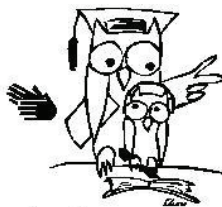


CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DEAF IN THE LABOUR MARKET

BOOKLET

Dr. IGORŠOLTES

EVROPSKI POSLANEC



DRUŠTVO UČITELJEV GLUHIH SLOVENIJE
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Challenges and opportunities for the deaf in the labour market

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8.15 - 8.30 Arrival of guests and participants

OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE AND OPENING ADDRESS

MITJA BERVAR, *Mag. manag., chairman of the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia*

DR. IGOR ŠOLTES, *MEP, Group of the Greens / EFA*

PETRA REZAR, *President of the Society of Teachers of the Deaf Slovenia*

HELGA STEVENS, *MEP Group of European Conservatives and Reformists*

BORIS ČERNILEC, *Director of the Institute for the Deaf Ljubljana*

DRAGICA BAC, *Directorate for the disabled, war veterans and victims of war, The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities*

PANEL 1: THROUGH EDUCATION TO THE PROFESSION

Moderator: Dušan Dvorščak

LJUBICA PODBORŠEK, *the first Slovenian interpreter for sign language, children of deaf parents: "Call the Deaf used to be"*

BERNARDA KOKALJ, *Principal of the Middle School of the Institute for the Deaf Ljubljana: "Vocational education of the deaf and hard of hearing"*

PETRA REZAR, DUŠAN DVORŠČAK, *Society of Teachers of the Deaf Slovenia: "Dilemmas or lack of competitiveness of the Deaf from education to employment "*

10:30 – 10:45 Coffee break and snack

PANEL 2: SQUARE BETWEEN CANDIDATES AND EMPLOYERS

Moderator: Dušan Dvorščak

MARJAN REPŠE, *deaf independent craftsman: "My way"*

BOJAN MORD, MAJA KUZMA, *Tipk TV, d.o.o. : "Examples from practice"*

MAJA SKORUPAN, *an independent legal advisor, Association of Employers Slovenia: "The role of employers and dilemmas"*

TAMARA GUZELJ, *Partner Consulting d.o.o.*: "How to service - what you want from employers work seekers, who would like a job?"

LEA KOVAČ, *Employment Service of Slovenia*: "Deaf at the Employment Service"

12:15 - 12.30 Coffee break and snack

PANEL 3: EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE AND PRACTICE

Moderator: Dušan Dvorščak

ROB VAN MAANEN, *FlexPay, Netherlands*: »What do I know about myself?!«

HELGA STEVENS, *MEP Group of European Conservatives and Reformists*:
»My career as a deaf politician«

DR. ÁDÁM KÓSA, *MEP of the European People's Party*: video speech

END OF CONFERENCE

14:00 - 14:15

DUŠAN DVORŠČAK, *Society of Teachers of the Deaf Slovenia*

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PREFACE

Petra Rezar, MA

President of the Association of the Deaf teacher Slovenia

The international conference Challenges and opportunities of the deaf in the labour market opened up a debate between jobseekers and employers and included also the school system into it. Among the biggest obstacles in the labour market is undoubtedly ignorance: the ignorance of a job seeker who enters the labour market without a basic level of knowledge and experience, as well as the ignorance of employers when meeting a deaf candidate for a job. The biggest problem here is the communication barrier on both sides. The fear of job seekers that due to their sincerity and communication barrier they will miss the opportunity to compete equally in the labour market at the one side, as well as the employers' dilemma in communication barriers on the other side. If both the job seekers as well as the employers had the information, knowledge and support in the process, it would be much easier for the both sides. Irrespective of the fact that the deaf candidate may not meet the needs of the employer, he or she will be much more relaxed in active job search, if he or she has the knowledge, feedback and encouragement of the employers: "There is certainly an employer who needs exactly your knowledge. Therefore persistently continue! " These proceedings were released in order to answer some of the questions of job seekers and employers. Many questions remain unexplored, open.

Among others in Slovenia there is no research on the deaf moving in the labour market from the first job search to the end of the years of service, even though the needs are more than justified. Only in this way we could improve the education system, the development of occupational profiles and the competitiveness of the deaf jobseekers. At the same time also the employers' culture of employment would improve. We thank the co-organizer of the conference, Dr. Igor Šoltes and his team, all the lecturers and the National Assembly, which put into service the hall for the purposes of the conference. We would also like to thank the excellent writer Sivija Pavčič from the Association of secretaries and business secretaries' clubs of Slovenia (Zveza kljubov tajnic in poslovnih sekretarjev Slovenije). Without her contribution some of the deaf and hard of hearing would not be able to follow the conference because they are not proficient in the Slovenian sign language.

This is exactly where we see the need for a new professional profile, namely, a writer for the conferences of the deaf and hard of hearing. We were honoured also with a visit of a deaf MEP Helga Stevens, and with the attention of Adam Kose, a deaf MEP, who transferred a significant positive message to the conference participants. We also had the opportunity to experience the translating into the international sign language with a deaf interpreter who justified the need for a new professional profile of a deaf interpreter.

I also thank all our volunteers, the translators and the proof-reader, who participated in the creation of the proceedings. In the hope that the proceedings will benefit to the job seekers, employers and parents, I wish you pleasant reading

SPEECH

Dr. Igor Šoltes

MEP of the Group of the Greens / EFA

Respected president of the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia Mitja Bervar, esteemed opening speakers Mr. Mladen Veršič, Ms. Petra Rezar, Ms. Helga Stevens, Mr. Boris Černilec, Ms. Dragica Bac, dear guests, welcome! I am extremely delighted and honoured to greet you in such numbers. Today's conference is addressing an extremely important topic, i.e. deaf and hard of hearing people's position in the society. The conference will mainly focus on their positions in the labour market. This topic presents a serious problem, because the unemployment rate among deaf people throughout all Europe is extremely high, situation getting even worse during economic and financial crisis. Many institutions are highlighting the fact, that the deaf and hard of hearing still have to overcome many obstacles when looking for a job: low education, unfitting education systems, dealing with employers who do not understand and are inflexible, unsuitable work conditions, inadequate access to information in visual form, lack of support programs in offices etc. All these reasons are, without a doubt, enough to cause great concern. Having a complete access to the labour market, which gives a chance to fulfil the right to employment, is a basic need for a proper life of every individual, because having a job does not only take care of financial independence, but also affects people's social involvement, physical and mental health and over-all feeling of self-fulfilment. We must not forget, that the problem mentioned above, is just a part of a bigger picture, which exposes many misunderstandings and inconsideration of the deaf people's needs in many different areas of life. As an example, I can point out issues with poor access to information and education in sign language, a problem which I also emphasized to European Parliament. It is a serious problem, because limited access to content in sign language is a huge obstacle for deaf people in realizing all other rights, including the right to work. This is also why I want a broader representation of sign languages, until they finally become a part of official languages of the European Union. I would also like to take this opportunity to mention, that in December 2015, European Accessibility Act has finally see the light of day and I hope that this Act will bring positive changes for all disabled individuals, including the deaf. The Act namely defines common demands regarding accessibility of some key products and services with the intention that disabled people in the EU could fully participate in the society. We are talking about a very important document, for which we have been waiting for a long time and its content applies to very important aspects of everyday life, because it involves ATMs, bank services, personal computers, telephones, television sets, audiovisual services, transportation, e-books and on-line shopping. This document will improve access to mentioned services and products for approximately 80 million disabled people in the EU, which is of extreme importance. We cannot forget that accessibility is the basic precondition for equal participation and active role in the

society. There is no doubt that the topic of today's conference touches a very complex issue, which requires wholesome and systematic solutions on several levels – local, state and even on the European Union level. I hope that today's conference, which will unite all key factors, will also contribute to us becoming better in identifying problems and challenges that concern employment for the deaf and that it will lead, based on dialog and exchange of good experience, to good common solutions and suggestions, which will result in higher integration of the deaf in the labour market. One of the crucial aspects of this is definitely the realization, that the labour market which unifies different groups of people is a better market for the society in general. For example – studies have shown that hiring a disabled person contributes a great deal to businesses, it carries improvements in general diversity and creativity of the work environment, plus it strengthens the morale and good company reputation – that goes for its employees, consumers and its general environment. It is important that we know how to recognize and appreciate contribution and talent of each and every individual, because that is the only way of living in a successful, equal and dignified society. With this thought I conclude my speech and I wish all the best to all participants in this conference.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF DEAF PEOPLE IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Helga Stevens

MEP, European Conservatives and Reformists

I would like to thank colleague MEP Igor Šoltes and his team for the invitation and the organisation of this very important conference. I would like to give a warm welcome to all the deaf people in the audience and I want to highlight the accessibility for deaf people at the conference, including International Sign. I look forward to working with MEP Šoltes in the future to ensure similar accessibility at events and public Committee sessions at the European Parliament. As a Member of the Disability Intergroup and the Employment Committee in EP I am very interested in the inclusion of deaf and disabled people in the labour market and fully support reasonable accommodation measures in the workplace, such as sign language interpreters. I use sign language interpreters myself at the European Parliament and also in my previous positions (more in my presentation later today), but I am especially concerned with equal rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities all over Europe as the reporter of the implementation report for the UNCRPD (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities). I look forward to fruitful discussions today and learning more also about the Slovenian situation.

Thank you

PROFFESIONS OF THE DEAF PEOPLE IN THE PAST

Ljubica Podboršek

the first interpreter of the sign language in Slovenia

There are definitely limitations the deaf have to deal with when choosing a profession, especially because of the communication barriers and many never realize their dreams about having a successful career in a desired profession. Because of the small deaf community, it was not and is not possible to establish a Vocational School for the deaf, where they could be trained for numerous wanted professions. That was the past situation and that is the present situation. Nevertheless, the situation today is still better than ever and the deaf can choose among many education and professional training options, some of them are a part of the program of a secondary school ZGN Ljubljana, School for the deaf and hard of hearing, some of them are a part of other schools' programs in which they can include themselves, so they get to a profession of their choosing. But how were things in the past? The deaf did perform different professions in the past, some of them were very successful and those are individuals of whom I will speak today, because I knew almost all of them personally or I was told about them by my parents. I grew up in a family with deaf parents and I can thank them, for having the opportunity to get to know their deaf friends, who had different professions. Unfortunately, some of these professions no longer exist or the deaf do not choose them for their occupation. I think it is right to remember and name some of the successful deaf, to keep a memory of them alive and make sure their names are remembered when talking about the history of the deaf culture in Slovenia. Let me start with my parents, they both came from the family of farmers, my father Ivan Kmetič from Močilno pri Radečah, my mother Stanka Bolka from Homec pri Kamniku. My father was a dentist, my mother a tailor, who studied tailoring with a master tailor Kosta in Ljubljana and was also his employee for 7 years, until my birth, after which she stayed at home, like most of the deaf married women, who stayed at home after the birth of their child and looked after their families. When my father finished his education in Gluhonemnica¹, a dental school has not existed yet, it was established later, in 1945. My father was set up by his family to become a shoemaker and he was supposed to be trained by the deaf master Martin Mavrin, who had his own workshop in Radeče. My father's teacher, Vilko Mazi, saw and knew that my father had great manual skills and a great ability to learn, and he was the one who convinced my father's parents, so that my father could start studying with dr. Jože Rant, a person who later formed and established a Stomatology clinic, where my father was also employed.

My father learned every possible dental technique from dr. Rant, he specialized in orthodontics and he was given a senior dental technician title. He was the first deaf dental technician in Slovenia. Due to his great knowledge about dental medicine,

¹ The old name for an institution for the Deaf youth in Ljubljana, Slovenia, which opened its door in 1900. It was an educational establishment, surrounded by hospitals.

he also fixed a lot of people's teeth at his home (off the books). A few years later Nikolaj Predovič also decided to become a dental technician, he did his training with dr. Pirc and was also great at his job. Vinko Möderndorfer also decided to become a dental technician and in 1946 enrolled in Dental school, where he graduated as a senior technician and got the right to work independently as a dental technician, a work position which he performed in clinics in Celje, Domžale, Student campus in Ljubljana. I would also like to mention, that Vinko Möderndorfer was a partisan during the Second World War, part of the Cankar battalion, from 1943 until the end of the war. As we are talking about medical professions, I would also like to mention Ms. Anda Štiglic, a pharmacist, who was educated in Zagreb and was employed as a pharmacist in a pharmacy in Prešeren Square in Ljubljana. She was taken under the wing of Mr. Puhar, teacher of the deaf, when she was very little (4 years old) and he taught her of speech and prepared her for classes. She successfully finished her primary and secondary education in a hearing school and enrolled at the Faculty of Pharmacy in Ljubljana, finishing her studies in Zagreb. The most popular crafts in the time between the First and the Second World War were tailoring, sewing and shoemaking and for the most part, these were professions chosen by the deaf. Shoemaking was a popular profession among the deaf. Some of them became actual master shoemakers and had their own shops. They were taught the art of shoemaking by other master shoemakers, home and abroad, mostly in Austria, where they had their training, made improvements and with all that great knowledge returned to Slovenia. One of these great shoemakers was already mentioned Martin Mavrin, from Radeče pri Zidanem Mostu, who also employed the deaf. All these successful deaf shoemakers were making custom shoes for all opportunities and they also repaired them. Bajt Ivan was a master shoemaker in Ljubljana, who led a shoemaking workshop, which was founded by the Slovenian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, initiated by Ciril Sitar. Many deaf persons were trained by Bajt: Milošič, Tomc, Češek, Marko Kordiš, Vinko Torkar, Tuljak, Ciril Žitko. Jože Hrastnik had a shoemaking workshop in Štajerska region and was educated and trained in Austria. The deaf engravers were especially successful in their profession. Engraving was once a masterful and flourishing profession. In the 19th century there were thousands of engravers in Vienna alone. Anton Černe, Ciril Svetek in Ciril Sitar were all trained there. All three of them were highly educated and great promoters of the deaf community, especially because they initiated the start of the organized activities for the deaf. Mr. Černe was educated at school for the deaf in Zagreb, because the school for the deaf in Ljubljana has not existed yet, then he trained to become an engraver with master engraver Pock in Ljubljana, and he improved his knowledge in Vienna, Graz, Stuttgart, Munich, Leipzig and Prague. He came back four years later and opened his own engraving shop in Ljubljana, in 1993. Ciril Svetek and Ciril Sitar were also trained by him. Ciril Sitar was a very important person in the deaf community. He was intelligent and capable and that is why he became a leader in organizing the deaf society and the Association of the deaf plus he also made a huge improvement in work organization of the deaf. He was a trained carpenter, but he was

drawn to the printing industry, so he started working as an apprentice in Učiteljska tiskarna¹ and later became a graphic designer. He also wanted a higher education, which he got with the help of the state scholarship, which he received when he went to Graz and Vienna to continue his further education. In 1920, Sitar opened a stamp-engraving workshop in Ljubljana, together with his friend and engraver Ciril Svetek. A few years later, in 1931, Sitar opened a printing office with 30 employees. During the Second World War, when Ljubljana was occupied, master Sitar was secretly making Italian and German stamps, with the help of which people made forged documents and he also printed anti-fascist fliers. There were many deaf trained and employed in the Ciril Sitar's printing office and they were manual typesetters, bookbinders - Anica Milošič was the first, who was trained to become a qualified bookbinder. Mila Štampfelj, married Grže, was also among the manual typesetters. This specific printing office was a predecessor of the printery called Učne delavnice, which was founded in 1948 and was the study base for students of the ZGN Ljubljana, School for the deaf and hard of hearing, led by Ciril Sitar. The Učne delavnice printery, where students were trained for all graphic professions, for tailoring, haberdashery and metalworking, was very famous for its quality graphic and bookbinding products, especially well known and successful was the manual bookbinding shop, where they created and repaired even the most demanding archive books and documents, thanks to their highly trained bookbinders (Kogovšek, Kolarič...). Some of the deaf individuals in Učne delavnice have progressed substantially and became leaders. One of them was Franc Planinc, who was trained to become a manual typesetter, he enrolled in Higher Graphic Design School in Zagreb parallel to his job, successfully finished it and was a production manager in Učne delavnice for many years. Due to their abilities Adolf Polenšek, Milica Razlag and Juhart became leaders in the bookbinding department. Grže Jože and Vinko Cepec turned out to be very good graphic designers, both worked for the newspaper Delo, Šavs Ivo was a lithograph in Ljudska pravica and there were others, who were also very precise and diligent. ² A printery in Slovenia, especially active between WWI and WWII. "Učiteljska tiskarna" translates to "Teacher's printery".

