

EUROCHANCE – English and German for  
Visually Impaired people  
Nr. CZ/03/W/F/LA-161832

## **European Labour Market Report**

02/2004

bfi Steiermark  
EDV-Schulungszentrum  
AUSTRIA

# Diratory

<b>1. Introduction</b>	page 03
<b>2. Task</b>	page 04
<b>3. Key Facts</b>	page 05
3.1 Working age blind and partially sighted people	
3.2 Unemployed working age blind and partially sighted people	
3.3 Summary	
3.4 General unemployment versus visually impaired peoples unemployment	
<b>4. Specific views of the European countries</b>	page 07
4.1. Major obstacles to employment	
<b>5. Employment</b>	page 08
5.1. Employment legal obligation and job quotas	
5.2. Employment of blind and partially-sighted women	
5.3. Vocational training areas in special programmes	
5.4. The most popular vocational training areas	
5.5. Mainstream vocational training programmes	
5.6. University and college education	
<b>6. Typical professions</b>	page 11
6.1. What types of employment are open to visual impaired in the protected work sector?	
6.2. Most popular professions resting upon feedbacks from some European countries	
6.3. Typical professions/types of employment for blind and visually impaired people in Europe	
<b>7. Future Prospects</b>	page 14
7.1. Medium/long term aspirations	
7.2. Further technologies for new career opportunities	
<b>8. Conclusion</b>	page 15
<b>9. Tables / Charts</b>	page 16
9.1. Total population / Statistic data 2002 – General employment / General unemployment	
9.2. EBU Labour Market Study 1995 / Key facts	
9.3. Estimated Number of Visually Impaired People by Country and Age / 1990/91	
9.4. Study EBU 1995 / Estimated Number of Visually Impaired People by Country and Age since 1991	
9.5. Estimated Number of Visually Impaired People in Working Age / Employment – Unemployment – current survey	
9.6. Mailings	

# 1. Introduction

The following labour market research done by bfi Steiermark aims to get an overview on the actual situation of employment of blind and visually impaired people and to find the further professions in the world of employment. The survey covers all European countries (EU 15 and the 10 countries entering the Union on May, 1<sup>st</sup> 2004).

Firstly, bfi Steiermark would like to thank Mr. Mokrane Boussaid, Director of EBU Office, for his help. Without his support this survey could not have been completed.

This survey is not a scientific research, it should help to judge the areas of further professions for blind and visually impaired people in Europe to prepare the measures to support job integration.

There where some problems to cover to realize this survey:

- 1) A lot of countries don't have sufficient, some don't have any figures about the employment / unemployment situation of their blind inhabitants
- 2) The statistics recorded by the different countries are not or not easy comparable, because there are different categories in
  - a) describing the age
  - b) describing unemployment (in general, the group of impaired people, blind and visually impaired people)
  - c) describing the target group of blind and visually impaired people (who is visually impaired? All who need glasses, or those who lost more than 50% of the sight ness?).
- 3) The Community Statistical Authority, called EUROSTAT, is actually the only provider of statistics at European level. EUROSTAT's mission is to provide the European Union with a high-quality statistical information service. They offer a whole range of important and interesting data that governments, businesses, the education sector, journalists and the public can use for their work and daily life, but EUROSTAT does not disposing about any statistic figures in the area of blind and visually impaired people in Europe.
- 4) Only very few national blind associations
  - EBU - European Blind Union, France
  - Belgian Confederation for the Blind and Partially Sighted
  - Polish Association of the Blind
  - SONS - Czech Blind United
  - ONCE - Organizacion Nacional de Ciegos De Espanaresponded to our mail where we asked for there support in collecting data.

At least after one and a half month more than planed and a lot of efforts more than assumed we are able to deliver the labour market research about the situation of blind and visually impaired people in Europe and are able to give a suggestion which further professions we should cover in the course English and German as a foreign language in the EUROCHANCE project.

## 2. Task

General aim of the project EUROCHANCE is to decrease the unemployment rate of the blind people. Increasing qualification of the visually impaired people, and making the professional community aware of the blind people skills and competences should achieve the goal.

Specifically our partnership aims to develop modules of English and German language for blind and visually impaired people available on the Internet platform. Increasing language and cultural competences of the blind employees, widening their awareness about employment possibilities and further personal development.

The first task of the Bfi Steiermark was to carry out analysis of the situation on the labour market for blind people. The analysis should provided information on job opportunities for blind and visually impaired people in the member states. We cooperated with blind people associations and other relevant parties. Partners from other European states would be of help with contacting the institutions in partner countries.

The report by Bfi Steiermark shall promote employability of the blind and visually impaired people in Europe among employers. The brochure shall above all show advantages of blind employees and contain list of occupations blind and partially-sighted people are able to hold successfully.

## 3. Key Facts

### 3.1 Working age blind and partially sighted people

There are 7.4 million blind and partially sighted people in the European Union and many more in the whole of Europe. There is a lack of comparable data regarding the number of blind and visually impaired people and their degree of participation in the life of society. Many respondents were unable to offer precise figures concerning the actual numbers of working age blind, and partially sighted in particular, people. In this sense, the statistics gathered by the survey must not be treated as an accurate gauge of the numbers of working age blind and partially sighted people. These information gaps, which are due to either respondents inability to access statistics or to the non-existence of these statistics, only confirmed data already available through other sources. Respondents to the survey report a total of 433 750 blind and partially sighted people of working age.

### 3.2. Unemployed working age blind and partially sighted people

The available statistics nonetheless show that the proportion of disabled people in relation to the total population of the EU is around 13 %, 4 % of which are severely disabled, 9 % moderately disabled. A person without any disability in working age (16 to 64 years) in Europe has a probability of 66 % to find a job or to develop in business, while for a person with a moderate disability the probability becomes 44 % and for a person with a severe disability only 25 %. The exact number of visually impaired people of working age in Europe is unknown due a lack of recent accurate statistical studies on the topic. Respondents reported a total of 100 000 unemployed blind and partially sighted people of working age.

If we limit the analysis to the Nordic countries, the information supplied is quantitatively and qualitatively satisfactory. It reveals very high unemployment rates amongst the blind and partially sighted population of an *average 60 %*

*Denmark: 69 %*

*Finland: 55 %*

*Norway: 68 %*

*Sweden* stands as a remarkable exception in this gloomy picture: only 5.5 %.

The situation is no better in *Germany*, with 72 % unemployed. This may be due to the overall bad employment situation in the former Democratic Republic, but unfortunately we do not have break-down unemployment figures between the two former republics to confirm this. With 4.2 % unemployment, blind and partially-sighted people in Spain seem to enjoy an enviable situation. This is mainly due to the fact that selling the famous ONCE Lottery tickets still provides an abundant source of employment.

