

Study: Discrimination of People with Complex Needs or Severe Disabilities

People with complex needs and severe or profound disabilities and their families often experience discrimination, fear and prejudices when accessing special or mainstream services or when trying to participate in the life of society. Even many disability services, for example in employment, living facilities or education, are designed with the implicit assumption that this group of citizens may not be able to benefit from them.

The European Commission therefore has published in 2006 an invitation to Tender for a “Study on the Specific Risks of Discrimination Against Persons in Situation of Major Dependence or with Complex Needs” (No. VT/2006/014). The study was managed by the Commission’s Unit for the Integration of People with Disabilities (Unit G3) in the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Inclusion Europe has submitted a successful bid to undertake this study as Tenderer of the European Commission.

This study focused on the discrimination of people who, due to a disability, have a high and/or complex need of support services. The majority of this group comprises people with severe physical or intellectual disability – or a combination of both. However, this study also included the potential discrimination of deaf-blind people, people with autism or people with a significant mental health problem.

The study compared policies and legislation against the discrimination of people with complex needs and/or severe disabilities at national level from twelve European countries and took special account of the accessibility, affordability, availability and quality of mainstream and specialized support service for the target group. The systematic of the study was guided by a life-cycle approach that defines the profiles of demands of disabled people to their support systems in different life situations.

Taking account of the population sizes and a good regional and cultural balance, Inclusion Europe has selected the following twelve countries as Focus Countries for the study: Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, Poland, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden and Romania.

The results of the study have been published in four volumes about the "Specific Risks of Discrimination Against Persons in Situation of Major Dependence or with Complex Needs":