



Policy Recommendations

Leisure Skills Project

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1. Recommendations

The present working group, aggregated in the scope of the European project Leisure Skills, composed by academic institutions and entities supporting People with Disabilities (PWD) from four European countries, considering:

- The existing concern, at European level, for a diversified and quality intervention to PWD;
- The evident improvement in the European responses to PWD in the last decades;
- The heterogeneity, despite the improvement, with which European countries still work with PWD;
- The heterogeneity with which leisure-related issues are still understood and valued in the different European countries;
- The awareness that one of the pillars for the quality of life of citizens are leisure activities;
- The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, namely Articles 3, 6, 14, 15, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 34, 35 and 41
- The European Pillar of Social Rights, namely principle 1 on education, training and life-long learning, principle 2 on gender equality, principle 3 on equal opportunities, principle 4 on active support for employment, principle 5 on safe and adaptable employment, principle 6 on wages, principle 10 on a healthy, safe and well adapted work environment and data protection, principle 11 on childcare and support, principle 14 on minimum income and principle 17 on the inclusion of persons with disabilities,
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) and its entry into force on 21 January 2011, in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC of 26 November 2009 concerning the conclusion, by the European Community, of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- That the basis of an accessible and inclusive Europe of disability is a Union whose Member States recognise a person's disability status and enable persons with disabilities to enjoy full freedom of movement; that persons with disabilities, in all their diversity, are entitled to exercise their fundamental rights on an equal basis with others; that the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in all areas of life and society is essential to the exercise of their fundamental rights
- That the EU Disability Rights Strategy 2021-2030 proposes the creation of a European Disability Card by the end of 2023, which should be recognised in all Member States.

Recommends to the **European Commission**:

- A. To formalise the need for a European policy to promote **leisure activities**, translated into national policies, aimed at full participation by all citizens in cultural, sporting and recreational activities, supported by fair financial contributions;
 - a. Generalize the use of the European Disability Card, broadening the scope allowing access to leisure activities (sport, culture and tourism) with special conditions for access and participation.

- b. Allocate resources and funding to support the development and expansion of inclusive leisure programs, facilities, and events specifically designed for people with disabilities.
- c. Provide financial support and incentives to organizations and community groups that offer inclusive leisure activities, encouraging their participation and involvement.
- d. Facilitate partnerships between disability organizations, community groups, and leisure service providers to collaboratively develop inclusive leisure programs and activities.
- e. Offer training and guidance to leisure providers, instructors, and staff to enhance their knowledge and understanding of disability-related needs and ensure inclusive and respectful service provision.
- f. Launch awareness campaigns to promote the benefits of inclusive leisure activities for people with disabilities and raise awareness about the availability of accessible programs and facilities.
- g. Encourage the media, including television, radio, and online platforms, to feature stories and promote positive representations of individuals with disabilities participating in leisure activities.
- h. Establish online platforms or databases that provide information about inclusive leisure opportunities, making it easier for people with disabilities to access and engage in various activities.

In order to achieve the actions and measures suggested under A, it is necessary for the European Union to develop and strengthen comprehensive legislation, policies and active measures that protect the rights of PWD, in other areas that will undoubtedly help to create the necessary ecosystem for the development of leisure activities as normative activities for PWD. The main ones are listed below.

- B. Improve **physical, digital, and communication accessibility** to ensure that PWD can fully engage in society. This includes the promotion of universal design principles, accessibility standards, and the elimination of barriers that prevent participation, for the creation of products, services and environments that are usable and enjoyable by all people. To achieve this, the following measures and actions are recommended:
 - a. Physical Accessibility:
 - i. Develop and enforce accessibility standards for public buildings, transportation hubs, and other essential facilities. This includes ensuring barrier-free access, installing ramps, elevators, and accessible restroom facilities, and providing clear signage and wayfinding systems.
 - ii. Encourage businesses and private establishments to implement accessibility features, such as wheelchair ramps, automatic doors, and accessible seating areas, through awareness campaigns, incentives, and regulatory frameworks.
 - iii. Foster collaboration with urban planners, architects, and construction professionals to integrate universal design principles into the development and renovation of public spaces, ensuring that accessibility is a fundamental consideration from the outset.

- b. Digital Accessibility:
 - i. Implement and enforce regulations that require digital platforms, websites, and mobile applications to adhere to accessibility standards, including those defined by the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). This includes providing alternative text for images, captions for videos, and keyboard navigation options.
 - ii. Promote accessibility training and awareness programs for web developers, designers, and content creators to ensure that digital content is inclusive and usable by people with disabilities.
 - iii. Facilitate partnerships between technology companies and disability organizations to encourage the development of assistive technologies and accessibility features that enhance the digital experience for individuals with disabilities.
 - c. Communication Accessibility
 - i. Ensure that public information, documents, and communications are available in accessible formats, such as Braille, large print, easy-to-read formats, and digital alternatives. This includes government publications, educational materials, and public announcements.
 - ii. Promote the use of accessible communication techniques, such as sign language interpretation and real-time captioning, in public events, conferences, and official parliamentary proceedings.
 - iii. Invest in the training of public service providers, customer support representatives, and government officials to effectively communicate and interact with individuals who have different communication needs or disabilities.
- C. Prioritize and actively promote **inclusive and accessible transportation systems** that cater to the needs of people with disabilities. This will enhance their mobility, independence, and participation in society. To achieve this, the following measures and actions are recommended:
- a. Accessibility Standards: Establish and enforce clear accessibility standards for all modes of transportation, including public transport, railways, airports, and maritime services. These standards should address physical accessibility, such as ramps, elevators, and designated seating areas, as well as digital accessibility for ticketing and information systems.
 - b. Infrastructure and Vehicles: Invest in the development and retrofitting of infrastructure to ensure barrier-free access to transportation facilities. This includes constructing accessible boarding areas, installing tactile guidance systems, and equipping vehicles with appropriate features, such as wheelchair ramps or lifts.
 - c. Staff Training: Provide comprehensive training programs for transportation personnel to raise awareness about the needs of PWD and promote inclusive service provision. This should encompass disability awareness, communication skills, and assistance techniques to ensure respectful and supportive interactions.
 - d. Information and Communication: Improve the availability and accessibility of transportation-related information for people with disabilities. This includes providing real-time updates on service disruptions, accessible timetables, and

ensuring that websites and mobile applications comply with accessibility standards.

- e. **Collaboration with Disability Organizations:** Foster collaboration with disability organizations and advocacy groups to gain insights into the specific needs and challenges faced by PWD in the transportation sector. Engage in dialogue and consultative processes to ensure that policies and initiatives are inclusive and reflect the diverse perspectives of the disability community.
- f. **Inclusive Design and Innovation:** Encourage the development and deployment of inclusive design principles in transportation infrastructure and vehicles. Promote innovative solutions, such as smart technologies and assistive devices, that enhance accessibility and the overall travel experience for people with disabilities.
- g. **International Cooperation:** Collaborate with other countries and international organizations to exchange best practices, harmonize accessibility standards, and facilitate accessible travel across borders. This will ensure a seamless and inclusive transportation experience for PWD throughout Europe and beyond.
- h. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the implementation of accessibility measures in the transportation sector. Regularly assess compliance with accessibility standards, gather feedback from users with disabilities, and take corrective actions as necessary to continuously improve the inclusivity of transportation services.

D. Promote and support the **healthcare systems** and providers to encourage inclusive leisure opportunities for PWD to obtain benefits for well-being and quality of life. To achieve this, the following measures and actions are recommended:

- a. **Holistic Approach to Healthcare:**
 - i. Acknowledge the essential role of leisure activities in promoting holistic health for individuals with disabilities. Recognize that participation in recreational and leisure pursuits contributes to physical, mental, and emotional well-being, leading to improved overall health outcomes.
 - ii. Encourage healthcare professionals to include discussions about leisure activities as part of their care plans and to promote the benefits of recreational engagement to their patients with disabilities.
- b. **Collaboration between Healthcare and Leisure Sectors:**
 - i. Foster collaboration and partnerships between healthcare providers, disability organizations, and leisure service providers to promote the integration of inclusive leisure activities into healthcare settings.
 - ii. Encourage healthcare institutions to collaborate with local recreational facilities, community organizations, and leisure service providers to develop referral systems and seamless pathways for individuals with disabilities to access suitable leisure activities.

E. Promote and support **work/life balance** for PWD, through the following measures and actions:

- a. **Work environments:** Promote inclusive work environments that value diversity and provide equal opportunities for career advancement.
- b. **Workplace Flexibility:** Encourage employers to offer flexible work arrangements that allow individuals with disabilities to engage in leisure activities outside of

work hours. Flexible schedules, telecommuting options, and other accommodations can create opportunities for individuals to participate in recreational pursuits, promoting work-life balance and overall job satisfaction.

- c. **Inclusive Workplace Culture:** Promote a workplace culture that values and supports the participation of employees with disabilities in leisure activities. Employers should foster an inclusive environment that encourages individuals to pursue recreational interests and promotes the benefits of leisure for overall well-being and work performance.
- d. **Collaborative Partnerships:**
 - i. Facilitate collaborations between disability organizations, leisure service providers, and employers to develop inclusive leisure programs specifically tailored to the needs and interests of employees with disabilities.
 - ii. Encourage businesses to partner with community organizations and recreational facilities to offer discounted or subsidized memberships or programs for their employees with disabilities.

F. Consolidate **educational measures** that provide a better understanding of PWD and the importance of Leisure Activities in the overall quality of life of individuals and, therefore society as general, through the following measures and actions:

- a. **Inclusive Education Policies:** Advocate for inclusive education policies that recognize the value of leisure activities as an integral part of the educational experience for students with disabilities.
- b. **Collaboration between Education and Leisure Sectors:**
 - i. Foster collaboration and partnerships between educational institutions, disability organizations, and leisure service providers to develop inclusive leisure programs and activities that complement the educational curriculum.
 - ii. Encourage educational institutions to collaborate with local recreational facilities, community organizations, and leisure service providers to create inclusive opportunities for students with disabilities to engage in leisure activities.
- c. **Inclusive Extracurricular Activities:** Encourage educational institutions to offer a wide range of inclusive extracurricular activities that cater to the diverse interests and abilities of students with disabilities.
- d. **Professional Development and Training:** Provide training and professional development opportunities for teachers, educational staff, and leisure service providers to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the benefits and strategies for integrating leisure activities into the educational experience of students with disabilities.

G. Strengthen **social protection systems** to ensure that PWD have access to leisure possibilities and opportunities in an inclusive and non-discriminatory environment. To achieve this, the following measures and actions are recommended:

- a. **Inclusive Social Protection Policies:**

- i. Ensure that social protection policies and programs take into account the importance of inclusive leisure activities for the overall well-being and social integration of individuals with disabilities.
 - ii. Recognize and promote the right of individuals with disabilities to access and participate in recreational and leisure activities as part of a comprehensive social protection system.
 - iii. Promote the figure of facilitator / personal assistant / volunteer to ensure the inclusion and autonomy of people with disabilities.
 - b. Financial Support:
 - i. Provide financial support and incentives to individuals with disabilities to facilitate their participation in leisure activities. This can include subsidies for membership fees, equipment, transportation, and other related expenses.
 - ii. Establish funding mechanisms to support organizations and community groups in developing inclusive leisure programs and activities for people with disabilities, including those from marginalized or disadvantaged backgrounds.
- H. Establish comprehensive **data collection mechanisms** to monitor the progress of disability inclusion initiatives and identify areas requiring further attention. To achieve this, the following measures and actions are recommended:
 - a. Regularly evaluate and report on the implementation of policies and measures aimed at promoting the participation of people with disabilities.
 - b. Support research initiatives that explore the impact of inclusive leisure activities on quality of life of PWD. Collect data on participation rates, health outcomes, and the barriers and facilitators to engagement in leisure activities for this population.
 - c. Utilize the findings from research studies to inform evidence-based policymaking and to advocate for increased resources and support for inclusive leisure initiatives and innovation strategies.

By adopting and implementing these recommendations, the European Parliament can lead the way in promoting the full and equal participation of people with disabilities, fostering social inclusion, and removing barriers that hinder their active engagement in society.

2. How we got here... An in-depth analysis (PESTEL)

The recommendations presented above, are the result of three years of a reflection/action process around the importance of Leisure Skills and their impact on the quality of life of PWD.

In order to systematise the reflective process, each participating country was invited to organise its reflections and contributions through a predefined methodological framework.

We chose to apply the PESTEL analysis methodology because we consider that it guides the reflection around the fundamental dimensions for an effective definition of feasible and sustainable public policies.

A PESTEL analysis is a strategic framework commonly used to evaluate the environment in which an organization operates. The framework is built around 6 factors/dimensions. Its name is the acronym for these dimensions: *Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal factors*. Combined, the above six factors can have a profound impact on risks and opportunities. The framework is used to reflect on strategic planning processes and risk management planning. PESTEL analysis is also very effective to develop innovative approaches and initiatives.

To allow for better comparability between the different European realities under analysis, key questions were established for each dimension so that each partner could organise its data collection and reflection around shared concerns.

The present section of the report is the PESTEL analysis as organised by each participant. Its exploration will allow an in-depth understanding of the different rationales and concerns that gave rise to the recommendations presented here.

Political

1 Disability in the EU framework

The concept of disability is very complex and has changed over time, following socio-economic factors, as well as environmental and technological developments.

According to the **World Report on Disability** (World Health Organization, 2011), disability is a complex, dynamic, multi-dimensional and evolving concept, which has changed from an individual, medical perspective to a structural, social perspective, meaning that contemporary people are viewed as being disabled by society rather than by their own bodies. Thus, the disability experience resulting from the interaction of health conditions, personal factors, and environmental factors varies greatly. For this reason, legislations, and strategies for the protection of the rights of PWD and their inclusion in everyday life activities vary across different political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal frameworks.

In general, the European Union has adopted a **European Disability Strategy 2010-2020** in 2010 to implement the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** based on the experience of the **Disability Action Plan (2004-2010)**.

Regarding this fundamental document, each country has ratified it at different times:

- **Spain** ratified it on 03/12/2007 and turned it into a General Disability Law (Royal Decree 1/2013), in 2013. In 2022, Spain publishes, the new General Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Law 6/2022, of March 31), modifying the previous text, emphasizing accessibility as a precondition for PWD, to be able to live independently and fully participate in society under equal conditions.
- **Portugal** ratified it on 23/09/2009, and it was approved by Resolution of the Assembly of the Republic no. 56/2009, of 30/07 and ratified by the Decree of the President of the Republic no. 71/2009, of 30/07.
- **France** signed the CRPD on 30 March 2007 and ratified it on 18 February 2010, before the EU ratification. Since then, France has adopted several laws aimed at strengthening the legal protection, accessibility, social inclusion and independence of persons with disabilities.
- **Cyprus** ratified it on 27/06/2011, incorporating into its national legislation, in the same year, by the approval of The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Related Issues (Ratification) Law of 2011, L. 8(III)/2011.
- **Greece** ratified it on 31/05/2012, with Law 4074/2012. Subsequently, five years later, with law 4488/2017 a general framework of regulations for the implementation of the Convention was established.

On a more operational level, the Council of Europe adopted its **Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2017-2023**, in 2016. The overall goal was to achieve equality, dignity, and equal opportunities for PWD and to encourage Member States to take 5 cross-cutting issues into consideration in their legislation, policies, and activities:

- equality and non-discrimination
- awareness raising
- accessibility
- equal recognition before the law
- freedom from exploitation, violence, and abuse.

In March 2021, the Commission adopted the **Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030** encompassing Parliament's main recommendations. The equal access to PWD to healthcare, employment and public transport and the implementation of the EU disability card pilot project were some of them.

However, the needs and interests of PWD are different in each EU country, and therefore each political authority has the obligation to implement different rules and strategies for the accessibility of PWD in all aspects of life, work, and leisure time.

2 The National Strategies to include PWD

The concern with the inclusion of PWD in society, despite presenting specific historical contexts in each participating country, has, in recent years, presented similar configurations. This seems to result from the international legislation itself, namely from the UN and the European Union, which shapes the way different countries defend and implement their inclusion strategies.

In this sense, each country has been developing its National Strategies, although at different times and with unique structures.

A comparative reading of these documents allows us an interesting reflection on what, within a national strategy, should be emphasised and implemented. In this sense, a comprehensive reading of each document is recommended. In a summarised way, we present a brief comparison about the guiding axes of each national strategy, which immediately allows us to read about our main dimension of analysis: leisure.

	Cyprus	France	Greece	Portugal	Spain
Title	National Disability Strategy	Disability Act of 11 February 2005	National Action Plan for the rights of PWD	National Strategy for the Inclusion of PWD	Spanish Strategy on Disability
Period of implementation	2018/2028	- without Information -	2020/2023	2021/2025	2022/2030
Axis	6 axis: 1. independent living, social inclusion, mobility and social protection of PWD 2. Employment and vocational training 3. Education 4. Accessibility of PWD to the natural and built environment, transport and information 5. provision of health and rehabilitation services 6. Information and awareness raising on disability issues	6 axis: 1. Successfully organize the Olympic and Paralympic Games by deploying a specific mobility plan ensuring that each person with a disability has a solution that meets their needs. 2. To put French Paralympic athletes in the best conditions to excel and make the Games a truly inclusive popular celebration. 3. Build a lasting legacy by increasing the sports practice of PWD in all places, by multiplying by 4 the number of inclusive clubs, and at all ages (sport at school, college, high school, university and in the workplace). 4. Amplify the artistic education policy for all: develop the Culture pass – with the extension, at the beginning of the 2023 school year, of the financial part allocated for access to culture by colleagues from the sixth grade – and artistic and cultural education. 5. Set up the accessible book portal and improve	6 axis: 1. The State at the service of the Disabled Person 2. Protection of the Rights of PWD 3. Accessibility 4. Participation in every aspect of life 5. Awakening society and the Public Administration 6. Synergies and Development	8 axis: 1. Citizenship, equality and non-discrimination 2. Promoting an inclusive environment 3. Education and qualification 4. Labour, employment, and vocational training 5. Promoting autonomy and independent living 6. Social measures, services and support 7. Culture, sport, tourism and leisure 8. Knowledge, research, innovation, and development	7 axis: 1. Active citizenship and full exercise of human rights 2. Social inclusion and participation 3. Personal autonomy and independent living 4. Support for families 5. Equality and diversity 6. Universal design and accessibility 7. Territorial cohesion, data and statistics, governance and civil dialogue, leadership and co-operation, innovation and digitalisation, sustainable development, cooperation, innovation and digitisation, sustainable development

	Cyprus	France	Greece	Portugal	Spain
		<i>adapted book production through a catch-up plan.</i> <i>6. Strengthen the accessibility of educational pathways in culture education.</i>			

Even though each National Strategy aims at developing the quality of life, protection, and assurance of the basic human rights to PWD, regarding leisure as a working construct, not every document seems to dedicate the same importance to it. Regarding leisure as a construct, only Portugal has an axis dedicated to it. That doesn't mean that the other countries don't pay attention to this aspect. It's included in a broader axis. Cyprus, however, mentions that the field of leisure skills is under-represented.

3. The main political protagonists & mechanisms

It is interesting to note that the approach of each participating country in the implementation of what are common goals (and materialised in the different National Strategies), takes on a very particular configuration, resulting from the socio-legal structuring of each country. In this sense, an individualised reading by participating country becomes necessary in order to obtain an overview of who acts and defends PWD rights.

3.1 Cyprus

The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cyprus decided on 9.5.2012, in regards with the implementation of Article 33 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to designate the following Mechanisms for the effective implementation and monitoring of the Convention:

- (a) The **Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities** under the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance as the Focal point for the implementation of the Convention, which will cooperate with the Contact Points of the Ministries/ Departments/ Services that undertake disability matters
- (b) The **Pancyprian Council of Persons with Disabilities**, supported by the Department for Social Inclusion of PWD which operates in the framework of PWD Laws 2000-2007, as the Coordinating Mechanism for the facilitation of related actions for the implementation of the Convention.
- (c) The **Ombudsman and Commissioner for Human Rights** - Equality Authority, which operates under the Law Against Racial and Other Discrimination L.42(I)/2004, the PWD Laws 2000-2007 and the Ombudsman Laws 1991 – 2011, as the Independent Mechanism for the promotion, protection and monitoring of the Convention. The Ombudsman is the chairperson of the **Advisory Committee for Monitoring the UN Convention for**

the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which includes organizations of PWD. The committee meets several times per year. In addition, many meetings are taking place between the Ombudsman and PWD and their representative organisations, regarding the rights of PWD and/ or specific issues that bother them.

- (d) The active involvement of the Organisations of PWD is pursued through the **Cyprus Confederation of Organisations of the Disabled (CCOD)** which is the umbrella of organisations for PWD. CCOD is an official social partner of the state and according to the 2006 Law of Consultation between Governmental and other Services involved in matters that relate to PWD, all such organizations and services should not take any decision without first consulting the Confederation.

In general, the inclusion of PWD in all aspects of everyday life in Cyprus mainly depends on the family and broader social context, while there are dozens of associations and organisations which struggle to establish a functional and effective plan for the actual involvement and development of PWD in contemporary education, labour market and society at large.

3.2 France

There are several organisations in France that defend and advocate for the rights of PWD. The most important French association related to disability is the *Association des Paralysés de France* (APF). For this organization, the priorities and perspectives that policies should put in place are:

- Access, choose and practice cultural and leisure activities, go on holiday, be welcomed in all cultural, leisure, associative, cult, sports and holiday places as a spectator, listener, reader, invested actor (amateur or professional) ...

The levers would be:

- Making cultural, leisure, sports and holiday practices accessible;
- Remove all barriers to access to leisure, sports, culture, worship, tourism and holidays, whether the person wishes to be a spectator, learn, practice, participate or become a professional:
 - Furnish buildings and activities, access to accessible and adapted transport (including evenings and weekends);
 - Adapt the reception, training;
 - Finance all specific needs (accompanying people, adapted equipment, etc.). Raise awareness, train and inform;
 - Raise awareness among volunteers and professionals from socio-cultural associations, leisure or sports clubs, federations, tourism, etc. the conditions for the reception of PWD;
 - Systematically - and reliably - in any guide or brochure related to leisure or tourism indicate information relating to the reception of PWD.

