



Cyprus – ANED country profile

The information contained in this summary was compiled by the Academic Network of European Disability experts (ANED) in April 2009.

Academic networks and resources

There is no dedicated academic network on disability research but the Cypriot Association of Inclusive Education (KOEI) provides opportunities for networking amongst researchers, university students, practitioners and parents. It holds a series of eight seminars every year and holds a day conference ever two years.

Policy and enforcement bodies

The key national bodies with responsibility for disability law and policy implementation include:

[Service for the Care and Rehabilitation of Disabled People](#) (YMA) is a government service that works under the authority of the Ministry of Labour. It co-ordinates disability issues and offers specialized services to disabled people in the fields of vocational rehabilitation and social integration.

[Office of Planning for People with Disabilities](#) is a government service that works under the authority of the Ministry of Communications and Works. Its goal is to contribute in altering all the architectural barriers in order to facilitate access to disabled and other people.

The [Office of the Commissioner for Administration](#) is a state department that promotes and enforces equality in relation to disability, race, gender, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief, as well as human rights. Individual complaints and cases of discrimination can be taken to this body.

Organisations of disabled people

The national organisation representing disabled people at the European level (European Disability Forum) is:

The Cyprus Confederation of Organisations of the Disabled (ccod-kysoa@cytanet.com.cy) which represents all disabled people's organisations in Cyprus.

Other significant national organisations of disabled people include:

Cyprus Deaf Federation (cyprusdeaf@cytanet.com.cy)
[Pancyprian Organization of the Blind](http://www.designingsteps.com/index.html) (http://www.designingsteps.com/index.html)
 The Cyprus Paraplegic Organisation
 PanCypriot Society of Parents of Children with Special Needs

National law and strategy

Cyprus has signed the [United Nations Convention](#) and the [Optional Protocol](#).

Important national laws, policies and strategies concerning disabled people include: [Persons with Disabilities Act](#) 127(I) του 2000 establishes disabled people's rights to non-discrimination in all areas of life and emphasises their rights for independent living, social inclusion and equal participation.

Facts and figures

Data on population indicate that:

There is no official data on the population of disabled people in Cyprus.

Data on employment indicate that:

According to the 2007 Annual Report (Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, 2007), in 2007 about 4.3% of disabled people were employed in the protogenic sector (i.e. agriculture), 22.7% in the secondary sector (i.e. industry) and 73% in the tertiary sector (i.e. services).

A total of 12,017 disabled people were registered as unemployed; 5,209 were men and 6,808 were women.

Data on education indicate that:

According to statistical data provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture, in 2006 about 4% of students attending public primary and secondary education schools are identified as students with special educational needs.

About 0.4% of students with special educational needs attend public special schools

About 3.6% of students with special educational needs attend public mainstream schools

Data on accessibility indicate that:

There is no official data on the accessibility of disabled people.

However, the 2006 National Strategy Report notes that measures are being undertaken to improve access of disabled people to public buildings, sidewalks and public transport. In particular, it is noted that accessibility for disabled people will be promoted by improving their access to buildings, streets and public transport, as well as by promoting their integration into the labour market and by improving their financial assistance benefits. The targets for improving accessibility include the increase of the ergonomic arrangements for physical access to public buildings, sidewalks and public transport by 10% in 2006. According to the 2006 National

Report, by 2010, the number of public vehicles that will be accessible to persons with disabilities will be increased by 50%.

According to the [MeAC e-accessibility survey](#) (2006)

1 out of 6 of the selected public websites, and none of the commercial websites, passed the manual accessibility evaluation

The main emergency number was accessible by text phone.

One of the main public TV channels provided some national language programs with subtitling (but less than 1%). No subtitling or description was provided by the two main commercial channels.

The two main public channels and two main commercial channels provided some programmes with signing (but also less than 1%).

One of the two main banks had installed 12 out of 129 talking ATMs by 2007.

Data on poverty and incomes indicate that:

Unfortunately, there is no recent research on poverty, income or pensions/benefits for different groups of disabled people in Cyprus.