Information on *Hungary* shows an unemployment rate of 77 % and *Poland: 70 % (up to date, Dec 2003)*. This only confirms other sources of information indicating that the employment situation for the blind and partially-sighted in Central and Eastern Europe has been badly affected by the transition period towards market economy. The visually disabled used to be employed in factories run by organisations of the blind, but many of these have had to close down because they could not withstand mounting fierce competition on the open market.

### 3.3. Summary

In West European countries more visually impaired people are employed under ordinary conditions as opposed to central and Eastern European countries where sheltered employment in special workshops provides the major employment opportunities.

### 3.4. General unemployment versus visually impaired peoples unemployment

However, data collected give a clear indication that blind and partially sighted people are considerably worse off than the general population.

<i>For example</i>	<i>% Unemployment visually impaired</i>	<i>% General unemployment</i>
Croatia	50	20
Cyprus	32	3,5
Denmark	69	5,2
Finland	56	11
Germany	72.8	8.9
Hungary	77	6
Norway	68	2.5-2.8
Poland	70	16
Spain	4.2	13.61
Sweden	5.5	3-4

## 4. Specific views of the European countries

### 4.1. Major obstacles to employment

The following obstacles to the employment of blind and partially sighted people were identified :

*Sight and health condition:* mentioned by 9 out of 17 respondents. It is the major cause of unemployment for 3 respondents (Hungary, Spain, UK)

*Disability pension:* mentioned by 6 respondents. Major cause of unemployment for 1 respondent (Luxembourg)

*General unemployment :* mentioned by 8 respondents. Major cause of unemployment for 5 respondents (Croatia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Poland)

*Low job qualification and experience:* mentioned by 6 respondents. Major cause of unemployment for 2 respondents (France, Greece)

*Employers' prejudiced attitude:* mentioned by 4 respondents. Major cause of unemployment for 2 respondents (Cyprus, Sweden)

*Poor legislation:* mentioned by one respondent.

*Family reasons:* mentioned by 3 respondents.

*Structural transformation of the economy:* mentioned by one respondent.

The above information is of great value as it helps identify what should be the focus of policies to improve the employment situation of blind and partially sighted people. However, and because of the information gap signalled above, further analysis is needed to confirm the impact of the causes of unemployment identified. It seems for example that disability pensions are an obstacle to the employment of blind and partially sighted people ; but does this mean that they should be taken away all together? This of course would have a tragic effect on those blind and partially sighted who, although they are job ready, can simply not find a job.

Based on a recommendation by the EBU Commission on Rehabilitation, Vocational Training and Employment, the Board of EBU has recently made its views on disability pensions very clear:

- Blindness has always been, and remains, a major disability, and any suggestion that it is not must be immediately and forcefully challenged.
- When providing social security benefits for blind people, a distinction must be drawn between the two types of allowance:
- If a blind person is unemployed, he needs an allowance to enable him to meet ordinary living expenses, for example, food, lodging, clothing, and so on. If he becomes employed, it may be reasonable for this allowance to be reduced or suspended, depending on the nature of the employment and the wages derived from it.

In any case, he should be entitled to an allowance to compensate for his blindness, including the expenses which a blind person has to incur which are additional to those incurred by a sighted person. He will often have to pay for help ; he will often have to spend more on cleaning clothes ; he may to spend more on food, as he cannot easily choose cheaper items. He needs special equipment, and may have to pay for a guide to accompany him on public transport. These are just some examples of the additional cost of blindness. Because this type of allowance is compensatory, it should not be reduced or suspended if the person finds employment, or has financial resources of its own.

## 5. Employment

### 5.1. Employment legal obligation and job quotas

Respondents report some form of legal obligation to employ disabled/blind people or job quota schemes within their countries. In some cases, legal obligation only falls on the public sector (e.g. Croatia). Advanced respondents report job quota schemes for visually impaired telephonists (80 % of telephony posts are reserved to blind telephonists in Greece).

Six respondents, including 3 Nordic countries, report no such schemes.

The extent to which these provisions are implemented remains to be seen. For example, in Spain, the Law for the Social Integration of the Disabled establishes that in all companies with more than 50 workers, 2 % of the payroll should be made up of disabled workers (blind or others). However, this law establishes no measures whatsoever in the case of its non-fulfilment. As a result, and in spite of complaints from disability organisations, this law has been systematically infringed by employers.

### 5.2. Employment of blind and partially-sighted women

As expected, the level of feedback in this area is disappointingly low. Only Ireland was able to provide some information which may also apply to some other EU countries: the primary difference between blind men and women at work seems to be that male blind people tend to have more definite career advancement opportunities - some have risen to levels of chief executives and assistant bank managers, and many are employed in the computer industry. As regards blind women, the general trend tends to be in administration and in telephony, with a few exceptions that are working in the civil service.

### 5.3. Vocational training areas in special programmes

Twelve countries provided information on vocational areas (directions) in which the visually impaired people are trained in special vocational training programmes (Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Russia and Ukraine). The main vocational areas or occupations are as follows:

*Massage and physiotherapy* - 9 countries

*Switchboard operator* - 8 countries

*Office work, administration, computer operator* - 5 countries

*Customer service, telemarketing, information work* - 2 countries

*Business administration* (running small businesses) - 1 country

*Stenography* - 1 country

*Piano tuning* - 2 countries

*Musician and organ player* - 3 countries

*Acoustician, sound technician* - 1 country

*Metal work - basic mechanic:*

- locksmith - 1 country

- lathe-worker - 1 country

- bicycle repairs - 1 country

- tin lids production - 1 country

- umbrella assembling - 1 country
- assembly work - 1 country
- fitting of electrical equipment - 2 countries

*Plastic moulding* - 1 country

*Handicrafts*

- brush making - 7 countries
- wicker work - 4 countries
- upholstering - 2 countries
- basket making - 2 countries
- knitting - 2 countries
- weaving - 1 country
- leatherwork - 1 country
- bristle stringing - 1 country
- straw weaving - 1 country
- joinery - 1 country
- wood carving - 1 country
- bookbinding - 2 countries

*Agriculture and gardening* - 1 country

#### **5.4. The most popular vocational training areas**

The most popular vocational training areas for visually impaired people in European Countries participating in the survey are: Massage and physiotherapy (9 countries), telephony (8 countries) and brush making (7 countries). Amongst the list of vocational training facilities available, there are many traditional occupations for visually impaired people. However, there are also some new, modern occupations, e.g. plastic moulder, organ player, acoustician.

#### **5.5. Mainstream vocational training programmes**

6 respondents reported that mainstream vocational training opportunities are available to visually impaired students in their countries. They are as follows:

##### **Czech Republic**

Students are trained in areas such as: metalworking, brush manufacturing, basket weaving, cardboard manufacturing, pottery and ceramics, fine mechanics, piano tuning, accounting, massage, music, telephony, computer programming.