And the commitments to be made are:

- Promote cultural, leisure, sports and holiday practices for all;
- Recognize the right to have access to leisure activities, to go to the cinema, practice religion, play sports or go on vacation, not as a luxury, but as an integral part of well-

being and personal development, and as a factor of social inclusion, regardless of the age of the person;

- Include in any 'leisure, culture, sports and holidays' policy an 'accessibility and disability' component.
- Promote the role of 'facilitator' of social and medico-social services and institutions for access to cultural, leisure and sports practices for people without autonomy.

3.3 Greece

The National Confederation of Disabled People of Greece (NCDP) is a founding member of the European Disability Forum, which is the most representative organization of the European disability movement, representing over 80 million European citizens with disabilities in the dialogue with the institutions of the European Union. The Forum in turn actively participates in the International Disability Alliance, through which one billion citizens with disabilities from around the world are represented. NCDP holds the position of the Social Partner of the Greek State in issues that directly or indirectly concern PWD, has type B and C management competence for the implementation of Projects co-financed by the European Union and has been designated as a "Life-long Learning" provider. In addition, it has a wide network of secondary member bodies throughout the country with over 500 primary member bodies. This network enables, on the one hand, to know at local, regional and national level the needs and problems faced by PWD, chronic diseases and their families in all areas of their lives, and on the other hand, to intervene directly where required.

The Panhellenic Federation of Societies of Parents and Guardians of People with Disabilities (POSGameA), as implied by the name, is the most widely known organization in Greece for parents and guardians of PWD. Revolving around children and adolescents with disabilities, this federation rose up in the early 80's, when the Heads/Chairmen of 11 associations for PWD combined their efforts and founded POSGAT, which later changed to POSGameA. Through the decades POSGameA vastly augmented its influence, resulting in a massive increase of the associations that are part of it, going up from 11 to over 230.

3.4 Portugal

The area of disability and impairment has had, in Portugal, a growing prominence initiated by the XXI Constitutional Government which, in 2015, created the figure of the **Secretary of State for the Inclusion of People With Disabilities**.

It should be noted that the person who has been assuming this portfolio is, herself, a person with disabilities, in an objective and symbolic act of representation and inclusion. This governmental function is committed to inclusion, as the greatest corollary of a true democratic rule of law, with the objective of allowing its consolidation as an egalitarian country, where PWD have the opportunity to fully exercise their rights and duties.

We cannot fail to highlight, however, that this operationalisation of policy concerns in a structured way predates 2015. The context of the Colonial War in which Portugal was involved, was

crucial for the creation, in 1971, of the National Secretariat for Rehabilitation. This body, created in a regime prior to the Portuguese democracy, has been assuming different contours, which, however, always keep the same goal: rehabilitation and integration of citizens with disabilities.

In 2006, a restructuring of this organism was carried out, in the current **National Institute for Rehabilitation** (IRN), whose mission is to ensure the planning, implementation and coordination of national policies aimed at promoting the rights of PWD. It is a Public Institute which pursues attributions of the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security.

3.5 Spain

To achieve the objectives related to leisure in the Strategy, lines of action and measures are defined, as well as their political leaders.

State level:

- Development of **awareness campaigns** that make visible the active participation of PWD and their contribution to social.

Responsible: Ministry of Social Rights and 2030 Agenda

- Prepare and approve a **Plan for the right to culture for PWD**, within the framework of the inclusive culture forum.

Responsible: Ministry of Social Rights and 2030 Agenda and Ministry of Culture and Sports.

- Ensure universal **accessibility** to the artistic and cultural goods, spaces and programming of the centres dependent on the General State Administration.

Responsible: Ministry of Culture and Sports

- Approve a new legal framework for Cinema that ensures the accessibility of cinematography.

Responsible: Ministry of Culture and Sport.

- Development of the Spanish tourism system, SICTED, towards inclusive and accessible tourism promoted by the public administration that encourages the implementation of best practices in terms of accessibility in tourist facilities and services.

Responsible: Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism.

- Approval of a **new legal framework for sport** that promotes, supports and ensures the participation of PWD at all levels.

Responsible: Ministry of Culture and Sport.

- Promotion of **Paralympic sport programs** with special attention to women athletes with disabilities.

Responsible: Ministry of Culture and Sport.

- **Adaptation of geographic applications** for web and mobile devices that allow PWD to enjoy hiking, cultural and tourist routes and the use of official cartography.

Responsible: Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda.

Recommendations to the Autonomous Communities and other local Administrations

- Promote specific measures to guarantee access, participation and enjoyment in cultural activities, as well as promote their contribution and their participation in the creation of cultural policies.
- Promote measures to encourage creative initiatives that promote the visibility of PWD in an active and normalized role, without stereotypes or stigmatization.
- Address the regulatory development and necessary actions (within the scope of its powers) to ensure conditions, actions, measures, support and reinforcement for inclusive leisure.
- Ensure access for PWD to cultural assets by eliminating physical, sensory, communicative and cognitive accessibility barriers.
- Promote the participation of PWD in sport: both in federated, organized or competitive modalities - seeking their development in community spaces with conditions of universal accessibility and allowing the use of their prostheses -, as well as promoting sport as a hobby and source of well-being for all PWD (particularly PWD with great support needs): ensuring conditions of universal accessibility in resources, facilities and community environments, facilitating options and alternatives, and the development of social networks that motivate and encourage it.

Economical

1. Economics... The cornerstone of everything else?

To talk about leisure (skills, access, and inclusion) regarding PWD is, necessarily, to talk about Economy and economic factors.

Increased life expectancy has transformed every human being into a potential disabled person. Some authors, like Rae (1989), underline that all bodies are temporarily 'able'. In a broader sense, disability is a question of time. Regardless of this timed issue, there is a clear correlation between disability and discrimination, poverty and social exclusion, with the result that PWD continue to be among the most socially disadvantaged (Beresford, 1996; Turmusani, 2002).

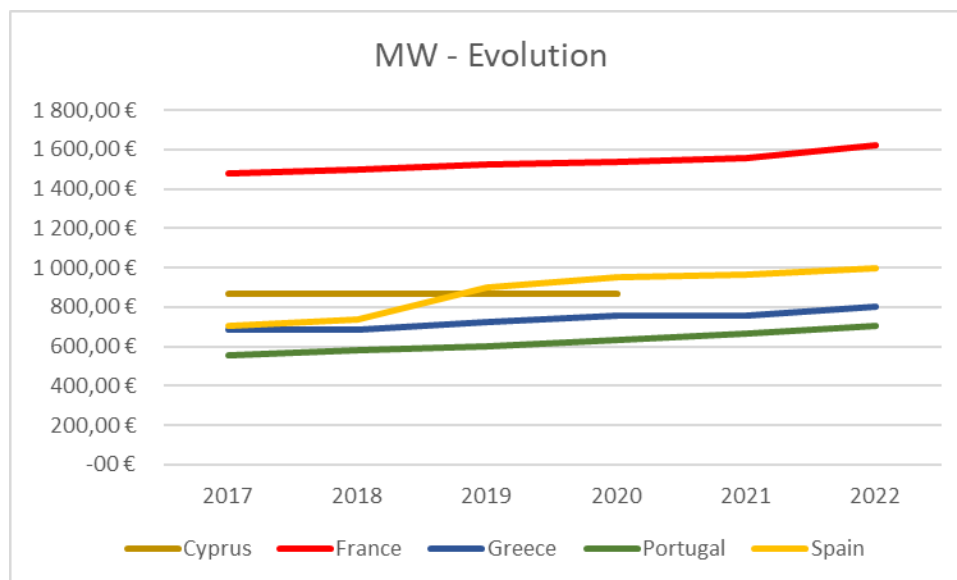
Stone (2001) asserts the existence of a vicious circle whereby poverty produces disability, and disability, in a disability-oriented society (one that does not consider the needs of PWD) turns into poverty. Thus, "poor people are more likely to be affected by disability, and PWD are more likely to live in poverty" (Priestley, 2001).

Emphasising this link between disability and economic deprivation and social exclusion does not mean, however, to claim that the former is the cause and the latter the result. Poverty does not result from disability, but from the way in which disability is socially constructed. Let's analyse how economic factors influence the experience of PWD in accessing services, including leisure.

2. Wages and Earnings what is the reality in each partner country?

To assess the current state of each country and their respective working conditions and social support, we consider the minimum wage and its evolution in the recent past as one of the main indicators.

The table below reflects the evolution of this indicator in each of the partner countries.



1 Evolution of Minimum Wage in participating countries

Country	World Ranking NMW
France	12 th
Spain	16 th
Cyprus	21 st
Portugal	22 nd
Greece	25 th

Source: Countryeconomy.com

An obvious initial finding is the high disparity between the different European partner countries. This wage gap is not, however, accompanied by a commensurate difference in the cost of living. Despite this gap, the standard of living in terms of access to essential goods in the participating countries is fairly similar.

In this sense, it is possible to verify that the conditions and resources that each country provides to its citizens are also quite heterogeneous. Thus, some of the differences and difficulties that each partner showed throughout the project were perceptible.

Leisure, as a dimension of work and social interest, and not being considered a basic need, inevitably suffers from these disparities.

2.1. State support/subsidies for PWD

Each country organizes its social support differently. It is interesting to compare the subtleties between the partner countries in terms of how they organize these types of support.

We have tried, in order to organize the reading and comparability between countries, to systematize the information as follows:

- a) Direct financial support to PWD
- b) Indirect financial support to PWD

a) Direct financial support to PWD

This support consists of cash grants awarded directly to PWD.

Cyprus

In Cyprus PWD with no adequate financial means are entitled to a care allowance up to €400 monthly for home care, up to €137 monthly for attendance at a day centre and up to €745 monthly for 24-hour care in an institution.

There are direct financial supports given to persons with disabilities (PWD) in Cyprus. These include:

- Disability Allowance: A monthly allowance given to persons with disabilities who are unable to work and have a low income. The amount of the allowance depends on the degree of disability and ranges from €162 to €717 per month;
- Carer's Allowance: A monthly allowance given to a person who takes care of a disabled person who needs constant care and attention. The amount of the allowance depends

on the degree of disability of the person being cared for and ranges from €162 to €717 per month;

- Mobility Allowance: A monthly allowance given to persons with disabilities who are unable to move around without assistance. The amount of the allowance ranges from €97 to €338 per month, depending on the degree of disability;
- Allowance for the Purchase of Aids and Appliances: A one-time allowance given to persons with disabilities to purchase aids and appliances that help them with their daily activities. The amount of the allowance ranges from €700 to €2,000, depending on the type of aid or appliance;
- Invalidity Pension: A monthly pension given to persons with disabilities who are unable to work and have a low income. The amount of the pension depends on the degree of disability and ranges from €176 to €794 per month;
- Guaranteed Minimum Income: A monthly income support given to persons with disabilities who have a low income and are unable to work. The amount of the support depends on the degree of disability and ranges from €480 to €720 per month.

It is important to note that the amounts listed above may vary based on individual circumstances and are subject to change. It is recommended to contact the Department of Social Insurance in Cyprus for more information on specific financial support programs and eligibility criteria.

France

In France, the disabled adult's allowance (Allocation aux adultes handicapés/ AAH) is awarded as a minimum-income benefit for PWD. To be eligible for this support, it is necessary that:

- The citizen must be over 20 years of age;
- Have a disability severity rating, as determined by the Committee for the Rights and Self-dependency of Disabled Persons (CDAPH), of at least 80% or between 50% and 79% along with a CDAPH-determined substantial and ongoing reduction of access to employment, not be drawing an old-age, disability, or industrial accident pension amounting to €919.86 per month or more (maximum amount of the AAH);
- That the citizen does not exceed the following ceilings:
 - €10,843.20 for a person living alone
 - €19,626.19 for a couple.(These ceilings are increased by €5,421.60 for each dependent child).

The maximum AAH award is €919.86 per month as from April 1st, 2022. This amount is awarded to individuals with zero income. Individuals drawing any type of pension receive the difference between the amount of their pension and the sum of €919.86.

Greece

The promoting country - Greece - presents a very differentiated set of economic supports (subsidies) by typologies of illness/disability:

Subsidy	Beneficiaries	Amount
For motor disabilities	For people with amputated legs and/or arms, with over 80% disability rate.	165€

Subsidy	Beneficiaries	Amount
For kidney patients, heart and liver transplant recipients, etc.	Kidney patients who are in the last stage of chronic kidney failure and for those who have had heart, liver, lung, stomach, spleen, pancreas, pancreatic islets, intestine (large or small), kidney and bone marrow transplant.	362€
For people with severe disabilities	Uninsured or indirectly insured persons who, due to a serious physical, mental or mental illness or disability, have a disability rate of 67% or more, those with final stage chronic renal failure and have a disability rate of over 80% and Type 1 diabetes patients with at least 50% disability rate.	313€
For people with severe mental retardation	Persons with Severe Mental Retardation, with a disability rate of 80% or more and an IQ of 34 or less, people with Down syndrome or other genetic syndromes of the chromosome, accompanied by severe or severe mental retardation and with a disability rate of 80% or more and people in the autism spectrum disorder or pervasive developmental disorder or autism or Asperger's syndrome, with a disability rate of 80% or more.	527€
For paraplegics quadriplegics and amputees	Quadriplegics and paraplegics having a disability rate of 67% or more, people suffering from diseases that have caused disability of 67% or more and of the same form - quadriplegia, paraplegia - due to irreversible damage to the spinal cord, roots, nerves or muscles and amputees with a disability rate of 67% or more.	771€
For people with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and hemophilia	People with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) with a disability rate of 50% or more	697€
For people with congenital hemolytic anemia or congenital bleeding disposition.	People with Mediterranean anemia, thalassemia, hemoglobinopathy, sickle cell anemia and micro sickle cell anemia, with a disability rate of 67% or more. Moreover, people with hemophilia A, hemophilia B, congenital bleeding disorders. For all the above ailments, a disability rate of 50% or more is required.	362€
For deaf and hard of hearing people	People with deafness - hearing loss with a disability rate of 67% or more, aged up to 18 years, as well as those over 65 years old. For the age group of 19-64 it is a prerequisite to have, simultaneously with deafness - hearing loss, another chronic physical, mental or mental condition.	362€
For visually impaired and blind people	People whose visual disability is certified with a disability rate of 80% or more	362€ (for those working) 697€ (for the unemployed)
For people with brain paralysis	People with cerebral palsy up to 18 years of age	697€
For patients and recovered leprosy patients and their family members	Leprosy patients who are treated as inpatients in the Public Hospital for Infectious Diseases and the dependent members of the family of the leprosy patient	362€

Subsidy	Beneficiaries	Amount
	People with leprosy who are treated at home and absent from work due to illness and those who have recovered from Hansen's disease.	697€

Portugal

In the case of Portugal, PWD benefit from a set of measures if they have an incapacity of more than 60%, proven by medical/legal certificate.

PWD benefit from a Social benefit for inclusion - PSI (over 18 years of age) – paid monthly, with a base value of 275,30€, and a possible complement to the maximum value of 431,32€.

In Portugal, there are several forms of direct financial support available to PWD. These benefits and allowances are designed to assist individuals with disabilities in meeting their specific needs and promoting their inclusion and well-being. Here are some examples of direct financial support programs for PWD in Portugal:

- Disability Allowance (Subsídio por Incapacidade): This is a monthly cash benefit provided to individuals with a disability who have a reduced earning capacity. The amount of the allowance depends on the degree of disability and the person's income level;
- Social Inclusion Income (Rendimento Social de Inserção - RSI): This is a means-tested social welfare benefit that can be granted to individuals or families facing financial hardship, including those with disabilities. It aims to provide a minimum income and support for basic needs;
- Attendance Allowance (Subsídio por Assistência a Terceira Pessoa): This allowance is intended to support individuals with severe disabilities who require assistance with daily activities, such as personal care or mobility. It is available to people who are at least 66% disabled and need permanent help from a third party;
- Disability Pension (Pensão de Invalidez): This is a monthly pension granted to individuals with disabilities who are unable to work due to their condition. The pension amount is determined based on the degree of disability and the person's contributory history;
- Personal Autonomy Allowance (Subsídio de Apoio à Autonomia Pessoal): This is an allowance provided to individuals with severe disabilities who require ongoing support to maintain their autonomy and independence. It covers expenses related to personal assistance, technical aids, and transportation;
- Special Education Support Fund (Fundo de Apoio à Educação Especial): This fund provides financial assistance to families of children with disabilities to cover expenses related to special education needs, such as specialized materials, therapies, or transportation to educational facilities.

Spain

There is a whole system of state aid for people with physical or mental disabilities. In Spain, there are degrees of disability expressed in percentages, which will have a direct influence on the type of state aid to which they can apply.

When the degree is 0%, it is said that the individual has zero disability after having presented an accident or disease with sequelae. From 1% to 24% the disability is grade 2, that is, mild, with

some difficulties in doing their daily tasks, but they can be done. Moderate (25-49%), severe (50-70%), and very severe (greater than 75%) disability are the next grades.

From here, certain ordinary tasks become a problem for the disabled, some can no longer work.

To obtain a certificate of disability, the application must be made at the Council of Social Affairs of the City Council or another competent body. In addition, from February 2023, those people who are granted a pension for permanent disability will have access to the automatic recognition of a 33% disability.

The SEPE (State Employment Service), Social Security and the Tax Agency jointly grant a series of state aids to PWD. This, according to their degree of difficulties previously foreseen and according to the needs they present. As the majority of powers have been transferred to the autonomous communities, the regulations must be reviewed to determine the amounts to be applied in each case.

Although many of these benefits depend in percentage terms on the degree of disability of each individual, their age and other personal factors, in terms of tax repercussions, the rules apply equally to any person with a disability of 33% or more.

Social Security:

- Compensatory pension for total disability: In this case, the worker who can no longer continue with his activity will be granted a total of 55% of his regulatory base. This percentage will grow by 20% from the age of 55 as a measure to alleviate the difficulties of finding a job in a different sector;
- Compensatory pension absolute disability: grants 100% of the regulatory base as a pension, while severe disability, which incapacitates the person even to take care of themselves on a day-to-day basis, maintains 100% of the regulatory base and, in addition, adds a 50% extra designed to cover the logical need for a professional caregiver to care for the disabled.

State Employment Service:

- Access to the Minimum Insertion Income: €480/month for a maximum of 11 months. It can be requested up to 3 times;
- Annual bonuses for hiring PWD during the term of the contract.

Long term contracts:

- People with recognized disability equal to or greater than 33%:
 - Under 45 years: men, 4,500 euros; women, 5,350 euros;
 - Over 45 years: men and women, 5,700 euros.
- People with severe disability: Mental or intellectual disability greater than 33% or physical disability greater than 65%:
 - Under 45 years: men, 5,100 euros; women, 5,950 euros;
 - Over 45 years: men and women, 6,300 euros.

Temporary contracts:

- People with recognized disability equal to or greater than 33%:
 - Under 45 years: men, 3,500 euros; women, 4,100 euros;
 - Over 45 years: men 4,100 and women, 4,700 euros.

- People with severe disability: Mental or intellectual disability greater than 33% or physical disability greater than 65%:
 - Under 45 years: men, 4,100 euros; women, 4,700 euros;
 - Over 45 years: men 4,700 and women, 5,300 euros.

Conversion of Temporary Employment Promotion Contracts, Contracts for the Acquisition of Professional Practice and Alternation Training in Ordinary Companies for people with disabilities:

- People with recognized disability equal to or greater than 33%:
 - Under 45 years: men, 4,500 euros; women, 5,350 euros;
 - Over 45 years: men and women, 5,700 euros.
- People with severe disability: Mental or intellectual disability greater than 33% or physical disability greater than 65%:
 - Under 45 years: men, 5,100 euros; women, 5,950 euros;
 - Over 45 years: men and women, 6,300 euros.

b) Indirect financial support to PWD

Indirect support attributed to PWD consists in the attribution of financial or fiscal benefits translated into taxes, price reduction in the access to services (transports, banking, ...), employment, housing.

In order to get a general idea of other benefits, comparing the similarities and differences between the partner countries, we present these benefits by different areas or topics.

1. Taxes Benefits

Cyprus	• Reduced VAT rates on certain goods and services: PWD are eligible for reduced VAT rates on a number of goods and services, including mobility aids, hearing aids, and medical equipment; • Tax deductions for medical expenses: and their families can deduct medical expenses from their taxable income. This includes expenses for medical treatment, medications, and specialized equipment; • Tax exemptions for disability benefits: Disability benefits received from the government or from private insurance providers are exempt from income tax; • Reduced property tax: PWD may be eligible for a reduced property tax rate on their homes, depending on their disability status and level of income; • Special tax credits: who are employed may be eligible for special tax credits that reduce their tax liability. The exact amounts of these tax benefits can vary depending on the individual's circumstances and the specific tax laws in Cyprus. It is recommended to consult with a tax professional or the Cyprus Tax Department for more detailed information.
France	Those receiving the Allocation aux adultes handicapés (AAH) and other extra allowances are exempt from income tax. Pensions fall into three categories: • The 1st category concerns disabled people who are still capable of carrying out a professional activity. The pension is calculated according to the following formula: average annual income (SAM) x 30%. The maximum annual

	amount of the pension is equal to 30% of the social security threshold: €12,340.80, or €1,028.40 per month; • The 2nd category concerns disabled people who are incapable of carrying out a professional activity. The pension is calculated in the same way as for the 1st category, with a different percentage. The calculation formula is as follows (SAM) x 50%. The maximum annual amount of the pension equals 50% of the social security threshold: €20,568, i.e. €1,714 per month; • The 3rd category concerns disabled persons in the 2nd category, who are obliged to receive help from a third party in order to complete ordinary acts of everyday life. The amount of the basic pension is then increased by 40%. Maximum monthly amount of 3rd category disability pension: €2,840.42 per month.
Greece	As with most countries, there are PWD - tailored benefits, with the major ones being: • Pension for PWD (up to 1000 euro – depending on the disability percentage); • Healthcare benefits; • Reduced costs for health/disability related equipment (such as hearing aids and wheelchairs); • Special purpose allowance (up to 917.91 euro – depending on the disability percentage).
Portugal	• Vehicle Tax (ISV) exemption; • IUC (Single Circulation Tax) exemption; • Lower IRS withholding tax; • Lower taxation base; • Reduction of taxes on labour income; • Fixed personal allowance and expenses for education, rehabilitation and life insurance.
Spain	The only requirement to obtain state aid is to have at least 33% disability. These are reductions for the acquisition or modification of housing or VAT of 4% on the purchase or adaptation of a vehicle for a person with limited mobility. It also includes aid where the disabled person is exempt from paying taxes such as the special tax on certain means of transport IEDMT.

