employment. The Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund has started providing more extensive labour market services to individuals with reduced work capacity, aiming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual Transition Plans: The use of individual transition plans for students with special needs is not widespread. These plans are crucial for ensuring that young people with disabilities receive continuous support as they move from education to employment.</li> <li>• Access to Quality Education: There is a need for more inclusive education practices that provide</li> </ul>	Ensuring that all students with special needs have individual transition plans that are actively implemented and updated. These plans should move with the students across different educational and employment support institutions. Developing and implementing more inclusive education policies that cater to the specific



	to change attitudes and help them find and keep jobs.	equitable access to high-quality education for young people with special needs. Discriminatory practices in educational institutions can hinder these students from gaining the necessary skills and knowledge.	needs of students with disabilities, providing them with the skills and knowledge required by the labour market.
<b>Insights through interviews</b>	Both employees and employers believe that disabled workers are valued once they secure employment. However, the challenge lies in getting a foot in the door. The awareness about the benefits of accessibility is growing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employers are insecure about hiring job seekers with intellectual disabilities.</li> <li>• Lack of a systematic approach to creating an inclusive and collegial culture within companies.</li> <li>• Addressing practical accessibility issues.</li> </ul>	Employers actively engage with disability advocacy organizations, government agencies, and other stakeholders to foster partnerships and share best practices for promoting inclusivity in the workplace. This collaboration helps companies stay informed about the latest accessibility standards and resources, while also raising awareness about the importance of disability inclusion in the broader community.
<b>Insights through surveys</b>	While there is growing awareness and some satisfaction regarding workplace adjustments and professional development, significant barriers and misconceptions still hinder the full inclusion of disabled individuals in the workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General low awareness of ergonomics.</li> <li>• Prejudices and misconceptions about the abilities of individuals with disabilities are still perceived to have a significant impact on their ability to gain employment.</li> </ul>	There is widespread awareness and understanding of ergonomics among employers and employees. Workplaces are designed to support the health, comfort, and productivity of all workers, with regular assessments and updates to meet evolving needs.