In the old Yugoslavia the majority of the deaf were trained by masters, without attending continuation schools of crafts. But some of them had an opportunity to educate themselves in other schools. Not until after the Second World War, the education system started to solve complex problems and that was the time, when some of the deaf were included in general vocational continuation schools. Before the Second World War, not many deaf persons decided to pursue studies at secondary, higher or graduate level. One of them was Ivan Štrekelj, sculptor and painter, who achieved University education. After he finished the school for the deaf, he attended a crafts school in Ljubljana, then he enrolled at the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade and after the war, he finished his studies at the Academy in Ljubljana.

² A printery in Slovenija, especially active between WWI and WWII. "Učiteljska tiskarna" translates to "Teacher's printery".

He made a living by working in a quarry, which strengthened his knowledge of sculpture. For a period of time Štrekelj was also a drawing teacher at the Zavod za usposabljanje gluhih in naglušnih and he also gave individual lessons to talented deaf, one of them being Drago Jerman, an amateur painter, whose profession was sign making. Ivan Mohar was also a very good stone mason of that time. Vlado Mihevc was studying at the Secondary Technical School, Mirko Kos and Branko Vidic attended Secondary School of Textile. These were the first integrations of the deaf in hearing schools. A few years after the war, Meri Möderndorfer and Anton Čarman finished their primary education in Zavod and later started with their integration. They enrolled in Secondary School of Economics in Ljubljana and they successfully finished it. Both of them also successfully worked in accountings in different companies and societies of the deaf. Nežka Čepon successfully finished a private Merchant School, got employment in a home-based business before the war, where she managed the books and found a job as a librarian in National and University Library in Ljubljana when the war was over. Besides Štrekelj, Jože Bergant, a master tailor, also gave practical tailoring training at Zavod in Ljubljana. In the post-war period, sewing was a very common and spread profession among deaf women. Before the war, deaf men and women took sewing and tailoring lessons and training with masters and later, when they conquered all the knowledge, performed quite well in this profession and they also sew privately for costumers, even when it came to the most complicated and demanding clothes (Žagar Jakob, Župančič Karolina, Šturm Ivanka, Vuga Ljudmila ...). Albin Pušnik was also a master tailor, who had his own workshop in Trbovlje. A professional technical drawer Kristan was later also an employee for RTV Slovenia, who taught drawing at the school for the deaf in Portorož, for a short period of time. After the war, the professional training for the deaf was finally being taken care of, so the Zavod za gluho mladino established a Vocational school in 1946 that did not have regular classes, only courses. Regular school for students was established in school year 1947/48, which produced 325 qualified workers by the year 1970. The deaf could choose among several professions, most of them were in graphic field, tailoring, carpentry, metalworking and haberdashery, and for all of this professions, except the carpentry, the deaf students could do practical training in Učne delavnice and later a lot of them found an employment there. Učne delavnice printery has played an important role in training and employing the deaf and they were the core that connected the deaf. Some rare professions practiced by the deaf were also very interesting, but are not being chosen by the deaf anymore, e.g. the profession of the builder. Let me mention Bavčar, who was a supervisor and Miha Gorišek, a qualified builder, both of them were exceptional masons and when my father started building a house, they were present at all times, as were many other deaf individuals and I can say, that the house was mainly built by the deaf. The next in line of rare profession is a stableman, a profession which was practiced by the deaf Kuhar at Biotechnical Faculty. He looked after horses, nourished them and cleaned their stalls. On one occasion the horse bit off a part of his ear. A jeweller was also a rare profession. Rangus from Kranj was a jeweller for a long time, because he inherited a

family tradition, now the tradition is carried on by his daughter. Emilija Štiftar, married Lovenjak, from Polana in Murska Sobota, also carries on the family tradition, she took over the restaurant that was very known and valued for years. Emilija Lovenjak is also an excellent cook and restaurateur. Anton Klančnik was also a part of a very interesting profession; he was a photographer and an employee in a Museum of Contemporary History in Ljubljana. He was a true master, restorer of the old, ruined photos and was much esteemed in the museum. Besides, he was a great mime and was part of all big events, which were organized by Societies and Associations of the deaf. His wife was a painter, unusual occupation for women, although I have to add, that women especially would excel in this kind of work, because of their extreme precision. The profession of a painter was mainly a men's profession, they were very wanted by customers and they had jobs all over Slovenia (Vrabič, Komavli). Carpentry was also a much acknowledged profession and it remains such to this day, the carpenters in the past were always very capable people. Franc Klemenčič, who had great credit for establishing the first Society of the deaf, in 1931, visited Secondary Carpentry Technical School and became a master carpenter for construction and house carpentry. I would also like to mention Alojzij Šturm, a very skillful carpenter. Judež was also a carpenter and a restorer. Despite the fact, that the deaf had successfully practiced a whole line of very interesting professions, they do not perform them anymore. They were upholsterers (Krč), automobile upholsterers, car painters and auto body repairmen (Bordon), moulders, confectioners (Bizjak), glaziers, tyre repairmen, precision mechanics.

In the era after the Second World War the deaf had a special department in Zadobrova, where they were performing pottery, stove making and gardening. The initiator was Sitar Ciril. I am certain I left out some active past professions and some important deaf individuals in my contribution, for which I apologize; all the facts presented are originating from my own personal knowledge and knowing. We should do a deep research about all professions and their performers. The craft professions have shown to be very suitable professions for the deaf and in the future, we should encourage all deaf teachers and students to start thinking about alternative options in professional training.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION OF THE DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED PERSON

Bernarda Kokalj

headmistress of the ZGN Ljubljana, School for the Deaf

School for the deaf and hard of hearing,

obeying boys and pretty girls.

Any of the girls can kiss me.

Professors want, that we get new experience

and to cover our past bad experience with leather.

Nikola Predović, former student, 2015

ZGN Ljubljana, School for the Deaf, is the only establishment in Slovenia that practices in the field of vocational and professional education, which enables deaf, hard of hearing students and students with speech and language impairments, an education within programs, which are of equal educational standards in comparison to others. Our school's history starts in the year 1946 and our institution celebrated its 115th anniversary in 2015, which is an amazing achievement of Slovenian education of youth with special needs. There is a very interesting entry in Jubilee Journal of ZGN Ljubljana 1900–1950, Ljubljana 1950: "At request of the management of the ZGN Ljubljana, a decree was issued from the Ministry of Industry and Mines, date 23rd March 1946, number 829/VI, which established a vocational school. In school years 1945/46 and 1946/47, classes have been carried out in the form of professional courses. In school year 1947/48, first grade for economy students was formed. 6 students were enrolled, for professions of shoemaker, lithographer, confectioner, printer, bag-maker and tyre repairmen. All students have successfully finished their classes." Applying to Vocational School High school enrollment is a variable, which is a reflection of the number of kids in a certain generation, of the novelties in the area, of enrollment possibilities, of the economy and of social conditions in general. When we started practicing our programs of vocational and technical education in 1995, the numbers of applied students increased up to a 100, in later years the numbers have again decreased and now they move around 70. The table and the graph below show the number of enrolled students at vocational school in the last ten school years, grouped according to their impairment. The third column shows the combined number of the deaf and hard of hearing students, the fourth column is a number of students with speech and language impairments, which also includes students with autism. The data shows, that the numbers of deaf and hard of hearing students are getting smaller, according to the overall number of enrolled

students and the numbers of speech and language impaired and autistic students are rising.

Table 1: The number of students in the last ten school years, divided by an impairment

SCHOOL YEAR	ALL	DEAF/HOH	SLI/AUTISM
2006/07	74	68	6
2007/08	63	57	6
2008/09	58	52	6
2009/10	60	49	11
2010/11	62	46	16
2011/12	58	41	17
2012/13	61	32	29
2013/14	60	26	34
2014/15	70	31	39
2015/16	73	25	48

Levels and Areas of Education

Our vocational school has programs at lower vocational education, secondary vocational education, vocational technical education and secondary professional education levels. All programs are renewed according to the Starting Points for Preparing Educational Programs for Lower and Secondary Vocational Education and Programs of Secondary Vocational Education, which began in Slovenian school area in 2001 and continues its dynamic development. In these Starting Points, an emphasized educational paradigm is set, that general, vocational and practical knowledge must be combined. The goal is to reach bigger contextual connection and knowledge intertwinement and to develop vocational and general competences, which lead to wholesome qualified individual in a certain profession, easier employment and capability of functioning in a society. Accepted legal norms, professional basics (catalogues of knowledge, exams' catalogues), methodical-didactical approaches, modern society's goals and plenty of teacher's creativity when working with students; following these components ensures a quality study process and with that conquering general and professional competence. The programs that are being carried out, cover professional fields of printery and graphic design, carpentry, computer science, engineering, media and textile studies, in school year 2015/16 we will also go into the fields of hospitality and tourism, agriculture and horticulture and food processing.

Professional Orientation

Professional orientation and raising awareness among general public about numerous possible educational programs of our establishment, is a very important part of our work. We have Open Days every year, an informative day, we set up visits at CSG Maribor and CKSG Portorož with students in last grades of primary school, we visit

companies and above all, we communicate a lot. We also follow new challenges and possibilities that is how a couple of years ago, some great videos were made, which addressed future students and their parents, through the story of an individual. Conversations with parents are as important as working with students in regular schools, which is done by our mobile teachers. The best advertisement is our happy seniors, who either continue an education at Universities or Collages, or build a successful professional career. New programs at Parents' Council of the ZGN Ljubljana and at Council of ZGN Ljubljana, an initiation for expanding professional choices were often expressed. In school year 2014/15, a survey among four generations of seniors at primary school was carried out, about professions choices at our secondary school. It turned out, that only 60 percent of students at the primary school of ZGN Ljubljana, continue their education at secondary school ZGN Ljubljana, and students could also express their wishes for desired professional fields. We mainly followed a goal, in which we could provide a bigger choice of professions for girls, a bigger variety of professions for the deaf and hard of hearing, and at the same time realizing, that having different options among professions, increases possibilities when transferring to the labour market. We have decided to cooperate with regular secondary schools, because we cannot ensure all conditions, space and staff wise. With the consensus of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and with cooperation from the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (CPI), who proposes programs, we prepared four renewed programs: An Assistant in Bio Technique and Care, Confectioner, a Gardner and Gastronomic and Hotelier services. Finishing Education Students get a vocational education title, when they successfully pass their final exam. In programs of lower vocational education, the exam is in a form of a finished project and a presentation, in programs of secondary vocational education they do all that is mentioned above, plus an exam of the Slovene language. At the level of secondary vocational and professional technical education, students get a secondary vocational education with a successfully finished poklicna matura. This exam consists out of four subjects: Slovene language, vocational subject, mathematics and a foreign language with a project assignment or a product. The first and the third subject are partially external, meaning, that tasks are prepared by the members of the national subject committee for poklicna matura, therefore all students take the same examination papers on the same day, assigned on the calendar of the poklicna matura.

Specificities

All departments at secondary school are heterogenic, they consist out of the deaf and hard of hearing students, students with Cochlear implants and students with speech and language impairments; in the last couple of years, students with autism are also being included to programs. The listed groups of students have different special needs, which need to be acknowledged by professional workers and adapt to them, whether teaching or setting up an exam. Because of that, the classes are carried out in normative smaller groups (from 4 to 10 students), the methods and ways of work

are adjusted, an interpreter is present in classes if needed, with parents' cooperation an individual program is designed for every student and that involves an adjustment to every individual's special need, consequently the education is prolonged for a year.

The Open Curriculum

The Open Curriculum is an integral part of every program of vocational and professional educational program. This is that part of the program, which is prepared by school itself, with some cooperation, and covers up to 20 percent of all school hours in every school year. The school defines the goals of this curriculum for every new school year, within which, the students develop their practical skills, deepen and broaden their knowledge of professional theory and evolve key competence, and these goals can be very much adapted to the students' needs in different classes. It is sensible to include such knowledge and study goals to the open curriculum, which strengthen professional and national competence of students. That means that we strengthen that knowledge, which students with special needs can achieve at higher quality levels. The open curriculum is also that appropriate manoeuvred space, which ensures, that the school can include and carry out activities for optimal development. We are talking about activities that allow every individual, to reach an optimal development, according to their specificities. These activities differ from one group of students with special needs to another, also from one individual to another. Professional workers at the school can, with the help from the decree about guidance, with the most competency, determine which particular activity is the most appropriate for the optimal development of an individual student. The open curriculum therefore also include communication, Slovenian sign language, emotional literacy, social communication skills, preparation for life and extra hours preparing for subjects at poklicna matura and final exam. Connecting the Practical Education at School and Work Process Practical education includes practical classes at school and practical training with work (PUD), which students receive from employers. Practical training with work is distributed through all four years in the programs of secondary vocational education, following the scheme 3 – 3 – 3 – 15, so altogether 24 weeks. In programs of lower vocational education, the students have four weeks of practical training with work, in second and third year; in programs of vocational education also four weeks in third and fourth year; meanwhile the students in programs of vocational technical education have two weeks of practical training with work during the holidays. Possible different distribution of the number of hours or weeks is specifically defined in the individualized program of an individual student. The program is carried out, based on the individual or collective (school) study contracts, generally for all education years of a certain student. Planning and carrying out the practical training with work, is based on gathering knowledge, socialization and developing personal and professional competence, important for quality work and successful development of a professional career with a direct working. That is why it is important to cooperate with employers, a cooperation which is, at our school, carried out at high level by two teachers of practical courses and professional subjects. It is mainly about establishing

a broad network of employers, who are favorable to students with special needs and for concrete information. Before we start practical training with work, students are prepared and introduced to employers, we visit them in their work places and we always do an evaluation in the end. Extra Activities Beside the secondary school's fundamental mission – acquiring competence and knowledge for professional education – other activities are also necessarily needed for a quality education of the youth. We try to carry out these activities in the form of quality interests' activities, content-goal orientated project days, we organize a meeting camp for first year students, we include ourselves in European projects (Turkey, Lithuania, Macedonia, Italy etc.), we participate in sports competitions, there are gatherings of regular schools and dormitories of Slovenia and we organize a mini Olympics of the Institutes, that work with individuals with special needs. A great motivation to boost creativity are also different opportune exhibitions, poetry of the deaf, photography and much more, where young people can express and develop their talents and skills. Where To Go After Finishing Secondary School? Our students have a chance to, according with decrees about guidance after successfully finishing programs of lower vocational education; continue their education in programs of secondary vocational education, students with successfully finished programs of secondary vocational education can continue with programs of vocational technical education. The primary goal is, of course, entering the labour market, finding a job in an industry, workshops, and companies or having a chance of self-employment. According to the program level and acquired knowledge and skills, our students can work at any position, varying from very simple to the more demanding ones; they can work independently or can choose to continue their education at Universities and Colleges, courses for matura etc. When transitioning to the labour market or being a part of the employment rehabilitation process, seniors can also turn for help to other institution, such as, e.g. RACIO.

Critical Overview

Our classes are carried out in a combination of departments or groups of students, who are heterogenic according to their disability. With such organization, teacher's work is very demanding and stressful, because he has to adapt his method and way of work to different students: deaf, hard of hearing, students with speech and language impairments and autistic students. We also carry out our classes in combined departments, according to professional orientation, in horizontal and vertical. First year therefore looks like this: there are seven students in the department, three of them are girls and four of them are boys; one of them is autistic, three are deaf or hard of hearing and three students have speech and language impairments. Regarding professional orientation, two of them are studying engineering, three textiles and two carpentry. Classes of general educational subjects take place in uniform department of all seven students combined; in professional-theoretical subjects and in practical classes, the students are either in an independent department or they go to classes with students from higher grades. We face great issues when making a schedule, also

because of shortage of space and lack of equipment; that is why we cooperate with regular secondary schools, where we are occasional guests. An adult education is also in decrease, but in the area of national vocational qualifications, new possibilities are arising.

Dormitory Care

An educational program for children with special needs, who are included in our dormitory, is intended for those children, who cannot be guaranteed care and education in their home town and cannot get transportation from their place of living to educational establishment because of the distance. These children can be included in our establishment for caring and educating children with special needs. The main purpose of this educational program is an optimal development of the psychological, physical and social individual's abilities, independence when taking care of themselves and inclusion into everyday physical and social environment. At the moment, the program is carried out in four educational groups and two dormitories groups. Because of the great numbers of our students, we are also guests in student dormitory Poljane, which is a unique challenge of including our youth in a regular way of dorm life. We put great emphasis on spending quality free time, which is intended for school obligations and different work, creative and interest activities. We can finish with a question: "What do gold and secondary school ZGN Ljubljana have in common?" Answer: "A golden graduate." In school year 2014/15 a student passed poklicna matura with an exceptional success, he got 22 out of 23 points, which places him among the golden graduates. We are very happy with this result and of course very proud of him.

BARRIERS AND UN-COMPETITIVENESS OF THE DEAF: FROM EDUCATION TO EMPLOYMENT

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PREFACE

Primary school students and I are talking about career choices.