2. Social Security

Cyprus	Persons with all types of disabilities, exercise their choice for where to live and with whom mainly through the state social financial benefits to which they are entitled to. The majority of them live at their home. PWD with no adequate financial means are entitled to a care allowance up to €400 monthly for home care, up to €137 monthly for attendance at a day center and up to €745 monthly for 24-hour care in an institution. Social benefit services regardless of income criteria, which aim to facilitate life in the community and personal assistance. The benefits concern monthly allowances for people with blindness, motor disability, paraplegia, tetraplegia, and financial assistance for the purchase of a wheelchair, various types of equipment and assistive technology, specially equipped cars, etc.
France	The disabled adult's allowance (Allocation aux adultes handicapés/ AAH) AAH is awarded as a minimum-income benefit for people with disabilities. Eligibility requirements are as follows: • The claimant must be over age 20; • Have a disability severity rating, as determined by the Committee for the Rights and Self-dependency of Disabled Persons (CDAPH), of at least 80% or between 50% and 79% along with a CDAPH-determined substantial and ongoing reduction of access to employment, not be drawing an old-age, disability, or

	industrial accident pension amounting to €919.86 per month or more (maximum amount of the AAH); • Not have financial means exceeding the following ceilings: ○ €10,843.20 for a person living alone; ○ €19,626.19 for a couple; ○ These ceilings are increased by €5,421.60 for each dependent child. • The claimant's income for 2020 will be taken into account for AAH benefits paid in 2022. The maximum AAH award is €919.86 per month as from April 1st, 2022. This amount is awarded to individuals with zero income. Individuals drawing any type of pension receive the difference between the amount of their pension and the sum of €919.86. AAH can be awarded for a period of: • 1 to 10 years for a disability severity rating of at least 80%; • Effective January 1st, 2019, if certain requirements are met, Cdaph can award AAH for an indefinite period of time; • 1 to 5 years for a disability severity rating of 50 to 79%.
Greece	As with most countries, there are PWD - tailored benefits, with the major ones being: • Pension for PWD (up to 1000 euro – depending on the disability percentage); • Healthcare benefits; • Reduced costs for health/disability related equipment (such as hearing aids and wheelchairs); • Special purpose allowance (up to 917.91 euro – depending on the disability percentage).
Portugal	• Family allowance bonus related with disabled children and young people (up to 24 years of age); • Special education allowance (up to age 24); • Allowance for the care of a disabled or chronically ill child (maximum 4 years); • 100% financing of support/assistive products; • Allowance for attending a special education institution; • Dependency supplement; • Financial support for organizations that work with PWD: residential home; autonomous residence; Support Center for Independent Living (CAVI); home support; day centre; family foster care for adults with disabilities.
Spain	One of the most important state aids is the disability pension. Depending on the grade, it will be determined whether the pension is for partial, total permanent, absolute permanent or severe disability. On the other hand, disabled people who have dependent children or women who are about to give birth can also receive help. Finally, another type of help is to reduce the time for retirement and thus receive the pension. Any person with a disability or their close relatives must find out what state aid is provided by their Autonomous Community. Throughout the country there are social programs that range from facilitating the acquisition of homes to improving access to transportation. To do this, they must go to the department and request the complete information to apply.

3. Housing

Cyprus	In 2017, the Council of Minister of the Republic of Cyprus voted for two very promising pro-jects, the “New Plan for Programmes of Supported Living” and the “Project for the Creation of New Residences of Supported Living”. These plans are co-funded by the EU.
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France	It is possible to obtain Personalized Assistance for housing under certain conditions, for anyone who rents, buys a dwelling or resides in a home. It is also possible to combine the APL with other aids. Among these aids, is the AAH which is cumulative. The APL for PWD is found in the assistance by situation. (The amount of aid will depend on the situation).
Greece	Benefits for PWD in Greece in regards to housing include the following: • Home modification grants, as long as the modifications are justified for disability and accessibility related reasons and not aesthetic reasons (up to 5000 euro); • Housing allowance, in the form of a monthly allowance given to those with a disability percentage of over 67% (up to 412.23 euro); • Social housing, in the form of Special Care Units that offer 24/7 in-house support of PWD, assisting them with daily needs and necessities.
Portugal	• Interest Rate Subsidy; • There are municipalities that grant support such as social housing and housing rental subsidies; • Program that enshrines the principle of accessibility, according to which "the rehabilitation or construction works intended for housing must integrate solutions to improve accessibility for PWD.
Spain	• The State Housing Plan 2022-2025, approved by the Government through Royal Decree 42/2022, of January 18, informs about aid for PWD for housing, whether to buy or rent; • Housing adaptation grants for kitchen, bathroom or other areas are also contemplated according to the needs of the person with disabilities. There are municipalities that grant support such as social housing and housing rental subsidies.

3. Employment

Cyprus	The Funding Scheme for Associations for the operation of Supported Employment Programs. Fund to hire professional instructors who will train PWD for their integration into employment (13.500€ per year). The Plan for the Creation and Operation of Small Self-Employment Units for PWD (8.543€ to people who can only pursue a limited circle of pro-vocational activities due to physical, sensory, mental or other disabilities.). Fund for Vocational Training to PWD (1.708€ to receive vocational training). The Plan for Grants to Associations for Programmes of Vocational Training for PWD through the Special Fund of the Center of Professional Rehabilitation. The Plan for Grants to Associations for Programmes of Vocational Training for Professional on the issues of disability through the Special Fund of the Center of Professional Rehabilitation for PWD.
France	In France, lower wages for a same or similar position are sanctioned as a form of discrimination, and workers with disabilities are entitled to the national minimum wage. Workers with a disability can, however, register the extent of their reduced productivity, giving the employer the right to obtain a wage subsidy from the State. Enterprises with more than 20 workers in France are obliged to have at least 6 per cent of workers with disabilities among their staff.
Greece	According to article 2 of Law 2643/1998, businesses or holdings, Greek or foreign, operating in Greece in any form, as well as their subsidiaries, as long as they employ more than fifty (50) people, are obliged to hire protected persons of Law 2643/1998, at a rate of 8% of all the personnel of the business. A similar obligation is foreseen for public sector bodies, with the percentage of protected persons amounting to 10%. The ergonomic arrangement of the workplace is subsidized according to the personal needs of each employee (e.g. the creation of a ramp, a special toilet, a work bench, etc.) with participation by the state in the expenditure up to 90%

	of its total cost and up to the amount of 2,500 euros for each of the ergonomic workplace arrangements deemed necessary.
Portugal	• Responsible government entity - Institute of Employment and Professional Training; • Personalized and specialized support: ○ information, Assessment and Guidance for Qualification and Employment; ○ placement Support; ○ post-placement follow-up. • Employment measures that can support the professional insertion of PWD: ○ employment-Contract; ○ support to entrepreneurship and the creation of self-employment; ○ quota system for public and private companies; ○ supported employment; ○ sheltered employment. • Financed professional training for PWD.
Spain	Active Insertion Income (RAI) This aid from SEPE (Public Service of State Employment) consists of the delivery of a subsidy for long-term unemployed people: • Those with less than 33% disability must be at least 45 years old and have not received this subsidy one year before; • If this is not the case, if the disability is equal to or greater than 33%, then it will not be necessary to comply with these requirements. They should not receive income above 75% of the Minimum Interprofessional Salary. Promotion of Autonomous Employment for PWD With this grant from SEPE, people will be able to opt for up to 10,000 euros that will help them start a business. Not only will they receive that amount, the interest rate will be 4 points lower than usual; they will get 2000 euros for technical assistance and will have a subsidy of 75% of the cost of a training course. So, it is a very complete help to undertake as a freelancer.

4. Others

Cyprus	From the part of the governmental and the centralized state services, one could say that a very strong financial safety net exists in Cyprus. There are various categories of allowance for each category of disability. The provisioned allowances cover the following categories: • Allowance for serious kinetic disabilities; • Allowance to paraplegics, tetraplegics; • Allowance to blind people; • Allowance for transport; • Allowance for car purchase; • Allowance for wheelchairs and mobility trolleys purchase or leasing; • Special parking budge; • Allowance for prosthetics purchase; • Plan for supporting associations standing for the rights of PWD; • Plan for the provision of social companions to people with serious disabilities. On the part of civil society, the example of the Cyprus Paraplegic Association, which created the "Assistance Service", with specialized and individualized services, promoting independent living of PWD: care services, nursing, social work, psychological and transportation to PWD.
France	The French railway system (SNCF), assures that PWD designated spaces and facilities in the carriages. In some locations, an adapted transport service to the station can be provided. A door-to-door baggage service is available for a fee. Car rental: Some car rental companies, for example Hertz, offer vehicles adapted for drivers.

Greece	In Greece, there are several transportation benefits available for PWD. The government provides accessible public transportation, including accessible buses, trains, and metro stations. These transportation options are designed to be accessible for people with mobility disabilities and provide features such as ramps, lifts, and designated spaces for wheelchair users. PWDs are also entitled to subsidies for taxi rides, which cover a portion of the cost of the ride, up to a certain limit. To access the subsidy, individuals with disabilities must apply to their local municipality and provide documentation of their disability. Additionally, PWD in Greece are entitled to a parking permit that allows them to park in designated accessible parking spaces. The parking permit is free of charge and is valid for three years. To obtain a parking permit, individuals with disabilities must apply to their local municipality and provide documentation of their disability. Furthermore, PWD in Greece are entitled to a reduced fare on intercity transportation, including trains and buses. The reduced fare is 50% of the regular fare and is available to people with a disability percentage of 67% or higher. To access the reduced fare, individuals with disabilities must apply for a special ID card from their local municipality.
Portugal	• Social Tariff for Electricity, Gas and Communications; • Community parking card for PWD; • Special accesses for road, rail, maritime and air transport.
Spain	• Grants for training and sport. They can cover enrolment in educational institutions, material, transportation, food and allocation of adapted residences. Some scholarships to help the training and study of PWD in Spain could be those of Fundación ONCE; • There are different discounts on leisure and culture or even free tickets in both public institutions and private companies; • Subsidies for transport travel, either to go to work, to receive therapies, among other activities; • Grants available to purchase or retrofit a vehicle including discounts, exemption from registration and circulation taxes, VAT reduction or reserved parking card; • Mobility subsidies to facilitate the acquisition of assistance products such as wheel-chairs for people with motor disabilities or reduced mobility so that they increase their degree of independence when traveling, inside and outside the home; • Regional aids, contacting the Social Services of each Autonomous Community or City Council; • Minimum income. The last level of the income guarantee system is made up of some specific benefits managed by the central government and minimum income, under regional jurisdiction, which are more directly focused on assisting people in severe poverty. They are a small part of the whole system - they represent only 6% of total spending - but they play a fundamental role: they are the last possible resort for those people who lack income; • All in all, the greater support needs of PWD mean an increase in spending, which translates into an economic over-effort on the part of families that is not compensated by the social protection system; • A quality of life project requires that PWD and their families have a enough and decent income that does not place them in a situation of permanent vulnerability with respect to the rest of the population.

3. What about leisure? Is the income enough?

The support for participation in leisure activities is not treated in a global way. In other words, leisure activities tend to be limited to culture, sports and tourism. However, there are many other forms of leisure which are not valued in such a way as to translate into direct or indirect financial support.

In Cyprus there is no direct financial support for leisure activities for PWD, although there is an effort about the importance of leisure for PWD in various other ways by governmental and non-governmental organizations.

In France, because of the high standard of living, PWD who are entitled to the national minimum wage, cannot access to many leisure activities.

In Greece, according to the National Confederation of Disabled People, PWD and chronic conditions, as well as their families, are finding it difficult to meet even their basic daily needs, with the subsidies remaining the same for over a decade.

When we look to the Portuguese reality, according to Fernando Fontes (2009), one of the characteristics of disability policies is the low level of support offered, especially at the level of monetary support and services made available, considering that this support has always been far below the real needs of PWD and their families. This situation remains, even with new support/social benefits (PSI) and with the updating of their values. Portugal approaches the issue of support in a "minimum necessary" logic and not in the sense of a holistic and globally balanced approach for the overall quality of life and well-being of PWD.

In Spain, according to Rebolledo-Gutiérrez & Rohlf-Domínguez (2014), the reality of PWD is that they are not on an equal footing with those without disabilities, which prevents them from fully participating in society. One of the areas where this happens is leisure and free time. In Spain there are still numerous barriers that must be broken so that all PWD can enjoy inclusive leisure. According to the Spanish Committee of Representatives of PWD, 69% of PWD see their participation in cultural and leisure activities limited due to the lack of accessibility and up to 91% affirm that they encounter some type of barrier. Families with members with disabilities face additional costs derived from the disability, suffering a comparative economic harm compared to families without members with disabilities.

Considering the partners reports, the economic realities are different among the partners, we all consider that the income earned by PWD is not enough for access to and participation in leisure activities. Leisure is not considered a priority. Leisure is usually associated to economic power. These activities, regardless of their nature, have costs. This type of expenditure is not priority when compared to others, such as food and health. This naturally limits the participation of PWD in leisure activities.

It should be noted that there are no studies or analyses that directly prove that PWD do not have the economic power to participate in leisure activities. The partners, as explained above, infer these difficulties in accessing leisure activities due to the economic realities and financial demands of family management.

4. Are there benefits regarding Leisure for PWD?

Complying with the objectives set by Europe in terms of Disability, in the partner countries measures are being applied so that PWD can live independently and participate fully in all as-

pects of life. Regarding to the leisure and free time of PWD, the measures are applied considering the following areas of action: culture, sports and tourism. In the table it's showed some examples of each partner regarding these three major groups of leisure activity.

	<i>Culture</i>	<i>Sport</i>	<i>Tourism</i>
Cyprus	The Cyprus Theatre Organization offers audio-description and sign language interpretation for select performances to make theatre more accessible to people with visual or hearing impairments. The Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia offers accessible tours for people with disabilities, including wheelchair users, with the help of specialized guides and assistive devices. The Larnaca Biennale hosts art exhibitions that are accessible to people with disabilities, including audio descriptions and tactile objects.	The Cyprus Sports Organization promotes accessible sports facilities and events, such as the Paralympic Games, to encourage PWD to participate in sports. The Cyprus Wheelchair Tennis Association organizes tournaments and training programs for wheelchair tennis players of all ages and abilities. The Cyprus National Paralympic Committee offers training programs and support for athletes with disabilities who want to compete at the international level.	Accessible tourism information platforms, non or governmental for PWD. Cooperation with the European Network "Accessible Tourism"
France	Created by decree of 7 February 2001, the National Commission for Culture and Disability is a forum for dialogue and consultation between the ministries responsible for culture and persons with disabilities, the main associations of persons with disabilities, persons with disabilities themselves and the cultural and artistic community. Its mission is to propose measures in all the fields concerned, in particular access to equipment, artistic practice, training and cultural professions. In 2016 the 10th National Commission "Culture and Disability". Three major projects have been announced: giving priority to accessibility to public broadcasting, new measures in favor of adapted publishing and digital technology and strengthening the training of cultural professionals.	Fédération Française Handisport is a French organisation that provides information on national and international disabled sporting activities and events. An example: The Ecole de Ski Française offers skiing lessons for the disabled in over 50 of its skiing schools.	The Tourism & Disability Association has defined accessibility and hospitality criteria to guarantee tourism to all in the greatest possible autonomy. It takes into account, in particular, easier access to buildings and services. It is also attentive to the personalized welcome reserved for tourists in terms of attention and kindness. A certified establishment, thus meeting these criteria, is subject to regular control by trained and specialized evaluators.

	<i>Culture</i>	<i>Sport</i>	<i>Tourism</i>
	Concretely, since 2020, Art & Disability Poles have been created and aim to promote access to culture for all by building long-term partnerships between institutions in the social, medico-social and health sectors and local cultural structures.		
Greece	PWD in Greece have the right to receive discounts or free entry to cultural events, including theater performances, museums, and exhibitions. Additionally, a significant number of cultural venues in Greece have been made accessible to PWD with the inclusion of ramps, lifts, and accessible restrooms among other features.	In Greece, individuals with disabilities can engage in various sports activities that are designed to meet their specific needs, with specialized equipment and facilities available. The Hellenic Paralympic Committee is responsible for promoting and organizing Paralympic sports in the country, and they offer information on sports programs that cater to people with disabilities.	Greece has numerous tourist destinations that are accessible to people with disabilities, with facilities specially designed to accommodate their needs. The Greek National Tourism Organization has created a dedicated section on its website that provides information on accessible travel, including details on accessible accommodation, transportation, and tourist attractions.
Portugal	In all monuments and museums under the governmental responsibility of Culture, the entrance is free of charge for people with reduced mobility and the person accompanying them. In similar non-governmental structures, disabled people can have the ticket price reduction defined by the museum or monument. PWD have reserved seats suitable to their needs in performance halls of an artistic nature.	In order to allow PWD to participate, in equal conditions with others, in sporting activities, there are entities promoting the practice of sports: (a) Portuguese Institute of Sport and Youth, I.P. b) Portuguese Paralympic Committee c) Portuguese Federation of Sports for PWD d) Academic Federation of University Sport e) NGOs - Non-Governmental Organizations f) Special Olympics Portugal, New Olympics Association	PWD are entitled, on an equal basis with others, to tourism services: there are accessible tourism information platforms for PWD; -tourist resorts must be adapted for PWD with restricted mobility and must have at least one adapted accommodation unit with an adapted sanitary installation; there are companies dedicated to accessible tourism.
Spain	Accessible Museums and exhibitions. In all monuments and museums under the governmental responsibility, is free for PWD and the accompanying person. In similar non-governmental structures, PWD can have the ticket price reduction defined by the museum or monument. Increasingly development of guided tours, exhibitions	The Master Plan for Inclusive Sport 2020, some examples: Call for Subsidies for sports federations; Compliance with current regulations on accessibility and adaptability of sports facilities for PWD; Development of programs dedicated to Inclusive Sport.	Accessible tourism information platforms, "Spain is Accessible"

	<i>Culture</i>	<i>Sport</i>	<i>Tourism</i>
	and specific activity programs for PWD: - Overcoming barriers; - Easy reading; - Media guides.		

Social

1. What is the reality in each partner country?

Reflecting on the social aspect of intervention with PWD in Europe, namely on the Leisure aspects, is to take on a complex reality. PWD face a wide range of exclusion types in society, which is further compounded by a lack of access to education, employment, and other necessary services. PWD in Europe are also often denied the necessary support and resources to live independently, leading to further isolation and marginalization.

Aware of this reality, the European Union has developed a set of initiatives that seek to improve the social inclusion of PWD. These initiatives include the European Disability Strategy, which sets out a framework for the implementation of policies, laws, and measures aimed at increasing the social inclusion of PWD. There are also a number of disability rights organizations across Europe, such as the European Disability Forum, that seek to increase the visibility and voices of PWD in society.

Ultimately, the social dimension of PWD in Europe is a complex issue that requires a concerted effort from governments, civil society, and the private sector. In particular, governments need to continue to prioritize the implementation of the European Disability Strategy, and to ensure that the necessary resources and support are available for PWD to access education, employment, and other services.

Below is a multidimensional analysis of some social facets of each partner country's reality.

1.1 Cyprus

1.1.1 Percentages and ratios

According to the European Disability Forum's country report on Cyprus published in 2020, the estimated percentage of PWD in Cyprus is around 14%. This translates to approximately 120,000 individuals. However, it's important to note that disability is a complex and diverse concept, and there are different definitions and classifications of disability, which may affect the estimated percentage.

Regarding the ratio of people with specific types of disabilities, the available data suggests the following:

- Around 8.2% of the population in Cyprus report having mobility disabilities, which is the most common type of disability.
- About 4.5% of the population report having hearing disabilities.
- About 3.1% of the population report having visual disabilities.

1.1.2 The importance of leisure activities

In Cyprus, many cultural, sports and recreational programs and activities are provided by voluntary organizations of PWD. These organizations receive grants to operate their programs mainly

through the State Schemes of the Social Welfare Services and to a lesser extent by the Department for Social Inclusion of PWD and the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Also, the Financial Assistance to the Organisations of PWD for Hiring Social Assistants for their Members Scheme operated by the Department of Social Inclusion of PWD covers the needs of transportation and assistance to PWD to participate in cultural and recreational events.

The Youth Board of Cyprus, through the European program "Youth in Action" offers programs and services, primarily informational and recreational, targeting PWD (dance workshops, painting and gymnastics).

Furthermore, in multiplex youth centres, free evening dance workshops, sports events, music, painting and crafts are offered, and they operate departments for PWD (Department for Social Inclusion of PWD, 2013).

Overall, it can be supported that several efforts have been made for the inclusion of people with (mental) disabilities in all aspects of everyday life, leisure time and society at large. However, the field of leisure time skills is still under-represented and based on general laws and regulations.

As mentioned by the Ombudsman (2017), inadequate knowledge for disability issues, limited education on human rights both in the public and the private sector as well as the lack of a culture towards the social model of disability, make the ensuring of PWD rights difficult especially under the present economic circumstances which widen inequality and make the position of PWD even more vulnerable. For this reason, the provision of leisure skills activities, tools and facilities is crucial for the equal participation of PWD in contemporary life and society.

1.1.3 Beyond the objective: social representations

In Cyprus it is noted that, in many cases, PWD are referred to as 'children' with disabilities, considering their mental age, rather than their chronological one. It seems obvious that a change in the perception that the community has of PWD is needed.

In this sense, the effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of PWD is a unique opportunity to improve services, on the one hand, and change social perceptions, on the other.

The Pancyprrian Council for PWD approved the establishment of eight **Thematic Technical Committees** to facilitate the actions for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of PWD, as well as the preparation of the corresponding reports. The Thematic Technical Committees established are the following:

- Thematic Technical Committee for Equality, Non-discrimination, Awareness and Statistics.
- Thematic Technical Committee for Accessibility to the Natural and Built Environment
- Thematic Technical Committee for Accessibility on Transportation
- Thematic Technical Committee for Accessibility on Information
- Thematic Technical Committee for Independent Living, Social Integration, Mobility and Social Protection.
- Thematic Technical Committee for Education and Training
- Thematic Technical Committee for Health and Rehabilitation
- Thematic Technical Committee for Employment

Each Thematic Technical Committee is composed of representatives of the Department for Social Inclusion of PWD, representatives of Ministries/ Departments/ Services having responsibility for specific areas of disability, representatives of the Office of Ombudsman and Human Rights Commissioner participating as observers and representatives of the Cyprus Confederation of Organisations of the Disabled (Committee on The Rights Of PWD, 2017).

