

EU Underlines the Importance of Increasing Employability of Persons with Disabilities for Social and Economic Inclusion

The European Commission will highlight the importance of promoting equal opportunities for persons with disabilities and present inspiring projects on increasing their employability skills during a webinar on Tuesday, 15 December 2020 from 11:00-12:30 via Zoom. The event will also be shared live on the EU Infopoint Facebook page.

The webinar will focus on social and economic inclusion of people with disabilities through inspiring examples of EU funded projects. Prof. Dr. Gamze Ekici and Ph. PT. Orkun Tahir Aran from Hacettepe University will present their EU-funded project on increasing the employability of people with disabilities, with the objective to increase working capacity, motivation, productivity, job search skills and social skills of persons with disabilities to increase their employability and access to the labour market.

Yiota Michaelidou, an entrepreneur from Limassol with Stargardt's Disease, a progressive eye disease that affects central vision, will talk about her baking business venture. Despite the onset of her disease, Yiota continued to pursue her love of baking and she is now the owner of a baking and confectionery workshop that produces traditional Cypriot-baked goods. She also received an EU grant through which she could invest in her business. Yiota continues to grow her business and is working on a cookbook with traditional delicacies of Cyprus, for persons with vision impairment.

Günay Kibrit from the Cyprus Turkish Orthopaedic Disability Association will present how the EU funded "Skilled Workforce Successful Community" Project provided lifelong learning opportunities for people with disabilities. The project, implemented by the Cyprus Turkish Chamber of Industry in partnership with Cyprus Turkish Chamber of Commerce aims to enhance lifelong learning opportunities in the vocational and labour market, through increasing key skills and competencies of unemployed individuals including a special focus for the disabled people.

Background:

The EU and all its member states have committed to promote a barrier-free Europe and to empower people with disabilities so that they can enjoy their rights and participate fully in society and economy by signing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and including these in the European disability strategy 2010-2020. The EU Disability Strategy 2010 – 2020 aimed to break down the barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from participating in society on an equal basis. The strategy outlined how the EU and local bodies can empower people with disabilities so they can enjoy their rights.

Last week on 1&2 December 2020, the European Commission in partnership with the European Disability Forum, hosted the annual event of the European Day of Persons with Disabilities to give an opportunity for the EU to mainstream disability issues and to raise awareness of the challenges faced by persons with disabilities in their everyday lives. This was an opportunity to put forward the final results of the evaluation of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 and to have a last round of reflections for the forthcoming Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030.

One in six people in the European Union – around 80 million – have a disability that ranges from mild to severe. Most of these people are all too often prevented from fully participating in society and the economy because of physical or other barriers, as well as discrimination. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights says that the "Union recognises and respects the right of persons with disabilities to benefit from measures designed to ensure their independence, social and occupational integration and participation in the life of the community."

For more information

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1748&furtherEvents=yes>
https://ec.europa.eu/eip/ageing/standards/general/general-documents/european-disability-strategy-2010-2020_en

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