##### **Hungary**

Visually impaired students are trained in such vocational areas as: basket making, cabinet making, leatherwork, dressmaking, gardening, plumbing, shop assistant, nurse assistance.

##### **Ireland**

Students are trained in such vocational areas as: telephony, word-processing. They also receive on-the-job training in commercial organisations.

## **Poland**

Visually impaired students are trained in the following vocational areas: locksmith, assembly, gardening, upholstering, electrical work, leatherwork, knitting, lathwork, office work, economist, computer operating, shop assistant.

## **Finland**

Reported that visually impaired people are working in 120 occupations who had received their education and training in a variety of educational settings.

## **Italy**

Reported that no special vocational training programmes exist for visually impaired people. All are trained in the integrated settings. Vocational training opportunities for visually impaired people include massage, massage/physiotherapy, rehabilitation therapy, computer operating, information technology.

## **5.6. University and college education**

In all responding countries except Malta, visually impaired people follow courses at universities and colleges in order to obtain entry to a profession requiring higher education. Five respondents indicated that universities and colleges are open to visually impaired students with appropriate abilities and entry qualifications. Nine respondents provided more detailed information on the faculties selected by visually impaired students.

These are: law, economics, business administration, business management, administration and management, accounting, psychology, sociology, music, education, special education, religious education, philosophy, theology, literature, languages (philology), ecology, electronics, mathematics, engineering, political sciences, journalism and information sciences. No figures concerning student numbers are available.

## 6. Typical professions

### 6.1. What types of employment are open to visual impaired in the protected work sector?

Many of the organisations serving the interests of visually impaired people in Europe do not have full information about vocational training and employment opportunities for visually impaired people. It is possible that they do not have the facilities available to collect and collate this information.

It would be impossible to produce a publication for circulation throughout Europe that will provide information on vocational training centres and special workshops for visually impaired people as the information that has been collected is insufficiently detailed, comprehensive or reliable.

Further thought will need to be given by the Commission on the collection, collation and publication of information on this subject.

### 6.2. Most popular professions resting upon feedback from some European countries

#### *Czech Republic*

Blind people are usually employed as:

- piano tuners (as self-employed persons or in private companies)
- music teachers (basic artistic schools)
- masseurs (as self-employed or in private companies, in medical or sport organizations)
- upholsterers (self-employed or in private companies)
- lawyers (notaries), librarians, editors, programmers etc. intellectually working persons (lower numbers, wider dispersion)
- telephone operators (the number of them is dropping due to new technologies)
- a small number of them work as basket-makers or similar manual workers.

As for the non-traditional professions it is on the level of experiment (production of pottery and textile or workers in administration).

#### *Finland*

Most popular professions:

Masseur, assistant physiotherapist

Industrial work

Accounting and clerical work

Computer design and programming

Teaching and social work

Agricultural work

Nursing

Shop staff and other mercantile work, domestic work, home assistant

Cleaning work, janitorial work, engineering, technician, telephone operator

## *Poland*

The blind and partially sighted people work mostly at:

- blind cooperatives (1 578 persons),
- national and self-governed/municipalities institutions (1 155 persons),
- sheltered workshops - but not these corporated by PAB (839 persons),
- agriculture (822 persons),
- private firms (645 persons),
- self-employment 419 persons),
- disabled persons cooperatives (332 persons),
- PAB units (91 persons),

The blind and partially sighted people work mostly as:

- health service workers (1 062 persons),
- brush-makers (537 persons),
- electro-technicians (448 persons),
- administration employees (393 persons),
- metal workers (267 persons),
- trade employees (245 persons),
- knitters (175 persons),
- teachers (121 persons),
- switchboard operators (70 persons),
- computer professionals (57 persons).

## *Spain*

The main factor explaining this situation is the enormous weight of the sale of tickets for the Lottery of the Blind (a passive type of lottery that has been operated by the ONCE since 1938), which is the major formula used by members for insertion in the labour market, as demonstrated by the following figures relating to working ONCE members :

- 85 % are sellers of Lottery of the Blind tickets (14,458 people).
- 6.6 % are employed by the ONCE as technical and administrative staff (939 people).
- 5.5 % work for other companies and organisations (1,123 people).

In connection with the blind and visually impaired who are affiliated to the ONCE (Spanish National Organisation of the Blind) but work outside the organisation, the following professions can be highlighted : telephonists, clerks, physiotherapists, teachers, lawyers, economists and psychologists. It can be said that virtually all professions are represented.

However, we have not been able to call upon the services of staff to carry out this task. In connection with the blind and visually impaired who are affiliated to the ONCE but work outside the organisation, the following professions can be highlighted : telephonists, clerks, physiotherapists, teachers, lawyers, economists and psychologists. It can be said that virtually all professions are represented.

In Spain the blind and partially sighted people are working mostly in areas:

- Lottery sellers
- Public administrations/servants
- Industrial laundry
- Information technology
- Social communication
- Human resources consultancy

- Food
- Industrial subcontracting

A few establishments have their own productions in a wide variety of fields such as the manufacture of white canes, breakfast trays, pallets, pillowcases, without forgetting exterior services provision in linen work, laundries and landscaping.

The new occupations listed by respondents are: gardening, straw weaving, beekeeping, animal husbandry, cattle breeding, plant-growing, wicker-working, ceramics, wood-carving, shop work, notary, computer programming, computer operating, sales representative, information technology, radio review of complicated diagrams, home telephony, sound technician, psychiatry, bicycle repairing, telesales.

Some respondents gave examples of new occupations that have been available to visually impaired people in other countries for some time (e.g. psychologist, economist, masseur, piano tuner). It should be noted that in Finland visually impaired people carry out occupations which might be replicated in other countries e.g. coil winding, filing, film development, forest working, greenhouse work, hiring holiday cottages, fur breeding.

### **6.3. Typical professions/types of employment for blind and visually impaired people in Europe**

1. Craft work, including basket-making (rattan, willow), chair caning and brush-making
2. Office automation, including keyboard entry, shaping and folding, reprographics, binding and printing in black or Braille
3. Subcontracting with manual conditioning and small assembly work
4. Agriculture, with stock breeding, market gardening and horticulture
5. Masseurs
6. Physiotherapists
7. Telephony
8. Computer operators, Switchboard operators
9. Customer service, telemarketing, information work
10. Metal work – basic mechanic

## **7. Future Prospects**

### **7.1. Medium/long term aspirations**

In a time when traditional job opportunities for the blind and visually impaired are rapidly disappearing, it is paramount that organizations active in the blindness arena are trying to locate so-called niche opportunities in the job market to be opened for the target group.

The internet as a whole and web-based services in particular play an ever increasing role in today's labour market. It is therefore of the utmost importance that we demand equal access to these facilities. We have to consider new approaches to employment of the visually impaired.