Some of the most recent achievements of the above Committees in the field of social inclusion and leisure time of PWD include the following (Committee for the Protection of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities, 2019):

- Creating new and enforcing the existing day centres for people with mental disabilities.
- Agreement with the Children's Skills Development Centre "TO ALMA" of the "Theotokos" Foundation, to improve the development of everyday and leisure skills among children with mental disabilities.
- Exemption from the obligation to pay co-payments for health care services and special discounts for telecommunication services, as well as electricity, water, and heat services.
- Constant monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the needs, interests, and existing skills of PWD in order to include them in existing learning and leisure time activities and sports and develop new ones for them.
- Constant communication and cooperation of the PWMD and their families with a group of specialists, such as psychologists, physiotherapists etc. for their constant support and empowerment.
- Constant training of the specialists mentioned above and participation in relevant seminars.
- Cooperation with the Youth Board of Cyprus by granting free rooms for conducting training days and other activities open to the public.
- Cooperation with the Charisma Music Scheme, with the Cultural Club "The House of Mario", with the Dance Scheme as well as with the Self-Advocacy Group of the Ioannou Foundation.
- Development and implementation of Employment Programs for integration of PWD in the labour market, especially in supermarkets, garages, nurseries, hairdressers', in the hotel sector, tourism, culinary arts, etc. What is more, PWMD are guided by special counselors and encouraged to be engaged in lifelong learning and constant training.
- Implementation of the Plan for Inclusion of people with severe disabilities in Supported Living programs and establishment of 10 houses which host people with mental disabilities in the whole country.
- Registering all institutions and services dealing with person with an intellectual disability.

In general, the Committee is constantly working to maximize the innate capabilities of PWMD and at the same time to deal with any kind of difficulties as quickly and as effectively as possible.

1.2 France

1.2.1 Percentages and ratios

In 2021, 6.8 million (13%) of people aged 15 and older living at home report having at least one severe limitation in physical, sensory, or cognitive function and 3.4 million (6%) report being

severely restricted in usual activities due to a health condition. Depending on the definition chosen, the strictest that requires combining these two criteria, or the broadest that takes into account all limitations and restrictions, there are between 2.6 million and 7.6 million disabled or dependent people aged 15 or over living in ordinary housing. For people aged 15 to 60 alone, this figure ranges from 0.9 to 3.3 million. In addition, there are more than 140,000 people aged 16 and over housed in institutions specializing in disability care.

Regarding the ratios of people with specific types of disabilities, the available data suggests the following:

- About 6.7% of the population in France report having mobility disabilities, which is the most common type of disability.
- About 3.1% of the population report having hearing disabilities.
- About 2.1% of the population report having visual disabilities.

1.2.2 The importance of leisure activities

In France, there is a growing recognition of the importance of leisure activities for PWD. The French government has implemented various initiatives and programs to promote inclusive leisure activities and facilitate access to cultural and sporting events for PWD.

One example of this is the "Sport-Santé Bien-Être" program, which aims to promote physical activity and sports for PWD as a means of improving their health and well-being. The program provides resources and support for sports clubs and associations to develop inclusive programs and facilities for PWD.

Another initiative is the "Tourisme et Handicap" (Tourism and Disability) program, which aims to improve the accessibility of tourist sites and accommodations for PWD. The program provides certification and labeling for tourism sites and accommodations that meet specific accessibility criteria, making it easier for PWD to plan and enjoy leisure activities.

Moreover, many cultural and entertainment venues in France have made efforts to improve accessibility and offer inclusive programs for PWD. For example, many museums, theatres, and cinemas have implemented accessibility features such as audio guides, subtitles, and wheelchair access, and some offer special events and programs tailored to the needs of PWD.

Overall, there is a growing awareness in France of the importance of leisure activities for PWD, and efforts are being made to promote accessibility and inclusion in this area.

1.2.3 Beyond the objective: social representations

Policies and laws that promote social inclusion of PWD in France are:

- The **Law of 11 February 2005** on equal rights and opportunities, participation, and citizenship of persons with disabilities, which aims to ensure the full participation of PWD in all aspects of society, such as education, employment, accessibility, health care, and social protection.

- The ***National Disability Strategy 2018-2022***, which sets out five priorities for improving the situation of PWD: simplifying administrative procedures, developing inclusive education, promoting employment and professional integration, ensuring accessibility and universal design, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion.
- The ***European Social Fund (ESF)*** and the ***European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)***, which allocate a significant amount of funding to France for promoting social inclusion and combating poverty, especially for PWD. Some of the projects supported by these funds include improving access to education and training, facilitating the transition from school to work, creating adapted workplaces and services, and fostering social innovation and entrepreneurship.

The main challenges or gaps in implementing these policies and laws are:

- The lack of effective coordination and collaboration among different levels of government, sectors, and stakeholders, which can result in inconsistent or contradictory approaches, duplication of efforts, or gaps in service delivery.
- The persistence of negative attitudes and stereotypes towards PWD, which can undermine their dignity, autonomy, and participation in society. This can also lead to discrimination, harassment, or violence against PWD.
- The complexity and diversity of EU law and its transposition into national legislation, which can create difficulties for understanding, applying, and enforcing the rights and obligations of PWD. This can also result in over-regulation or under-regulation of certain aspects of disability policy.
- The lack of adequate resources and capacities to implement the policies and laws effectively, especially in times of economic crisis or social unrest. This can affect the availability and quality of support services, accessibility measures, assistive devices, and reasonable accommodation for PWD.

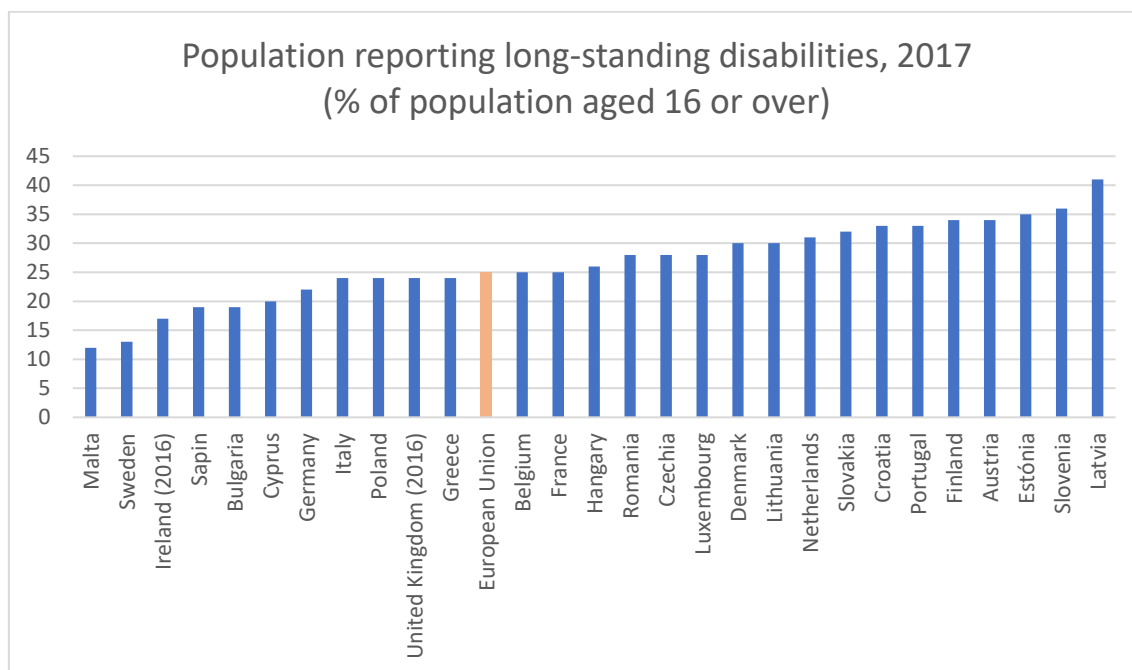
Possible ways to address or overcome these challenges or gaps are:

- Enhancing the coordination and collaboration among different levels of government, sectors, and stakeholders, through mechanisms such as inter-ministerial committees, cross-sectoral partnerships, joint planning and budgeting, and participatory governance.
- Promoting positive attitudes and awareness towards PWD, through campaigns, education, media, and role models, that challenge stereotypes and stigma, and highlight the diversity and contributions of PWD.
- Simplifying and harmonizing EU law and its transposition into national legislation, through better regulation principles, such as consultation, impact assessment, evaluation, and stakeholder involvement.
- Mobilizing adequate resources and capacities to implement the policies and laws effectively, through increasing public investment, leveraging EU funds, strengthening administrative and institutional capacities, and fostering innovation and learning.

1.3 Greece

1.3.1 Percentages and ratios

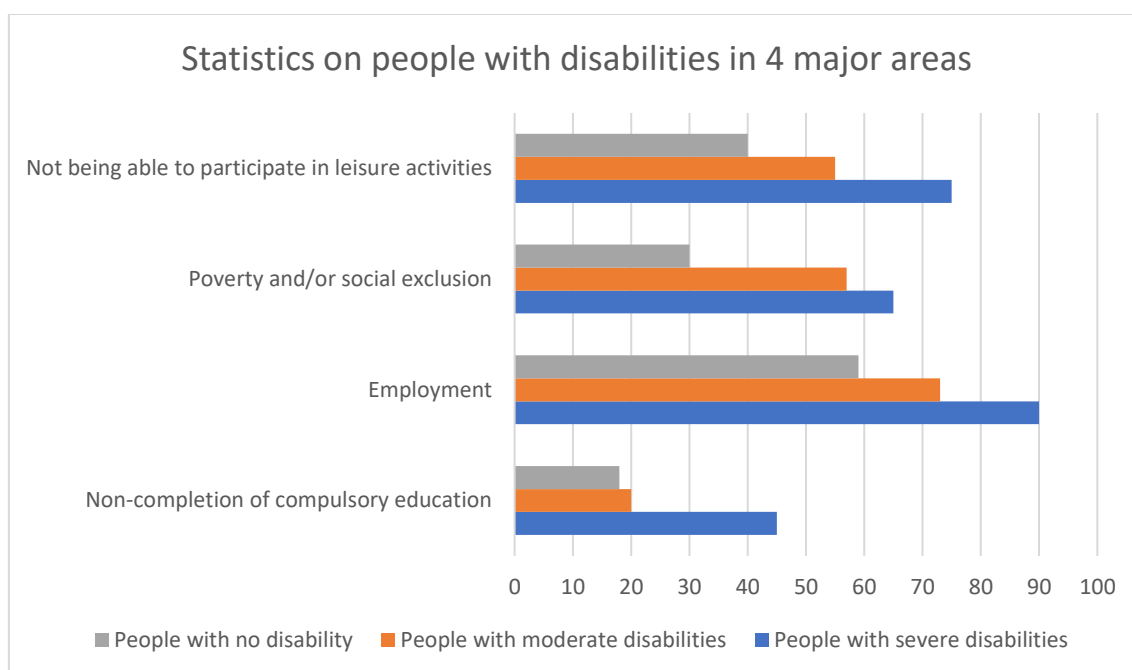
The latest count for PWD was carried out in 2018 by the National Confederation of Disabled People in Greece. According to this survey, the percentage of PWD in Greece rises to 24.7% of the general population, meaning roughly 2.4 million people. That is in accordance with Eurostat's estimations, just a year prior, where they reported the percentage to be 24% (Figure 1).



2 Population reporting long-standing disabilities - eurostat

Moreover, the National Confederation of Disabled People has founded the Disability Issues Observatory, a special division tasked with the object of scientific recording, study and research on disability issues. According to the 12th Statistical Information Bulletin, titled "*Living conditions and rights of young people with disabilities*" (Figure 2):

- 46% of young people with severe disabilities and 20.3% of people with moderate disabilities, up to the age of 34, have not completed compulsory education, in contrast to the 16.8% of people with no disabilities.
- 80.4% of people with severe disabilities and 73.3% of people with moderate disabilities, up to the age of 34, are not employed.
- 64.4% of people with severe disabilities and 56.7% of people with moderate disabilities, aged 25-34, live in poverty and/or experience social exclusion; numbers that particularly high, especially when compared to the 30.2% of people with no disabilities.
- As far as regular participation in leisure activities goes, it is reported that in severe disabilities the 75% does not participate in any kind of activity, with the numbers for moderate disability being 55.9%. For reference, the corresponding number for the general population is 39.7%.



3 – Statistics of PWD in 4 major areas

1.3.2 The importance of leisure activities

Firstly, a definition of leisure activities must be given, so that their importance can then be highlighted even better. Leisure activities are defined as enjoyable activities that individuals participate in of their own accord when they are unrestricted from the strains of work or other responsibilities. Researchers have proposed that leisure activities may be beneficial, especially during times of pressure, since they offer a chance to take a break, participate in an enjoyable activity that produces positive emotions and ultimately reduce stress (Lazarus, Kanner & Folkman, 1980). Leisure activities can also be classified as “restorative”, since they have been found to restore a person’s mental well-being to optimal levels. These activities usually encompass little mental effort, offer a feeling of “being away”, preserve commitment and offer relief from the struggles of everyday life (Kaplan, 1995). The restorative leisure activities encompass, but are not limited to, creative (e.g. drawing), social (e.g. going out with friends), spiritual (e.g. meditating), nature-related (e.g. trekking), reflective (e.g. keeping a journal), physical (e.g. going to the gym) and travel among others (Jansen & von Sadowszky, 2004).

Probably the most beneficial aspect of leisure activities lies in the fact that they are scientifically proven to relieve stress and benefit one’s mental well-being (Iwasaki et al., 2006). These benefits may come about as the upshot of leisure activities boosting positive feelings and endorsing a variability of resources that make individuals feel revitalised and better cope with stress (Iwasaki & Schneider, 2003), as well as maintain an enhanced physiological function (Staats et al., 1997) to less severe disease consequences (Diener et al., 2002) and greater longevity (Gump & Matthews, 2002). As far as PWD go, the benefits resulting from leisure relate to more confident personal identity, better personal regulation, improved relations with others, amplified communal skills, enhanced self-concept and general development in skills (Kleiber and McGuire, 2016).

Leisure offers an external incentive that aids the lives of PWD in numerous ways (Sánchez and Rodríguez, 2008). It helps to cultivate mental, physical, emotional and relational capabilities, such as creating better self-confidence and refining socialization (Duquette et al., 2015). Moreover, leisure offers social benefits such as congruence, unity, and encouraging social change (Ramos et al., 2012).

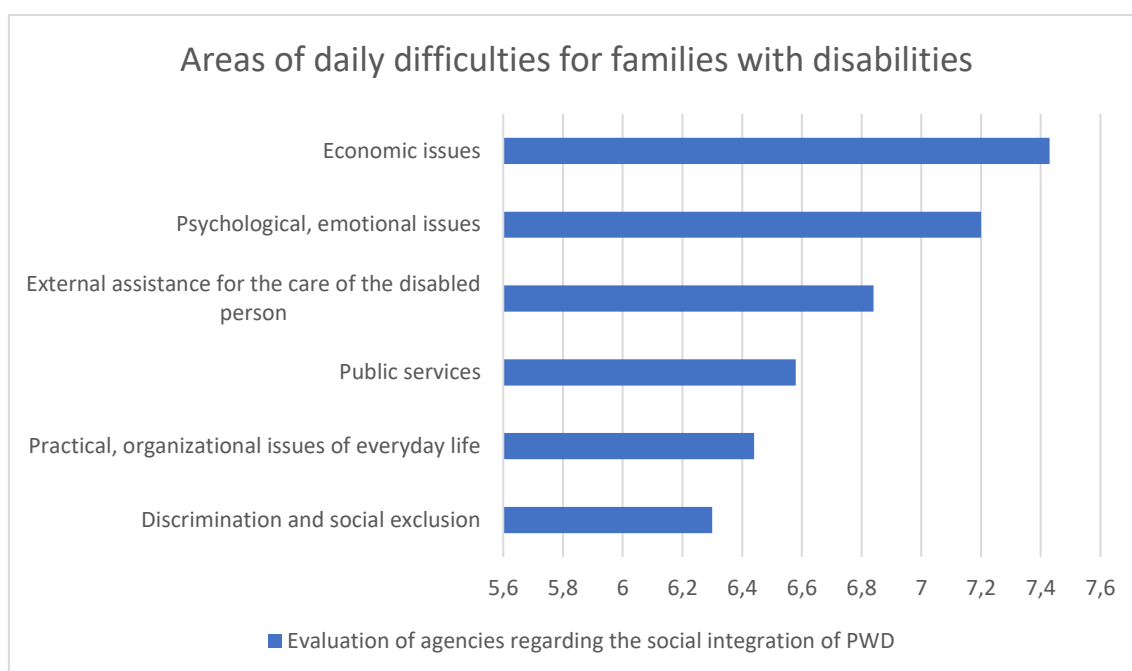
Finally, it is worth noting that in Greece the participation of PWD in leisure activities was taken in account when shaping the National Action Plan in 2020. One of its main goals (Pillar IV) revolves around active participation in cultural life, entertainment, leisure activities and sports. Under this goal a number of objectives has been set that, once achieved, will ensure the vigorous involvement of PWD in everyday life and will make their living much more enjoyable. This goes to further illustrate the importance of leisure activities for PWD in Greece.

1.3.3 Beyond the objective: social representations

Regarding the social representations of the Greek society for the PWD in general, Kapa Research, a polling company, undertook a massive survey in 2019. In this survey 600 people participated and shared their views on a matter of issues regarding the PWD.

- In the family setting/significant others

One of the questions in the survey revolved around the role of the family and how much of an obstacle it may turn out to be for a PWD. With a score of 1 signifying “not at all” and a score of 10 being “very much”, the mean score for the family was 5.33. While not being high, it is not low either, showing that in many cases the family setting may be unfavourable towards a PWD within it. When asked, on a similar scale, to rate difficulties faced by a family that has a PWD, the results are as follows (Figure 3): economic issues seem to be the highest difficulty a family with a PWD faces, with a score of 7.46, followed closely by psychological and emotional issues, with a score of 7.19. It seems that more often than not external assistance is needed for the PWD within the family, making it the third most difficult issue a family faces, scoring 6.84. The many instances in which a family with a PWD has to deal with public services of any sort make it score 6.56. Several practical issues in everyday life put a toll on the family, as shown by the 6.43 score. Finally, we have cases of discrimination and social exclusion, that may score less than any of the other but they still have a relatively high score of 6.31.



4 Areas of daily difficulties for families with disabilities

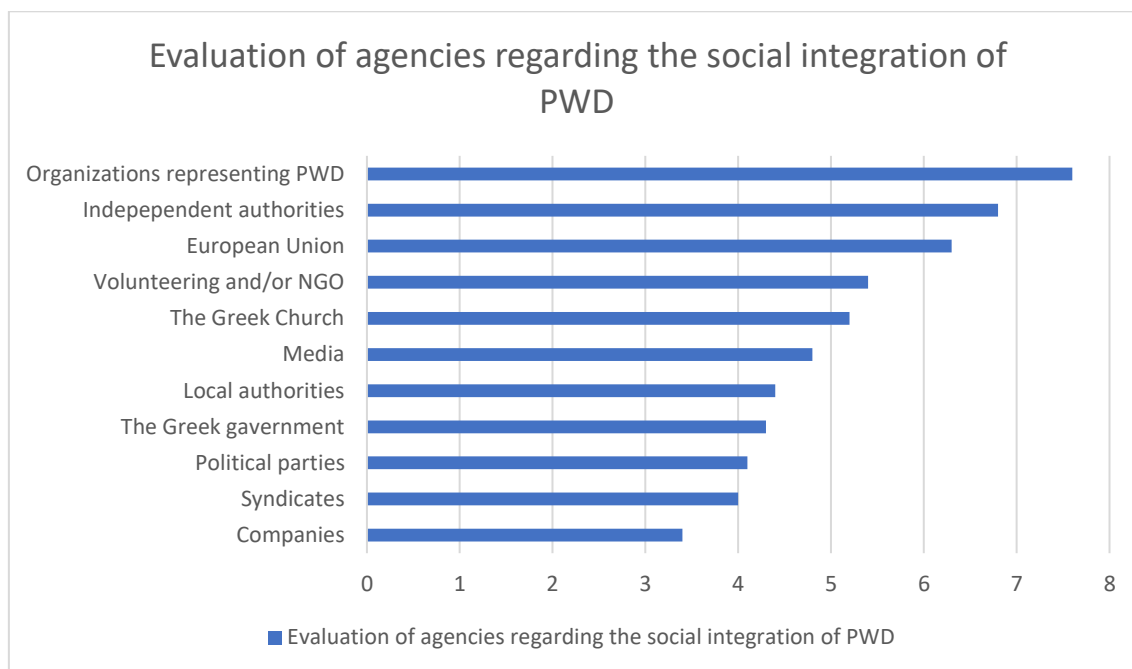
- In the educational setting

In the research of Nikolarazis and her colleagues (2005), the attitudes of 196 preschool children from Greece and America towards people with special needs were investigated. The results of their research showed that both children in Greece and in America accepted these people as being part of the whole. In addition, children who attended an integrated kindergarten had more positive attitudes towards people with special needs, compared to children who did not attend an integrated school. Another research, by Kalyva and Agalotis (2009) found that having a child with disabilities in class resulted in more positive attitudes towards PWD in general, than not having one in class. Research by Padeliadou and Lampropoulou (1997) showed that many Greek teachers do not have a positive attitude towards school integration, while younger and less experienced teachers show more positive attitudes towards school integration than older and more experienced ones. On the other hand, the research of Zoniou-Sideri and Vlachou (2006) revealed the fact that several Greek teachers have contradictory views regarding the necessity of integration. 62.1% state that ignorance is due to the segregation practices applied in Greek schools, 56.3% the lack of infrastructure and 52.5% the lack of educational opportunities for the coexistence of students with and without disabilities.

- Organizations/Entities providing services to PWD

Greek citizens were asked in the Kapa Research survey (2019) to rate some organizations and/or entities that provide services to PWD on a scale 1-10, with 1 being “bad” and 10 being “good”. The results were as follows (Figure 4): organizations representing PWD are viewed as being the most efficient ones, having a score of 7.59. They are followed by the independent authorities and the European Union, with the relatively good scores of 6.81 and 6.33 respectively. Taking it from there we have the volunteering and/or NGOs (5.4) along with the Greek Church (5.22) that keep it in relatively well, before the scales turn and start to drop. Having a mean score of below 5 are the media (4.75), the local authorities (4.46), the Greek government (4.38) and the political

parties (4.13), showing clearly that their engagements for PWD are far from being ideal. Unfortunately, the syndicates and the companies have the lowest scores, with 3.96 and 3.39, being labelled as the two worst of the organizations/entities that provide services to PWD.