Primary school students: "I want to be a physical education teacher." Petra: "Great, work hard in school, finish secondary education and matura examination, continue with your studies at Faculty of Sport and come back as teacher of the deaf." Primary school students: "Oh, no, I can't, I don't know how to, I'm not capable." Petra: "Why not, of course you can. If I can do it, so can you." Primary school students: "You can, I can't. It's too hard, I don't know how to." Petra: "I was the same when I was your age, why wouldn't you try and do what makes you happy?" Primary school students: "I can't, I'm deaf." End of the conversation.

How many Himalayas need to be climbed, before reaching the finish line?

Education and employment are closely intertwined; there is no employment without an education. We get our formal education, then we get lost in the labour market, we are somewhat illiterate in many different areas, all the way to finances. Slovenian serfdom mentality backs up this conviction. All these "illiteracies" are exploited by many institutions and the media. The Deaf often make decisions which are in their disadvantage. The Deaf children and youth have (no) ambitions to work in the same professions as the hearing, because the environment tells them that they are "Deaf and that is the reason they cannot." Parents, environment, teachers. Deaf accept that and become indifferent to their destiny, they take minimal challenges in the labour market, just enough to survive. The same applies to generations of workers, who worked all their lives in one work position in a certain industry. It is proven that their IQ has decreased after twenty years of the monotonous work. Does the same apply to the Deaf? Do you know that there are Deaf with the identity of "the Deaf" and deaf with the identity of "the hearing"? Maybe this fact does not mean much at first, but in reality it is very important when acknowledging the needs and problems concerning the employment for the Deaf.

In the end we can use the findings of the American anthropologist Oscar Lewis and his concept of cultural poverty, which is defined as a pattern that transfers from generation to generation. This is happening with the Deaf and their professional path, which transmits as a pattern from generation to generation.

EDUCATION TIME

1. Insufficient information about career choices in the time of primary education for the deaf/hard of hearing

Solutions:

- more emphasis on guidance in primary school (better consulting, better trainings for specialists held responsible for counseling; parents' participations in discovering the child's interests and disciplines he/she is good at)
- higher levels of informing deaf children and their parents about different chances in regard to further education and possible extracurricular activities (visiting fairs where certain professions and associated types of work are introduced; information day; raising awareness about professions that are most in demand in the labour market)
- presentation of practices that gave good results in everyday life
- presentation of the support, which is given to a Deaf student in regular schools or in an Institution
- technological equipment in premises: a proper technology equipment and appropriate adjustments made in institutions and other schools are necessary for ensuring equal education for the Deaf

2. Weak connection between education and employment intended for the Deaf

Solutions:

- readjustment of practices for the Deaf in secondary education
- enrollment limitations should be connected to the demands of the labour market: personnel planning in institutions and adapting limited vacant positions in training programs

3. Lack of information regarding education in Faculties

Solutions:

- more information about studies given to the Deaf; special courses on this subject; access to the media (computer, school board, school TV) and regular refreshments of relevant information, notices and activities inside and outside of the educational institution
- theory used in practice: cooperation between Faculties and actual employers, who employ the Deaf to gain professionally trained and managing staff

4. The Deaf increasingly quit professional trainings and studies at Faculties

Reasons why Deaf students stop with their education:

- inadequate or extremely bad communication with teachers, professors; low literacy;

low quality notes, unorganized interpretations; knowledge of sign language

- they only enroll because of their social status and they do not have any intention of finishing their schooling; inadequate choices of professions in the Institution; low support for the Deaf in regular schools
- they get a job and they cannot do two things at once, so they leave school
- they discover during their studies that the chosen profession does not interest them and they quit – their social status does not allow them to study outside their home town, where they have a permanent residence

Solutions:

- we should encourage a choice made by a Deaf student that is based on their own interests and try to cancel out influences that come from structural ambiguities, parents, counselors etc.
- we should improve an actual presentation about a certain profession and education institution, because many of the Deaf students do not know what the real situation is
- encouraging scholarships
- many Deaf students do not know what they want to do when they choose a profession/studies and that is the reason to implement some kind of secondary school, which would be adapted for the Deaf; in this way Deaf students could choose their professional path later in life
- maximize support for the development of sign language, its implementation in all segments of Deaf people's lives – acknowledging the Deaf culture plus the fact, that Institutions for the Deaf are one of the fundamental pillars of development and preservation of the Deaf culture
- redefining the concept of the Deaf social integration: society is never uniformed, society's core lies in its diversity and is divided by interests; the Deaf should not be scapegoats for some people's idea of what the right inclusion in the society is; we are a community with different interests, our own language and the same sense of the common good as the hearing!
- we should increase control on entries, so only people that really want to study certain profession can actually be enrolled – better assistance for Deaf students, Deaf families
- we should develop a certain practice that would be adapted for the Deaf (ensuring interpretation in the workplace with the help of a technique)

NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION

1. The Deaf are often excluded from the process of non-formal education

Solutions:

- we need a bigger selection of non-formal education for the Deaf – the young Deaf should be introduced to the meaning and value of non-formal education in the society – that would motivate them for non-formal education – raising awareness among employers of the Deaf in regard to the importance of non-formal education – integration in the process of non-formal education in early ages (childhood) – ensure all technical support for participation and cooperation (interpreters, notes, prepared mentors)

2. Informal education is almost entirely over-looked and it is not encouraged by the system

Solutions:

- re-evaluate and set it on positive, visible place in the system – encourage the Societies and Associations to organize youth jobs and activities for the Deaf, because they enable opportunities for acquiring new skills and experiences in different subjects – encourage different Deaf organizations to recognize and realize the importance of informal education for young Deaf people and youth leaders/ workers as well as for people that work within the institutions of formal education (e.g. trainings for coaches, youth workers)

EXAMPLE – STATISTICS

We can begin with accessible statistical data, related with Deaf employment: In 2013: Compared to the hearing labourers (aged between 21 and 65) the Deaf:

- get lower income and are more likely unemployed
- have the feeling that they cannot advance or get more responsible positions compared to the others – they advance slower

However:

- the employment rate among young Deaf is higher than that among their peers with other disabilities
- trends in the employment for the Deaf are on the rise and they show an optimistic prognosis

Employment rates:

- in 2011, 47,9% of the Deaf were employed

- in 2009 the lowest employment drop was among young Deaf people between 12 and 25 years of age

Earnings:

- the Deaf have in average lower salaries than hearing people
- Deaf women are payed less than Deaf men
- Deaf women earn 67,7% of Deaf men's average annual income This data applies for the USA. http://www.pepnet.org/sites/default/files/employmentbrief_v5.pdf

What are the Slovenian numbers? Is it possible to do a project, in which we would research this subject; to involve one of the known Institutions, which would periodically and systematically examine a certain area of interests? How the young Deaf start their professional paths? Do they find jobs in their own professions, do they continue with their education ... ? Then there is also a story about un-competitiveness of the Deaf. Because there is no known data for this sort of field in Slovenia (as far as we know), we, at Slovenian Association of Teachers of the Deaf, have decided to do a mini project – research. With formal and unstructured interviews with groups of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, aged between 18 and 65, we tried gathering as many information, experience and stories as possible, that were acquired throughout their work history: when they were employed, looking for a job, in the process of changing jobs, etc. We have obtained different stories that speak for themselves.

1. First employment and filling out the application forms

Candidates come across their first barrier when they are asked to fill out forms, write an application letter and attend a job interview. The level of confidence decreases. They write many applications and never get a reply, let alone a job interview. Plus: some Hard of Hearing report the same experience with consultants, that advised them to avoid certain professions due to their condition; that is also a very common advice to the young Deaf. Some of the Deaf go to an Employment and Vocational rehabilitation straight away, but they can face disappointment there, because they realize it does not offer an appropriate work position for their profession or that there is no employment whatsoever and they stay in rehabilitation indefinitely. They cannot lead a normal life with low income, they cannot start a family and they remain a burden to their parents, still residing with them.

Example 1

“One time a psychologist came to visit us and advise us about certain professions. But the teacher said we would only be capable of factory work!” (Deaf, male, over the age of 40) The fact is, that “experts” in certain work positions do not have enough knowledge about certain specific professional demands, regarding the Deaf.

Example 2

“The application forms are often consisted of many questions and expressions, which I don’t understand. It takes forever for me to fill them out; I wonder what they want me to write.” (Deaf, male, over the age of 40)

Example 3

“The old forms, used in the past, were pretty straight-forward and simple: first name, last name, age, education. Everything is different now and harder: they ask me why do I want this job, why do I think I’m the best choice, what will my added value be? What added value? I don’t think I’m the greatest; I just like to work and I know that I’m diligent and capable of getting the job done. And then I write something, give that to my hearing friend, who corrects my grammar and then I wait. They rarely invite me to an interview.” (Deaf, male, over the age of 40) Open type questions or personal statements in job interviews are the most common examples when the Deaf do not know what is being expected of them and what kind of reply should they give.

Example 4

“After I finished school I started looking for a job close to my home, I’ve send applications. A lot of people don’t respond, only a few of them replied with answers that the job has already been taken. I know it’s common practice in certain companies, that the work position is already taken in advance. They are bound by the law to announce a request for tender.” (Hard of Hearing, male, 24 years old)

Example 5

“I know I could find a job near my home. I would make arrangements with the Director; salary is bad, the work is undeclared; I wouldn’t have regular hours. I wanted to work there, near my home; but when I saw the situation up close, I walked away, I didn’t want that sort of exploitation.” (Hard of Hearing, male, 24 years old)

Example 6

“My hard of hearing co-worker said, that he will find a job in Switzerland, that everything is already arranged with his uncle. I’m also thinking of going to Austria or Switzerland. But the problem is, I don’t know who will help me learn a new foreign language. If I had German lessons in school as one of the school subjects, I would have gladly learnt it that way. What good is English now? Nothing. Austria – German language, Italy – Italian language. Hungary – Hungarian language, Croatia – Croatian language, these all are the languages I should’ve learned and the most important one of them is German.” (Hard of Hearing, male, 24 years old)

Example 7

“I went to see an advisor regarding Eures, I thought they will help me to communicate with the boss. No, I would have to drive myself to a job interview abroad. I thought they

would help me find a job abroad. What is an advisor good for, then? They should be there to help us. Not to say 2 to 3 words and they earn 900 – 1000 euros.” (Hard of Hearing, male, 24 years old)

Example 8

“If I had to search for a job one more time, I wouldn’t have done it through rehabilitation.” (Hard of Hearing, female, 24 years old)

2. Independence

Hard of hearing do not show any extra interest for any kind of support in the workplace. They are often very keen on the principle “I can do this myself”, as if that is desired and expected in the workplace. In this sense, hard of hearing often withhold their disability, just so they can prove their independence. The Deaf associate their independence with support in the workplace. Especially in communication: that goes for interpreter to Slovenian sign language (SSL) or a Recorder, who writes instead of them. Awareness about support is higher among young Deaf. That is partially connected to the change in education regime for the Deaf, acknowledging the Slovenian sign language, exchanged information between the Deaf on different internet forums (The Association, institutions, TIPK TV, international gatherings) etc.

Example 9

“I never got any advice in school, on how to arrange my Deaf status, which enables access to interpreter. They were just telling me, all the time, that I have to know how to read lips and talk in a very articulate manner so the hearing will understand me.” (Deaf person, over the age of 40)

Example 10

“I have found out most of the information about getting an interpreter, a job or other social benefits from other Deaf individuals in the Society.” (Deaf, male, under the age of 40) Hard of Hearing are a lot more confident in a relation to a job and more convinced, that they should take on more responsible tasks in the work environment. When they are considering a certain profession, their thinking revolves more around actual factors connected to the employment and not so much around the communication, which is the case with the Deaf. They also rarely indicate the need for an interpreter or a recorder, whilst those are the main concerns for the Deaf.

3. SSL Interpreting

Young Deaf often mention a shortage of interpreters, low quality of interpretations, different ethics violations and content interference during interpretations. Interpreter’s “Sponsorship” is more distracting than it is helpful. Whilst the older Deaf were used to doing most of the things themselves, young Deaf expect interpreters in their workplace.

Without interpreters, everything is harder: the job interview, practice, meeting with a consultant, job itself.

Example 11

“They don’t allow me to bring an interpreter to joint meetings in the company that I work for, because of the data confidentiality. And then I sit in that meeting together with 30 other people, the main discussion is development possibilities for the company. You can imagine how I feel.” (Deaf, female, under the age of 40)

Example 12

“I couldn’t communicate with my employer. He was screaming at me all the time. As I look back: going to a hearing school didn’t prepare me for life with the hearing. He could normally talk to other people, but not to me. Never. And I could always communicate with my classmates without any problems. He was bothered by my way of communicating and everything I did, was wrong. He didn’t treat me equally. He really hated me. And I hated him! I remember how he came up to me on the last day and said, that I will never make it in life this way.” (Deaf, male, over the age of 40)

Example 13

“I see now, that my speech learning was completely unsuccessful. People didn’t understand what I was saying. And then I was forced to write it down. They were often asking each other, what is it that I want to say to them. I was embarrassed.” (The same Deaf as above) Those are all experiences shared by numerous Deaf people.

4. Deaf culture

Deaf culture or Deaf friendly relations is a topic often talked about. We can imagine different situations describing this phrase, for example: conversation in sign language, when a deaf person is present; or the expression on people’s faces when they greet each other; concern if the deaf and the hearing really understand one another, even though some information need to be repeated or written several times; simplifying conversations etc. The young Deaf think that employers and co-workers in a certain company need to be educated about the Deaf people’s needs and issues. There was an expressed need for formation of a new Institution, which would take care of this type of support for the Deaf, employers and all other interested. We are coming across the concept of audism, which means, among other things, that the hearing make choices in the name of the Deaf.

Example 14

“When I started my job I rarely used sign language in front of my colleagues. I talked to them and did my best to make sure we understand each other. Then, when abroad, I saw how in one firm, all people were using sign language when a deaf person was present. Since then, I have tried many times to use that practice here, in Slovenia.

Now I'm already tired from trying to remind them of this practice." (Deaf person, over the age of 40)

Example 15

"I have this job for over a year now. I remember one time, when all the staff went out. I looked around and nobody was there. I checked the time, but it wasn't lunch time already. I've seen all my co-workers in the upstairs office with the boss. They were talking about something, but I didn't go up because nobody had said anything. They came back after half an hour. I went to one of my co-workers and asked what the conversation was about. He told me that they found out we will all get full time employment. And that was it, a half hour conversation reduced to one sentence." (Deaf, male, under the age of 40). This is a clear example of audism, which means, that the hearing make decisions in the name of the Deaf. In this case, the Deaf only got a short summary, an information, that was recapped by someone else.

5. Employment

The next topic is also very important and in our opinion should not be overlooked and that is the fact, that the Deaf often get worse jobs or they get jobs, they consider boring.

Example 16

"I have worked for a carpenter for two months. All I did was swoop, sort nails, clean the equipment. I held and carried boards. Once I asked the boss if he has anything more important for me to do, that I want to do something more substantial. Nothing. He said there isn't anything. After that I left. Poor earnings. And boring." (Deaf, male, under the age of 40)

Example 17

"My first job was at the printer's office. I was there for 2 days, stacking boxes. It was boring. The problem was standing on my feet in the same place for 8 hours and that was the reason why I didn't want to continue, because I knew all this standing will have an impact on my lower back. Concessioner, who got me the job, was angry because I quit." (Deaf, female, 24 years old)

Example 18

"There were 3 of us from the same class. We finished in 2012. Nobody has a regular job; my schoolmate and I are still in the rehabilitation, the other schoolmate is working student jobs." (Hard of hearing, male, 24 years old) We can often hear how the Deaf are diligent workers. That they focus on their work easier, because they are not bothered by the surrounding sounds. But that can also mislead people in believing that working in loud places or doing repetitive jobs are the perfect occupations for the Deaf.

6. Earnings and promotions of gathered knowledge.

The Deaf often believe that they earn less for the same type of work as their hearing co-workers. This is a stereotype which is present in everyday work relationships. Considering there is a great deal of discrimination even in the most basic relationships, we cannot possibly think, that there is not any when it comes to payment. Maybe the proof of that lies in the fact, that we have no overview on how much the Deaf earn. The reasons for that are: firstly, they are doing low-paid jobs; and secondly; they cannot successfully negotiate their wages.