Reasonable computer access, relatively good optical character recognition (reading systems) and a number of telecommunications facilities are no longer revolutionary items in most of the industrialized countries. They have been around for some time. It is true, they still need improvement, and, fortunately, they keep improving. But we are looking at a relatively small population, so we will always have to catch up to the mainstream. At some point in the future a "design for all" philosophy may reduce the necessity for this constant chase.

But maybe even more important than the technological aspect of our endeavors is the creation of awareness among potential employers that their future employees are not only technologically savvy but also mentally and physically prepared to face new challenges and succeed in a highly competitive work environment.

### **7.2. Further technologies for new career opportunities**

1. Information Technology / Web-Designer, Programmer, Network instructor
2. Social Management / Services to companies / Advisory activities / Information work / Teaching
3. Customer Care / Call Center Agent (instead of switch board operator)
4. Handcraft / Tele-working
5. Agricultural work / due to the automation of technical processes on the territories of botany cultivation and animal care)
6. Industrial Management / Tele-sales
7. Health / Masseurs / Physiotherapists
8. Wellness / Tourism
9. Council / Consulting / Real estate / Back-office
10. Financing / supporting environment / Telemarketing / Customer service

## 8. Conclusion

It appears from the survey that the employment situation of the blind and partially-sighted people in Europe has not evolved dramatically over the last ten years.

Statistics on disabled people in general, let alone special disability groups, are still tremendously difficult to gather. Blindness organisations do not have the financial resources, nor do they have the expertise, to perform quality investigations in this area.

There have been no major innovations in terms of incentives to employment of disabled/blind people. Traditional recipes (e.g. job quotas) are still with us, but this may be because they have yielded good results in the past. As we can see the blind and partially-sighted people are much worse off in terms of unemployment than the general population. This infers that positive discrimination measures are needed to curb the unemployment of the target group.

It may sound odd to speak of positive discrimination, whereas the disability movement played an active role in the adoption of an EU Non-Discrimination Directive on Employment. In fact, non discrimination and positive discrimination are not opposed ; on the contrary they should be seen as complementary. Unfortunately, it is much too early to try and assess the impact of the directive. A few more years will be needed before a good assessment can be made.

The results contained of the document provide a diverse picture of the employment situation of visually impaired people in Europe. Although there is variation in the criteria for registration as a blind or partially sighted person in different countries, it does seem probable that many European countries are underestimating the prevalence of visual impairment in the population. This remains a key issue that needs addressing urgently, as service planning by governmental and non-governmental organisations needs to be based on reliable population estimates.

It is interesting to note the extent to which visually impaired people in EBU member countries are increasingly accessing mainstream employment opportunities.

General aim of the project EUROCHANCE is to decrease the unemployment rate of the blind and partially-sighted people. Increasing qualification of the target group and making the professional community aware of the blind and visually impaired people skills and competences should achieve the goal.

Specifically our partnership aims to develop modules of English and German language for blind and partially-sighted people available on the Internet platform. Increasing language and cultural competences of the blind employees, widening their awareness about employment possibilities and further personal development.

New age of information technologies has brought up wider opportunities for blind and visually impaired job seekers. Rising qualification of the target group in the foreign languages will increase their chance on the labour market and it will also improve their social situation while blind and visually impaired people will be able to find better positions and well-paid jobs.

## 9. Tables / Charts

### 9.1. Total population / Statistik data 2002 – General employment / General unemployment

#### EU Members - Total population

								statistic data 2002	statistic data 2002
Nation		Total population	% Children (0-14)	% population (15-24)	% population (25-49)	% population (50-64)	Elderly (over 65)	employment rate working age/total	unemployment rate working age/total
Austria	Total	8.121.300	16,8	11,8	38,6	17,2	15,6	68,2	31,8
	Female							61,1	38,9
	Male							75,3	24,7
Belgium	Total	10.263.400	17,6	12,1	36,7	16,7	16,9	59,7	40,3
	Female							51,1	48,9
	Male							68,1	31,9
Denmark	Total	5.349.200	18,4	11,7	36,4	18,7	14,8	76,4	23,6
	Female							72,6	27,4
	Male							80,2	19,8
Finland	Total	5.181.100	18,2	12,8	35,5	18,7	14,8	69,1	30,9
	Female							67,3	32,7
	Male							70,9	29,1
France	Total	59.038.500	18,9	13,0	36,1	16,0	16,0	62,9	37,1
	Female							56,4	43,6
	Male							69,6	30,4
Germany	Total	82.259.500	15,7	11,1	38,0	19,0	16,2	65,4	34,6
	Female							58,8	41,2
	Male							71,8	28,2
Greece	Total	10.564.700	15,2	14,0	36,0	17,5	17,3	56,9	43,1
	Female							42,7	57,3
	Male							71,7	28,3
Ireland	Total	3.825.900	21,9	17,5	35,1	14,3	11,2	65,0	35,0
	Female							55,2	44,8
	Male							74,7	25,3
Italy	Total	57.844.000	14,4	11,8	37,3	18,5	18,0	55,4	44,6
	Female							41,9	58,1
	Male							68,9	31,1

## EU Members - Total population

Nation		Total population	% Children (0-14)	% population (15-24)	% population (25-49)	% population (50-64)	Elderly (over 65)	statistic data 2002	statistic data 2002
								employment rate working age/total	unemployment rate working age/total
Luxembourg	Total	439.500	18,9	11,3	39,2	16,3	14,3	63,6	36,4
	Female							51,5	48,5
	Male							75,5	24,5
Netherlands	Total	15.987.100	18,6	11,9	38,8	17,2	13,5	74,5	25,5
	Female							65,9	34,1
	Male							85,9	14,1
Portugal	Total	10.262.900	16,1	15,0	35,9	16,9	16,1	68,6	31,4
	Female							61,2	38,8
	Male							76,3	23,7
Spain	Total	40.121.700	14,9	14,7	37,7	16,0	16,7	58,4	41,6
	Female							44,0	56,0
	Male							72,8	27,2
Sweden	Total	8.882.800	18,5	11,6	34,1	18,5	17,3	74,0	26,0
	Female							72,5	27,5
	Male							75,5	24,5
United Kingdom	Total	59.862.800	19,0	12,2	36,2	16,9	15,7	71,5	28,5
	Female							65,3	34,7
	Male							77,7	22,3

references: [www.europa.eu.int/index\\_de.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/index_de.htm)