5 Evaluation of agencies regarding the social integration of PWD

- Community in general

In a Eurobarometer survey (2019) 44% of European Union citizens (EU) believes that discrimination due to disability is widespread, while in Greece the percentage amounts to 53%. In Greece, 65% of citizens in the survey by Kapa Research (2019) are of the opinion that the Greek state does not do much for PWD, 21% that it has abandoned them to their fate, 9% agree that it is doing what it should and 3% that it does too much. In the same survey and to the question of *“how do you think PWD are treated by Greek society”*, 57% agreed with prejudice, 46% with pity, 28% with charity and only 12% with equality. Moreover, one in two respondents (52%) answered that they have contact at least once a month with PWD and 83% state that they know a person with a disability. 62% state that socializing with these people contributed to shaping better view of PWD, whereas 33% remained unchanged and only 2% degraded their views. In the Eurobarometer survey (2019) 8 out of 10 Greeks say they are comfortable with the idea of a person with a disability rising to the highest political office in the country and 9 out of 10 feel comfortable having a colleague with a disability.

1.4 Portugal

1.4.1 Percentages and ratios

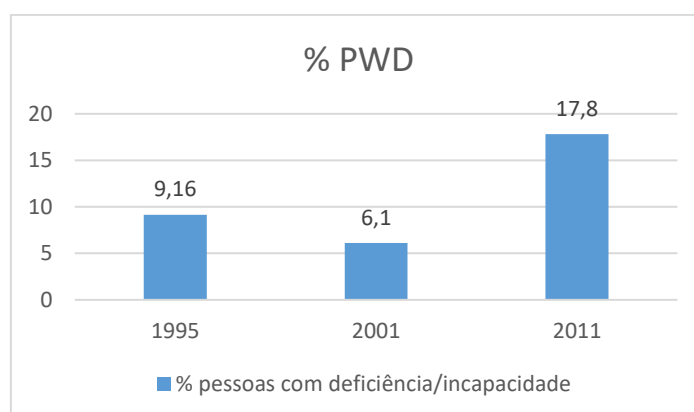
Currently, in Portugal there are 1 792 719 people with at least one type of disability. Of these, almost half a million cannot perform any action at all, such as: seeing, hearing, walking, remembering, bathing, dressing themselves or even understanding others or making themselves understood. This is the data supported by the 2011 census, which reveals that there are more women than men with disabilities (1 088 412 women to 704 307 men).

Resorting to a diachronic analysis, it seems relevant to frame the macro evolution of disability and impairment in Portugal, highlighting the emergence of the National Health System, in 1979, as a determinant factor for a significant decrease of disability situations. This was due to a particular attention given to pre and neo natal health. This public investment (both in health and in social policies) had an evident materialisation in the statistical data on this problematic which, in the meantime, had been compiled.

At the statistical level, the first data on Disability and Rehabilitation in the Portuguese context emerged as a result of the "National Survey on Disability, Impairments and Disadvantages", carried out in 1995 by the National Secretariat for Rehabilitation. According to these data, the national rate of disabled people was estimated in 9,16%, a figure similar to that of the other European Union countries.

Only in 2001, the censuses start to aggregate information regarding disability (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2001). These show that the percentage of disabled people in Portugal was 6.1% of the resident population.

However, official statistical data, reveal the existing difficulty in drawing the real picture of the situation in Portugal, as a result of the socio-conceptual evolution of the disability issue itself. Provocatively, we may present a summary of them:



6 Percentage of PWD

We can see that, in 2011, there seems to be an increase in the number of PWD. This does not correspond to an effective increase of the problem, but rather to a conceptual change, more brother than before (from deficiency we started to talk about incapacity). The medical paradigm for characterising disability is abandoned and the biopsychosocial model of incapacity is assumed, in accordance with the guidelines of the World Health Organisation. In this sense, the figure of 17.8%, presented above, refers to the population aged five years old or older who reported having great difficulties or being unable to perform at least one of the daily activities listed in the first paragraph (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2011).

Although the 2021 Census has already taken place, data¹ regarding the demographic characterisation of the population with disabilities is not available.

1.4.2 The importance of leisure activities

Without wishing to carry out a theoretical analysis of the sociology of leisure, as a conceptual object, it seems important to highlight that it has undergone a fundamental sociological evolution, since it began to be scrutinised as an object of scientific analysis.

From an initial approach in the 1960s, in which leisure behaviour was directly associated with age, income and social class (Christensen, 1988), there has been an evolution towards a more relational understanding, from the 1970s onwards, between leisure behaviour and the context of the individual's occupation (Parker, 1971), his or her social class (Young & Wilmott, 1973, cited in Veal, 2001) and his or her family environment (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1975, cited in Veal, 2001).

Complementing this relational approach, Roberts (1978) emphasises the pluralistic dimension of leisure, i.e. people use "leisure to nurture lifestyles that support experiences with which (...) they care and value". In this sense, it is made evident that leisure has a fundamental basic premise: **Freedom to**. Freedom for each person to choose the way they define and respond to their different interests and contexts.

In this way, the framework that led the scientific community to gradually recognise leisure as a fundamental dimension for quality of life is perceptible. This is defined by the International Society for Quality-of-Life Research (ISOQOL), meeting the definition of the World Health Organization which refers QOL as "an individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns".

Therefore, it is relevant to try to understand the importance of these activities in each individual's organisation. According to the Portuguese Psychologists Association, leisure activities are much more than ways of "killing time", having a very positive impact on our Health (physical and psychological) and well-being, in the immediate, but also in the long term. They contribute to a:

- Emotional, cognitive and physical recovery;
- Reduction of stress and anxiety levels;
- Strengthening interpersonal connections and sociability;
- Development of coping skills in order to deal with uncertainty and adversity.

Leisure activities may not solve the individual's problems but will help them to deal with them more effectively and often to discover new points of view about them.

In Portugal, and mainly for cultural reasons, leisure is mostly associated with tourism and sports. However, the cultural and leisure contexts available in Portugal are, in general, perfectly aligned with those available in other European countries. Naturally we must take into consideration some reference elements, namely the fact that leisure remains associated to contexts that influence, positively or negatively, the access and enjoyment of leisure activities, namely the:

¹ https://censos.ine.pt/scripts/db_censos_2021.html

- Economic-financial of the country;
- Geopolitical;
- Sociocultural.

The concern with the leisure dimension with PWD is relatively recent, from a formal point of view, and the growing offer of occupational possibilities is remarkable. Cultural, sporting, and touristic offers are not yet universal. However, there is a growing concern among the different agents to ensure an improvement in the conditions of access and participation in these three dimensions.

On the other hand, institutions working directly in the area of disability have been dedicating special attention and intervention to the leisure dimensions, namely by trying to ensure spaces and time dedicated to culture, sports and tourism in normative contexts, as well as to promote among the population with whom they work, a growing empowerment in terms of self-determination and capacity of choice, so that each one may choose what they want to do in their own time.

The importance of the leisure dimension does not seem to be differentiated in the population with disabilities, when compared to the general population. The difference continues to be in access to services and activities made available. There are still evident difficulties in these accesses, namely in terms of physical and economic barriers, but also in terms of social representations.

1.4.3 Beyond the objective: social representations

In terms of social representations, it is difficult to categorise the multiplicity of existing perceptions and subjectivities in just a few paragraphs, without running the risk of an obvious oversimplification and thus falling short of the expected analysis. However, and without assuming an academic component, it seems pertinent to us, as intervening agents in this area, to make some considerations resulting from decades of accumulated professional experience.

We will focus this brief analysis on people with intellectual impairment as the target audience of the partner organisations in this project.

People with intellectual impairment. Most of them do not have a critical perception of the existing offer in terms of the multiplicity of leisure activities and tend not to have sufficient self-knowledge about this dimension. Therefore, it is up to the significant people (family, friends or technicians) to intervene in this dimension. It is also fundamental to create opportunities to experience leisure activities, in order to contribute to the knowledge of their interests and tastes and to instil the practice of these activities in their routine.

Families and Significant others of PWD. Issues related to leisure tend not to be valued as desirable by this group. It can be seen that parents and significant others of PWD who are integrated in occupational activity centres, easily confuse these activities (which may be artistic, sporting and therapeutic) with leisure. In fact, the purpose of these centres is to occupy the time to replace a professional/training activity, since they do not have the skills to do so. In this sense, we assume that leisure time consists of the time beyond these occupational activities. There are some factors associated with this group that inhibit participation in leisure activities:

- the *cultural factor* associated to the spatial context, that is, rural contexts with less leisure services and aged families do not contribute towards the habit of leisure;
- the *educational factor* such as over-protection, which does not encourage the exploration of leisure activities
- the *economic and financial factor* that does not allow the practice of leisure activities (for example, going to the cinema, practicing sports), being most of them associated to expenses;
- the *community factor* through the inexistence or scarcity of services with leisure activities in some contexts.

Organisations supporting PWD. This group (through their professionals) becomes crucial in intervening in this issue, either by changing mentalities (through raising awareness among the different interlocutors: clients, families, community), or by creating opportunities and stimulating participation in leisure activities in normative contexts. Through projects such as Leisure Skills and through their proximity to the community and public entities, organisations can and should "open the way" for PWD to have access to leisure time and spaces.

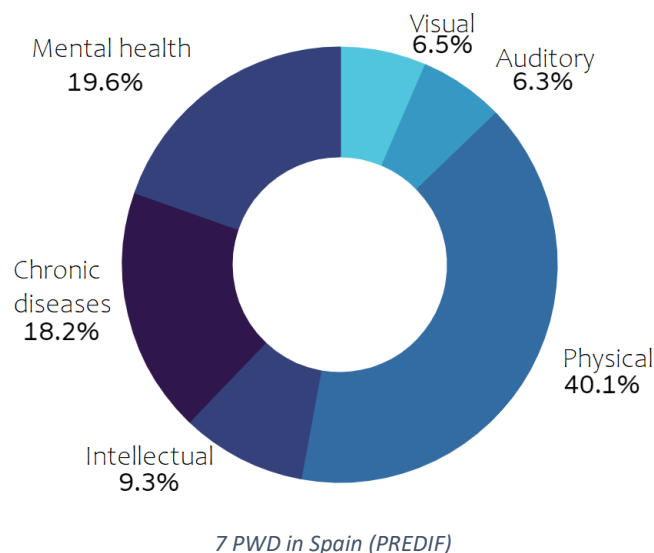
Community in general. Regarding leisure, we are witnessing in Portugal a greater bet and investment in two areas of leisure: accessible tourism and adapted sports. We add to these efforts, accessible culture through access to museums, showrooms and exhibitions with specific legislation. However, access to these activities still presupposes economic and financial power as well as physical access conditions (using an effective system and adapted transports). Access to leisure activities such as holiday camps and adapted sports continues to be financed (although not sufficiently and within everyone's reach) mainly by public funds. It is urgent that the community become inclusive in its different dimensions (cultural, artistic and sporting) and it build and adapt its responses/organisations, making them accessible to All.

1.5 Spain

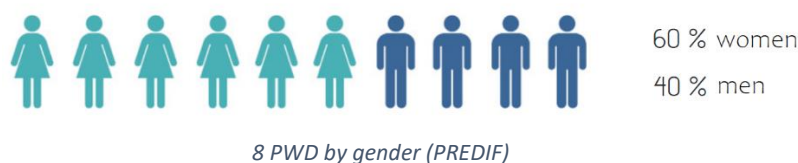
1.5.1 Percentages and ratios

According to the progress of the **Survey on Disabilities and State of Health (2020)**, in Spain there are **4,32 million** PWD, which represents an increase of 14.0% compared to the previous survey, carried out in 2008.

67.2% of these people have limitations, 55.3% have problems related to disabilities with the following **type** subdivision:



By **sex**, 1.77 million men (17.1% more than in the previous survey) and 2.55 million women (11.9% more) reported having a disability.



By **age** group, disability rates were higher in men up to 34 years of age and in women from 35 years of age. The most pronounced difference by sex was recorded from 70 years of age.

The only age group in which the rate of disability has increased significantly compared to 2008 was that of 6 to 24 years old.

On the contrary, the greatest decreases in the rates with respect to the previous survey have occurred among people between 35 and 44 years old and between 70 and 74 years old.

It has also had to attend to their needs to know their circumstances, limitations and consequences, in this way it has been possible to better verify the social reality and know the quality of life of these people.

Almost half of the PWD aged 6 and over reported receiving **care or personal assistance**. 24.6% received this care only from people residing in their home, 12.1% from non-residents and in 13.0% of cases the care was provided by both.

63.7% of these caregivers were women, with the most frequent profiles being women between 45 and 64 years old (41.0% of cases) and men of the same age group (20.7%).

49.7% of the people who received care reported being cared for eight or more hours a day.

From a social perspective, the social interlocutors consider that PWD are a generally disadvantaged group and work to advance in the recognition of their rights and achieve full citizenship with equal rights and opportunities with the rest of the components of society.

They defend that "capacity" is aptitude, talent, a quality that disposes someone for the good exercise of something, and that people can have different capacities. They therefore consider that to refer to a person with a disability it is inconvenient to use the term "disabled" because it implies being limited in all capacities.

People whose disability affected interactions and personal relationships were the ones who most reported feeling situations of discrimination, both at school and at work.

1.5.2 The importance of leisure activities

To argue the importance of leisure activities for all people and, especially inclusive leisure, we are following the indications of the Manifesto for Inclusive Leisure published in 2004 by the University of Deusto (Bilbao, Spain), with the collaboration of Fundación ONCE and CERMI.

Inclusion is an attitude towards life, related to a system of values and beliefs, which materializes in a set of actions. It assumes that diversity, coexistence and learning in groups is the best way to benefit each and every one of the participants. The values it entails are, among others: acceptance, sense of belonging, personal relationship, interdependence and consideration of all the agents involved in the community. It supposes a frame of reference for the rights of all people. It interprets the disability based on the relationship that the person establishes with his or her environment. It underlines the active role of society in responding to the needs of all people. It focuses on socio-community offers from and for everyone. It promotes the training of all agents (institutions, companies, associations, professionals and citizens) in the development of **inclusive leisure**.

Leisure is considered a **fundamental human right** that favours the development of people and from which no one should be deprived for reasons of disability, gender, sexual orientation, age, race, religion, belief, health, economic condition or any other personal circumstance. or social. The exercise of this right, included in a wide repertoire of laws and regulations, should explicitly include the spirit of inclusive leisure and also be guaranteed in practice.

Given the importance of the phenomenon of leisure in today's society, it is necessary to highlight the potentialities and possibilities of an **inclusive model** that adopts political measures, works on education and manages projects so that all people fully participate in a mature and responsible society.

Leisure is a sign of quality of life and well-being. Directly, as satisfaction of the need for leisure and, indirectly, as a corrective and balancing factor in the face of other maladjustments and deficiencies of a personal or social nature. It can improve the quality of life of the people who practice it, but the conditions in which it is possible must allow the needs of all to be met, without exclusion or discrimination, and guarantee the exercise of the **right**.

The **benefits** of leisure are effects of positive change produced in a person who gets to live rewarding experiences of leisure. The individual himself identifies and experiences the benefits, but they also have an impact on his family and social environment. Therefore, we can speak of benefits of a physical, psychological and social nature. All of them are of great importance in human development, especially the framework of interpersonal relationships and the richness that this implies for growth as a social individual.

Leisure is understood as a **human experience and a social phenomenon**, which participates in a series of dimensions that enable the development of internalization processes and free and satisfactory activity, within the framework of the times and spaces in which it manifests itself.

Leisure **dimensions** are understood as each of the magnitudes used to define the phenomenon. Of these, the following can be noted: creative, playful, festive, ecological, supportive, productive, consumptive, educational, social, therapeutic, absent and harmful.

Among the **main areas** in which leisure is manifested are: culture, tourism, sports and recreation.

The phenomenon of leisure materializes in the plans, projects, programs, services, products, activities, professionals, equipment, infrastructures, regulations and budgets that, in the outlined areas, organise the **intervention**.

1.5.3 Beyond the objective: social representations

Inclusive leisure needs a shared culture, a strategic plan to change the model and recognition of its importance in promoting quality of life. In this regard, it is important that the information reaches all related social representatives not only PWD.

PWD:

They are the real protagonists and for their opportunities to be real, the starting point is to facilitate their self-knowledge and the identification of their hobbies. Also guaranteeing that the choice of the activity is individual, although it can be practiced in a group and responding to their demands, creating activities based on their interests. It is important to strengthen relationships of friendship and knowledge between people and becoming aware that they are part of other broader and global spaces. Letting them know their environment, resources and the organizations that can help them. Motivating them to share their experiences with the environment and encouraging them to carry out activities autonomously.

The strategy has to focus on increasing their participation in all processes: from planning, implementation and evaluation to the prioritization of activities and budget control.

The families:

They are the natural support of the disabled person. Their role will be conditioned by the support needs of the people and their free decision. For families, any change can arouse mistrust and fear of the repercussions it may have on their relatives. That is why it is necessary to proceed with an accompaniment, highlighting the benefits but without avoiding the difficulties that may arise.

The process must be very individualized and one of permanent listening. Communication will be constant in each case, to always inform of any change related to facilities, fellow hobbies, schedules, etc. You can also encourage contact with other families with whom they can organize, for example for transport.

The professionals:

They are the transmitters of the quality of life model with their daily practice and they are essential for the trust of families. The keys are continuous updating in full knowledge of the model

to follow; respect and recognition of PWD and a thorough review of their attitudes and professional skills.

Its role is relevant in the planning processes, ways of thinking and strategies towards inclusive leisure and its result depends on the incorporation of this participation into its daily practice.

The volunteering:

When it comes to improving people's quality of life, it is essential to include volunteering at the service of PWD. In addition to carrying out their voluntary action, they promote actions, concrete support and are defenders of the rights of PWD in the different areas in which they operate.

Inclusive Leisure Service:

It is a specific and structured resource that manages support aimed at satisfying the expectations, demands and individual leisure needs of people with intellectual disabilities through mediation in activities in the environment and the development of continuous programs of standardized activities.

If we compare them with other services aimed at PWD, Leisure Services are relatively recent. The first activities were carried out in the mid-seventies, basically promoted by parents and siblings and focusing on camps or summer camps.

Little by little, the offer increased, organizing activities during the weekend in specific places, constituting the first clubs, whose number gradually grew throughout the State in the following years.

The way of understanding leisure has also evolved, from a **traditional model** that was based on occupying free time as a form of entertainment, passing through a **therapeutic model** in which activities are a means to achieve educational or rehabilitative achievements for the PWD, to the present day in which we want to achieve leisure based on the **participation of the person in their community**, guaranteeing equal opportunities that allow them to access community leisure.

The Spanish Confederation of Organizations in favor of People with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities is committed to the creation, promotion, development and stability of Leisure Services in the entities that belong to the associative movement, for which a Registry of Leisure Services in order to have a stable and similar network in terms of quality criteria in the entities.

Some of the most representative examples are:

- [Inclusive Leisure Service ASTUS and ASIDO Cartagena](#):: Cartagena, Murcia, Spain.
- [Inclusive Leisure Service ASTOR and Plena Inclusión](#): Madrid, Spain
- [Inclusive Leisure Service APROCOR Foundation](#): Madrid, Spain
- [Inclusive Leisure Service ADISSUR](#): Canary Islands, Spain
- [Inclusive Leisure Club ASPRONA and Plena Inclusión](#): Comunidad Valenciana, Spain
- [Inclusive Leisure Service PRODE Foundation](#): Córdoba, Spain
- [Inclusive Leisure Service PERSONAS Foundation](#): Valladolid, Spain
- [Inclusive Leisure Service MADRE DE LA ESPERANZA Foundation](#): Toledo, Spain
- [Leisure and Free Time in INTRAS Foundation](#): Castilla y León, Spain

Technological

1. The long and winding road to implement technological innovations and improvements at the service of PWD

PWD are as incapable or capable as their environment allows them to be. This perspective is fundamental for a true framework about the importance of the technological component as a means for a true inclusion of PWD. In this regard, technological innovations are an asset when it comes to supporting the PWD. In a nutshell, innovation and technological improvements serve to *make things easier*.

It is not easy to put technological innovations and developments at the service of PWD. For them to become mainstream it is essential that the different States consider innovation as a public policy, for it to have public funding and then for it to be available to those who need it. The European Commission stresses that despite the progress made in this area in the last decade, PWD still face considerable obstacles and are at greater risk of poverty and social exclusion. In this sense, and in the absence of a public policy framework, access to technologies and innovations is directly linked to the purchasing power of PWD. Regulation and legislation coupled with technology practice have been an important policy tool in making information and communication technology (ICT) available to the public and to the disability community.

Beyond this fundamental issue of economic power to acquire technology and innovation, we cannot neglect the role of social awareness as a facilitator of rights and access to be truly universal. In this sense, the greater the awareness of equal rights for all, the easier it will be to implement public policies in this sense. Thus, in addition to innovation, it is also necessary to convey its importance for a more balanced and fairer society.

From an operational point of view, and as an example of technological current, in the last decade, we have witnessed a rapid evolution of technology with the aim of improving the quality of lives of PWD. For example, smartphones, tablets and computers now include applications and functions that allow access to information for blind and visually impaired people and make communication possible for people with motor limitations or hearing impairments.

The technology of the 21st century is a powerful tool in the improvement of the quality of life of individuals and the range of their life opportunities. Hence, as part of the technological advances in educational and social inclusion, Assistive Technology (AT) offers potential tools to meet this challenge and provide people with access to the magic and power of learning and communication. However, despite the recognition of the benefits of ICT for PWD, the opportunities presented by ICT have often been underutilised, due to several reasons related to stakeholders, funding, social and educational services, etc.

In the case of Cyprus, difficulties are evident in the implementation and development of Assistive Technology (AT) to support inclusion. Therefore, another issue which needs to be taken into consideration for further action to improve AT in Cyprus is the reconstruction of the relevant policy to more flexible but clearly targeted procedures. One of the biggest challenges in the provision of TA in Cyprus is the assessment procedure. The matching process between person and technology remains complex because people's expectations and reactions to technologies are complex. One of the biggest challenges in assessment is multidisciplinary. Due to the complexity of disabilities, the use of multidisciplinary technology is of great importance, and it seems that this is not always the case in the Cypriot context.

