

Study on access to Assistive Technology in the EU



Assistive or Adaptive Technology (AT) commonly refers to "...products, devices or equipment, whether acquired commercially, modified or customized, that are used to maintain, increase or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities..."

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Approximately 38 millions people in Europe have a disability. It is estimated that at EU-level 2 to 3,5 millions persons with disabilities could be reintegrated in employment. Assistive Technology (AT) has a role to play regarding reinsertion of disabled persons.

Moreover, the promotion of a healthy AT industry and a well developed market at EU-level will improve the availability of cost-effective products and services for the end user, therefore preventing the danger for the market of being lost to foreign competition.

Finally, a proper development of the AT market has significant potential to reduce increasing cost of care.

THE PROJECT

The European Commission, DG Employment & Social Affairs, has assigned a study to Deloitte & Touche, in order to perform a comparative study on the legislative and regulatory framework impacting on access and provision to assistive technology (AT) in eight EU countries (France, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom).

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The study will include:

- A description of the main features of the legislative and regulatory frameworks affecting directly and indirectly the



access to AT.

- A comparative analysis of the cost-effectiveness, the availability and the efficiency of the AT delivery systems in the different countries concerned.
- A description of best practices in providing access to AT based job accommodations.
- An assessment of the impact of legislation and regulatory framework on the internal market for AT products.
- Recommendations for action at Community and national levels.





METHODOLOGY ADOPTED

The approach selected for addressing the different issues will incorporate a range of different activities, such as desk research, interviews with key stakeholders and analysis of best practices.

- First, a comprehensive desk research phase will be conducted, both at European and national levels. The desk research will help in identifying and classifying all relevant information in relation to the issues examined: legislation and related regulation, statistics, reports, and specific information that is available with key actors or organisations active in the field, such as public bodies (national or regional), research centres, organisations representing disabled people, industry, intermediary organisations, etc.
- A considerable number of persons and organisations throughout Europe will be identified. They will be contacted, either for direct interviewing or for exchange of information by other means. Deloitte & Touche will use standardised questionnaires and checklists so that comparison will be possible.
- A number of best practices will be identified jointly with the Commission. These will refer for

example to the provision of AT based job accommodations on a functional basis. The best practices will be thoroughly investigated.

The activities will be undertaken by a core team of Deloitte & Touche in Brussels, assisted by staff from the countries considered, as well as some external experts in the field.

TIMING

The project started effectively in December 2002. The final report is due for June 2003.

QUESTIONS - REMARKS ?

Feel free to directly contact the persons mentioned on the right frame



EC - DG Employment and Social Affairs

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/employment_social/index_en.htm

The Employment and Social Affairs Directorate-General of the EC has the objective of promoting a modern, innovative and sustainable European Social Model with more and better jobs in an inclusive society based on equal opportunities.

DG Employment & Social Affairs develops together with the Member States a modernisation process concerning social protection. It also develops and implements new social inclusion policies based on the Amsterdam Treaty, as well as new anti-discrimination policies related to employment and other social issues.

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Deloitte & Touche

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Deloitte & Touche is one of the world's leading auditing and management consulting firms. In Europe, Deloitte & Touche is active in all European countries, where over 26,000 Deloitte & Touche staff serve the needs of its European customers. The group is strong in its truly multidisciplinary approach, enabling its teams to have a true understanding of an issue or an organisation.

The Brussels based practice includes a strong management consulting group with considerable experience in undertaking consulting and study assignments for international organisations such as the European Commission.

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