## Total population / Statistik data 2002 – General employment / General unemployment

### Acceding Countries May 2004

Nation		Total population	% Children (0-14)	% population (15-24)	% population (25-49)	% population (50-64)	Elderly (over 65)	statistic data 2002	statistic data 2002
								employment rate working age/total	unemployment rate working age/total
Cyprus	Total	785.300	23,2	14,9	35,6	15,0	11,3	68,5	31,5
	Female							59,0	41,0
	Male							78,8	21,2
Czech Republic	Total	10.232.000	16,6	15,5	36,0	18,1	13,8	65,5	34,5
	Female							57,1	42,9
	Male							73,9	26,1
Estonia	Total	1.367.000	18,3	14,4	34,7	17,7	14,9	61,7	38,3
	Female							57,6	42,4
	Male							66,2	33,8
Hungary	Total	10.200.300	16,9	14,9	35,4	17,7	15,1	56,5	43,5
	Female							49,9	50,1
	Male							63,4	36,6
Latvia	Total	2.364.300	17,8	14,3	34,9	18,0	15,0	60,5	39,5
	Female							57,6	42,4
	Male							63,6	36,4
Lithuania	Total	3.480.000	19,8	14,3	36,7	15,9	13,3	60,6	39,4
	Female							57,2	42,8
	Male							64,3	35,7
Malta	Total	391.400	20,4	15,2	34,8	17,5	12,1	55,0	45,0
	Female							34,3	65,7
	Male							75,6	24,4
Poland	Total	38.248.700	19,6	16,9	36,6	14,9	12,0	51,7	48,3
	Female							46,7	53,3
	Male							57,0	43,0

## Acceding Countries May 2004

Nation		Total population	% Children (0-14)	% population (15-24)	% population (25-49)	% population (50-64)	Elderly (over 65)	statistic data 2002	statistic data 2002
								employment rate working age/total	unemployment rate working age/total
Slovakia	Total	5.378.900	19,8	17,1	37,1	14,5	11,5	56,5	43,5
	Female							51,2	48,8
	Male							61,9	38,1
Slovenia	Total	1.990.100	16,1	14,7	38,5	16,8	13,9	64,3	35,7
	Female							59,8	40,2
	Male							68,7	31,3

references: [www.europa.eu.int/index\\_de.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/index_de.htm)

## 9.2. EBU Labour Market Study 1995 / KEY FACTS

	NO. B	NO. PS	LEGAL DEF. BLIND.	LEGAL DEF. PS	WORK. AGE B	WORK. AGE PS	UNEMP. WORKING AGE B	UNEMP. WORKING AGE PS	OVER. TOTAL UNEMP. PEOPLE	MINIMUM SALARY F/T (US\$)	LEGAL NO. WORK. HOURS F/T
<b>ARMENIA</b>	3263	1736	0.04%	0.08%	1087	578	266	200	N/A	6	8 HPD
<b>BELGIUM</b>	12000-15000	N/A	>10%	>40%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	550000	N/A	8 HPD
<b>CZECH REP.</b>	20000	40000	3/60 SNELLEN	6/60 SNELLEN	10000	20000	5000	10000	105000	55	8 HPD
<b>DENM.</b>	CIRCA--	15000	6/60 SNELLEN	6/60 SNELLEN	2500-----	-----	N/A	N/A	273000	1975	37 HPW
<b>ESTONIA</b>	500	1500	0.03% OR 10%	0.08% OR 20%	200	500	120	300	N/A	40	40 HPW
<b>FINLAND</b>	710000	30000	WHO	WHO	4000	6000	2000	3500	430000	N/A	6 HPD
<b>FRANCE</b>	55000	85000	1/20	1/10 2/10	78000	50000	11000	N/A	3.3M	1100	YES
<b>GERMAN.</b>	155000	500000	2% OF NORMAL	10% OF NORMAL	41000	N/A	32000	N/A	3.826M	N/A	N/A
<b>GREECE</b>	22000	N/A	1/20 OF NORMAL	N/A	7000	N/A	N/A	N/A	400000	587	8 HPD
<b>HOLLAND</b>	16000	142000	FUNCT.	>10% OF NORMAL	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	650000	2163	38 HPW
<b>HUNG. 1</b>	33000	N/A	95% MASCHKE	67-95% MASCHKE	3600	N/A	1100	N/A	550000	CIRCA 85	8 HPD
<b>HUNG. 2</b>	33000	N/A	MASCHKE	MASCHKE	3600	N/A	1100	N/A	550000	CIRCA 100	8 HPD
<b>IRELAND</b>	6000	11000	2/20	N/A	1500	N/A	50	N/A	280000	NO	48 HPW
<b>ITALY</b>	58362	176000	1/10 OF NORMAL	2/10 OF NORMAL	5000	N/A	500	N/A	2M	NO	36 HPW
<b>KAZA-KHSTAN</b>	9619	10189	0.04%	0.05-2%	4601	4867	1976	2177	N/A	18	36HPW

EBU Labour Market Study 1995						KEY FACTS					
	NO. B	NO. PS	LEGAL DEF. BLIND.	LEGAL DEF. PS	WORK. AGE B	WORK. AGE PS	UNEMP. WORKING AGE B	UNEMP. WORKING AGE PS	OVER. TOTAL UNEMP. PEOPLE	MINIMUM SALARY F/T (US\$)	LEGAL NO. WORK. HOURS F/T
LATVIA	2260	3840	N/A	N/A	2000	N/A	3000	800	86528	56	40 HPW
LITHUAN.	2881	4085	3%	20%	890	1620	N/A	251	N/A	25	8 HPD
LUXEMB.	550	N/A	% OF NORMAL	N/A	80	N/A	20	N/A	5200	1447	40 HPW
POLAND	81724	75680	3/60	N/A	31594	N/A	2622	N/A	2.8M	125	35 HPW
ROMAN.	25800	30300	0.04% OF NORMAL	0.07-0.1%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	CIRCA 1.0M	40	40 HPW
RUSSIA	263000	N/A	0.04%	0.2%	101312	50000	25743-----	-----	N/A	11	36 HPW
SLOVAK.	7827	5511	SNELLEN---	-----	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	84	43 HPW
SPAIN	5000	30000	1/10 WECKER	1/10 WECKER	10000	20000	NIL	NIL	3.5M	600	37.5 HPW
SWEDEN	13000	90000	N/A	N/A	2600	18000	N/A	1000	N/A	NO	NO
SWITZERLAND	2000-3000	20000-30000	3/10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	44 HPW
TURKEY	N/A	N/A	1/10	1/3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
UK	300000	475000	3/60 SNELLEN	6/60-6/24 SNELLEN	41000	50000	N/A	N/A	2M	NO	NO
UKRAINE	78000	N/A	8% OF NORMAL	N/A	70000	N/A	1500	N/A	5.2M	10	36 HPW
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2.7M ---</b>	<b>-----</b>			<b>416963</b>	<b>218818</b>	<b>84921</b>	<b>41494</b>	<b>26.5M</b>		