In France, the government's policy on technological innovations targeting PWD is based on the principle of inclusion and social participation. The French government supports the development and dissemination of technological solutions adapted to the needs and expectations of PWD while respecting their rights and dignity. The French government relies on several mechanisms to promote technological innovation at the service of PWD such as:

- The Fund for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities into the Civil Service (FIPHFP), which finances innovative projects aimed at improving the accessibility and adaptation of the workstations of public officials with disabilities;
- The Investments for the Future Programme (PIA), which supports research and development projects in the field of disability, particularly through the "Inclusive and Solidarity-based Society" component of the third IPA;
- The France Recovery Plan, which provides for increased support for innovative companies in the disability sector, notably through the "Disability and innovation: autonomy at all ages of life" fund;
- The National Strategy for Autism in Neurodevelopmental Disorders (TND) 2018-2022, which aims to strengthen support for autistic people and their families, particularly through the deployment of adapted digital solutions;
- The National Strategy for the Prevention and Fight against Poverty 2018-2022, which aims to reduce inequalities in access to rights and services for people in precarious situations, particularly those with disabilities.

The French government is also committed to promoting international cooperation in the field of disability and technological innovation, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) adopted by the United Nations in 2006. The French government actively participates in the work of the European Disability Forum (EDHR) and the Global Partnership for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (GPCwd), which aim to promote the sharing of experiences and good practices between public and private actors involved in the development of inclusive technological solutions.

More specific objectives are:

- Promoting the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in the digital society;
- Ensuring accessibility of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for persons with disabilities;
- Support the development and dissemination of technological assistance products and services adapted to the needs and abilities of persons with disabilities;
- Strengthening the digital skills of PWD and their carers;
- Foster international cooperation and the sharing of good practices on digital accessibility and technological assistance.

In Greece, according to the "Study for new technologies and PWD", carried out by the National Confederation of Disabled People of Greece (2014), the most important areas of everyday life are access to information, transportation, communication and active societal participation. So, technological innovations and improvements need to adhere to these needs.

In regard to accessibility to information, this can be divided into two main dimensions: educational needs (having access to all educational levels) and informational needs (being informed about news and developments). As far as educational needs go, the main technological innovations and improvements focus on the development of e-learning courses and the use of means, like computers.

Communication is now easier than ever and for that technological innovations have contributed the most. For PWD things are no different, since they have equal access to all the necessary tools (like cutting edge mobile phones and communication services) with the rest of the general population. Moreover, more and more communication applications are being developed, with features that benefit PWD (like customizing fonts and having text-to-speech).

In conclusion, while the technological innovations and improvements are relatively available for PWD, Greece has still a long way to go in order to make all kinds of environments fully accessible to them. The biggest issue, though, does not rely to the existence of said innovations but to the levels of familiarity the PWD have with technology. Most of the technological advancements necessitate a proficiency in digital literacy, making it difficult for most PWD since there is little to no solicitude for this by the state.

In Portugal, there is currently a favourable environment for research and development, in order to find technological solutions that enable or facilitate the inclusion of PWD. However, between the development and creation of innovative solutions and their effective implementation, there are a number of factors that mediate their operationalisation and implementation. The path for technological innovations to become mainstream it's long and winding.

In the case of Spain, the new technologies are an ally in PWD, for the normalization of their day-to-day life and for their access to employment. In this sense, it is significant as a 72% of those surveyed show that technology has substantially improved their quality of life, allowing them to normalize their relationships with others, as well as access to training, *leisure* or employment. But 62% found it difficult to access the Internet or during its use. Among the factors are the lack of training, the cost of the connection and the absence of adaptations to the needs of users with different types of disabilities, both in the presentation of content and in navigation. These are the conclusions of the second study on Digital Gap and Disability carried out by the Chair of Digital Gap and Functional Diversity (DicaTIC), promoted by the Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV) and the Conselleria de Innovación, Universities, Science and Digital Society of la Valencian Generalitat (2021). Experts in the field of **accessible leisure** have highlighted the need to promote education and training in accessibility, with the aim of using ICT to promote access to leisure for PWD. The accent to close the digital gap is to put the PWD at the centre of the process and not in isolated activities.

2. Innovation mechanisms and examples. What is the reality in each partner country?

2.1 Cyprus

The Department of Information Technology Services (DITS) of the Ministry of Finance is the competent government body on matters relating to the promotion and implementation of IT and e-Governance in the Public Sector as well as the design and development of the Websites

of the Public Service, including the Internet Portal of the Republic. DITS provides through web sites and electronic services access to information for PWD.

Aiming the accessibility of the Information Society for all population groups, DITS has already begun the process of converting the Sites of the Public System and the Online Systems based on the Web content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, level AA (WCAG 2.0 Level AA), thereby reducing to a minimum the "digital exclusion", of PWD.

Today there are 185 Sites of the Public Service on the Internet, about 30% have already been converted to comply with the Internet Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, level AA (WCAG 2.0 Level AA), while the rest are in the conversion process. The Department mainly cooperates with persons with visual disabilities (members of the Pancyprian Organization of Blind). The aim of the Department is to create a channel of communication and collaboration with organizations (members of Cyprus Confederation of Organisation of the Disabled) in order for them to be involved in the planning and control of a Web Based Information System and Applications.

The Action Plan on e-Government 2011 - 2015 (e-Government Action Plan)² will help public authorities to use Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to provide better services at lower costs, facilitating and improving the lives of citizens and businesses.

The Department of Electronic Communications of the Ministry of Communications and Works has been designated as the executive arm to formulate and implement a comprehensive national strategy for the Information Society. As part of the Digital Strategy of Cyprus, in the horizontal actions implemented, the needs of vulnerable population groups are also integrated, such as accessibility of websites, online services that help serve the vulnerable groups etc. The Department has jurisdiction to appoint by a Decree the radio features used, for convenience purposes of individuals with disabilities under the Radiocommunications Law 2002, N.146 (I) / 2002³.

The Office of the Commissioner for Electronic Communications and Postal Services, an independent authority, is responsible for the Regulation of Electronic Communications and Postal Services Law of 2004 (Law 112 (I) / 2004) ⁴. The Telecommunications Universal Service Decision 2005⁵ provides that the Catholic Telecommunications Service includes the provision of services or facilities for PWD, of low-income and / or with special social needs, in accordance with what is specified in Annex IV of the Decision.

The Digital Champion designated by a Council of Ministers Decision in October 2012 has undertaken the action of "e-Inclusion of persons with disability" in order to provide assistance to PWD so they can take advantage of the Technologies of Information and Communication, both in everyday life and at work.

² Department of Information Technology Services – Ministry of Finance

http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/dits/dits.nsf/page08_gr/page08_gr?OpenDocument

³ Department of Electronic Communication – Ministry of Communication and Works

[http://www.mcw.gov.cy/MCW/DEC/Digital_Cyprus/ict.nsf/3700071379D1C658C2257A6F00376A80/\\$file/Main%20document%20digital%20strategy.pdf](http://www.mcw.gov.cy/MCW/DEC/Digital_Cyprus/ict.nsf/3700071379D1C658C2257A6F00376A80/$file/Main%20document%20digital%20strategy.pdf)

³ Department of Electronic Communication – Ministry of Communication and Works

http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/dec/dec.nsf/DMLaws_gr/DMLaws_gr

⁴ Office of the Commissioner of Electronic Communications and Postal Services

http://www.ocecpr.org.cy/media/documents/Legislation/EC_FinalDecision_Market18_GR_27-03-2013_PH.pdf

The information and content of all subjects taught in public schools (in Primary and Secondary Education) are accessed through special technological equipment provided to children with special needs after an evaluation by the District Committee of Special Education and Training. The children are provided with communication devices, closed-circuit TVs and other equipment to enlarge letters, special keyboards, especially software and other technological aids.

2.2 France

Some of the technological innovations for PWD (persons with disabilities) in France are:

- A smart wheelchair that can be controlled by eye movements or voice commands, developed by the company Ergoconcept. This wheelchair allows users to navigate autonomously and safely in various environments, and also has features such as automatic braking, obstacle detection, and GPS navigation;
- A wearable device that can translate sign language into speech and text, and vice versa, created by the startup Signes de Sens. This device uses artificial intelligence and machine learning to recognize and interpret sign language gestures and can also generate synthetic speech and text from spoken or written input;
- A virtual reality headset that can simulate different visual impairments, such as glaucoma, cataract, or macular degeneration, designed by the research institute Inria. This headset can help raise awareness and empathy among the general public and professionals about the challenges faced by people with visual disabilities and can also be used for training and rehabilitation purposes;
- A mobile app that can provide audio descriptions of movies and TV shows for people with visual impairments, developed by the association Valentin Haüy. This app uses a synchronization technology that matches the audio description with the original soundtrack of the media content and can also adjust the volume and speed of the narration according to the user's preferences;
- A smart cane that can detect obstacles and provide haptic feedback to users with visual impairments, invented by the company Nov'in. This cane uses ultrasonic sensors and a vibrating handle to alert users of potential hazards in their surroundings, such as stairs, curbs, or moving vehicles, and can also connect to a smartphone app that provides GPS navigation and emergency assistance.

Several of these projects are aimed at social inclusion and, some of these, are directed to PWD:

- Hopen Project: A wearable device that helps people with visual impairments navigate the environment by providing audio feedback about their surroundings;
- Eye-D: A mobile app that uses artificial intelligence to assist people with visual impairments in identifying objects and text in real-time;
- HandiConnect: An online platform that provides video conferencing services with sign language interpreters for people who are deaf or hard of hearing;
- Brain Computer Interface: A technology that allows people with severe physical disabilities to control electronic devices using their brainwaves;
- Wheeliz: A car rental platform that offers adapted vehicles for people with mobility impairments;
- e-Nable France: An open-source community that 3D prints prosthetic hands for children with limb differences;

- My Human Kit: An association that provides open-source plans and tutorials for creating prosthetics and other assistive devices using 3D printing;
- HackIDemia: An educational program that teaches children with disabilities how to create their own assistive technology using low-cost materials.

These are just a few examples of the innovative technology solutions that have been developed in France to support PWD.

2.3 Greece

Greece presents some examples and good practices of how new technologies can be at the service of PWD:

The **GR-DeAN National Network** aims to strengthen actions that promote the equal participation of PWD in the Information Society, as well as promoting the principles of "Universal Access and Usability" and "Design for All" in Greece. The GR-DeAN National Network constitutes Greece's participation in the European EDeAN Network, thus contributing to the implementation of the objectives of the eAccessibility action, for the employment of the purposes of the European Commission's eEurope initiative.

The Erasmus+ program "**ID-GAMES Co-Create assistive games for people with Intellectual Disability to enhance their inclusion**" is based on the idea that all people are equal and should have access to equal opportunities for development their skills and personality. In particular, the program will seek to strengthen the social inclusion of people with mental disabilities by designing serious games with the active participation of people with mental disabilities as well as professionals, caregivers, volunteers, game designers as well as members of the local community.

The Erasmus+ program "**StoryLiving- Enabling youth with developmental disabilities & mental health disorders to share their COVID-19 experiences through digital storytelling**" aims to encourage social inclusion and provide support to youth with mental health disorders to overcome the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. It will accomplish that by creating a training program on the storytelling methodology for youth workers, educators and social workers, followed by the development of a training and hosting platform, which will be an online learning & hosting platform will be developed in order to host the training modules and to allow users to publish their own digital stories.

The Transportation Systems Research Group of the Aristotle University in Thessaloniki, within the framework of the research project of "**PROSPELASIS**" carried out interventions to improve the physical and perceptual accessibility of PWD in some of the city's main monuments, receiving an international distinction in the "Friendly Spaces" Competition of the International Union of Architects (UIA) for the important interventions implemented in the Rotunda monument. As part of that project, a pedestrian bridge, approximately 15.5 m long, was designed and implemented, connecting the sidewalk with the so-called "Imperial" entrance, a WiFi system was installed that provides information about the Monument in text and audio format, with the choice of three languages, Greek, English and Russian, as well as in Greek and international sign language, making it especially easy for the hearing impaired. Moreover, a digital model of the Rotunda was created and then, at an appropriate scale, a metal tactile model with appropriate material to facilitate touch was installed at the entrance of the new access point. Therefore,

visitors who do not have the opportunity to see the monument, can get a clear picture of it, by touching the model and through a specially designed audio "finger tour", accessible via the monument's WiFi.

The Erasmus+ program "**SailAway**" aims at fostering the social inclusion and developing the personal skills of children and youth in the autism spectrum disorder, by enhancing their participation in team sports activities such as sailing. It includes a capacity building programme for sailing instructors on delivering inclusive sailing activities for children and youth with ASD, a guide for sailing clubs, an e-learning platform and an awareness raising toolkit for sailing clubs and parents with children and youth with ASD.

The Erasmus+ program "**Youth ASD**" aims to contribute to the inclusion of young people with ASD in youth activities, by equipping youth workers and organizations with a new, innovative and accessible learning opportunity in order to develop programs that can accept people with ASD. This will be accomplished via a Guide for youth organizations on structures & strategies for the inclusion of people with ASD, a training program for youth workers and the development of online resources for youth organizations and youth workers on how to practically include young people with ASD in their activities.

2.4 Portugal

As previously mentioned, the innovation ecosystem in Portugal is highly developed. In fact, in terms of social innovation, Portugal is in the European vanguard. In this context, it is possible to verify that, in addition to the use of technological innovations that are already in the streamline process, there is a constant concern for the development of new solutions.

Regarding the most mainstream solutions we can highlight the facilitated use of:

- **Computer peripherals** - adapted solutions that facilitate and enable PWD to use computer such as: virtual assistants the head mouse, voice stick, virtual keyboard, braille text printer and braille browser or electronic text magnifiers - all of this can be used in the leisure context.
- **Communication** – Technology improvements are being made daily regarding PWD, namely people with low vision or hearing impaired, allowing them to properly communicate. Smartphones allow a wide range of accessibility features that turn this device available for all.
- **Assistive technologies** – Besides these innovations, others are widely spread that enable a more autonomous life, such as a new generation of prosthetic limbs (robotics), electric chairs with verticalization.

Regarding innovative social projects, Portugal has a public initiative to promote social innovation and boost the social investment market in Portugal, called Portugal Inovação Social⁶. This initiative mobilises around €150 million from the European Social Fund, under the Portugal 2020 Partnership Agreement. It channels this money to the market through 4 funding instruments aimed at financing projects that propose alternative and innovative approaches to respond to

⁶ https://inovacaosocial.portugal2020.pt/?doing_wp_cron=1667533455.6433598995208740234375

social problems. This initiative is a pioneering experience in Europe, as Portugal is the only Member State that has set aside part of the EU funds until 2020 to experiment new funding instruments aimed at fostering innovation and social investment.

Several of these projects are aimed at social inclusion and, some of these, are directed to PWD. Not being possible to highlight all the projects currently being implemented, we refer those that best suit the leisure skills:

e-Rehab. It's a virtual reality tool that allows remote neuropsychological rehabilitation of people with acquired brain injury or neurodegenerative disease.

The e-Rehab platform is an online assistive technology, which through virtual environments (VA) and serious games, with the mediation of specialized technicians, allows the development of neuropsychological and social rehabilitation processes of people with Brain Injury.

TOuR-in. A social inclusion project aimed at combatting the social/relational isolation of the elderly in small villages, by promoting active ageing and intergenerationally. The elderly, who hold the knowledge and skills, empower young people and, together, they promote experimental activities for the community in general, in the iconic spaces of the village using endogenous products, modernizing them. Young people teach ICT as a tool to combat isolation.

SURFaddict. SURFaddict aims with this project to promote the regular practice of adapted surfing of users of social institutions in the municipality of Lisbon.

InclusivTUR. It's a project for the promotion of accessible tourism and social inclusion through:

- (i) Qualification of the tourism offer
- ii) Qualification of the tourist demand
- iii) Demystifying prejudices and stereotypes about PWD or differentiating characteristic/special needs
- iv) Development of the Alentejo's tourist potential

In a more general way there are projects aimed at technological areas, for example, the Portuguese delegation of the Center of Digital Inclusion (CDI Portugal), a non-governmental organization for social and digital inclusion and innovation that strives to transform people's lives through technology, has strengthened its partnership with Microsoft Portugal.

The Portugal digital platform, which provides simple information on how to access the social tariff for Internet access, also integrates the "I am digital" program, a program for tutors to promote digital skills in the community. The platform is part of the inclusion and diversity project to reduce the gap between men and women in digital areas.

2.5 Spain

The access to services for disabled people in Spain is mainly administrated by public authorities and based on international and Constitutional principles.

Hence, the main stakeholders that facilitate the access to protection and integration services are represented by a number of public actors operating in health, education, sports, leisure and other several sectors. However, cannot be underestimated the crucial role of directly related associations of disabled people (coordinated by the Spanish Committee of Representative of Disabled People - CERMI).

Regarding some of the most innovative social projects promoting inclusion in culture, leisure tourism or sports activities:

- **Teatro Circo:** the first in Spain to implement the intelligent accessibility system through mobile phones
- **Instituto San José Foundation:** has promoted the *Cultura en un Clic* program, which aims to ensure that PWD residing in the city of Madrid can freely participate in the cultural life that it offers and that is fully available to all the neighbours.
- **ONCE Foundation** has a Bibliographic Service (SBO Library) with more than 50,000 works whose objective is to adapt in braille, sound or relief, any material that affiliated people need, upon request, to access written information in any field: educational, work, culture, etc.; promoting, in this way, their full social inclusion.
- **Accessible Cultural Agenda** (www.culturaaccessible.es): shows that around 100 museums, galleries and other cultural heritage spaces offer at least one sensory accessibility service. A recent update to this registry, not yet published, increases the figure to 146 museums with sensory accessibility services.
- **The SSD-MOVE project** (INDRA and Universia Foundation) uses tactile perception of vibrations as a substitute for visual perception as a method to develop locomotion assistance technologies for people with visual disabilities, since it does not hinder the normal functioning of other sensory modalities as essentials like hearing.
- **The Museum of the City of Antequera**, a pioneer in Spain incorporating new technologies to bring its contents closer to people with intellectual disabilities
- **"Mefacilyta"** app, developed by the **Vodafone Spain Foundation**, consists of a technological platform that facilitates the personal and professional autonomy of PWD. This application has been used in the 'DanzaWOW!' project, made up of dancers with intellectual disabilities from the Danza Down Company. The general objective aims to demonstrate, through different pilot experiences in entities related to the SIFU Group Foundation, the usefulness of mobile technology in increasing the capacities and learning processes of the group of PWD.
- **ViveLibre (private initiative for smart solutions)** is a service specially designed to promote the personal autonomy of people with support needs: PWD, dependent elderly or chronically ill. It is a digital and real-time Permanent Support Unit.
- **"No limits travel guides"**, a participatory reference accessible tourism guide in Spain. Said tool has the advice of the main associations of the associative movement of PWD and makes content such as reports and first-person experiences, video reports, videos of Internet users, photographs, graphics, etc. accessible on the Internet. It offers what any other travel guide does plus helpful accessibility information.

In Spain we have the **National Plan for Smart Cities**, in force from 2014 to 2023, with a budget of 15 million euros. It is a project of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Digital Transformation that seeks to facilitate the digital transformation of different municipalities with more than 20,000 inhabitants.

Environmental

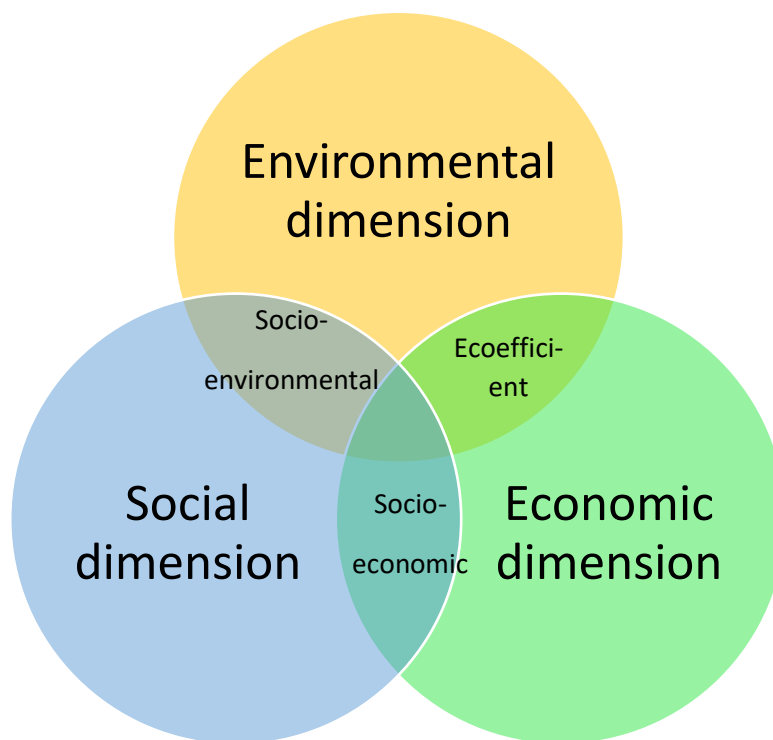
1. How are leisure activities viewed from a global sustainability perspective?

Sustainability can be defined as the capacity of human beings to interact with the world, preserving the environment so as not to compromise the natural resources of future generations.

This concept began to be discussed on the world stage in 1972, in Stockholm, at the **United Nations Conference on Human Environment**. This first major international meeting discussed human activities in relation to the environment, by starting to draw attention to sustainability.

It seems fundamental that, in an analysis more focused on leisure issues, we try to understand how sustainable development applies to this dimension. In other words, how do entities that work with this public guarantee sustainability issues in their activity.

This analysis needs to start with deconstructing the concept itself. Sustainability necessarily refers to a balance between social, environmental and economic dimensions. These dimensions are, necessarily, interdependent and feedback with each other.