Example 19

“Yes, the hearing definitely earn more. I see hearing people, who do the same tasks as me. Equally well. But they get a promotion and I don’t. I have accepted that by now. I’m happy for them, but ... I know the reason for this is because I’m Deaf. It’s not fair.”
(Deaf, male, over the age of 40)

Example 20

“I know little from school, I forgot almost everything. I have to buy a book about C6.”
(Hard of Hearing, over the age of 20) It somehow seems that the Deaf should be thankful for simply having jobs. They have to accept, that one of the human activities – work, is reserved for the hearing. On one side we have a society that invests in education for the Deaf; we believe that the Deaf are just as capable for work as the hearing, but on the other side the society denies that same capabilities required for more responsible jobs, like control or escort, organization of work, with the explanation that those kind of jobs involve contact with people and that the Deaf cannot do the job as good as others in this competitive world. Hmm, this could possibly be true around 20 years ago. Today, in the 21st century, with all the technologies, applications, support systems, this has become a downright ridiculous, unsupported argument. But it is not, it is a tragic one. The Deaf are one of the excluded! Nothing can be taken for granted. Everything has to be fought for despite the legislation, lists of rules and other documents.

Example 21

A deaf pharmacy student is looking for a job in his own profession after getting his diploma in 2014. Companies did not see any potential in him. Today he is employed in one of the oldest and most known pharmacies in Vienna, where he works with clients with the help of a sign language interpreter. Why pharmacies in Slovenia did not see an opportunity in him, attracting deaf customers?

Example 22

Situation in Slovenia: we have three unemployed graduates from Academy of Fine Arts and Design, one unemployed social worker with passed professional exam. They are all deaf. How come this highly trained personnel cannot find any work in their disciplines?

How can they realize, satisfy their creativity, potential?

Example 23

Why is a Deaf studying photography, if, after graduation, cannot find work anywhere, except in some rehabilitation outside of his professional field, despite the fact that he could be an excellent photographer?

Example 24

A deaf doctor cannot work in a doctor's office because of her damaged hearing, which is why she is working office duties. Why couldn't she work as a doctor with deaf patients or develop her potential and professional knowledge and help the Deaf?

PROBLEMS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF EMPLOYMENT AND SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

Deaf workers and their rights

1. Violation of the Deaf people's rights in their workplace

Solutions:

– **Confidant to whom violations can be reported.** Young Deaf are a vulnerable group, subjected to many workers' rights violations, due to their disadvantageous position (high unemployment rate, working temporary jobs or other unreliable types of work) in the labour market. If we want to reduce violations of young people's workplace rights, we have to initiate a so-called confidant or syndical confidant inside a company, to whom endangered groups and individuals could report any violations made by employers/superiors (younger, older, women ...) and would represent a link between employer and employee.

– **Increased control and sanction for rights violators**

2. Discrimination regarding Deafness

Solutions:

– **Upbringing, education and raising awareness among** people about the Deaf equality, including workplace and labour market: it is still believed, that some are "typically hearing" and others "typically Deaf" professions. That kind of thinking needs to be eradicated, the easiest way to do that is through upbringing, education of teachers and via media in national region. To solve all problems regarding the discrimination of the Deaf, **we suggest raising awareness and the level of information among people** (media campaigns, brochures as attachments to employment contracts, showing the workers who they can turn to in a case of discrimination). Every form of discrimination needs to be reported.

3. Discrimination of the Deaf in the labour market

It is harder for young Deaf to get work than for young hearing, most of the time their jobs are paid less doing the same kind of work.

Solutions:

– **“Deaf friendly business” certification:** We suggest that we follow in the footsteps of “family friendly business” certificate and we introduce a “deaf friendly business” certificate, which would encourage companies to promote equal treatment of the deaf and the hearing in their workplace. Deaf friendly business is considered as a business, in which the Deaf do not have better positions than the hearing, but all are equal (e.g. the same chances of promotion for both groups, the same payments for the same kind of work, communication in sign language, use of interpretation, equal rights and duties, etc.). We are talking about a very broad and financially challenging project, part of which would also be a list compilation (internet list) of “Deaf friendly businesses”, link to this internet list would show on already existing web sites (Institute for employment, other companies, that are looking for employees, Student service, agencies for employment ...). When awarding the title “Deaf friendly environment” the employers would be encouraged to treat the hearing and the Deaf equally and a debate about problems concerning inequality in the workplace between these two groups would simultaneously be encouraged.

– **Workers’ confidant for the Deaf:** the Deaf face discrimination in the workplace more often, but they rarely report it, because they are afraid of losing their job. We suggest an appointment of “workers’ confidant for the deaf”. He or she would be a neutral professional, who would represent a link between employers/superiors and employed Deaf people and would also accept anonymous reports regarding The Deaf people’s workplace rights violations.

– **Lower wage taxes for the Deaf:** it is harder for the Deaf to get an employment; it is even harder for a young Deaf and young Deaf female parents to get a job, because, e.g. the employers expect that young women will soon want children and would potentially be away from work for at least a year due to the maternity leave. Also, young mothers have to face even greater difficulties when finding a job, because they represent a burden for employers, in case if they often miss work due to sick child.

Employers must be encouraged to lose any prejudice which concerns the Deaf men and women. We also suggest lowering the wage tax base for the Deaf. A Deaf worker is not highly aware of his rights. The work environment rarely allows the Deaf to co-decide about things that go on in their workplace. The Deaf are an especially sensitive group in the labour market and they often do not know their rights or they do not report any violations or irregularities concerning their rights, because they are too afraid to lose their jobs (which are, most often, temporary jobs).

Solutions:

- **Representative of the Deaf:** We propose the introduction of mandatory representative of the Deaf, who would be Deaf himself and would represent the interests of the Deaf employees in all representatives bodies (syndicates, boards, committees ...)
- **Greater control:** We propose a greater control and bigger sanctions when dealing with Deaf workers' rights violations, larger jurisdiction for inspectors and more unexpected controls
- **Raising awareness:** We propose raising awareness among Deaf workers in regard to their rights and increasing control and penalties for the workers' rights violators.
- We should show employers how to adapt their workplace for the Deaf and reward those employers, who create a Deaf friendly environment.

Employment for the Deaf

1. Precarious work

Solutions:

- **National subsidies for companies/institutions,** that offer permanent employment for the Deaf. After finishing school, the Deaf often find themselves in a position, when they have to accept temporary jobs, contract work, part-time work etc. With these types of employment, the Deaf rarely become financially independent and cannot overcome barriers on their way to independent life (getting an apartment, creating a family etc.). The Deaf cannot get bank credit and that leads to dependence. We propose an initiation of national subsidies and reliefs, which would encourage employers to give employment to the Deaf for permanent time.
- Introduction of mandatory/recommendable work for the Deaf employees in public sector mainly, because that would instantly give them lawfully ensured support;
- Encouraging employers to employ the Deaf: employers need to be encouraged, by different measures, to give employment to the Deaf. The Deaf would have more jobs, if tax burden was lowered.

2. Low employment rate among the Deaf

Solutions:

- **Financial and technical support:** To encourage self-employment among the Deaf, we propose an introduction of financial, technical and professional state support for the Deaf, when starting their own business and introduction of benefits for innovative businesses that are owned by the Deaf.

– **Development incubators and tenders for self-employed Deaf:** The Deaf have many great ideas, which cannot be realized due to poor communication, lack of experience and money. The Deaf need support and advice when they are trying to realize their own ideas. We propose an establishment of development incubators, which would help the Deaf in realizing their own ideas and more municipality/state notices, which would encourage Deaf for self-employment.

– **Financial support for the Deaf entrepreneurs and networking with established businessmen:** The Deaf are a very vulnerable group when they finish school, because they cannot open their own business or be self-employed due to high taxes. We propose an introduction of financial support for the innovative businessmen. Their key role in this encouragement of young entrepreneurs with innovative ideas could be placed in the hands of already successful companies.

– We should offer, especially to young Deaf businessmen or young with innovative ideas, a chance to connect with special companies from municipality/region/country and start with the formation of study centres (they can be a part of the Institution), which would employ the Deaf.

– Rewarding innovative ideas of the Deaf

MY PATH

Marjan Repše

deaf craftsman

Greetings to all! Allow me to share my story.

My name is Marjan Repše, I am an entrepreneur, deaf, with an invisible disability. I come from Trzin, where I live with my family and where my business office and workshop are. I work in tool industry. We make tools for aluminium casting, plastic casting, punching machine ... I will briefly say a few words about my path. When I went to school – in today's ZGN Ljubljana, School for the deaf and hard of hearing – I thought about my professional path. Firstly, I wanted to be a dentist, but I changed my mind, then my mentor suggested I should be a tailor, but I did not listen to him and lastly, I was suggested to become a blacksmith, but I really did not want to become one. After I finished 8th grade¹, I had professional training in ELMO (electrical installation company). The master accepted me, he was my mentor, teacher. I was really excited about this profession, therefore I was certain this is the right path for me and I enrolled in Secondary Vocational School in Mechanical Engineering. I did my professional training in ELMO Company, same as 4 other deaf students, we all started as apprentices and then we became employees. Some of them were there until their retirement, others became unemployed. I left ELMO and got a job in Iskra, where newer, better machines and newer materials were used. I got to know all the equipment anew and I was excited, because I could work with all these machines, tools ... It was very interesting. Later on, I was trying to convince my now-deceased wife, to open her own business, where I would make tools and she would, with the help of an injection moulding machine, make products from my tools. And so, we opened our own business. We started in 1987. It is true though, that we saved a lot of money beforehand, with the help of which we could buy an injection moulding machine and we had it brought to Slovenia from Germany. Our first project was a toothbrush. We also had to face another big obstacle in the beginning of our business path – communication. Luckily my father-in-law really helped and later we got a fax machine, although the communication through it was quite time-consuming. The communication nowadays is really good, it is not great yet, because we still need quite some time to get responses, especially when in a hurry, the hearing have it easier, they just make a phone call and get all the information and we have to wait. Our company only employed deaf people throughout all these years, with the exception of my daughter, who is a secretary.

18th grade is the final year of primary school in Slovenia (students are approx. 14/15 years old), after which the student chooses a school of secondary education.

We have a contract with ZGN Ljubljana, School for the deaf and hard of hearing,

¹8th grade is the final year of primary school in Slovenia (students are approx. 14/15 years old), after which the student chooses a school of secondary education.

so students can do professional training in our company, with the chance of later employment. The students come for a week or two, but it can be seen, that they are not enthusiastic about this line of work. What also happens is, that the students are supposed to do a certain amount of obligatory work hours, e.g. 100 hours, but they try to get out of it with different excuses. If I had seen an interested student with successfully finished training, I would have offered him/her a job immediately. I must also tell you, that, when I was looking for a new employee, I searched for a deaf worker. And I gave him a job in my company. What I did not know is, that this person was also 'employed' in RACIO (Employment and Vocational rehabilitation). RACIO provided courses 2 times a week for this person and he had to visit seminars ... Two months into the new job, RACIO started looking for this person, wondering where he is and why is he not attending seminars and courses, and I did not know, that this person was 'registered' in RACIO. So there was a contract signed between RACIO and this person plus between me and this deaf person. Anyway, there was this whole mess concerning this person's place of employment. Nobody informed me on how to proceed in this kind of situation and nobody told me that this person already had a signed contract. And I have never received anything for employing a deaf person. Later on, RACIO sent me a few people for a job interview, to work in an assembly line, but I do not practice such kind of work, I specialize in toolmaking. At this point I also have to tell you, that in 2003, we sent an application to Ministry of labour, family, social affairs and equal opportunities for an establishment of a disability company. We waited one year for a reply and we did not get it. We sent the application again and the story repeated itself. There was no answer. Then we contacted them, asking why will they not answer us and they told us, that there were changes in the government management and that we should send the application one more time. We gave up, completely, and we never sent another application. We continue to work as a limited liability company; without the status of a disability company. In a company, where deaf people and a person with the knowledge of sign language are employed, work and communication are optimal. There are no problems regarding communication. The problems arise when dealing with an additional education. I will give, as an example, the course of mechanical computer software. Despite interpreter, the course is really hard to follow. You have to look at the board where the program is running, you have to look to an interpreter, you have to look at your computer and be focused 100%, so you can learn from the course as much as you possibly can. There is no time to make notes. I am fortunate though, to have a supplier for this mechanical computer software, who enables individual lessons for me, that way I can get the most out of it. And here, talking about the needs of the company, employees' education and an interpreter are necessary.

We, the deaf people, get a voucher for an interpreter as a natural person. As a businessman I have to pay for an interpreter and that is how I pay with my vouchers. As I mentioned before, my wife, who was hard of hearing and later my children, were a huge help to me on my professional path. Luckily, I have really great costumers,

who understand my deafness and respect it, if I can say it like that. They know I am reliable, precise and responsible contractor. When I attend a meeting with a buyer, with whom I have never worked before, I go there with an interpreter or my daughter, so we get to know each other and later we can work together without the help of a hearing person. Not long ago I had a problem with an interpreter. We set up a meeting with a notary; the meeting lasted longer than expected. The interpreter was in a hurry, so we did the meeting in a hurry. You can never know how long a meeting will last and here lies the problem; you order an interpreter for one hour, the meeting lasts for an hour and a half but you have to finish in an hour, because the interpreter is in a hurry. In my opinion the biggest issue today is the employment of the young. I, personally, really want 'our old' school system to return – school, lessons for the first half of a year and actual professional training for the second half of a year – that is the only way for students to really learn. We had a couple of students in our company that worked that way. But none of the apprentices decided to continue working in this profession after they finished secondary education. We offer them an introduction to this profession, to materials, machines, management ... And I very much want to get my hands on a person, whom I could teach so well, that he could open his own business and start out the same way as I did. I want that the young would be encouraged and would get all the necessary support on this independent path, including state support, because my start was really tough and I would not have succeeded without the support of my family.

EXAMPLES FROM PRACTICE

Bojan Mord, BA in Graphic Engineering, advisor

Director of the company TIPK, I. I. c.

Opening Thought

Members of the deaf and hard of hearing communities face tougher inclusion at regular jobs, except certain exceptions. Deaf and hard of hearing are known as very diligent, hardworking and exceptional workers, co-workers, honest contractors, but because of their communicational barriers during work process, they are often excluded from their middle for personal growth, and are therefore unequally represented in companies, their voices are not heard enough or are not listened to enough. There are rare exceptions. We can avoid these conditions, if deaf and hard of hearing socialize and work in companies, where their community prevails, with that socialization increases, safety and beneficial well-being improves. Work productivity is also better. That is a guarantee. Historically, those types of companies were, e.g. INDE Koper, Učne delavnice Ljubljana. In my opinion it makes sense, that the company, with mainly deaf and hard of hearing employees, is led by a deaf or hard of hearing individual. That is how I got an idea to form a company, in which an integral part is formed with components mentioned above. A company is now led by a deaf person, there are four deaf or hard of hearing employees, if needed, we also hire a couple of contract workers, who are also deaf or hard of hearing. In our most work-intense months, twelve people were actively cooperating in the company. The hearing personnel deals with grammar and linguistic matters.

Which Activities?

The company was established in 2011 and is registered for four activities, which are:

- technology (development, transferring innovations and launch)
- education (regarding Slovenian sign language)
- call centre (it offers modern technology of executing services in fields of transferring video in multiple different modern platforms)
- television (adjusting contents of daily development of the national meaning)
- popularizing sign language and subtitling

From the acronyms of these four activities, the company's name was created – TIPK, I.I.c.¹

¹The name is combined out of acronyms from Slovenian words for technology, education, call centre and television.

The main activity of the company is TIPK TV. Television was first reachable through a web site and soon we started, as the first one in Slovenia, broadcasting our program through cable providers throughout Slovenia. At the moment we are part of three providers' programme scheme, those are T2, SIOL TV and AMIS. The regular television TIPK TV for the deaf and hard of hearing is also intended for those, who do not have access to the internet or do not have a computer.

Short Timeline

- 1/7/2013 launch of the internet television www.tipk.si
- 16/9/2013 launch of the daily news show, adjusted to the deaf, hard of hearing, blind and visually impaired, broadcasting live on the web site www.tipk.si (three times per week), length up to 35 minutes
- 1/12/2013 seen on regular television programme scheme at T2 (a historic day)
- 1/1/2014 launch of the daily news show, called Yesterday and Today, every week day at 6 p.m.
- 1/12/2014 seen on regular television programme scheme at SIOL TV (a historic day)
- 11/12/2015 seen on regular television programme scheme at AMIS
- 29/1/2016 a 474th daily news show **Yesterday and Today** was on, every week day at 6 p.m., length up to 25 minutes
- 29/1/2016 a first live broadcast from the National Council Chambers of the RS conference Facing the Challenges and Opportunities of Deaf People in the Labour Market

There are ten deaf and three hearing people, who create the programme in this picture.

Problems – Barriers Down the Road

- Communication with **Organs of State**
- First make and then show – **three times more** often than others
- We are a company **on the market**, not a society, not an organization, these three are not the same thing
- Business communication with business partners: **confidentiality and secrecy**
- Zavod Združenje tolmačev za slovenski znakovni jezik (Slovenian Association for Interpreters of Sign Language), help or an obstacle?
- Work costs for hiring a disabled are **two- to three- times higher**, competitiveness?