### 9.3. Estimated Number of Visually Impaired People by Country and Age - 1990/91

	Year	Population in	Estimated	Population in	Estimated	Population in	Estimated	Population in	Estimated	Total	Estimated
		age group	VI pop. in	age group	VI pop. in	age group	VI pop. in	age group	VI pop. in		
		0 - 14	0 - 14	15 - 59	15 - 59	60 - 74	60 - 74	75+	75+		
Austria	1991	1,357,700	2700	4,852,000	13,600	1,038,800	25,900	542,600	97,100	7,791,100	139,300
Belgium	1990	1,801,200	3,600	6,114,400	17,100	1,370,400	34,100	661,900	118,500	9,947,900	173,300
Denmark	1991	873,500	1,700	3,226,600	9,000	688,200	17,100	358,100	64,100	5,146,400	92,000
Finland	1991	964,200	1,900	3,106,700	8,700	644,600	16,100	283,100	50,700	4,998,600	77,400
France	1991	11,314,700	22,600	34,265,400	95,900	7,161,900	178,300	3,794,200	679,200	56,536,200	976,100
Germany	1990	12,638,600	25,300	50,391,900	141,100	10,358,600	257,900	5,723,800	1,024,600	79,112,900	1,448,900
Greece	1990	1,927,400	3,900	6,136,100	17,200	1,369,100	34,100	624,700	111,800	10,057,300	166,900
Ireland	1990	962,400	1,900	2,013,300	5,600	373,300	9,300	157,300	28,200	3,506,300	45,000
Italy	1990	9,620,000	19,200	36,341,000	101,800	7,975,900	198,600	3,639,500	651,500	57,576,400	971,100
Luxembourg	1990	65,300	100	241,300	700	48,900	1,200	22800	4,100	378,300	6,100
Netherlands	1991	2,738,700	5,500	9,659,600	27,000	1,791,000	44,600	820,300	146,800	15,009,600	224,000
Norway	1991	805,800	1,600	2,555,500	7,200	587,700	14,600	300,900	53,900	4,249,900	77,300
Portugal	1990	2,160,000	4,300	6,291,600	17,600	1,335,500	33,300	549,900	98,400	10,337,000	153,600
Spain	1991	7,556,300	15,100	24,075,600	67,400	5,198,400	129,400	2,163,500	387,300	38,993,800	599,200
Sweden	1991	1,548,200	3,100	5,092,500	14,300	1,261,000	31,400	688,900	123,300	8,590,600	172,100
Switzerland	1991	1,158,600	2,300	4,279,600	12,000	858,300	21,400	454,200	81,300	6,750,700	117,000
UK	1991	10,974,700	21,900	34,610,300	96,900	7,903,700	196,800	3,989,600	714,100	57,478,300	1,029,800
Total										368,670,200	6,329,700

Source: Population by major age groups. Council of Europe (1991) Recent Demographic Developments in Europe. Council of Europe Press.  
 Estimated number of visually impaired people. Estimates based on prevalence rates identified in I Bruce et al (1991) Blind and Partially Sighted Adults in Britain.

#### 9.4. Study EBU 1995 Estimated Number of Visually Impaired People by Country and Age since 1991

Nation		Registration of Blind People	% Children (0-15)	% population (16-64)	% population (>65)	Total visually impaired population approx./identified	% Children (0-15)	% population (16-64)	% population (>65)	Partially sighted population	% Children (0-15)	% population (16-64)	% population (>65)	Estimated total
Austria	Total			2.700	13.600	122.000								138.300
	Female													
	Male													
Belgium	Total					12000 - 15000								12000 - 15000
	Female													0
	Male													0
Denmark	Total	26.850				53.700	1.721	17.613	34.366	26.850				107.400
	Female													0
	Male													0
Finland	Total					81.300	1300 *	10000 **	70000 ***					81.300
	Female					55.100	600 *	4500 **	50000 ***					55.100
	Male					26.200	700 *	5500 **	20000 ***					26.200
France	Total	55.000	2000 *	18000 **	35000 ***	140.000		68000 **		85.000		50000 **		280.000
	Female													0
	Male													0
Germany	Total	155.000	9600 *	43989 **	102300 ***	655.000			465000 ***	500.000				1.310.000
	Female	96.100				360.000				275.000				731.100
	Male	58.900				295.000				225.000				578.900
Greece	Total					22.000		7000 **						22.000
	Female					11.000								11.000
	Male					11.000								11.000

Nation		Registration of Blind People	% Children (0-15)	% population (16-64)	% population (>65)	Total visually impaired population approx./identified	% Children (0-15)	% population (16-64)	% population (>65)	Partially sighted population	% Children (0-15)	% population (16-64)	% population (>65)	Estimated total
Ireland	Total	6.448		1500 **		17.000				11.000				34.448
	Female													0
	Male													0
Italy	Total	58.370				368.000	10000 *	132000 **	226000 ***	57.388				483.758
	Female					218.000	6000 *	63000 **	149000 ***					218.000
	Male					150.000	4000 *	69000 **	77000 ***					150.000
Luxembourg	Total					550	69 *	80 *	401 *					550
	Female					350								350
	Male					200								200
Netherlands	Total	16.000				158.000				142.000				316.000
	Female													0
	Male													0
Portugal	Total	17.500	1300	11100	5100	163.500	12300	103100	48100	146.000	11000	92000	43000	327.000
	Female	9.200	700	5500	3000	86.200	6200	51500	28500	77.000	5500	46000	25500	172.400
	Male	8.300	600	5600	2100	77.300	6100	51600	19600	69.000	5500	46000	17500	154.600
Spain	Total	59.186	4340 *	33155 *	21691 ***	150000 - 200000				100000 - 150000				309186 - 409186
	Female	29.024	1904 *	14726 *	12394 ***									29.024
	Male	30.162	2436 *	18429 *	9297 ***									30.162
Sweden	Total	13.000	400 *	2600 **	10000 ***	102.600	3000 *	20600 **	79000 ***	89.600	2600 *	18000 **	69000 ***	205.200
	Female	7.500	200 *	1300 **	6000 ***	61.800	1500 *	10300 **	50000 ***	54.300	1300 *	9000 **	44000 ***	123.600
	Male	5.500	200 *	1300 **	4000 ***	40.800	1500 *	10300 **	29000 ***	35.300	1300 *	9000 **	25000 ***	81.600
United Kingdom	Total	193.856				1.066.740	24200	166140	876400	160.197				1.420.793
	Female									21.500				21.500
	Male									20.500				20.500