9 Sustainability diagram

The previous diagram refers us to the elements that make up the concept of sustainability, namely:

- Environmental sustainability involves protecting and preserving the natural environment and its resources, such as air, water, soil, and biodiversity. It means using resources in a way that does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This can involve reducing waste, conserving resources, and finding ways to minimize negative impacts on the environment.
- Social sustainability is about the well-being and quality of life of individuals and communities. It means ensuring that all members of a society have the opportunity to live fulfilling and healthy lives and participate fully in the social, cultural, and economic activities of their community. This can involve promoting equal access to education, healthcare, and other resources, and addressing issues such as poverty and social inequality.
- Economic sustainability is about the long-term viability of an economy. It means ensuring that economic activities are carried out in a way that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This can involve finding ways to use resources efficiently, reduce waste, and create economic opportunities that are equitable and inclusive. Economic sustainability also involves considering the environmental and social impacts of economic activities and finding ways to balance these competing interests.

The social dimension includes multiple and interconnected variables, from corporate social responsibility to human rights, accessibility, public policies, education, legislation and democracy, social inclusion of marginalised groups, among others. This dimension enables the health, safety and well-being of present and future generations.

In this sense, social sustainability is about ensuring that all members of a society have the opportunity to live fulfilling and healthy lives and participate fully in the social, cultural, and economic activities of their community. This includes promoting equal access to education, healthcare, and other resources, as well as addressing issues such as discrimination, stigma, and social isolation. In the case of PWD in Greece, this might involve implementing social projects and initiatives that aim to promote inclusion and equality for PWD, as well as providing financial support and other forms of assistance to help PWD fully participate in society.

2. What is the reality in each partner country?

Taking into account the socio-political context of each country, it can be seen that it influences the design of the different responses, namely in terms of leisure, as well as the impacts they have on the environment.

Leisure activities are viewed as an important aspect of sustainable development in the partner countries, from a global sustainability perspective. This is because leisure activities can have both positive and negative impacts on the environment and society.

From a positive perspective, leisure activities such as outdoor recreation, nature tourism, and sports can help promote physical and mental health, social well-being, and community cohesion. In addition, eco-friendly and sustainable tourism initiatives, such as sustainable agrotourism, can provide a source of income for local communities while promoting conservation of natural and cultural heritage.

However, leisure activities can also have negative impacts on the environment, such as increased pollution, overuse of natural resources, and degradation of sensitive ecosystems. Therefore, it is important to adopt sustainable practices in the planning and management of leisure activities in order to minimize these negative impacts and ensure that leisure activities contribute to sustainable development.

The following are the main considerations on the environmental impact of leisure activities in the country.

2.1 Cyprus

In Cyprus, the government has taken steps to promote sustainable leisure activities, such as investing in eco-friendly tourism infrastructure, promoting sustainable tourism practices, and protecting natural and cultural heritage sites. Additionally, organizations and communities are working to promote sustainable recreation and tourism practices, such as responsible wildlife watching, sustainable fishing, and protection of marine ecosystems.

Overall, the promotion of sustainable leisure activities is viewed as an important aspect of sustainable development in Cyprus, and there are ongoing efforts to ensure that leisure activities are managed in a sustainable manner.

- **The Cyprus Tourism Organization (CTO)** is the national tourism board of the Republic of Cyprus. It was established with the aim of promoting Cyprus as a tourist destination and developing the island's tourism industry.

In terms of promoting sustainable tourism, the CTO works to ensure that the island's tourism industry operates in a way that is economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable. This includes promoting responsible and sustainable tourism practices, such as reducing waste, minimizing the impact on the environment, and respecting the local culture and customs.

The CTO also recognizes the importance of accessibility and inclusiveness in tourism, and works to promote leisure activities that are accessible to all members of society, including PWD. This involves working with various organizations and stakeholders to provide accessible facilities, services, and information for PWD, and ensuring that leisure activities are designed and operated in a way that is inclusive and accessible to everyone.

In this way, the CTO views leisure activities from a global sustainability perspective, recognizing the need for sustainable and accessible tourism practices that benefit both tourists and the local community. By promoting sustainable and inclusive tourism, the CTO aims to contribute to a more sustainable and equitable world, where all members of society, including PWD, can enjoy the benefits of tourism.

- **The Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative (CSTI)** is a government-led initiative aimed at promoting sustainable tourism in Cyprus. The CSTI is focused on the development and

promotion of sustainable tourism practices that contribute to economic, social, and environmental sustainability, while at the same time preserving the island's natural and cultural heritage.

From a global sustainability perspective, the CSTI views leisure activities as an important part of the tourism experience and seeks to promote sustainable and accessible leisure activities that are inclusive to all members of society, including PWD. This involves working with local communities, stakeholders, and the tourism industry to provide accessible facilities, services, and information for PWD, and ensuring that leisure activities are designed and operated in a way that is sustainable and accessible to everyone.

For example, the CSTI promotes eco-tourism activities that respect the environment and promote conservation, such as nature walks, bird watching, and wildlife viewing. It also promotes cultural and heritage tourism activities that provide meaningful experiences and contribute to the preservation of the island's rich cultural heritage.

In this way, the CSTI views leisure activities from a global sustainability perspective, recognizing the need for sustainable and accessible tourism practices that benefit both tourists and the local community. By promoting sustainable and inclusive tourism, the CSTI aims to contribute to a more sustainable and equitable world, where all members of society, including PWD, can enjoy the benefits of tourism.

- **The Cyprus Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism** is a government department responsible for overseeing the development and regulation of various industries, including tourism, in the Republic of Cyprus.

From a global sustainability perspective, the Ministry views leisure activities as an important part of the tourism experience and seeks to promote sustainable and accessible leisure activities that are inclusive to all members of society, including PWD. This involves working with local communities, stakeholders, and the tourism industry to provide accessible facilities, services, and information for PWD, and ensuring that leisure activities are designed and operated in a way that is sustainable and accessible to everyone.

For example, the Ministry may work with local tourism organizations and the private sector to promote sustainable tourism practices, such as reducing waste, minimizing the impact on the environment, and respecting the local culture and customs. It may also provide funding and support for initiatives that promote accessible and inclusive tourism, such as providing accessible transportation and facilities, and training for the tourism industry to better serve PWD.

In this way, the Ministry views leisure activities from a global sustainability perspective, recognizing the need for sustainable and accessible tourism practices that benefit both tourists and the local community. By promoting sustainable and inclusive tourism, the Ministry aims to contribute to a more sustainable and equitable world, where all members of society, including PWD, can enjoy the benefits of tourism.

- **The European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN)** is a European Union (EU) initiative that promotes sustainable tourism development in different regions of Europe. In Cyprus, EDEN highlights and promotes destinations that offer unique and sustainable tourism experiences, showcasing the country's diverse and high-quality tourism offerings.

From a global sustainability perspective, EDEN Cyprus views leisure activities as a key aspect of sustainable tourism and seeks to promote destinations that offer inclusive and accessible leisure experiences. This involves working with local communities and tourism providers to ensure that leisure activities are designed and operated in a way that is sustainable and accessible to all members of society, including PWD.

For example, EDEN Cyprus may highlight destinations that offer sustainable and accessible leisure activities, such as eco-tourism experiences, cultural heritage sites, and outdoor recreational activities. The initiative also seeks to promote destinations that offer accessible transportation, facilities, and services for PWD, and that provide information and resources to help travellers with disabilities plan and enjoy their trips.

In this way, EDEN Cyprus views leisure activities from a global sustainability perspective, recognizing the need for sustainable and accessible tourism practices that benefit both tourists and the local community. By promoting destinations that offer unique and sustainable leisure experiences, EDEN Cyprus aims to contribute to a more sustainable and equitable world, where all members of society, including PWD, can enjoy the benefits of tourism.

- **The Cyprus National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS)** is a comprehensive policy framework for promoting sustainable development in the country. The NSDS seeks to guide the development of Cyprus towards a more sustainable future, through the implementation of policies and measures aimed at balancing economic, social, and environmental objectives.

In terms of leisure activities, the NSDS views them from a global sustainability perspective by recognizing their role in promoting social well-being and contributing to sustainable economic growth. The NSDS recognizes the importance of promoting access to leisure activities for all members of society, including PWD, and seeks to create inclusive and accessible environments that support the participation of all individuals in leisure activities.

For example, the NSDS may promote the development of sustainable tourism destinations that offer accessible and inclusive leisure experiences, such as eco-tourism, cultural heritage sites, and outdoor recreational activities. The NSDS may also seek to improve transportation and accessibility to leisure destinations and promote the use of new technologies and information and communication systems that support the participation of all individuals in leisure activities.

Overall, the Cyprus National Sustainable Development Strategy views leisure activities as a key aspect of sustainable development and seeks to promote policies and measures that support the accessibility and inclusiveness of leisure activities for all members of

society, including PWD. By promoting sustainable and inclusive leisure experiences, the NSDS aims to contribute to a more sustainable and equitable future for all individuals in Cyprus.

2.2 France

The French government's position on sustainable leisure for PWD is that it is a fundamental right and a factor of social inclusion. The Government supports initiatives aimed at promoting access to cultural, sporting and tourism activities for people with disabilities, taking into account their specific needs and independence. The government is also committed to promoting awareness and training of professionals in the leisure sector, as well as strengthening cooperation between public and private actors involved in this field.

Some examples of sustainable recreation for PWD in France are:

- Adapted hiking: there are hiking trails accessible to people with reduced mobility, equipped with information panels in Braille or relief, sound terminals or tactile beacons. These trails allow you to discover nature and heritage while respecting the environment;
- Solidarity tourism: it is a question of travelling differently, by promoting meetings with inhabitants, local associations and sustainable development actors. Solidarity tourism offers stays adapted to the needs and desires of people with disabilities, by offering them cultural, sports or well-being activities;
- Therapeutic gardening: it consists of using the garden as a tool for care, stimulation and development for people with disabilities. Therapeutic gardening helps develop people's motor, sensory, cognitive and social skills, while raising their awareness of the protection of biodiversity;
- Art and culture for all: There are many initiatives to make art and culture accessible to people with disabilities, such as adapted guided tours, sign language performances, creative workshops or interactive exhibitions. Art and culture for all promote the expression, creativity and inclusion of people with disabilities.

2.3 Greece

As a European country concerned with the inclusion and participation of all its citizens, Greece has developed a number of initiatives for PWD. Considering the dimensions pointed out in point 1, below are some examples of projects and social initiatives, as well as their support mechanisms.

Examples of social projects and initiatives for PWD in Greece might include:

- Programs to improve access to education and training for PWD, such as adapted curricula, assistive technology, and supportive teaching methods;
- Support groups and social activities for PWD to promote social connections and combat isolation, such as peer support groups, clubs, and recreational activities;
- Advocacy campaigns to raise awareness about the rights of PWD and to promote inclusive policies and practices, such as public awareness campaigns, lobbying efforts, and partnerships with disability rights organizations.

Examples of financial support and assistance for PWD in Greece might include:

- Disability benefits and other forms of financial assistance to help PWD meet their basic needs and participate in society, such as disability pensions, income support programs, and assistance with housing and transportation costs;
- Programs to provide financial assistance for the purchase of assistive technology and other adaptive equipment, such as grants or loans for adaptive equipment or home modifications;
- Grants or loans to help PWD start their own businesses or pursue other economic opportunities, such as entrepreneurship programs or microloan programs for PWD.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) can also play a role in promoting social sustainability for PWD in Greece. CSR refers to the way that companies integrate social and environmental concerns into their business operations and interactions with stakeholders. Best practices in the area of social innovation through CSR might include:

- Partnering with organizations that support PWD to implement projects and initiatives that promote inclusion and equality, such as funding or volunteering for disability rights organizations or partnering with them to develop and implement inclusive initiatives;
- Developing and implementing policies and practices that are inclusive and accessible for PWD within the workplace, such as providing accommodations and assistive technology, implementing diversity and inclusion training, and promoting the hiring and advancement of PWD;
- Engaging in philanthropic activities that support PWD and their communities, such as donating to disability rights organizations or supporting PWD-led initiatives through charitable giving programs.

To conclude, some examples of good practices that promote inclusion for PWD will be presented:

- **Myrtillo** is a social cooperative enterprise located in the city centre of Athens that aims to integrate vulnerable groups, including PWD, into the labour market. The organization operates a cafeteria and arts centre and employs a majority of disabled individuals as co-owners who have the opportunity to work and take on responsibilities. Myrtillo is self-sustaining and innovative, with all employees jointly responsible for its success;
- **M.A.N.A.** is a private initiative by parents of children with disabilities that has been created to address the problems faced by parents and to value the worth of children. The programs offered by M.A.N.A. are designed to entertain and educate children, while also improving their knowledge and skills related to the needs of individuals with disabilities. The ultimate goal of M.A.N.A.'s programs is the professional rehabilitation of children and the relief of families from daily problems. M.A.N.A. operates a café at its premises where children with special needs work and learn new skills by serving customers. The café helps to provide training and work experience for these children;
- **P.A.S.K.A.**, the Panhellenic Athletic Association for PWD, was established on April 7, 1987 and is located at the National Rehabilitation Center in Ilion, Attica. As the first athletic association specifically for individuals with disabilities in Greece, P.A.S.K.A.

has gained significant recognition and importance. The association played a crucial role in the creation of the Panhellenic Championship for PWD, which began in 1988. Throughout its history, many athletes have been affiliated with P.A.S.K.A., and currently there are over 90 active athletes in competitive divisions. P.A.S.K.A. also regularly hosts mass sports programs for PWD in various parts of Attica;

- **ASKLIPEIADES'** goal is to provide a comprehensive and accessible a network of services for visitors with disabilities, elderly individuals, or those with health issues on the island of Rhodes in Greece. This is achieved by operating on principles of social economy that meet the necessary technical specifications for individuals with disabilities. ASKLIPEIADES is already active in providing services to vulnerable social groups in an effort to improve their quality of life, integrate them into society, and reduce social exclusion. One of the main objectives of ASKLIPEIADES is to attract new visitors to the island of Rhodes and ensure their comfortable and safe holidays.

2.4 Portugal

In Portugal, there is a growing concern with the activities and conditions that support leisure activities. The inclusion of PWD in these activities is also growing. Considering the diagram initially presented in point 1, it is possible to see, in Portugal, that the economic and social dimensions meet in order to develop synergies that promote this participation. Social innovation and entrepreneurship is one of the fields where these assumptions are verified.

The area of innovation and social entrepreneurship has been developed in recent years. In this sense, companies with a great national weight, through their corporate and social responsibility policies, financially support social projects and / or social institutions.

In Portugal there are some companies that allocate funds to support social projects in a generalized way or social projects directed to public with disabilities.

These financial supports have as objectives the resolution or minimization of social problems, responding to a social need, promoting the start of a project with a view to its sustainability after a short/medium period.

We share some examples of social projects, financial support and best practices in the area of social innovation, through corporate social responsibility to vulnerable groups:

- **Montepio Solidarity Fleet (a national bank)**

Since 2008, the Montepio Foundation promotes mobility, inclusion and the fight against isolation and desertification through the Solidarity Fleet project. A social responsibility practice that consists in the acquisition, transformation and adaptation of vehicles, offered to Private Social Solidarity Institutions (IPSS) all over the country, destined to help those who need it most.

- **BPI Capacitar and "la Caixa" Foundation**

An international bank that contributes to the progress and well-being of the community where it operates, through the support of social and cultural projects, promoted by institutions of recognized merit. Capacitar (means *to empower*) Project promote autonomy and support for daily activities, including leisure and free time, as well as promoting family and community support networks, and fostering universal accessibility. Training to improve employability and support the process of insertion into working life, the promotion of self-employment and socially useful

activities. Improvement of the living and health conditions of people in situations of illness, palliative care or end of life, as well as their families.

- **EDP Foundation (private company – energy and electricity services)**

EDP Foundation supports social innovation and entrepreneurship projects in different social areas and different vulnerable groups. This foundation is starting a new program - *Mobilidade Solidária (solidarity mobility)*, which provides access to 100% electric vehicles, installation of charging wallboxes, support for electricity costs and training on efficient use to institutions in the social sector. The program's main goal is to promote the reduction of the third sector's carbon footprint, create conditions for effective savings for the entities and, at the same time, promote knowledge about electric mobility and its relevance to a more sustainable planet.

- **Altice Foundation (private company – telecommunication)**

The Altice Foundation supports and provides products and services for PWD. The program funds promote research and development of solutions for digital accessibility and accessible communication, such as: Communicating through technology; Development of platforms and solutions for the development and dissemination of Portuguese Sign Language; Distance access for students with disabilities or long-term illness; For all PWD over 60%, ensures: subsidization of communications accessibility products; subsidization of Altice's telecommunications and TV services.

- **Decathlon Foundation (multinational company)**

With the DECATHLON Foundation, the employees get involved and make their contribution to “making things happen”. They strongly support the main mission: "To make the pleasure and benefits of physical activity and sport accessible to as many people as possible, in a sustainable way". Sport everywhere and for everyone!

One of the funded projects is promoted at SCMP, called Desporto+ (means Sport+). This project includes the acquisition of equipment and sports materials enabling the access and practice of sports for everyone, without exception.

2.5 Spain

The reality of Spanish political administration is very particular in the European context, particularly when compared to the partners of this project. Currently, Spain is very focused on reducing inequalities (within the broad scope of the Strategy for Sustainable Development 2023), as it considers them as limiting access and participation.

It is in this sense that improving the accessibility of cities, transport and accommodation will help PWD to access leisure, contributing to the reduction of inequalities and strengthening and promoting social, economic and political inclusion of all people. In addition, by providing universal access to green areas and safe, inclusive and accessible public spaces, Spain is collaborating in the creation of Sustainable Cities and Communities.

Spain has similarities with other European partners in this respect. Many pioneering companies have begun to integrate the rights of PWD into their business strategies, as well as to develop practices, products and innovative services.

Here we share some examples of social projects, initiatives and best practices in the area of social innovation and inclusive leisure and free time, through corporate social responsibility to vulnerable groups:

- **ILUNION Hotels**

This hotel company has been working for years to make this a reality and to make it easier for a greater number of people to travel. In all their processes they always keep PWD and their needs in mind. The reforms they carry out are born with the concept of universal accessibility and design for all, all our hotels are certified according to the UNE 170001 universal accessibility standard. In addition, they have been the first hotel chain to implement a reservation engine accessible for PWD, increasing the autonomy in the search and reservation of rooms on their website. Without forgetting that they are leaders in job creation for PWD in touristic sector.

- **'Put on my shoes 4.0'**

The 'Put on my shoes 4.0' group, managed by young people with intellectual disabilities who are users of Plena Inclusión of Villafranca de los Barros (Badajoz), seeks to encourage and promote inclusive leisure. To do this, they offer talks as well as a mobile application from which they organize activities. This Tuesday they gave a talk to users of Placeat in Plasencia (Cáceres) and Moisés Jiménez, a member of said group, stressed that they do "everything" because the objective is for them to manage leisure since it is something they need.

- **Agreement between YMCA and ONCE Foundation**

It starts by "identifying initiatives, projects and actions of mutual interest to carry out jointly in terms of inclusive leisure", such as the promotion of camps in which there are children with disabilities or the development of training for leisure time monitors with disabilities. In addition, the agreement also provides for the development of initiatives, programs or activities that promote inclusion and social innovation to contribute to improving the quality of life of PWD "and, especially, of children and young PWD in risk of social exclusion".

- **Valladolid debuts in a personal assistance project as an accessible tourism destination**

The Valladolid Provincial Council has received the first 15 tourists with personal assistance at the Predif destination. This project has been launched in the cities of Valladolid, Madrid and Palma de Mallorca. Travelers have had personal support assistants throughout their stay at times when they needed it. All this provided through Predif Castilla y León, without the need to bring them from their cities of origin.

- **Personal sports assistance as a recovery tool in the community of Red ISEM**

Personal Assistance implies direct support in the recovery and rehabilitation process in the field of disability and specifically, for the group of people who suffer from mental health problems. In this context, this year ISEM has been developing the State Network Project for personal assistance and mutual support agents (experts by experience) in mental health, thanks to the experience of several of its entities in their respective Autonomous Communities.

- **Whatscine**

Thanks to the technology and development of the Carlos III University of Madrid, it has created a free application for mobile devices (smartphones and tablets). It is a unique technology worldwide that allows the integration of 3 accessibility systems in the same application: audio description, adapted subtitling and the display of an interpreter in sign language, so that the user can

choose the modality that best suits them. to your needs and enjoy a movie in the theater and content on television in real time.

- **Sport and Challenge Foundation**

It is a private, non-profit cultural institution. It is the first institution in Spain concerned with the social integration of PWD through sport. The president of the Board of Trustees is Jorge Pérez de Leza. The entity promotes adapted sports and outdoor activities practiced in a normal environment. It is also in charge of making society aware of the capabilities of this group. Currently, the Foundation has a very wide range of activities in 24 Sports Programs.

Legal

1. Is there legislation that directly and indirectly promotes access to leisure activities? In what way? What is the reality in each partner country?

The legal landscape surrounding PWD in Europe is complex and multifaceted. The European Union (EU) and its member states have implemented a range of legal instruments aimed at promoting the rights of PWD, including laws on accessibility, discrimination, and social inclusion. These laws are designed to ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal access to education, employment, healthcare, and other essential services.

The UN Convention on the Rights of PWD (UNCRPD) has been ratified by all EU member states and is a key framework for promoting disability rights. The convention recognizes that disability is an evolving concept and that PWD must be treated with respect and dignity. It also highlights the importance of accessibility, non-discrimination, and full participation in society for PWD.

In addition to these overarching legal frameworks, many countries have developed their own national laws and policies to address specific issues related to disability. These include laws on accessibility in public buildings and transportation and positive measures, such as employment quotas for PWD, and support for independent living.

Despite these legal protections, PWD in Europe still face significant barriers to full inclusion in society. Challenges include inadequate access to education and employment opportunities, limited accessibility in public spaces and transportation, and negative attitudes and stereotypes about disability. Addressing these challenges requires a continued commitment to promoting disability rights and advocating for the full participation of PWD in all aspects of life.

One direct legislation is the EU Web Accessibility Directive, which requires public sector websites and mobile applications to be accessible to PWD. This includes ensuring that information about leisure activities, such as events and recreational facilities, is presented in an accessible format.

In addition, many EU member states have their own laws and policies that aim to promote access to leisure activities for PWD. For example, in Portugal, there is a national law (Law no. 38/2004) that requires the accessibility of public spaces, including recreational facilities, for PWD. The law also establishes penalties for non-compliance.

Similarly, in Spain, there is the RLD 1/2013, approving the Consolidated Text of the General Law on the rights of PWD and their social inclusion, that establishes measures to promote the full inclusion of PWD in society, including access to leisure activities. The law recognizes the importance of leisure and cultural activities for the personal development and social integration of PWD.