- We **could earn** 1.000,00 €, but we get 100,00 €.
- The community of the deaf is **a barrier and a burden**, even though you dream, think and work for them every day
- Media Act and other laws are not adapted to the needs of running a special media status of special meaning and other correlated systems

State on the Market

- In a company, employed person with a disability status, is a **“goldmine”**
- Quota system **and** other related fields
- Minimal **wage**, grants, additions, overtime
- Dead run, protection of the workers with the disability status
- Many deaf, despite their organized status, **do not use the right to an interpreter during work hours**
- Organizations do not pay enough attention to companies, which have deaf or hard of hearing employees
- **Distress of the deaf** in the workplace **is much bigger**, than we imagine
- In spite of relatively good **legislation**, we do not know enough about rights of each side
- A deaf worker with minimal wage will be **a state’s social problem** all his life

Ideas and Suggestions for a Better Tomorrow

- State should put out annual public tenders and funding plans, **for ten deaf/hard of hearing** for so called “working and studying” project + additions to the basic salary, they **could freeze a worker’s work position.**
- Legislation upgrade, rewarding disabled community in companies **with more than three deaf employees**
- Intensively offer education with full coverage, permanent education every two years for company’s employees with a disability status, maintaining competitiveness status
- It is necessary **to connect** companies with deaf/hard of hearing employees with organizations and societies
- Forming an **“union”** for people with a disability status
- State’s public tenders, business funds, scoring and evaluation – **normative – more**

– A deaf/hard of hearing person when entering the labour market – **immediately attained rights**

Vision

- An initiator for forming a television channel RTV SLO 4 since **2012**
- **Establishing a partner cooperation between Slovenian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and other organizations**
- A Training Centre for qualified interpreters for Slovenian sign language (Slovenian in gesture) and sign language interpreters in cooperation with Faculty of Arts, Slovenian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ljubljana and other organizations
- Call centre at all levels, technology, which deserves to come in the right hands
- Installation of the smart home systems
- deaf and hard of hearing friendly
- **Expansion** of the TIPK TV activities – soon

Unity is Strength, However ...

- To become a leading broadcasting station
- A great employer of the deaf and hard of hearing
- Having branches all over Slovenia
- Status – pending

Closing Sentence

Instead giving each other the evil eyes, we could have an exemplary talk with key partners – communication and only communication opens a new path, new width and horizon. That is how Slovenia could really become a second Switzerland.

If you want to meet or talk to me, my e-mail address is bojan.mord@tipk.si.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DEAF IN THE LABOUR MARKET: THE ROLE AND DILEMMAS OF THE EMPLOYERS

Maja Skorupan, MA

Independent legal adviser,

Slovenian Employer's Association

Introduction

As I was assigned the task to participate in the conference Challenges and opportunities for the deaf in the labour market, I first thought of what I was to lecture on. In 10 years of my employment at Slovenian Employers' Association this topic was never discussed. Association has never been involved in any project addressing the problems related to the employment of the deaf, nor were we ever notified by our members that this topic could be relevant for them. As I told the conference organizer that I can come to the conference but I shall speak in general about the importance of inclusive labour market, I was promptly answered that they do not need only general information but require up-to-date information about the fact whether employers are employing the deaf, the reasons for them not being employed and what advantages and disadvantages the employers list as related to deaf employees. Therefore I conducted a short survey amongst several members I work closely with and could be ranged amongst medium-sized or large enterprises but differ in business activities (marketing companies and industry). I assumed that the employment opportunities in such companies are bigger and therefore they might have had more experience with the employment of deaf people. However, the results of the survey proved me wrong. Still I can assess I obtained some information from the employers which I hope could be useful for the deaf.

Problematic issues of the education of the deaf

Maybe I should first talk about the problematic issues of the deaf related to the education. As I was reading different sources, I noticed that in most cases the deaf have very low degree of education. Some of them are even illiterate. Definitely this is a reason for less chance of a successful life and a good employment. Therefore we should begin solving this problem by encouraging or acknowledging the deaf their rights to adjusted educational programmes. Only well-educated deaf person can be competitive at acquiring and keeping jobs. Undoubtedly, the employers can significantly contribute to higher skills and education of the deaf. While preparing for the conference, I received a question whether the deaf shall be able to be promoted at work or have management support for continuing their education. Deafness can not be a reason why an employee is not promoted. The fact that a person is deaf can not and must not in any way influence the promotion at work.

What is more, due to deafness an employer can not deny an employee any type of on the job training. This could be considered a discriminatory circumstance which is prohibited by Employment Relationships Act. As far as additional education of the employees is concerned, this is a matter of employer's needs and the agreement between both parties. In practice employers support their workers when acquiring new or higher degree of education, in such cases the collective agreement also grants workers certain rights. As far as this topic is concerned I believe the employers do not represent any obstacle for lower education of the deaf employees.

Advantages of the deaf workers

Few employers I asked for information answered that they employ deaf people. There are not many employees like that; usually it comes down to one person. Many answered that they have never had a deaf candidate so far so they have not been confronted with the question whether to employ such a candidate or not. In companies employing a deaf person, they express extreme satisfaction. It does not mean there were not any adjustments in the work process to enable their employment, it is almost a prerequisite, however, they all agree that a deaf person is no less productive than other workers. Some employers even think that deaf people have exceptionally good predispositions for good workers as they have fewer chances of excessive social integration – for example, excessive chatting at workplace diminishes concentration and consequently the productivity of workers. A deaf person is perceived as diligent, attentive and also persistent. Such a worker is also believed to be an employee who does not have any physical impairments, which is recognized as an advantage (they do not have physical impairments, which are a consequence of a disease or injury). Some employers wrote that the adjustment of workplace for a deaf person is less demanding as for a worker who, for example, has problems with a backbone or cardiovascular system.

Communication barriers

All employers, who stated that they employ a deaf person, listed some problems. Obviously most problems are related to communication. Therefore a deaf person is employed for a post, which does not require that an employee communicates with clients. Marketing companies answered that a deaf person is not suitable for a post in shops as s/he could not or would have problems communicating with customers. Deafness in their opinion represents an insurmountable obstacle because of permanent contact with customers. It is assumed that a deaf person would have problems understanding a customer due to noise of a till or during regular shop activities such as stocking the shelves when an employee is turned away from the selling area. Communication with a deaf person takes up more time. This could be an aggravating circumstance in cases where a work post is not part of a series production, each product is different and a lot of communication amongst workers is required. Whenever there should be frequent negotiations and coordination among all workers, deafness could represent an obstacle. Instructions for a deaf person should be in writing. This

means that despite an organized meeting of a department its head is always confronted with additional task of written communication with a deaf employee. Additional written explanations may be time-consuming (thus prolonging working hours). Employers are always afraid to communicate with a deaf person – they do not know the sign language and assume that they shall not be able to communicate with a deaf person. Most of them have never communicated with a deaf person in their private life. I also had no such experience until I met Mrs Petra Rezar. I have to say I was concerned whether I shall be able to communicate with her in a meeting. The experience, however, was very positive. There were no obstacles and the meeting did not take longer than meetings with a hearing person. Therefore I believe this is mostly just a prejudice we urgently need to overcome. The employers also stated that they did need some time to get used to the need for different communication and overcome certain prejudice and fears.

Safety and health at work

Most employers believe that a major obstacle for employing a deaf person is an aspect of safety and health at work. As a rule systematized work posts demand perfect hearing and a deaf person would not be granted a certificate of health suitability from a department of occupational medicine. This is especially the case regarding the jobs in warehouses or production lines as the instructions for work are transmitted via headphones, where there is a lot of work with forklifts and other dangerous mobile machinery, where there is a lot of traffic in the employer's business area, etc. Most employers admit they do not have proper light signalization mounted, however, they did not share the reasons for that. I conclude this is associated with high costs and that is why employers do not regulate work process areas in such a way. As far as safety-at-work training course is concerned, it is organized individually for deaf employees as written material as well as individual written explanations of a safety engineer need to be prepared. It also represents additional financial costs. Another problem related to the employment of deaf employees may be that they might be less flexible as far as the reallocation to other work posts is concerned. It is practically impossible for a deaf person, especially in cases when not all work posts are adjusted for deaf employees.

Conclusion

Although the employers are aware of the obstacles they might overcome when employing a deaf person, they still decided to employ such a worker. The obstacles they identified obviously did not appear insurmountable. Later in practice it was often established that actually only a minor adjustment of work process can (of course related to suitable work posts) enables them to employ a deaf candidate. They also all confirmed that in the future they would also employ a deaf person and that deafness by itself will not be an obstacle. Still employers expect certain financial incentive and relief for adjustment of a work post for a deaf person. Probably these financial resources are already available, however, I notice that employers are not familiar with their choices. Even my participation at the conference encouraged us to discuss this topic more

thoroughly, namely, we published an article about the employment of the deaf written by Mrs Petra Rezar in our monthly issue of The Employer, we are also discussing the possibility of publishing an article about legislation and rules facilitating the employment of deaf workers with the Employment Office. Thus other employers will be able to read and get acquainted with financial advantage recognized by our regulations when employing a deaf person. Fear associated with the ability to communicate with a deaf person and the concern of safety and health at work will have to be overcome by good practice.

HOW TO SERVICE - WHAT YOU WANT FROM EMPLOYERS WORK SEEKERS, WHO WOULD LIKE TO EMPLOY?

Tamara Guzelj, MSc

Partner Consulting, d. o. o.

How to find a job?

Most jobseekers nowadays realize, sooner or later, that traditional job searching methods do no longer apply. In times of recession and extreme technological progress, not many work positions are offered, but there are plenty of jobseekers. Getting a job, especially a good one, is much different in comparison to 5 years ago. A majority of jobseekers, hearing and deaf, look for a job in a traditional way. Many are desperate, because they have applied for more than 100 jobs and were not even invited to a single job interview. There are plenty of people, who apply for every available job there is. The problem is, that employers are avoiding those kind of jobseekers. Jobseekers often enter a vicious unproductive circle in which they apply for every job possible, getting nothing but rejection in return. And that leads nowhere, people get increasingly desperate and because they are desperate, they do not find a job. The today's situation regarding job searching is knowing exactly what you want to do, where you want to work and then address this self-initiatively, proactively and especially with a positive attitude and enthusiasm. It is extremely hard to get a job without those qualities. But is that easy? No, it is not, especially if you have to deal with communication barrier on a daily basis, which is the case with the deaf and hard of hearing. That is why it is of extreme importance for all deaf and hard of hearing jobseekers, to be self-initiative and make contacts with desired employers using e-mail and thus firstly proving, they can communicate well and that the communication with the deaf or hard of hearing is no "boogeyman". Employers, who are not used to communicating with a deaf or hard of hearing individual, are mainly afraid of not knowing how to communicate with them. That is why the deaf or hard of hearing person should show in advance, that she/he is qualified for a certain job and that she/he knows how to communicate. That is something all employers want. There is something else worth remembering: the job often does not go to an individual, who is the most qualified, but to an individual who wants the job the most, is prepared to work the hardest and is not embarrassed to step out of his comfort zone!

Why?

Job searching has changed dramatically in the last 5 years Recession & extreme technological progress Due to advanced technology and higher pressure for lowers costs, employers have started to look for new associates in completely new ways Traditional job searching methods no longer apply New job search tools and ways of employment for all job seekers

How do you look for a job in these days?

I, I.I.c. – Manager

Proactive and strategic job seeking

What do I want to do? What do I know? What makes me happy?

Where do I want to work? Field, companies in this field

Do an employer research with the help of the internet

Job seekers should try to find 30 potential employers and their search should be based on certain criteria: e.g. useful information about a certain employer – they have positive business activity, they are hiring and they pay on time

Marketing campaign, Sales campaign

Necessary tools:

Marketing campaign:

- CV
- Motivation letter
- LinkedIn profile
- Facebook, Twitter, internet, blogosphere

Sales campaign:

- 30 employers
- Communication
- e-mail

WHY ARE YOU THE RIGHT CHOICE?

How do employers choose who to hire?

Expertise, skills, knowledge and competences

- CV
- Motivation letter
- e-mail communication
- LinkedIn profile
- Facebook, Twitter, internet, blogosphere

- Professional qualification
- deaf education
- Intelligence
- Passion and commitment
- Cultural adequacy for the organization
- Will the candidate fit in?
- Communication skills = barrier

How to present your advantages?

- Different ways of collaboration
- modern technologies, work from home
- Benefits for the employer in case of hiring a deaf person
- Positivity and enthusiasm
- Show excitement and interest in your potential employer and in the specific work place: “I want this job and I want to work for you!” You have to overcome

Job interview

- Does John fill all the necessary requirements for a specific job?
- Can we believe and trust John?
- Will John be pleasant to work with?
- How can anyone make a good impression at a job interview?
- Be confident, but not arrogant
- Radiate **positive energy, excitement and interest**
- **Smile**
- Stand up **straight**
- Make eye contact
- Firm hand shake
- Look presentable
- When do employers, more than half of them, decide for a specific candidate at a job interview? In the first 10 seconds!

- Thank-you letter
- Why?
- E-mail or paper
- What should it contain?

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED (PARTIALLY AND TOTALLY HEARING IMPAIRED) PERSONS – GOALS, ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE INSTITUTION

Lea Kovač, prof. of defectology

Employment section

Keywords

- Employability
- Properties and limitations
- Functioning
- Help/support/services/program
- Networking

Content

- Program of actions for disabled persons 2014–2021
- Institutional activities at implementing the Act of employment rehabilitation and disabled persons' employment
- Business plan of the Institution for year 2016
- disabled persons

Program of actions for disabled persons 2014–2021

- 13 goals, 91 actions
- Alerting and informing
- Habitation and inclusiveness
- Availability
- Children and adult education
- Labour and employment
- Financial and social security

Program of actions for disabled persons 2014–2021

- Health and health insurance – Cultural participation

- Sports and free time activities
- Religious and spiritual life
- Self-organisation of disabled persons
- Violence and discrimination
- Aging with disability

Fifth goal: labour and employment

- Prohibition of discrimination due to disability
- Appreciation of employability of disabled persons relative to amount of labour-active population
- Procurement of a profession with consideration of abilities and capacities
- Presentation and adaptation of work- and life-related conditions and work environment
- Entrance of young disabled persons onto the labour market

API – 5 Labour and employment (five actions)

- 5.1 Unification of professional standards and procedures at determining special needs or necessary help and support and at disability evaluation
- 5.2 Insuring a system of support for employers, who employ disabled persons
- 5.3 Improvement of employability for employed disabled persons

API – labour and employment (actions)

- 5.4 Inclusiveness of all unemployed disabled persons in one of active forms of handling
- 5.5 Insuring a network of professional support for the implementation of employment rehabilitation
- 5.6 Standstill of rights and transition of a disabled person's status of a social rights beneficiary into the status of an employment seeker or an employee and back

5.1 Professional standards and procedures

Implementing ZPIZ procedures:

- reducing the number of applications
 - reducing the number of those included in profession-related rehabilitation
 - founding of an institution for medical expertise
- Implementing ZZRZI procedures:
- stabilizing the number of newly acknowledged disabilities
 - appreciating the number of those involved with services of employment rehabilitation
 - active forms of help – bio-psycho-social model

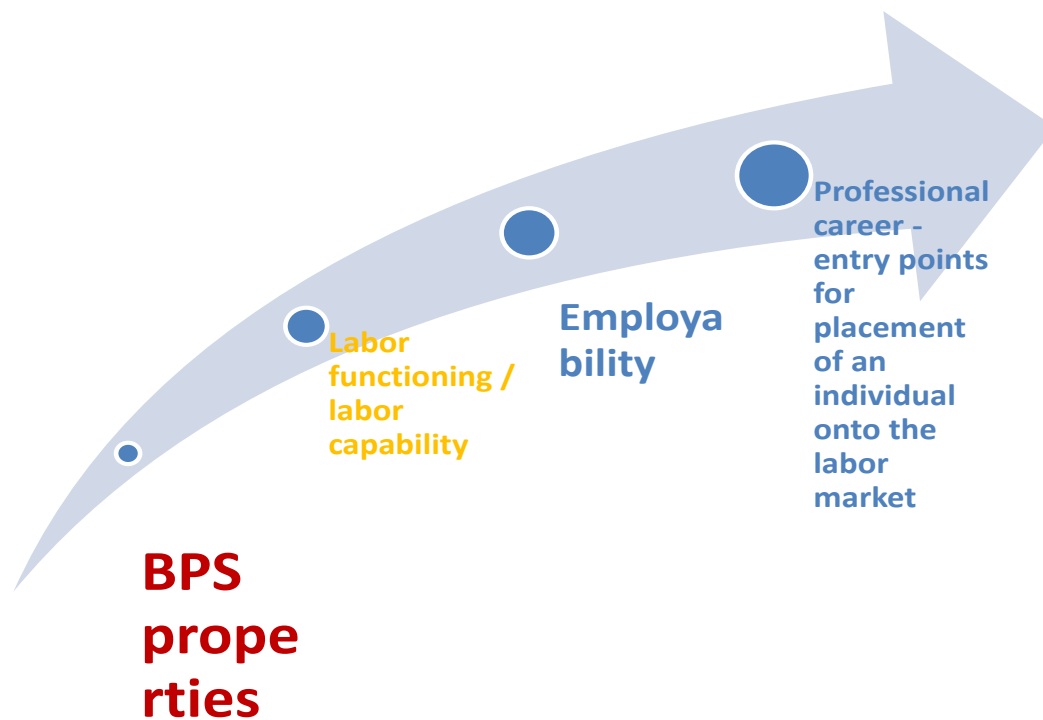
5.2 Activation of unemployed disabled persons