## Acceding Countries May 2004

Nation		Registration of Blind People	% Children (0-15)	% population (16-64)	% population (>65)	Total visually impaired population approx./identified	% Children (0-15)	% population (16-64)	% population (>65)	Partially sighted population	% Children (0-15)	% population (16-64)	% population (>65)	Estimated total
Cyprus	Total	503	56 *	257 **	190 ***	857	105 *	453 **	299 ***	354	49 *	196 **	109 ***	1.714
	Female	225	28 *	96 **	101 ***	389	52 *	180 **	157 ***	164	24 *	84 **	56 ***	778
	Male	278	28 *	161 **	89 ***	468	53 *	273 **	142 ***	190	25 *	112 **	53 ***	936
Czech Republic	Total	18.000	2700 *	5800 **	9500 ***	60.000	9000 *	20000 **	31000 ***	42.000	6300 *	14200 **	21500 ***	120.000
	Female	9.500				31.000				21.500				62.000
	Male	8.500				29.000				20.500				58.000
Estonia	Total	500		200 **		2.000		800 **		1.500		600 **		4.000
	Female					1.000								1.000
	Male					1.000								1.000
Hungary	Total					43.386	942 *	15260 **	27184 ***					43.386
	Female													0
	Male													0
Latvia	Total	2.349	138*			7.423	303 *	2105 **	5015 ***	5.074	165 *			14.846
	Female		63 *			4.047	142 *	1039 **	2866 ***		79 *			4.047
	Male		75 *			3.376	161 *	1066 **	2149 ***		86 *			3.376
Lithuania	Total	3.295	108 *	815 **	2372 ***	8.581	852 *	2648 **	5081 ***	5.286	744 *	1833 **	2709 ***	17.162
	Female					4.047								4.047
	Male					3.376								3.376
Malta	Total		40											
	Female													
	Male													

Nation		Registration of Blind People	% Children (0-15)	% population (16-64)	% population (>65)	Total visually impaired population approx./identified	% Children (0-15)	% population (16-64)	% population (>65)	Partially sighted population	% Children (0-15)	% population (16-64)	% population (>65)	Estimated total
Poland	Total	81.724				157.404		31594 **		75.680				314.808
	Female													0
	Male													0
Slovakia	Total	7.827	5.511											
	Female													
	Male													
Slovenia	Total	2.107	59 *	1019 **	1029 ***	3.521	121 *	1853 **	1547 ***	1.414	62 *	834 **	518 ***	7.042
	Female	1.161	26 *	501 **	634 ***	1.941	59 *	948 **	987 ***	833	33 *	447 **	353 ***	3.935
	Male	946	33 *	518 **	395 ***	1.580	62 *	905 **	560 ***	581	29 *	387 **	165 ***	3.107

references: [www.euroblind.org](http://www.euroblind.org)

\* no specification about the age group (children)

\*\* no specification about the age group (Working age)

\*\*\* no specification about the age group (Elderly)

## 9.5 Estimated Number of Visually Impaired People in Working Age /EMPLOYMENT-UNEMPLOYMENT – current survey

Nation		Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Number of VIPS employed on open labour market
		Working age BLIND	Working age Part. Sighted	Unemployment Working age blind	Unemployment Working age Part. Sighted	
Austria	Total			75,00%		
	Female					
	Male					
Belgium	Total	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	Female					
	Male					
Denmark	Total	2.500	N/A	69,00%		
	Female					
	Male					
Finland	Total			56,00%		
	Female					
	Male					
France	Total	78.000	50.000	11.000	N/A	54.000
	Female					
	Male					
Germany	Total	41.000	N/A	32.000	N/A	
	Female			72,00%		
	Male					
Greece	Total	7.000	N/A	N/A	N/A	60
	Female					
	Male					
Ireland	Total	1.500	N/A	50	N/A	35
	Female					
	Male					
Italy	Total	5.000	N/A	500	N/A	
	Female					
	Male					

<b>Nation</b>		Estimated Working age BLIND	Estimated Working age Part. Sighted	Estimated Unemployment Working age blind	Estimated Unemployment Working age Part. Sighted	Number of VIPS employed on open labour market
Luxembourg	Total	80	N/A	20	N/A	
	Female					
	Male					
Netherlands	Total	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	Female					
	Male					
Portugal	Total					
	Female					
	Male					
Spain	Total	10.000	20.000	4,20%		
	Female					
	Male					
Sweden	Total	2.600	18.000	N/A	1.200	
	Female				5,50%	
	Male					
United Kingdom	Total	41.000	50.000	75,0%		22.000
	Female					
	Male					

## Acceding Countries May 2004

Nation		Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Number of VIPS employed on open labour market
		Working age BLIND	Working age Part. Sighted	Working age blind	Working age Part. Sighted	
Cyprus	Total				32,00%	
	Female					
	Male					
Czech Republic	Total	10.000	20.000	5.000	10.000	
	Female					
	Male					
Estonia	Total	200	500	120	300	
	Female					
	Male					
Hungary	Total	3.600	N/A	1.100	N/A	
	Female					
	Male					
Latvia	Total	2.000	N/A	2.000	800	144
	Female					
	Male					
Lithuania	Total	890	1.620	N/A	251	269
	Female					
	Male					
Malta	Total					5
	Female					
	Male					
Poland	Total		38768		70,00%	60.069
	Female					
	Male					
Slovakia	Total	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	Female					
	Male					

<b>Nation</b>		Estimated Working age BLIND	Estimated Working age Part. Sighted	Estimated Unemployment Working age blind	Estimated Unemployment Working age Part. Sighted	<b>Number of VIPS employed on open labour market</b>
Slovenia	Total					
	Female					
	Male					

## 9.6. Mailings

### 14.11.2003 / EBU – European Blind Union

Dear Mr. Bossaid,

We contact you, because of the EBU is the most important source for data in the filed of blind and visually handicapped people.

In October 2003 a new project, funded by the Leonardo da Vinci program, called EUROCHANCE has started. The project partner are from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Norway, Spain, United Kingdom and Austria.

The provisional research executed by the partners in their countries, as well as the date from the national report on this issue, the observations and the experience of the partners in this field has shown, that there is a higher rate of unemployment, lower employability opportunities, and difficult access to foreign language vocational materials for the blind and visually impaired people compared to other social groups.

According to the analysis of the European projects dealing with educational materials for the blind we have found, that there is a lack of quality vocational language materials suited to the needs of the blind people.

The aim of the project is the development of the vocational training curriculum on the basis of previous analysis of current method and approaches of distance and autonomous education for the blind and visually impaired people. Furthermore the aim is to provide a transparent layer for the speech synthesisers independent on the equipment used.

Our first task is to carry out analysis of the situation on the labour market for the blind and visually impaired people. The analysis should provide information on job opportunities for blind and visually impaired people in the member states of the European Union and also in the 10 further member states.

The aim will be to create a database of the potential employers.

Therefore we ask you to support us with some of the needed information:

- \* unemployment rate of blind and visually impaired people in each country (actually and the 10 further members)
- \* current job opportunities for blind and visually impaired people in the member states and future member states
- \* further job opportunities in the labour market in the member states and future member states

Because of the pressure (dateline: 5th of december) we will ask you, if the European Blind Union dispose about a labour market study and convey the issues to us, respective get in contact with your national members to receive all that urgent information.