However, despite these efforts, the reality in each partner country may vary. In some countries, access to leisure activities for PWD may be limited due to inadequate infrastructure, lack of funding, or social attitudes. Additionally, there may be disparities in access between urban and rural areas. Addressing these challenges requires a continued commitment to promoting disability rights and advocating for the full participation of PWD in all aspects of life, including leisure activities.

1.1 Cyprus

Cyprus has implemented policies to support PWD. Some of the key measures include:

- **Accessibility:** Buildings, public transport and other public spaces are required to be accessible to PWD.
- **Employment and Employment protection:** PWD have the right to work and are protected from discrimination in the workplace.
- **Education:** PWD have access to inclusive education and special education services.
- **Assistive technology:** PWD have access to assistive technology and equipment to support their daily needs.
- **Social protection:** PWD have access to a range of social protection measures, including pensions and benefits.
- **Health care:** PWD have access to appropriate health care services and support.
- **Advocacy and representation:** PWD have access to advocacy and representation services to support their rights and needs.

Overall, Cyprus has made progress in implementing policies to support PWD, however, there is still room for improvement in terms of full implementation and enforcement of these policies.

In Cyprus, there is no specific legislation that directly promotes access to leisure activities in culture, sports, tourism. However, the Equality of PWD Law of 2013 (L. 96(I)/2013) and the PWD (Education, Employment, Social Protection and Accessibility) Law of 2013 (L. 37(I)/2013) aim to ensure that PWD have equal access to all areas of life, including cultural, sports, touristic activities.

Additionally, the Barrier-Free Environment Law of 2005 (L. 27(I)/2005) requires all public buildings and spaces, including cultural institutions, sports and tourism facilities to be accessible to PWD.

Legislation that directly promotes access to leisure activities:

Culture

While there is no specific legislation focused on cultural access for PWD, the government and various cultural organizations are working to make cultural activities accessible to all members of society, including PWD. This includes efforts to increase accessibility to cultural events, exhibits, and facilities, as well as promoting inclusive and accessible cultural programming.

Legislation that directly promotes access to leisure activities:

- **Accessible Cultural Venues:** The government and cultural organizations are working to ensure that cultural venues, including museums, theatres, and concert halls, are accessible to PWD. This includes installing ramps, elevators, and accessible restrooms, as well as providing audio descriptions and sign language interpretation for performances and exhibitions.
- **Inclusive Cultural Programming:** The government and cultural organizations are also promoting inclusive cultural programming, including events and exhibitions that are specifically designed for PWD. These programs may include audio descriptions, sign language interpretation, and tactile exhibits, among other accommodations.
- **Awareness and Education Campaigns:** The government and cultural organizations are also running awareness and education campaigns to promote accessibility and inclusiveness in the cultural sector. These campaigns aim to raise awareness among cultural institutions and the general public about the needs of PWD and promote a more inclusive cultural environment.

Sports

While there is no specific legislation focused on sports access for PWD, the government and various sports organizations are working to make sports activities accessible to all members of society, including PWD. This includes efforts to increase accessibility to sports events, facilities, and programs, as well as promoting inclusive and accessible sports opportunities.

- **Accessible Sports Facilities:** The government and sports organizations are working to ensure that sports facilities, including stadiums, arenas, and gyms, are accessible to PWD. This includes installing ramps, elevators, and accessible restrooms, as well as providing accessible seating and assistive technology.
- **Inclusive Sports Programs:** The government and sports organizations are also promoting inclusive sports programs, including events and activities that are specifically designed for PWD. These programs may include adaptive sports, such as wheelchair basketball, and inclusive fitness classes, among other accommodations.

Tourism

The Cyprus Tourism Organization (CTO) also promotes accessibility for PWD through its "Accessible Tourism" program, which provides information and support for accessible tourism in Cyprus. The CTO works with various organizations and stakeholders to promote accessible tourism and make tourism activities more inclusive for all members of society, including PWD.

Others

The Cyprus Tourism Organization (CTO), in the fields of its efforts to upgrade Cyprus beaches, is an active supporter of issues related to accessibility in cooperation with the Local Authorities that are in charge for the administration of the beaches. CTO has listed so far 47 beaches for people with special access needs, including 26 fully accessible and 21 partially accessible beaches.

- **Accessible Beaches:** The government and local authorities are working to improve accessibility at popular beaches, including installing accessible pathways, changing rooms, and restrooms. Some beaches also have ramps, beach wheelchairs, and other assistive technology available for PWD.
- **Inclusive Beach Programs:** Some local organizations and private companies are offering inclusive beach programs and activities, such as adaptive water sports and beach games, for PWD. These programs aim to promote inclusiveness and provide PWD with opportunities to participate in beach activities.

Legislation that indirectly promotes access to leisure activities:**Transport and accessibility**

- **Accessible Public Transport:** The government is working to improve the accessibility of public transport, including buses, trains, and taxis. This includes installing accessible ramps, low-floor vehicles, and audio-visual information systems for PWD.
- **Inclusive Taxi services:** Some private taxi companies in Cyprus are offering accessible taxis equipped with wheelchair ramps, spacious interiors, and other features to accommodate PWD.

Legislation that indirectly promotes access to leisure activities:
Adaptive Transport Services: Some local organizations and private companies are offering adaptive transport services, such as door-to-door transportation and community-based transport services, for PWD. These services aim to provide PWD with safe, reliable, and accessible transportation options.
Access to new technologies and information and communication systems - Accessible Government Websites: The government is working to make its websites and online services accessible to PWD. This includes providing accessible web content, using appropriate alternative text for images, and providing keyboard navigation for PWD. - Assistive Technology: The government and various organizations are providing training and support for PWD to use assistive technology, such as screen readers, magnification software, and other assistive technologies. - Inclusive Digital Accessibility: Some private companies and local organizations are working to promote inclusive digital accessibility and to make new technologies and information and communication systems accessible to all members of society, including PWD.

2.2 France

Legislation in France states that PWD have the right to participate fully in the social, cultural, and sporting life of society. To promote their access to leisure activities, France has adopted several laws aimed at ensuring their equal treatment, autonomy, and inclusion. Here are the fundamental ones:

- Act of 11 February 2005**
 This act on equal rights and opportunities, participation, and citizenship for persons with disabilities has strengthened the obligations of local authorities with regard to the accessibility of public facilities and services to persons with disabilities.
 This law provides, in particular, that establishments open to the public (ERP) must be accessible to people with disabilities, regardless of the type of disability, within 10 years of its publication, i.e. before 1 January 2015.
 It also requires municipalities with more than 5,000 inhabitants to create a municipal commission for accessibility (CCA) responsible for drawing up an inventory of the accessibility of the existing built environment, roads, public spaces and transport, and proposing measures to improve the situation.
- Law of 7 July 2016**
 In addition, this law of 7 July 2016 on freedom of creation, architecture and heritage (LCAP) introduced the concept of cultural accessibility, which aims to promote access to cultural works and practices for people with disabilities.
 This law provides, inter alia, that cultural institutions must develop and implement a multiannual cultural accessibility plan (SPAC) which defines the objectives and actions to be taken to make their cultural offers accessible to people with disabilities.
 It also provides that local and regional authorities must integrate cultural accessibility into their cultural policies and support local initiatives to promote access to culture for people with disabilities.
 The law also provides for a mobility card (CMI) that grants priority access and free parking for people with disabilities.

However, the reality of the situation is that many existing buildings and transport systems are not fully accessible yet. Moreover, only 36% of PWD are employed, and many face difficulties in professional integration and discrimination.

2.3 Greece

PWD have the right to participate in leisure activities and recreation, just like anyone else. In Greece, the Law on the Protection of PWD (Law No. 3919/2011) aims to protect and promote the rights of PWD, as well as to provide support and services to help them live independently and participate fully in society. The law also established the National Council for PWD, which is responsible for advising the government on issues related to disability and for monitoring the implementation of the law. Moreover, it states that PWD have the right to participate in cultural, sporting, and other leisure activities, and that the state is responsible for promoting the participation of PWD in such activities.

There are also a number of organizations in Greece that offer leisure and recreational activities specifically for PWD. These organizations may provide adapted sports and recreational facilities, as well as programs and events designed to be accessible to PWD. Some examples of such organizations include the Greek Federation of PWD and the Hellenic Association of Blind Sports.

There is no specific legislation in Greece that directly promotes access to leisure activities. However, there are laws and policies that indirectly support access to leisure activities by providing funding for cultural and recreational programs, supporting the development of public spaces and amenities, and promoting tourism, which can increase the availability of leisure activities in the country. For example, the Greek National Tourism Organization (GNTO) is responsible for promoting Greece as a tourist destination and supporting the development of the tourism industry, which can include leisure activities such as sightseeing, sports, and cultural events. Additionally, the Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports is responsible for supporting and promoting cultural and sporting events and activities in the country, which can provide opportunities for leisure and recreation for both residents and visitors.

In 2019, the government began developing the first and only national plan for PWD, this time expanding on the previous law and addressing the quality of life of PWD. This plan, which was passed later on as Law n.4622/2019, brings together actions from various government departments related to supporting PWD and aims to fulfill the constitutional requirement to ensure that PWD have the right to autonomy, professional opportunities, and participation in social, economic, and political life. The plan also incorporates international human rights protections and addresses, in an indirect way, the right to leisure activities for PWD.

Legislation that directly promotes access to leisure activities:

Culture

- Law No. 4338/2015 on the Provision of Tourism Services and Other Related Provisions: This law sets out the rights and obligations of parties involved in the provision of tourism services in Greece, including the rights of PWD to access such services. As cultural activities are often a key component of tourism, this law may be relevant to PWD seeking to participate in cultural activities in Greece.
- Law No. 3908/2011 on the Protection of PWD: This law sets out the rights of PWD in Greece, including the right to access cultural activities and services. It also establishes the National Confederation of PWD (ESAEA), which is responsible for promoting and protecting the rights of PWD in Greece, including through the provision of cultural programs and activities.

Legislation that directly promotes access to leisure activities:	
	○ Law No. 3896/2010 on Cultural Heritage and Cultural Activities: This law sets out the framework for the protection and promotion of cultural heritage and cultural activities in Greece. It includes provisions on the accessibility of cultural facilities and events for PWD, as well as the promotion of cultural programs and activities that are inclusive of PWD.
Sports	○ Law No. 4706/2020 on Disability and Social Inclusion: This law sets out the rights and support available to PWD in Greece, including the right to participate in sports and recreational activities. It also establishes the National Council for the Rights of PWD, which is responsible for promoting and protecting the rights of PWD in Greece. ○ Law No. 4491/2017 on Accessibility of Public Buildings and Other Structures: This law requires that new or renovated public buildings and structures in Greece be designed and constructed to be accessible to PWD. This includes sports facilities, which must have appropriate accommodations for PWD, such as wheelchair ramps and adapted sports equipment. ○ Law No. 4490/2017 on the Protection of the Rights of PWD: This law sets out the rights of PWD in Greece, including the right to participate in sports and recreational activities. It also establishes the Hellenic Organization of the Disabled (ELEPAP), which is responsible for promoting and protecting the rights of PWD in Greece, including through the provision of sports programs and activities.
Tourism	○ Law No. 4338/2015 on the Provision of Tourism Services and Other Related Provisions: This law sets out the rights and obligations of parties involved in the provision of tourism services in Greece, including the rights of PWD to access such services. It also establishes the Hellenic Tourism Organization (HTO), which is responsible for promoting and developing tourism in Greece, including through the promotion of accessible tourism for PWD. ○ Law No. 4442/2016 on the Provision of Services and Accessibility for PWD: This law sets out the rights of PWD to access services in various sectors, including the tourism sector. It also establishes the Greek Accessibility Certificate, which is a system for certifying the accessibility of buildings, facilities, and services for PWD. ○ Law No. 4485/2017 on the Protection of Consumers' Rights: This law sets out the rights of consumers, including PWD, in Greece, including the right to access tourism services and facilities that are safe and of good quality.

Legislation that indirectly promotes access to leisure activities:	
Transportation	○ Article 86 of law No. 4530/2018 and article 110 of law 4714/2020: These laws set out that disabled persons with a pathological disability rate >67% get unlimited free travel in all of Athens Urban Transport Organization (OASA)
Accommodation	○ Article 26 of law No. 4067/2012 on accommodation: This law sets out the minimum number of rooms for PWD and especially for those with mobility problems in hotels at 5% of the total capacity of the accommodation and maximum of five rooms in total.
Learning - Law 3699/2008	○ Law No. 3699/2008 on accessibility: This law sets out provisions for students with disabilities throughout the education system and a Universal Design is implemented in education to ensure that it is accessible to all learners, regardless of their abilities or disabilities.
Other	○ Law No. 3304/2005 on the Provision of Services for PWD: This law sets out the rights of PWD to access services in various sectors, including the leisure sector. It also establishes the Hellenic Association of Rehabilitation Centers for PWD (ELEPAP), which is responsible for promoting and protecting the rights of PWD in Greece, including through the provision of leisure programs and activities.

Legislation that indirectly promotes access to leisure activities:

- Law No. 4206/2013 on the Provisions for the Rights and Support of PWD: This law sets out the rights and support available to PWD in Greece, including the right to participate in leisure activities. It also establishes the Greek Disability Forum, which is responsible for promoting and protecting the rights of PWD in Greece.
- Law No. 4283/2014 on the Rights and Support of PWD: This law sets out the rights and support available to PWD in Greece, including the right to participate in leisure activities. It also establishes the National Council for the Rights of PWD, which is responsible for promoting and protecting the rights of PWD in Greece.

2.4 Portugal

In Portugal, legislation has been developed in order to guarantee the rights in various domains of PWD. There is a lot of legislation which is divided into different laws, decree-laws, norms and orders. More recently, and with the creation of the figure of the Secretary of State for the Inclusion of PWD, contents have been developed in official documents, such as guides or manuals of good practices with organized information for an easy access and understanding for PWD, family members and entities that work directly with this target audience.

The basic law⁷ nº 38/2004 defines the general bases for the legal regime of prevention, habilitation, rehabilitation, and participation of PWD. This basic law is more general and includes the right to culture and science, the right to the practice of sport and leisure time, to health, to education, among others. This document refers to all areas of a citizen life, where it is the duty of the State to adopt the specific measures necessary to ensure the inclusion of PWD. In this segment there is more specific legislation for each domain.

At the level of legislation there is a set of measures in different activity sectors and which are directly or indirectly related to leisure activities, namely:

- Social support (Transport for PWD; Holiday and leisure centre; support in terms of transport (tax exemption and access to public transport));
- Accessibilities (Decree-law 163/2006 regime of accessibility to buildings and establishments that receive the public, public thoroughfare and residential buildings; community model parking card; decree-law 126/2017 officialization of the braille system in Portugal);
- Others: (Sports: Basic Law of Physical Activity and Sports; Culture: reserved seats appropriate to their needs in performance halls of artistic nature)

In order to ensure the implementation of legislation and government measures, it was elaborated a National Strategy for Inclusion. This document target at all PWD, understood in its heterogeneity and aims to mirror the political and operational concern with the promotion of an inclusive society, aiming at an active citizenship for all. It is structured around 8 strategic axes, highlighting the axis: *Culture, Sport, Tourism and Leisure*

- Promote access to culture and inclusive cultural programs.
- Promote the practice of sports at all ages.
- Promote inclusive tourism and leisure practices.

⁷ In Portugal there is a law that is structuring and to which all other laws are subject. These are called "Leis de Base", which, in a literal translation to English is something like: "Basic Laws".

At the level of legislation there is a set of measures in different activity sectors, and which are directly or indirectly related to leisure activities.

Legislation that directly promotes access to leisure activities:	
Culture	○ PWD have reserved seats suited to their needs, in accordance with the capacity established by the General Inspection of Cultural Activities. ○ PWD may have a ticket price reduction defined by the museum or monument. In all monuments and museums under the jurisdiction of the Government of Culture, admission is free for people with reduced mobility and the person accompanying them.
Sports	○ The Constitution of the Portuguese Republic of 1976 enshrines, the right to physical culture and sport for all, an aspect reinforced by Article 1 of Law no. 30/2004 - Basic Law on Sport - which assumes sport as an indispensable factor in the formation of the person and in the development of society, not failing to deal especially with the sporting practice of disabled citizens. ○ Law nº 38/2004 - Framework Law for the Prevention and Rehabilitation and Integration of Disabled People - refers to the value of the practice of sport for citizens with disabilities, namely regarding sport and recreation as measures for habilitation and rehabilitation. Furthermore, it states that "the State shall adopt specific measures necessary to ensure access for PWD to the practice of sport and the enjoyment of leisure time". ○ Law nº 5/2007 - Basic Law of the Sports System. ○ Ministerial Order nº 103/2014, establishing the sports results to be considered, the amount and terms for awarding prizes in recognition of the value and merit of sports achievements. ○ Resolution of the Assembly of the Republic nº 312/2018, which recommends the Government to equalize the values of scholarships and support awarded to Paralympic athletes with those of Olympic athletes.
Tourism	○ As a rule, tourist resorts must be adapted for PWD. They must, as a minimum, have an adapted accommodation unit with adapted sanitary facilities with an adapted sanitary installation. ○ It is possible to consult the National Register of Tourist Resorts, on the Turismo de Portugal, I.P., where this information is available.
Others	Accessible Beaches - Decree Law Nº 135/2009 ○ Coastal and inland bathing areas whose waters are identified as bathing waters. For a bathing area to be considered accessible the following conditions should be guaranteed: have a life-guard, easy pedestrian access and orderly and reserved parking, ensure level access to the beach / bathing area via ramps, install walkways to the equipment and as close to the water as possible, provide adapted and easily accessible sanitary facilities.

Legislation that indirectly promotes access to leisure activities:
Transport and accessibility ○ Regulation (EC) 1107/2006, that regulates the rights of PWD and people with reduced mobility in air transport. ○ Decree-law n.º 163/2006, which approves the accessibility regime to buildings and establishments that receive public, public ways and residential buildings. ○ Decree-law no. 74/2007, which establishes the right of access for PWD accompanied by assistance dogs to places, transportation and establishments with public access.

Legislation that indirectly promotes access to leisure activities:
○ Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007, of the European Parliament and of the Council, of 23 October, which regulates the conditions that must be observed in the rail transport contract.
Access to new technologies and information and communication systems
○ In 2009 The Portuguese Republic has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of PWD, thus committing to take appropriate measures to ensure PWD equal access to technologies and information and communication systems, on an equal basis with other citizens, to develop, promulgate and monitor the application of minimum standards and guidelines for the accessibility of facilities and services open to the public or for public use, and to promote access for PWD to new technologies and information and communication systems, including the Internet. ○ Decree-law extends the scope of application of Law No. 36/2011, which establishes the adoption of open standards in State IT systems, to local public administration and functions considered essential, regarding the accessibility of the content of websites and mobile applications. ○ Decree-law 126/2017 officialization of the braille system in Portugal.

2.5 Spain

The modern history of **legislation and Leisure** appears linked to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). It was joined by subsequent universal declarations, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), as well as other state regulations.

In the case of Spain, the **Right to Leisure** can be read in Article 43 of the Constitution (1978), which states that "The State must facilitate the proper use of Leisure", after having recognized in its Article 40, the right to rest and periodic paid vacations.

The articles referring to tourism, culture, the promotion of sports, physical education or community development, are an index of the new institutional sensitivity on Leisure problems and population groups. Among them is the *Policy for the Integration of Disabled People*.

This new spirit is the one that is breathed in the laws and regulations of the Autonomous Communities.

Since the 80s, there has been a change in mentality that relates Leisure to Quality of Life. Beaches have been rehabilitated, recreational areas have increased, communication channels have been opened between citizens and nature, facilitating more accessible leisure. In a few years Leisure has become humanized for everyone and within everyone's reach.

The most current regulations that favor leisure as an integral human experience and as a fundamental right of every person, which guarantee the participation and equal opportunities of all individuals, are the Spanish Strategy on disability (2022-2030) (Ministry of Health, Social Policy and Equality, 2022), and RLD 1/2013, approving the Consolidated Text of the General Law on the rights of PWD and their social inclusion (Ministry of Health, Social Policy and Equality, 2013).

Legislation that directly promotes access to leisure activities:
Culture ○ Spanish Integral Strategy of Culture for All. Accessibility to culture for PWD.
Sports ○ The Inclusive Sport II Program has been declared an event of exceptional public interest in Law 11/2020, of December 30, on the General State Budget for 2021. The duration of the support program for this event covers from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2024.
Tourism

Legislation that directly promotes access to leisure activities:

- The regional legislation on the matter is very profuse and, in general terms, sensitive to the tourist accessibility of the PWD (for example, the right to non-discrimination, existence of adapted rooms in hotel establishments, creation of the brand "Castilla y León Accessible" for accommodation adapted for PWD, etc.), one of the axes of the recent Tourism Law of Andalusia, which considers, in its Statement of Reasons, the objective of "comprehensive quality in the various services, establishments and destinations tourist".
- Legislative RD 1/2007, of November 16, which approves the consolidated text of the General Law for the Defense of Consumers and Users and other complementary laws, which in its articles 150-165 regulates combined trips
- Others:
- Law 27/2007, of October 23, by which Spanish sign languages are recognized and the means of support for oral communication of deaf, hearing impaired and deafblind people are regulated.
- Law 56/2007, of December 28, on Measures to Promote the Society Information and converts Web accessibility into a legal obligation, guaranteeing accessibility for PWD and the elderly to information provided by electronic means. Article 2 contemplates the obligation to have a means of telematic interlocation for the provision of services to the public special economic importance to f) "Travel agency services, in accordance with the provisions of Royal Decree 271/1988, of March 25, which regulates the exercise of the activities of travel agencies" and g) " Passenger transport services by road, rail, by sea, or by air, in accordance with the provisions of the specific applicable regulations.

Legislation that indirectly promotes access to leisure activities:

Accessibilities

To make reading easier, we will divide by sectors of direct or indirect involvement to cite the most relevant national legislation. As we have anticipated, the competition is autonomous, however, as the regulations are more permissive and never more restrictive than the previous administrative level, we will focus on those that are mandatory at the state level.

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Royal Decree 1544/2007, of November 23, which regulates the basic conditions of accessibility and non-discrimination for access and use of modes of transport for PWD.

Law 49/2007, of December 26, which establishes the regime of infractions and sanctions in terms of equal opportunities, non-discrimination and universal accessibility for PWD.

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