- Appreciating the number of disabled persons involved with services of the Institution according to ZUTD and ZZRZI
- Insuring support to young disabled persons at transition from education to employment
- Stimulative monetary benefits for all included disabled persons, regardless of their status

5.3 Professional support network

- Appreciating the number of professional teams for implementation of ZR for the period of 2014–2020
- Gradual widening of employer network for implementation of training
- Education and training of professional workers
- Improvement of ratio between the number of unemployed disabled persons and the number of rehabilitation advisers
- Inclusiveness of disabled persons' organisations into the system of supportive services

Professional career – entry points for placement of an individual onto the labour market



Education and labour – professional career

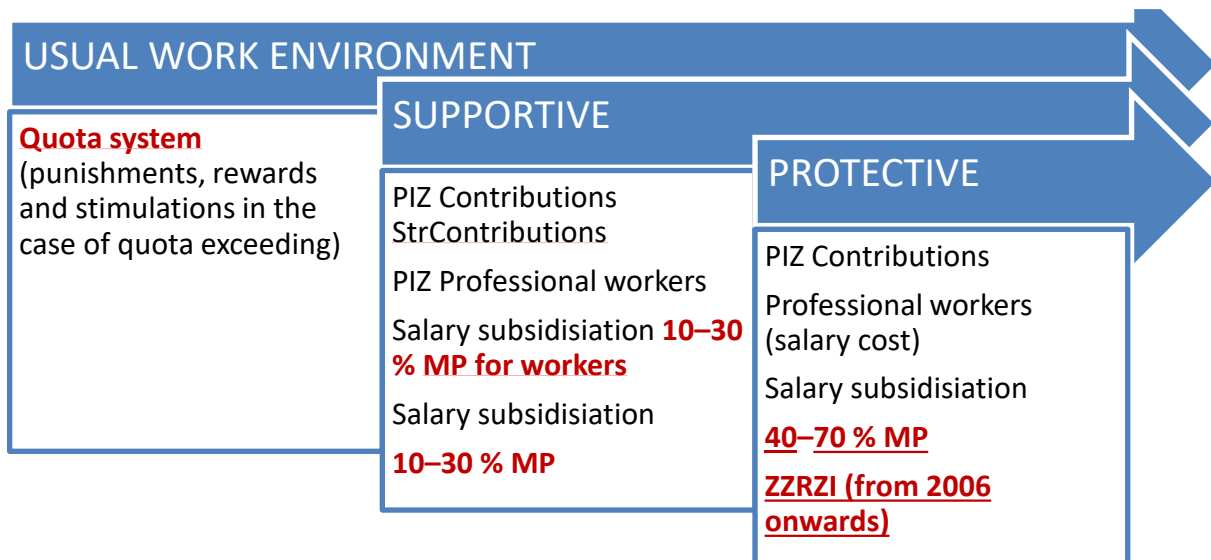
- Implementing modern methods: communicational, lingual, entrepreneurial
- User-friendly legal and formal framework
- Stimulative actions – equalizing of chances
- Perpetual and complex professional **support**

Disabled persons on the labour market (systematic) support:

- **Quota systems** for disabled persons' employment
- **Received contributions**
- Rewards and stimulations for disabled persons' employment
- **P/Z rehabilitation**
- **ZPIZ, ZRSZ**
- Disabled persons' fund
- Disabled person (status/right)

- P/Z rehabilitation
- **Technical** (adaptation of workplace and working environment)
- **Professional** (supportive services)
- **Salary subsidisation** (from 10 up to 70 % of minimal monthly salary)

Systemic support for employed disabled persons on the labour market



Disabled persons unemployment - trends

- Number of unemployed disabled persons by the end of November **2015 – 16.797**
- An increment of unemployed disabled persons between 3,4 and 2,7 % in the last five years, a **reduction of the number of unemployed disabled persons in 2014 and 2015**
- **Increments in the number of employments of unemployed disabled persons since 2011 onwards (30 % in 2011, 27 % in 2012, 9 % in 2013)**

Legal basis for implementation of systemic forms of support at employing disabled persons

- **Decision** about a disabled person status (ZPIZ, CSD, ZRSZ etc.)
- Decision about the right to professional/employment rehabilitation (ZPIZ/ZRSZ)
- Decision about employability within a protective or supportive employment (ZRSZ)
- Decision about unemployability (ZRSZ)
- Rehabilitational adviser

– Rehabilitational commission

Employment rehabilitation and employing of disabled persons – legal basis

- Act of employment rehabilitation and disabled persons' employment
- Instructions for filling out insurance application **forms for disabled persons**
- Rulebook of standards and procedures for determining the amount of subsidy of **salary for disabled persons**
- Rulebook about **employment centres**
- Rulebook about **disabled persons' enterprises**
- Standards of services, network of implementers

Unemployed disabled persons and employment entrances (2009–2015)

	Number UN	Number UN -DIS	Number UN -DIS	Zaposlitve BO-INV (English) Emloyments BO-INV
2009	96.672	13.132	13,6	1.629
2010	110.021	14.920	13,5	1.618
2011	112.754	16.873	14,9	2.107
2012	118.061	17.454	14,8	2.694
2013	124.015	17.936	14,5	2.937
2014	119.458	17.646	14,7	2.929
2015	107.412	16.797	15,6	2.717

Employment opportunities of unemployed disabled persons

- In the period from 2010 to 2013 averagely 13,7 % of **unemployed disabled persons have been employed**
- **Inclusion in the services of employment rehabilitation significantly increases chance of employment (30 % in the period of 2010–2013, 45 % two years after entrance)**
- BI: share of DSP recipients 22,6 %
- BI-ZR: share of DSP recipients 63 %

Structure of unemployed disabled persons – type of disability (2012–2015)

Type of disability	Number of unemployed disabled persons			
	XII 2012	XII 2013	XII 2014	XII 2015
Work-related disabilities and persons with a determined physiological disability	14.393	14.795	14.220	13.232
Categorized youth	834	831	779	721
By ZUZIO and ZZRZI*	2.219	2.294	2.634	2.832
Military disabled persons	8	14	13	11
All	17.454	17.936	17.646	16.797

Institutional activities – implementing ZUTD and ZZRZI

Activities 2015	oseb
Entrances in APZ programs	1.495
Health-related employment counseling	1.886
Rehabilitation counseling for unemployed disabled persons	9.309
Rehabilitation commission proceedings	1.030
Inclusioning and following the implementation of employment rehabilitation along with drafting of a rehabilitation plan	2.228
Evaluating disabled persons' chance of employment	527
Employments of unemployed disabled persons	2.717

Inclusions of disabled persons in APZ and ZR (2012–2015)

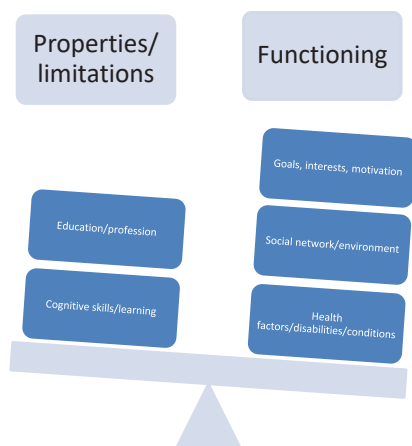
	2012	2013	2014	2015
Inclusions in APZ	1.985	2.448	2.092	1.495
Inclusions in ZR	1.945	1.866	2.110	2.228

Implementation of ZZRZI (2012–2015) – disabled person status/right to ZR

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Gained disabled person status	138	144	174	158
Gained disabled person status / ZR right	480	483	576	535
Gained right to ZR	234	200	241	165

ZZRZI – employability decisions 2006–2015

	Decisions about PZ	Decisions about ZZ	
2006	21	170	165
2007	17	76	85
2008	29	54	131
2009	37	73	163
2010	42	74	140
2011	32	59	204
2012	47	88	184
2013	43	94	190
2014	59	80	250
2015	57	98	303
All	384	866	1.815



Rehabilitation commissions 2006–2015

H66 Suppurative and unspecified otitis media	1
H661 Chronic tubotimpanyc suppurative otitis media	1
H663 Other chronic suppurative otitis media	1
H800 Otosclerosis involving oval window, nonobliterative	1
H809 Unspecified otosclerosis	1
H811 Benign paroxysmal vertigo	1
H819 Unspecified disorder of vestibular function	3
H90 Conductive and sensorineural hearing loss	4
H900 Conductive hearing loss, bilateral	11
H901 Conductive hearing loss, unilateral with unrestricted hearing on the contralateral side	8
H902 Conductive hearing loss, unspecified	2
H903 Sensorineural hearing loss, bilateral	98
H904 Sensorineural hearing loss, unilateral with unrestricted hearing on the contralateral side	3
H905 Unspecified sensorineural hearing loss	103
H906 Mixed conductive and sensorineural hearing loss, bilateral	38
H907 Mixed conductive and sensorineural hearing loss, unilateral with unrestricted hearing on the contralateral side	4
H908 Mixed conductive and sensorineural hearing loss, unspecified	7
H91 Other and unspecified hearing loss	2
H910 Ototoxic hearing loss	1
H911 Presbycusis	1
H912 Sudden idiopathic hearing loss	2
H913 Deaf nonspeaking, not elsewhere classified	70
H918 Other specified hearing loss	2
H919 Unspecified hearing loss	100

RK evaluated chance of employment – sort and level of functional limitations

- Determined medium and heavy problems in the area of functional limitations: knowledge, motivation, work experiences, acquired skills, limitations of work capability, endurance, disability acceptance, efficiency levels and social networks
- Determined **medium problems in the area of locomotional and communicational barriers (less workplace adaptations)**

Criteria for recognition of the right to ZR

- Seeking of an appropriate job and employment
- Professional goals
- Amount of knowledge
- Work experiences
- Acquired skills
- Social skills and arts
- Social support networks
- Motivation

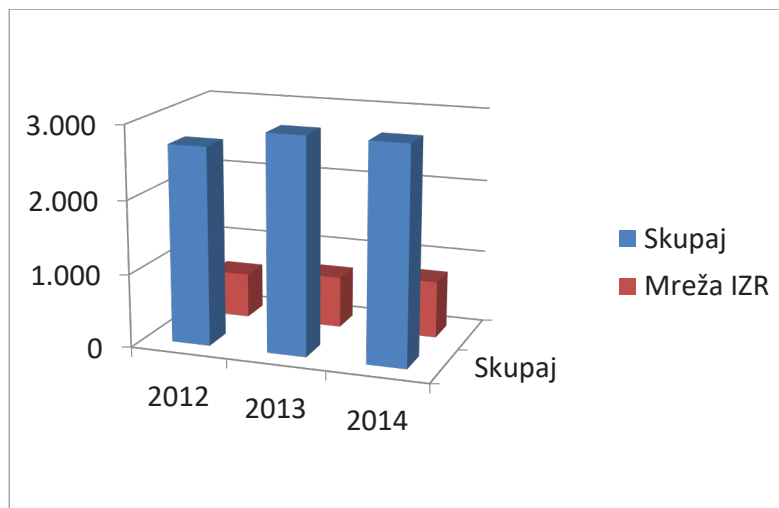
Criteria for recognition of the right to ZR

- Capability limitations (work related)
- Efficiency problems (work related)
- Problems and barriers at one's own disability acceptance
- Barriers (locomotional, communicational etc.)
- Need for analysis and adaptation of workplace and work environment
- Self-reliance at training, education, employment

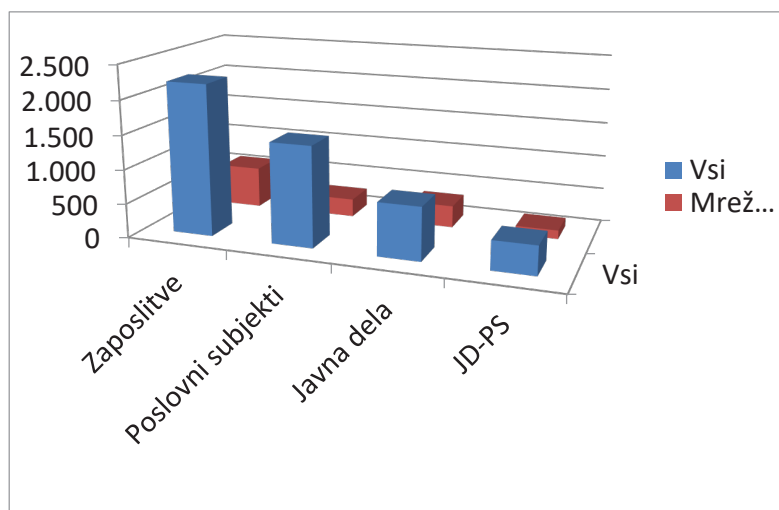
Employer network IZR 2015

- 1.275 employers
- 262 training areas
- 723 persons at training

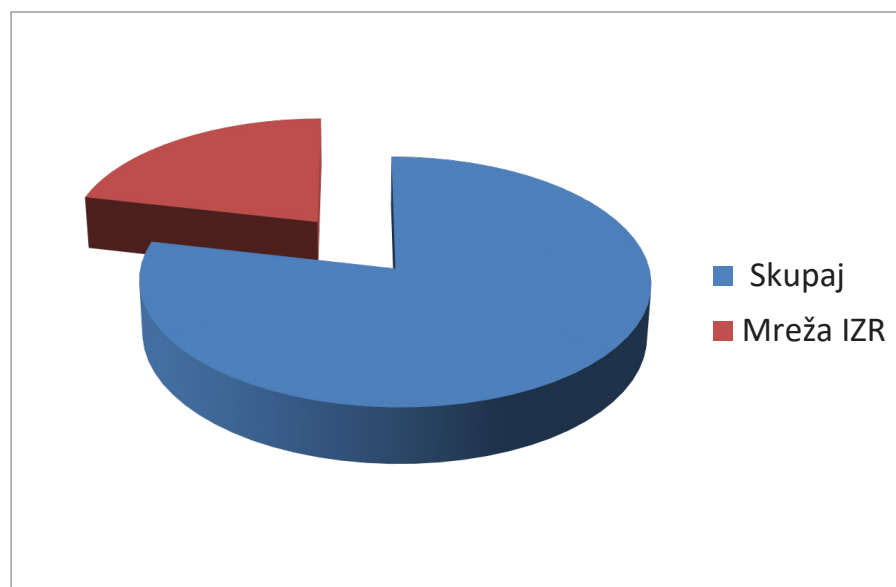
Employments of unemployed disabled persons
2012–2014



Employments of unemployed disabled persons 2014



Disabled person employments 2014 – share of those included in ZR



Implementation of employment rehabilitation services

- Insurement of a dense and **continued proceeding** in the services framework – a waiting list
- Emphasis on an **employer network** and actual workplace training
- **Permanence of professional team** members and their inclusion in the implementation of other programs in accordance with predicted scope of team activities
- **Knowledge of conditions** and laws **of labor market** and service implementators' employments

Institutional PN 2016

- **Implementation of a team** proceeding before the Institution's rehabilitation commission proceeding
- **Following the implementation of a rehabilitation plan:** following the effects of an inclusion in an employment rehabilitation, procurement of a disabled person's feedback information, planning the content and scope of necessary services

Training of rehabilitation commission members

- **Fortifying the network of employment rehabilitation implementators:** insuring an active participation of rehabilitation counselors at regular monthly implementator team meetings
- **Cooperation with employers:** systematic following of employed disabled persons' employability with decisions about protective or supportive employment
- **Cooperation with implementators of social inclusiveness programs:** systematic following of included disabled persons' employability
- **Cooperation with disabled persons' organisations and clubs:** alerting and informing members and public about disabled persons' insurance and rehabilitation issues and systematic identification of disabled persons' needs
- **Cooperation with local community:** founding of employment centres, active participation at the drafting of situational analysis and implementation of action plans in recipient municipalities/candidates for the Municipality According to the Disabled list (office directors and advisers)

Funding of support services – challenges

Issues (of payment) in support that is implemented by:

- family members
- employer (mentors, leaders)
- disabled persons'/non-governmental organisations

A case from ZR practice

- M., 33 years
- Primary school, 2 years of work experiences (baker)
- Motivated, unformed professional goals
- No health problems, hearing impairment
- 12 months of employment rehabilitation
- Suggested for supportive employment

Barriers at employment:

- work in a noisy environment
- in draught, damp, dusty and cold environment
- wherever good verbal communication and hearing are necessary
- at height or at depth

Employment opportunities:

- extraordinary capacity for precision
- punctuality
- attention
- focus on the work process
- excellent spatial awareness
- error sensing
- practical resourcefulness
- Thank you for your attention.

WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT MYSELF?

Rob van Maanen

Director FlexPay BV, Netherlands

General information for employers

- Contemplate information about deafness and/or hard of hearing. Knowledge about what it means to be deaf or hard of hearing can remove or avoid a lot of misunderstanding, misconceptions and prejudices.
- Remember that every deaf or hard of hearing is different. It is therefore important to ask questions to the appropriate person. Together, you can agree on what the right solutions are at work. Consider not just yourself solutions, but discuss them together. The deaf or hard of hearing person is an expert in this case and has probably already found his own solutions.
- Discuss with the employee how you want to arrange communication. Does the deaf or hard of hearing person speak with voice or uses his/her voice rather not? Not all deaf people can talk well or easily. The self-talk and lip reading can cost a lot of energy.
- Communication may include a sign language interpreter, a writing interpreter, one-on-one conversations, communicating as much as possible via e-mail or chat programs like Skype or Google chat. In short communication situations you can use pen and paper or a laptop/tablet/mobile phone.
- Check that the deaf or hard of hearing has everything well understood (e.g. the division of tasks). Deaf and hard of hearing would sometimes pretend to have understood, but have actually not understood.
- Realize that deaf or hard of hearing most (or all) of information receive through their eyes. They hear badly or anything. In conversations can really help if you're using mimicry as much as possible, clearly articulate and speak quietly (no exaggeration) and logical gestures used with it. Everyone can portray with his or her hands things and with a little creativity, you can make communication so much more visual for deaf and hard of hearing.
- Deaf or hard of hearing often have to figure out what people are saying or asking for repetition. It's very nice for them as colleagues often take the initiative to explain about what is spoken, so as to involve the deaf or hard of hearing colleague at the talk or meeting.
- Hold with meetings into account the fact that the deaf or hard of hearing often lags slightly behind with the information and it can be difficult to pick it up in the conversation.

Create space for it, so that the deaf or hard of hearing employee also his / her contribution to surrender. Not everyone is assertive enough to take the initiative themselves.

Tips for the deaf and hard of hearing

The deaf and hard of hearing can work just fine. Only, there are some things you need to bear in mind. And also one should bear in mind the things of the organisation for which you work. The most important thing is that you know exactly what you can do and can't do well. And understanding of your own qualities and skills is therefore important. Every deaf and hard-hearing person is unique, which makes it difficult to give standard tips. Below, you can read a number of tips that might be useful to you!

Applying for jobs

- Turn your deafness or hard hearing into strength! At which things are you actually better than others, despite your deafness or hard hearing? For example, consider more-visual thinking, more-focused working, being more dextrous with your hands?
- Do you find it hard to put together a good application letter or CV? You can find tips on many websites on the Internet.
- Have someone else check your application letter or CV. It is nice when it contains no linguistic or spelling mistakes and someone else can take a fresh look at it.
- Think well about whether you want to state your deafness or hard of hearing in the application letter. Depending on the type of organisation, honesty can sometimes be appreciated. We think that you should state it if your deafness/hard hearing has implications for the job. Do you have any talents thanks to your deafness or hard hearing? Then you can certainly mention them. If it doesn't have implications for the job, it might be better to save it for the first interview.
- If you didn't state your deafness/hard hearing in your application letter and are invited for an interview, it is important to consider whether you want to do the interview with an interpreter or not. We think that, above all, you should be yourself during the interview. Do you normally use an interpreter in conversations with people with unimpaired hearing? Then, by all means, bring an interpreter along!
- Prepare your interview well! Practise the frequently asked questions with someone else. You can find these here.
- Tell them, during the interview, about the solutions and provisions that are available to enable you to do your job well. Think: sign-language or writing interpreters, sign-language training for your colleagues, a warning system, text-telephone service for calling.

– It is important to be yourself, to be enthusiastic, to know how to sell your qualities and to come up with solutions to be able to do your job well.

While working

– Let your colleagues know that you are deaf or hard of hearing and indicate how they can best take that into account. – An optimal work environment is important. Consult with the employer regarding what your ideal workspace looks like. Where is your workspace in the room and what is the lighting, for example, like in the room?

– Organise a sign-language course for your colleagues during the initial phase or invite somebody who is in-the-know to tell them more about hard hearing or deafness and how colleagues can deal with that. It is nice to let them experience what it is like to be deaf or hard of hearing, or to teach them more about sign language or deaf culture. People with unimpaired hearing usually like that and find it interesting, as long as you present it in a fun and enthusiastic way.

– Remain true to yourself and to others: Being deaf or hard of hearing can be tiring. Keep a good eye on your own boundaries!

– Don't forget to build relations with your colleagues in an informal way too: this helps create a good atmosphere at the workplace. Chat to people by the coffee machine, during lunch or go and have a drink with them. This can sometimes be tiring but raises your visibility within the organisation!

– It can be handy to arrange a 'buddy' at work: a colleague who keeps in close contact with you and passes on not only the important information but also the informal information that's around. The deaf and hard of hearing often don't catch information floating around the corridors.

– Meetings can be rather intensive for the deaf and hard of hearing. Make agreements with your colleagues about how the meeting can go well for you. For example, agree that people will not talk over each other and that there should be a list of items discussed. It can also help to sit next to the minute-taker or to be the chairman yourself so that you can steer the meeting well and direct people to talk in turns.

– Making phone calls is difficult or simply impossible for the deaf and hard of hearing. Yet, for some jobs it is important that you can easily be reached. Decide with your employer how you can resolve this issue. Perhaps one of your colleagues can answer the phone for you? Or perhaps people will be able to reach you quickly and easily by email or by means of a chat program?

– Plan regular ongoing assessments: you can explore timely issues and frustrations. Always be as open and honest as possible and give you deaf or hard of hearing employees the chance to develop themselves or improve things.

- Organise there a pal or a buddy at work. This hearing person can provide the deaf or hard of hearing employee of (in) formal information within the organization. A deaf or hard of hearing person often lacks much informal information because he / she does not automatically in informal talks at the coffee machine. This pal or buddy can be the one who regularly engages the deaf or hard of hearing person with it in group discussions.
- Please note that deaf or hard of hearing employees who work very concentrated may perhaps feel lonely in the organization. Ask the person for example to go to lunch or to go for a walk.
- A deaf or hard of hearing employee is usually highly motivated to work, it is important to ensure that this isn't going to be too much for the person. Check whether there is enough relaxing time. An overwork or burnout is more lurking within this group.
- Would your company or organization reach an additional group of new employees? Ask the deaf or hard of hearing employees to think about the accessibility of the organization. He / she is the expert and will like to put in his / her expertise.

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- Remain true to yourself and to others: Being deaf or hard of hearing can be tiring. Keep a good eye on your own boundaries!
- Don't forget to build relations with your colleagues in an informal way too: this helps create a good atmosphere at the workplace. Chat to people by the coffee machine, during lunch or go and have a drink with them. This can sometimes be tiring but raises your visibility within the organisation!
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the phone for you? Or perhaps people will be able to reach you quickly and easily by email or by means of a chat program?

The basic question

What are the challenges and factors for success, which relate to the participation of deaf and hard of hearing in the labour market?

Challenges

If a deaf person has received too much support to family members, special schools (schools for the hearing impaired) and using sign language, may experience more difficulties in the normal conditions in the workplace. The level of education is the size of the cases (too) low.

Low self-esteem

A greater emphasis on employing people based on their communication, rather than to competence.

Success factors

When we talk about human behaviour pattern - awareness of what we can do or what we can't do, how to behave in certain circumstances - assertiveness

In the process of job applications it is important that the person is aware that, due to their disability in the workplace is accepted otherwise. When viewed from the positive point of view, it is easier to convince an employer to recruit a deaf person who has more knowledge than the person who hears normally and does not have this knowledge.

- What do you know about yourself?
- What can I ask or. You should ask yourself before looking for a job?
- Do I know what my passion is?
- What motivates me?
- Do I know what I can do?
- Do I know what people think about me?
- Do you know what knowledge, skills and qualities do I have?
- What do I know about the current state of the labour market?

- Do I have a realistic idea of their opportunities in the labour market?
- How can I contribute to greater company success?

Practical examples for job search

Or know more about the cases of employees of the deaf in the (regular) services:

- in their family circle;
- among their friends;
- on the Internet;
- movies on YouTube;
- in other countries;
- about themselves.

What we have to be vigilant about?

- Or they are carried out research on why deaf people get a job and how?
- What they did to get the job?
- Is it easier to get a job in a small (smaller) or large (large) company?
- At what age group is the largest employment opportunity?
- Is it easier to get a job in a small (smaller) or large (larger) town?
- Who is easier to get a job? Male or female?
- What kinds of jobs are of the highest rank and why?
- It may already be an analysis relating to the method of application for employment

Proposals for jobseekers

Use or develop the necessary special tools for assessing the deaf that will make you more visible. Rehearsing the application process for a job from A to Z (in the real world with real employers). Before the employment interview is to be consulted on whether the employer will say that I am deaf; I shall also be consulted regarding the presence of an interpreter in an interview. It should be used social media to connect with employers.

Proposals how to get a job

It must be investigated, in which sectors, units, enterprises can expect the greatest chance of success in mediation and referral to the employer (on the basis of previous successful attempts). Before speeding forward the request, first send brief question and information of a precise employer (that is brief information about the employer, which is helpful for us). Visit employers (relaxed and without any obligation) in order to talk to them about work and the workplace needed to be done by the deaf and hard of hearing. Discuss the possibilities for service and creativity in the service. Build a relationship.

Why hire a deaf person? Deaf employees are faced with many more challenges at work and are much more patient and flexible. Deaf people are extremely talented to overcome communication and cultural barriers in everyday circumstances. This fact can be understood as the skill and the solution of many problems that arise in interpersonal communication. Deaf or hard of hearing person can in the company propose services, features or advertising ideas to which other employers would have never thought of or thought about them.

Why hire a deaf person?

Studies have shown that people with disabilities are more reliable, responsible and loyal to the company. In one study it was found that deaf and hard of hearing people are the most protected person in the company! Deaf are inclined to the fact that the service is working hard in order to secure their position, and looking for opportunities to advance in their careers. Working environment, with its deaf employees contribute to the enrichment of the culture of the entire company.

Movies on YouTube

On YouTube we can find many successful examples of deaf employees in regular service. We can analyze examples:

In what kind of company or organization?

What is the function of the job?

What kind of education is required?

Where is the company?

What are the collaborators?

What adjustments are made in the workplace?

Tips

Sign in Job - Tips for hearing impaired

General information for employers

Examples from the Netherlands

Future steps

Establish (international) by a joint working group, which will be in addition to the normal, are evidence of some members of the deaf and hard of hearing people. To develop new methodologies that can be used in several countries. To participate in European programs such as Erasmus +

MY CAREER AS A DEAF POLITICIAN

Helga Stevens

*Member of the European Parliament, the Group of
European Conservatives and Reformists*

Who am I?

- Deaf sign language user
- Born in Flanders, Belgium
- First deaf lawyer in Belgium
- Member of the European
- Parliament

Early career

Educational background

- 1988-1993 Law studies (Catholic University of Leuven)
- 1991-1992 Erasmus Exchange (Leeds, United Kingdom)
- 1993-1994 Master of Law (Berkeley, California)

Internships

1991 -1992 Brussels Law Office

1993 - 1994 Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund

- California Center for Law and the Deaf
- Work in NGOs - Non-governmental Organisations
- European Disability Forum (EDF)
- Legal Rights Working Group
- Women with Disabilities Committee
- European Union of the Deaf (EUD)
- President
- Executive Director
- Flemish Deaf Association (Fevlado)

- President
- Board

Political career

- 2004-2014 Member of Flemish Parliament
- 2007-2014 Member of Ghent City Council
- 2007-2014 Belgian Senator
- 2014- Member of the European Parliament

European Parliament

Libe

- Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice & Home Affairs
- Migration & asylum
- Fundamental Rights (= human rights!)
- Privacy
- Data protection

Empl

- Committee on Employment and Social Affairs
- Many disability topics
- Employment Equality Directive
- UNCRPD Implementation Report
- Refugees: social inclusion and integration into the labour market

Sign language in the EU/EP

- Resolutions 1988 & 1998
- UNCRPD ratification (EU 2010)
- UNCRPD Resolution 2015
- Accessibility of public hearings & Committee sessions

- Provision of sign language interpreters by EP

Deaf people in politics (Europe) European Parliament

- Dr Ádám Kósa (Hungary)
- Helga Stevens (Belgium/Flanders)

National Parliament

Gergely Tapolczai (Hungary)

Helene Jarmer (Austria)

Pilar Lima (Valencia/Spain)

Martin Zierold (Berlin/Germany)

VIDEO ADDRESS

Dr. Ádám Kosá

MEP of the European People's Party

Welcome to everyone!

First of all, thank you for your kind invitation, it was indeed a real honour to me; however, regretfully, I am not able to take part in your important meeting today. As we all know, we, Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons, are a special community. It is a special one because members of this community face multiple discriminations and a much higher risk of social exclusion. Nevertheless, I believe that our community can remind not only us but everyone else to pay more and exclusive attention to those who also have disabilities we have, which is going to be more relevant in an ageing society. At the same time, please allow me to partly criticize the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities as a shadow reporter to the upcoming report on its implementation process from the EP side. Why? Because even though there are 18 members in the UN Committee responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Convention, only one excellent hard of hearing expert has been elected so far representing the hearing impaired whilst the hard of hearing community is among the largest ones in the world. The hard of hearing community thinks that the Convention does not deal with this unique community quite frequently. We think that before having any employment opportunity inclusive education is a decisive prerequisite to the success of inclusion. I personally think that without the inclusive education hard of hearing children will be excluded in the future too. The Committee of the CRPD will soon discuss about one of the most relevant articles, Article 24 in particular, in which the Deaf and Hard of hearing persons is expressly mentioned in relation to the inclusive education. With this excellent news I hope all Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons will have much better opportunities in the field of employment. For this purpose I wish you a very successful conference here and I am personally looking forward to seeing the outcomes you will achieve today!

CONFERENCE: FACING THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF DEAF PEOPLE IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Greetings and welcome to you all. I would like to start today's conference with an introduction of our schedule and guests. We have here with us, Mr. Mitja Bervar, President of the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia, Dr. Igor Šoltes, Member of the European Parliament, Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance, who is also a host of this conference, his European Parliament colleague Ms. Helga Stevens, from the European Conservatives and Reformists Group, Ms. Dragica Bac, General Manager of Directorate for Disabled, War Veterans and Victims of War at the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Mr. Boris Černilec, Director of the ZGN Ljubljana, School for the Deaf, Mr. Mladen Veršič, President of the Slovenian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Ms. Petra Rezar, President of the Slovenian Association of Teachers of the Deaf. I would also like to greet all of our other honoured guests, among which are employer representatives, entrepreneurs, non-governmental organizations, fellow teachers, students and pupils. Welcome to this international conference, titled Facing the Challenges and Opportunities of Deaf People in the Labour Market, financed by Dr. Igor Šoltes, Member of the European Parliament and Slovenian Association of Teachers of the Deaf. During our conference preparations, I came across a statement written by Minister Dr. Anja Kopač Mrak, in which she stated that a job and employment represent crucial factors in enabling social security and welfare. Beside governmental and state institutions, which all form, take care of and cooperate with deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind and people with hearing aids, there are numerous other non-governmental institutions and companies, which put the same amount of effort and attention to their easier integration. There are also DLAN society, our society, Association of Interpreters and every one of them, each to the best of their abilities, try to make our life the best it can be. We are all in the same boat, the deaf and the hearing; all of our problems and ways in which they affect and influence our lives. Those were all questions, which gave us an idea for this conference and consequently led us to its organization. For this purpose, we have invited our honoured guest, speakers from Slovenia and abroad, and asked them to talk about their views on these topics. I would like to see, that we maintain the level we setup beforehand and it will make me extremely happy if, by the end of this conference, you start thinking about some new idea, which has been presented at this conference. I believe we will succeed in that. But before we start, I would like, as protocol demands, to ask our honoured guests for a few words, to welcome us. I will stick to the protocol and our program and follow our written list of speakers. I will invite all of our speakers in one introduction, so we do not walk back and forth all the time. Firstly, I would like to welcome on stage **Mr. Bervar**, President of the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia, he will

be followed by our host, **Dr. Igor Šoltes**, then **Mr. Mladen Veršič**, President of the Slovenian Association, **Ms. Petra Rezar**, President of the Slovenian Association of Teachers of the Deaf, **Ms. Helga Stevens**, Member of the European Parliament and we will finish with **Mr. Boris Černilec**, Director of the ZGN Ljubljana, School for the Deaf and **Ms. Dragica Bac**, from Directorate for Disabled, War Veterans and Victims of War. Thank you.