The only report that provides basic information on the issues of poverty and pensions is the National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion. The 2006 National Report referred only to poverty rates about elderly people and gender differences among elderly people with regard to poverty, and pension rates with regard to the different age groups of the population, gender differences and the characteristics of households. Evidently, it is important to design and implement long-term research projects to record data about poverty, income or pensions/benefits for disabled people in Cyprus, including the poverty or income of different groups of disabled people, disabled women, ethnic minorities etc.

Data on attitudes indicate that:

There is no official data on attitudes towards disabled people. Cyprus was not included in the [Eurobarometer 54.2](#) study of EU15 countries in 2001.

The [2007 Special Eurobarometer on Discrimination in Europe](#) showed that 49% of people knew someone who was disabled (compared to 55% EU average) and 69% acknowledged that being disabled tended to be disadvantage in society (EU average 79%).

Disability discrimination was viewed as widespread by 47% (EU average 53%); 28% thought that disability discrimination was more widespread than five years ago. Only 29% thought that not enough was being done to combat discrimination in general (EU average 51%).

88% thought that more disabled people should be in the workplace (EU average 74%) and 93% thought specific measures on equal opportunities were needed in this field.

Data on public spending indicate that:

In 2006 Cyprus spent 3.9% of total social benefit expenditure on disability benefits compared to the EU27 average of 7.5% (European System of Integrated Social Protection Statistics).



Social protection

Key features of the national system include (including adapted items from the [MISSOC](#) database December 2008):

Disability benefits

The most important disability benefits are:

Severe Mobility Impairment Benefit: This scheme is in force since 1992 and it is addressed to paraplegic and quadriplegic persons. It is a monthly allowance, which at the end of 2007 was CY£ 172.92. This amount is subject to changes every six months, according to the cost-of-living index.

Financial Assistance for Disabled People's Special Needs Benefit and Sponsoring of Disability Organisations Benefit: This scheme is in force since 1988 and it aims to facilitate the living conditions of disabled people, promote independent living and equal participation of disabled people in the society and economy. This is expected to be achieved through the provision of technical means and other equipment. In 2007, a total of CY£ 284.831,27 was allocated through this scheme to 454 individuals who required technical means and other equipment. A total of CY£ 64.900 was allocated to disability organizations to cover their expenses.

Holidays for Disabled People Benefit: This scheme is in force since 1998 and it aims to sponsor the holidays of disabled people and their families in hotels around Cyprus. This benefit is allocated to disabled people who are not recipients of any other benefit. In 2007, 193 individuals applied for this benefit and a total of CY£ 72.621,74 was spent.

Financial Assistance for Wheelchairs Benefit for People with Severe Mobility Impairment: This scheme is in force since 1999. In 2007, a total of CY£ 89.948,90 was spent to 128 individuals who applied for a wheelchair.

Wheelchair Distribution Scheme: This scheme is about lending used wheelchairs to people who need them. The wheelchairs belong to the Service for the Care of Disabled People, which is responsible for completing the necessary procedures.

Public Assistance Allowance: It is allocated to specific groups of the population in an attempt to reduce the risk of poverty. It ensures the right to a decent standard of living through the provision of financial assistance and/or social services to persons, whose resources are not sufficient to meet their basic and special needs as determined by legislation. Basic needs include food, clothing and footwear, electricity, supply of water, healthy living conditions and pocket money allowance. Special needs include rent, special diet and disability allowances, as well as allowances for home care, day care and residential care. It is also possible to provide assistance for house repairs, mortgage interest, heating etc.



Reinforcement of Families Scheme for Caring about the Elderly or/and Disabled Members of the Family: This scheme allocates up to CY£ 7,000 for changes in buildings so that they become accessible for their elderly or disabled members. In 2007, eleven families received this allowance.

Sponsoring of Holidays Schemes for Elderly People and for Disabled People who are also Recipients of the Public Assistance Allowance: This scheme sponsors holidays in Cyprus for elderly people (63+) and disabled people who are also recipients of the Public Assistance Allowance. The allowance is CY£ 150 for holidays with duration of six days. When necessary the amount of CY£ 150 is also allocated for an assistant.

