

Acces To Work Europe Letter of Intent for a jointly cooperation **“Es braucht Werkstätten”***

[*Translation from the German original: **There is a need for sheltered workshops.**]

In Europe, sheltered workshops are an important element of the different national systems of vocational participation¹. They are part of a network of diverse support measures.

The “Thematic study on the work and employment of persons with disabilities” of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), published in 2012, attributes two functions to sheltered workshops. As part of “sheltered employment” sheltered workshops can act as a temporary offer of support for people with disabilities to enable their transition to employment on the labour market. At the same time, they offer support on an ongoing basis for people who are not offered – for various reasons – any work on the labour market.

Currently, sheltered workshops offer rehabilitation through work for approximately two to three million people with disabilities in Europe. For the great majority of this group of people the concept of sheltered workshops is the only possibility of participating in working life. No matter what the economic situation among the European countries, the labour market offers only a small number of suitable working conditions for this group of people.

Already, sheltered workshops are contributing to the participation of people with disabilities in employment and society. Sheltered workshops are providing advanced services for participation in working life. The person with disability is supported and promoted by sheltered workshops, while taking into account the life situation of the person in its entirety.

The cooperation of the organisations and persons signing this letter of intent is oriented towards the following contents of the UN-Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN-CRPD). They form the basis for the actions of this interest group.

- fulfilment of the assignment of vocational rehabilitation and thus the participation in working life according to article 26 Habilitation and Rehabilitation of the UN-CRPD
- to support and to enable people with disabilities to exert their right to choose freely and make their own decisions regarding all aspects of their lives according to article 19 of the UN-CRPD
- support and promotion in achieving to live independently and being included in the community according to article 19 of the UN-CRPD

¹ This also includes Supported Employment and integration firms and integration enterprises.

- promotion of personality development and of lifelong learning, in particular the implementation of vocational and personal education for all according to article 24 of the UN-CRPD
- individual vocational qualification and promotion of the person with disabilities and – if possible and wanted – qualification and support for the transition onto the labour market according to article 27 of the UN-CRPD
- improvement of the permeability between the different options of participation in working life
- promotion of qualified education for and further training of the skilled personnel/staff

The signatories of this letter of intent agree to campaign for sheltered workshops as a part of “sheltered employment” in Europe and to foster their further development in compliance with the UN-Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Vienna, Austria, 30 October 2014

List of all signatories

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