Thank you very much for your support. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With best regards,

---

Michaela Meier  
Berufsförderungsinstitut Steiermark  
EDV-Schulungszentrum  
Asperngasse 4/2. Stock, 8020 Graz  
Telefon: +43 316 57 35 48 - 12  
Telefax: +43 316 57 35 48 - 14  
E-mail: [michaela.meier@bfi-stmk.at](mailto:michaela.meier@bfi-stmk.at)

## Contact Adresses – EBU National Members

Nation	Organisation	Ansprechperson	e-mail
Belgium	confédération belge pour la promotion des aveugles	Leandre CAMBIER	<a href="mailto:bcbs.cbpm@skynet.be">bcbs.cbpm@skynet.be</a>
Denmark	Dansk Blindesamfund	Jens Bromann Jensen	<a href="mailto:ibi@dkblind.dk">ibi@dkblind.dk</a>
Germany	German Federation of the Blind and Partially Sighted	Jürgen Lubnau	<a href="mailto:h.kaltwasser@dbsv.org">h.kaltwasser@dbsv.org</a>
Finland	Finnish Federation of the visually impaired	Timo Kuoppala	<a href="mailto:timo.kuoppala@nkl.fi">timo.kuoppala@nkl.fi</a>
France	Comité National pour la Promotion Sociale des Aveugles	Jean-Pierre Gantet	<a href="mailto:paulguinot@antivirus.oleane.com">paulguinot@antivirus.oleane.com</a>
Greece	Panhellenic Association of the Blind	Ilias Margiolas	<a href="mailto:pab@otenet.gr">pab@otenet.gr</a>
Ireland	National Council for the Blind of Ireland	Desmond Kenny	<a href="mailto:desmond.kenny@ncbi.ie">desmond.kenny@ncbi.ie</a>
Italy	Unione Italiana Ciechi	Tommaso Daniele	<a href="mailto:inter@uiciechi.it">inter@uiciechi.it</a>
Luxembourg	Association des Aveugles et Malvoyants du Luxembourg	Roger Hoffmann	<a href="mailto:roger.hoffmann@blannemheem.lu">roger.hoffmann@blannemheem.lu</a>
Netherlands	Netherlands Federation of the Blind and Partially Sighted	Geert Joosten	<a href="mailto:m.theunisz@sb-belang.nl">m.theunisz@sb-belang.nl</a>
Austria	Österreichischer Blinden- und Sehbehindertenverband	Klaus Guggenberger	<a href="mailto:oebsv.zentrale@aon.at">oebsv.zentrale@aon.at</a>
Portugal	Acapo	José Eduardo Gaspar Arruda	<a href="mailto:dn@acapo.pt">dn@acapo.pt</a>
Spain	Organizacion Nacional de Ciegos De Espana, Once	Jose Maria Arroya Zarzosa	<a href="mailto:rrii@once.es">rrii@once.es</a>
Sweden	Swedish Association of the Visually Impaired Synskadades Riksforbund (SRF)	Lennart Nolte	<a href="mailto:erik.staaf@srfriks.org">erik.staaf@srfriks.org</a>
Great Britain	Royal National Institute of the Blind	Colin Low	<a href="mailto:colin.low@rnib.org.uk">colin.low@rnib.org.uk</a>

Nation	Organisation	Ansprechperson	e-mail
Estonia	Estonian Federation of the Blind	Ago Kivilo	<a href="mailto:pimedateliit@hot.ee">pimedateliit@hot.ee</a>
Latvia	Latvian Society of the Blind	Janis Polis	<a href="mailto:lnbcv@e-apollo.lv">lnbcv@e-apollo.lv</a>
Lithuania	Lithuanian Association of the Blind and Visually Handicapped	Osvaldas Petraislas	<a href="mailto:audra@lass.lt">audra@lass.lt</a>
Malta	Malta Society of the Blind	Waldemar Beck	<a href="mailto:socblindmalta@global.net.mt">socblindmalta@global.net.mt</a>
Poland	Polish Association of the Blind	Sylwester Peryt	<a href="mailto:international@pzn.org.pl">international@pzn.org.pl</a>
Slovakai	Slovak Blind and Partially Sighted Union	Branislav Mamojka	<a href="mailto:mamojka@unss.sk">mamojka@unss.sk</a>
Slovenia	Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted of Slovenia	Brane But	<a href="mailto:zdsss@zveza-slepih.si">zdsss@zveza-slepih.si</a>
Czech Republic	SONS, Czech Blind United	Vaclav Polasek	<a href="mailto:sons.polasek@centrum.cz">sons.polasek@centrum.cz</a>
Hungary	Hungarian Federation of the Blind and Partially Sighted	Katalin Molnar Erhart	<a href="mailto:mvgyosz@axelero.hu">mvgyosz@axelero.hu</a>
Cyprus	Pancyprian Organization of the Blind	Mikis Florentzos	<a href="mailto:pot@logos.cy.net">pot@logos.cy.net</a>

## **Mailing - 1.12.2003 / Members of the European Blind Associations**

In October 2003 a new project, funded by the Leonardo da Vinci program, called EUROCHANCE has started. The project partner are from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Norway, Spain, United Kingdom and Austria.

The provisional research executed by the partners in their countries, as well as the data from the national report on this issue, the observations and the experience of the partners in this field has shown, that there is a higher rate of unemployment, lower employability opportunities, and difficult access to foreign language vocational materials for the blind and visually impaired people compared to other social groups.

According to the analysis of the European projects dealing with educational materials for the blind we have found, that there is a lack of quality vocational language materials suited to the needs of the blind people.

The aim of the project is the development of the vocational training curriculum on the basis of previous analysis of current method and approaches of distance and autonomous education for the blind and visually impaired people. Furthermore the aim is to provide a transparent layer for the speech synthesisers independent on the equipment used.

Our first task is to carry out analysis of the situation on the labour market for the blind and visually impaired people. The analysis should provide information on job opportunities for blind and visually impaired people in the member states of the European Union and also in the 10 further member states.

The aim will be to create a database of the potential employers.

Therefore we ask you to support us with some of the needed information:

- \* unemployment rate of blind and visually impaired people in each country (actually and the 10 further members)
- \* current job opportunities for blind and visually impaired people in the member states and future member states
- \* further job opportunities in the labour market in the member states and future member states

It is possible that you have got the same or a simlary mail from Mr. Bossaid (European Blind Union), because we get in contact with him two weeks ago, because of the EBU is the most important source for data in the filed of blind and visually handicapped people, to support us with some of the needed information. We also requested him to get in contact with the national members to receive all that urgent information.

Because of the pressure (dateline: 5th of december) now we will ask you, if your national organisation dispose about a labour market study and convey the issues to us.

Thank you very much for your support. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With best regards,

---

Michaela Meier  
Berufsförderungsinstitut Steiermark  
EDV-Schulungszentrum  
Asperngasse 4/2. Stock, 8020 Graz  
Telefon: +43 316 7270 - 842  
Telefax: +43 316 7270 - 844  
E-mail: michaela.meier@bfi-stmk.atl