Rehabilitation and re-training

Rehabilitation services are offered in public hospitals. There is no official data about the percentage of the recipients of rehabilitation services.

Re-training programmes are offered at the Centre of Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled People. This is a state centre which runs a limited number of training programmes for disabled people. There is no official data on how many people are trained in the Centre.

Preferential employment and quotas

There is no official data on disabled people's employment.

There is piecemeal legislation regarding employment, giving priority to the hiring of different groups of disabled people in the Civil Service. In what follows, the most important acts are listed:

The 1987 Civil Educational Service (Amended) Act (N.180/87, Amendatory Act of N.10/69 Civil Educational Service Act): It legitimizes a quota of 3% for hiring disabled people in the Civil Educational Service and a quota of 5% for hiring people who became disabled as a result of war.

The 1988 Blind Telephone Operators Act (N.17/1988): It legitimizes the right of blind telephone operators who possess all the required qualifications to have a priority whenever there are vacancies of telephone operators in the Civil Service, the Civil Educational Service, and in legal persons of public right. In case that there are no blind candidates, other disabled people can be employed according to priority, having in mind that they possess all the necessary qualifications.

The 1990 Civil Service Act (N.1/1990): It gives priority to the hiring of disabled people in the cases they demonstrate equal qualifications with other candidates.

The 1992 Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled People and Depended Persons of Killed, Missing, Disabled and Pent Persons Act (N.53(I)/1992): It legitimizes a quota of



10% for the hiring in the Civil Service of disabled people and depended persons of killed, missing, disabled and pent persons.

The 1997 Vocational Rehabilitation of War Disabled People and Children of Missing Persons Act (N.55(I)/97)

The 1998 Vocational Rehabilitation of War Victims and Children of Pent Persons (N.100(I)/1998): It legitimizes a quota of 10% for the hiring in the Civil Service of war (disabled) victims and children of pent persons.

Long-term support and care

There is no official data on how much is spent for long-term support and care.

The Public Assistance Allowance ensures the right to a decent standard of living through the provision of financial assistance and/or social services to persons, whose resources are not sufficient to meet their basic and special needs as determined by legislation.

The current annual rate of allowance for basic need is: CY£ 2,678 for the recipient (head of household); CY£ 1,339 for every dependant aged 14 and over; CY£ 709 for every dependent aged under 14.

Recipients who are not home owners receive a rent allowance equal to 50% of the total monthly allowance. In case of a disabled recipient, an additional disability allowance, equal to 50% the personal basic allowance, is payable.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance runs two schemes for elderly and disabled people:

Reinforcement of Families Scheme for Caring about the Elderly or/and Disabled Members of the Family: This scheme allocates up to CY£ 7,000 for changes in buildings so that they become accessible for their elderly or disabled members. In 2007, eleven families received this allowance.

Sponsoring of Holidays Schemes for Elderly People and for Disabled People who are also Recipients of the Public Assistance Allowance: This scheme sponsors holidays in Cyprus for elderly people (63+) and disabled people who are also recipients of the Public Assistance Allowance. The allowance is CY£ 150 for holidays with duration of six days. When necessary the amount of CY£ 150 is also allocated for an assistant.

It should be noted that the allowances and benefits described above are available through different departments of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, which makes it quite difficult for disabled people to claim them.



Additional information

Useful sources of more detailed information about the situation of disabled people, and the policies and support available, include:

[Workers with disabilities in the Republic of Cyprus](#) (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work 2006)

[News from DisabilityWorld](#)

[The factual and legal situation of people with disabilities in Cyprus](#), Michael Florentzos (2001)

[Inclusive policy, segregating practice: A cultural analysis of the impairment discourse reflected in the official and hidden curricula in Cyprus](#), Simoni Symeonidou 2005

[Challenges in Employment of Blind and Partially Sighted People](#), Maria Kyriacoy 2005

[Education for All country assessment report](#) (2000)

[European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education](#)

[National Overview](#)

[Government response to UN Rules survey](#) (1997)

[Employability](#)

[Committee for the Protection of People with Mental Retardation](#)

[Accessibility Campaign for 2009](#)
Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance (2007) [Annual Report of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance](#).