Mitja Bervar, President of the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia

First of all, a warm greeting to all of you, who gathered here today, in the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia. Honored organizers of today's conference, respected Dr. Igor Šoltes, Member of the European Parliament, Ms. Petra Rezar, President of the Slovenian Association of Teachers of the Deaf, a special welcome to our guest from Belgium, Ms. Helga Stevens, Member of the European Parliament, and to all other important participants: Mr. Mladen Veršič, Mr. Boris Černilec and Ms. Dragica Bac from the Ministry. I would also like to greet all of you, who came here today and welcome, as mentioned before, guests who represent employers and educational institutions. I welcome all of you in the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia, a second home to Slovenian Parliament. As part of the legislative authority, the National Council is the right place to talk about matters of appropriate legislation and effective implementation of laws in everyday life. That also applies to problems, faced by the deaf and hard of hearing. There were some steps made in Slovenia in the last couple of years regarding legislation, mainly at systemic level, and trying to improve integration conditions for the deaf and hard of hearing citizens in social process. With the passing of the law, regarding the use of Slovenian sign language, a path to more equal integration into everyday life has been opened. I would especially like to point out acquiring the right to an interpreter, which deaf have in public institutions, especially the right to an interpreter during education process and in some other public services. Education is the surest path, which leads to employment and we can say, that the possibilities of accumulating knowledge, information and communication are key. Slovenian legislation ensures that the deaf can be, with the interpreter's help, effectively integrated into the lifestyle of the hearing majority and consequently have more independence and autonomy. As part of the Resolution on the National Programme for Language Policy, Slovenia has committed itself until year 2018, that it will, in all areas of public life, with different mechanisms, ensure ways of communication, which will grant equal participation in society of all social groups. We have also written, that the country will, with special delicacy, look after speakers with special needs, which also applies to the deaf and hard of hearing. Another novelty has also been mentioned and that is the policy, which is in force for over a year now, about technical accessories and vehicle adjustment, which not only improve the quality of life among disabled, including the deaf, but also increase possibilities of their equal participation in the labour market. Unfortunately, the deaf do not reach a high level of education in our country. 89 % of them only finish primary or professional level of education, therefore they often face

unemployment or worse paid work positions, their social status is weak. The percentage of unemployed deaf remains high, which shows the need to actively deal with this problem. Some employers remain wary toward disabled, even though experience often shows quite the opposite. It mostly shows that prejudices are unjust. Honoured guests and participants, esteemed organizers, today's conference is an opportunity for the deaf, hard of hearing, employers, legislators and for all of us present here, in the National Council chamber. It is important that we listen to each other. It is important to define barriers and recognize ways to remove them. Only then we can suggest changes and consequently contribute to improved integration of the deaf in the labour market. In doing so, it is also important listening to other countries' experience, getting acquainted with good examples and try to implement them in our everyday life. I would like to thank all participants of this conference for their effort, consideration and I want to wish them a continuous successful work, here at the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia, where representatives of different interest groups have worked and actively cooperated side by side for years and are trying to help all of you and with that, also all of us. Thank you.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Thank you. Dr. Šoltes, please.

**Dr. Igor Šoltes, Member of the European Parliament, Group of the Greens/
European Free Alliance**

I wish you all a good morning. Esteemed president of the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia, Mr. Mitja Bervar, thank you, again, for inviting us and making this conference possible, which all shows how well you recognize problems of modern society, not only political ones, but also social and civil ones. You also know how important it is, to understand this issue and to make sure all citizens and members of our community are equally integrated in day to day life and work, so thank you again. Esteemed introduction speakers, respected ladies and gentlemen, honoured participants, if I may, I would like to start by saying, that I am honoured and pleased to greet you in such numbers, because today's conference is addressing an important issue, which is the position of the deaf and hard of hearing in society, and it mainly focuses on their access to the labour market. It is a very important topic, because the unemployment rate among the deaf throughout Europe is relatively high. In time of economic and financial crisis, which we have experienced in recent years, the situation has gotten even worse. Therefore, numerous institutions warn, that the deaf and hard of hearing are still facing more obstacles when seeking employment – education problems (which is a consequence of unadapted educational systems), misunderstandings, employers' inflexibility, work conditions, insufficient accessibility to information in visual form, lack of support programs at workplaces etc. All these are, without a doubt, reasons for more meetings, more measurements to be taken, which could gradually remove these obstacles. Because access to the labour market and with that the right

to employment, are essential for the life of each individual. Because it does not only affect financial state, but also social integration, health, physical and mental wellbeing and general feeling of self-confidence and self-fulfilment. We must not forget, that mentioned issues are part of a bigger picture, which shows common misunderstandings and disregards of the deaf people's needs on numerous areas. As an example, I can point out the lack of accessible information and education in sign language, an issue I also pointed out at European Parliament. It is a serious problem, because a poor accessibility to the contents in sign language consequently hardens achieving all other rights, including the right to a job. That is why I stood up for broader representation of sign languages and for appointing sign languages as one of the official languages of the European Union. On this occasion, I would like to mention, that in December 2015, European Accessibility Act saw the light of day and I hope that will bring numerous rights to the deaf. The Act defines common demands regarding accessibility of some key products and services. Advantages are, especially in the field of products and services, with the intention of ensuring full social participation for all disabled in the EU. This is a very important document, for which we have waited a long time and it refers to very important aspects of everyday life, work and covers matters from bank services, ATMs, personal computers, telephones, audiovisual services, transportation, e-books and on-line shopping. This document will ease access to these mentioned products and services for approximately 80 million disabled in Europe, which is of extreme importance. Topics of today's conference therefore address an extremely complex issue that requires a wholesome and systematic response on numerous levels, i.e. local, national and EU. I wish that today's conference, which actually combines all aspects of this field, also contributes us, so we can unambiguously identify problems and challenges in the field of deaf employment and that all conclusions and suggestions, which will emerge out of this conference, will set some challenging goals in the field of deaf employment, which could lead to exchanges of good examples and bring good common solutions, that would finally lead to bigger integration in the labour market. One of more important aspect of this is the realization, that the labour market, which equally integrates all groups of people, is a successful market that brings advantages to the whole society. Therefore, it is important, that we know how to recognize and appreciate contributions of each individual and that we ensure equal and dignified position to every person. Honoured participants, I wish that this conference will bring valid conclusions, as we have already said, which could, also with the help of the National Council, find their place in the discussion, that goes for National Assembly and other places, which would mean accepting and changing different rules and laws and simultaneously aspire to more efficient implementation of rules in everyday life. I wish you all a successful conference and thank you again for your visit. I wish you all the best. Thank you.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Thank you. As a moderator I will make a decision. I think that this was a great opportunity to show, how it is to live with our disabilities and adjust to them. The

demonstration was very explicit and obvious, so a huge appreciation to our previous speakers for showing patience and adapting to the situation. The decision that I am talking about at this moment is, that we are completely subordinated to needs of this transcript. I think that the transcript is not essential for this conference at this time, which is why I will ask all of our future speakers to talk in their usual tempo. The transcript may be a little incomplete because of it. I apologize and at the same time show my gratitude to Ms. Silva Pavčič, who works on the transcript and wish to do a great job, but I also think that the transcript should not be the thing to which we should conform at this point. We do want to please every participant of this conference, that is the reason for bringing interpreters and I think that is enough for now. If not, we can be here until tomorrow and the purpose of this conference might not be fulfilled. Thank you for your patience. Another thing I was warned about. As you can see, we have translation into English language. If anyone needs headphones, we have them on the right side, ready for translation. That is the second thing. And the third matter is that I would like to get back to our introduction speakers. Next in line is, please, Mr. Mladen Veršič, President of the Slovenian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Come, please.

Mladen Veršič, President of the Slovenian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Can you all see me? Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I will use Slovenian sign language and I ask you, to watch the interpreter for international sign language. Greetings to you all and special welcome to our guests, representatives from the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, to the President of the National Council, to Members of the European Parliament and to the EU office of Dr. Šoltes, Member of the European Parliament, who supported this conference. This conference set up a few important objectives or challenges, for which you will all seek appropriate answers. The basic question, which you have to ask yourself is, do deaf people have such problems with employment because the employment area is unregulated or because the educational system is inappropriate. The Slovenian employment field has, system-wise, a relatively good organization. There are definitely areas in need of improvement, but the systemic solutions in the fields of employment are equivalent to those in the European Union. Labour Relation Act, Vocational Rehabilitation Act, employment of people with disabilities and other regulations systematically regulate certain rights of the disabled, e.g. services, vocational rehabilitations, the right to get disability status, employment in supported employment, sheltered employment, workplace adaptation or means for work, which is part of the law as a quota system for employing a disabled person etc. So why do employers, despite all of these systemic solutions, still hesitate in employing a hearing impaired person?

Slovenian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, which celebrates its 85th birthday this year and connects thirteen inter-municipal societies of the deaf and hard of hearing all over Slovenia, is a representative disability organization for four types of

hearing impairment: the deaf and hard of hearing people, the deaf-blind people and people with hearing aid. We notice a lot of fear among employers, when considering hiring deaf, hard of hearing or deaf-blind individuals. The fear comes from unknowing, that people with hearing impairment are capable individuals and good workers, who want to succeed – for themselves and for their employer. It is true though, that we need some reasonable work adjustments to do our job, depending on our specific needs. We welcome the decision from the Minister of Labour, that Slovenia has one special contractor for vocational and employment rehabilitation for the deaf and hard of hearing, which is a company called Racio. We are pleased with the fact, that since 1991, so 25 years now, Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Celje has established a disability company Zaupanje (Trust), which has ten employees, six of them have a disability. In the year 2013 an idea was formed about creating junctures and so, based on the partnership between Racio Social and Inter-Municipal Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing for Gorenjska Auris, Auris Kranj, two junctures in two Slovenian regions were established as part of the project, junctures which enable and support, with informative, educational and guidance activities, a wholesome model of help, offered to youth with special needs. These experiences can be a great foundation for forming suggestions, on how to deal with problems and how to realize these solutions at systemic level. The Alliance of Companies Employing Disabled People of Slovenia also works successfully in Slovenia. I ask you, that you also include all of these very important partners, when preparing your conclusions, partners which, unfortunately, did not find their place at this conference. The key problem in hearing impairment employment is our education and competency in our professions. Based on a research, 89 percent of the deaf in Slovenia has finished vocational school at best, 10 percent have finished technical school and 1 percent has at least collage level education. We can see where the root of our biggest problem is. Why do hearing impaired people, among all disabled, have the lowest education? Why is the educational structure for hearing impaired people that much worse in comparison to Slovenian average? Could that be the reason for such challenging transition of youth to the labour market? I personally think, that a better education and professional training are predispositions for a young person to find an appropriate employment. Because of their deafness or hearing impairments, the deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind job seekers should be better prepared and qualified than others. Unfortunately, that is not always the case. I would like to finish my speech with a final thought. Because people do not know much about the deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind and our specific needs, when it comes to communication, it hurts us deeply, that we are surrounded by distortions and innuendos, that hearing impaired people are not entitled to personal assistance. In this time, when our authority is talking about a Personal Assistance Law, we urge all people, to abstain from such negative comments and I invite them, to join me for a day or two, to see for themselves, that despite the right to an interpreter we also necessary need other services, i.e. the right to personal assistance. Not all, who need rights, know sign language and therefore cannot use the right to an interpreter. If this can be

settled in other countries, I do not see a reason why it should not be settled in Slovenia. Nevertheless, in current draft of the Personal Assistance Law, workplace help is also mentioned. Let that include us, deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind, as well. Thank you for your attention. Maybe some of you do not know this sign. This sign means we love you. We wish that us all, hearing impaired or not, unite. Together we will be stronger and we can improve all of our lives together. Thank you again.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Thank you. Petra Rezar, I invite you to the stage.

Petra Rezar, President of the Slovenian Association of Teachers of the Deaf

Greetings to all of you in the name of the Slovenian Association of Teachers of the Deaf. Thank you for coming to this event today in such large numbers. I will be very short, because we are short on time. Having a job is very important in all life stages, that is also why we came here, to this conference. How did we get here? Because of a new book, titled Kako do službe (How to find a job)? When I was reading this book, I had an idea, which does not only concern deaf people. The author of the book and myself realized, together, that there are many unknown situations and employers do not know what is happening in the labour market for the deaf who are looking for a job. That is why I am really thankful to Dr. Šoltes, for recognizing, understanding and supporting this topic. Another special gratitude also goes to all of our volunteers, without whom this conference would not exist. Volunteering is not just offering your help, it is also an opportunity for non-formal learning and human excellence, which nobles every human being. A lot of volunteer hours are made in our Association. We do up to 1800 hours per year. We could employ somebody, if we had conditions for it. People who volunteer, also have a lot of empathy. One of the most known doctors, Dr. Pušenjak once said, that every intellectual should voluntarily share part of their knowledge to society. That means that we see new things, learn new things and maybe in the process, find a good and practical solution. I especially want to show my gratitude to this house, for giving us their room. Thank you all and have a great day at this conference.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Thank you Petra Rezar. Now I would like to ask Helga Stevens, Member of the European Parliament, European Conservatives and Reformists Group, to say a few words.

Helga Stevens, Member of the European Parliament, European Conservatives and Reformists Group

Hello to you all and good morning. I would like to thank our colleague at the European Parliament, Dr. Šoltes. Thank you for organizing this conference, much appreciation to his team as well, I am extremely grateful that you organized today's conference and invited me to Slovenia. This is my second time in Ljubljana. I have already been here

in 2000. That is a very long time ago, 16 years. It is a shame I can only stay here for a day, maybe two, I might return in the future and stay longer. I am pleased, to meet you all and that we are here, at Slovenian Parliament. Thank you Slovenian Parliament. I am deaf. And a Member of the European Parliament. I coordinate work with the disabled; actually I run a board commission for working with the disabled. There is a board for people with disabilities and different political groups as part of the Parliament. Our job is to guide the disabled and help them integrate. You may know, that Europe has already ratified a UN convention, i.e. rights for people with disabilities. Europe is the first continent, which ratified, followed by the USA and other countries, but Europe was first and now other countries follow in ratifying an UN convention. I want that people with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else, not just on paper. It is important that we cooperate, to make something real. It is beneficial for everybody. At the European Parliament we have a representative for writing reports, regarding implementation of an UN convention. Two days ago we had a very important discussion about implementation. There were many members of the European Parliament present that day. It was cooperation between a lot of different people and we all talked about problems in the field of deaf, blind, hard of hearing and deaf-blind. We talked about a very important topic. It was a very good discussion. This Slovenian conference is also very important, because it will help us and Slovenia in implementing UN convention in regards to employment and offer professional training for certain jobs, sports or even making subtitles for television. That means that accessibility must be implemented in everyday life. Dr. Šoltes organized this conference in Slovenia, so the whole Europe can cooperate, so that all Members of the European Parliament can work together and so that Europe can connect to other world-wide countries. Different members are working together and forming contacts. I am here, so I can gather all experience and take it back to Belgium with me, to my country, because there are many countries that have employment problems. Belgium is facing the same problem. We also have money problem – there is not enough of it. I always want an interpreter present, but there is not enough money to finance this. It is hard to get money. The situation is identical in Slovenia, so we must find solutions together. Having interpreters is crucial, because that is our main connection to the world. So, if the governmental organization says: “Oh, you do not need an interpreter”, that is the same as shutting the door right in front of our faces. If an interpreter is present, the doors are opened and I can enter the world of the hearing. Therefore, I am very pleased that Dr. Šoltes joined forces with the Slovenian Association of Teachers of the Deaf. That is very important. Why? Because deaf teachers teach deaf students and Šoltes made that connection. This is very important for the future of the deaf people. I do not want to explain this any further, I will explain this in more details later on, when I get my opportunity to present this topic. Thank you for listening.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Thank you Ms. Helga Stevens. Mr. Director Boris Černilec, please come.

Boris Černilec, Director of the ZGN Ljubljana, School for the Deaf

Greetings esteemed guests and visitors. I sincerely thank all organizers of today's consultation and express my gratitude to all, who supported today's conference. ZGN Ljubljana is the central Slovenian institution that works with deaf and hard of hearing. Its tradition is 115 years long, that means 115 years of experiences and that makes it leading in this area of expertise. There are 250 children in ZGN today. Those are all children that all other institutions have given up in working with them. Approximately 30 percent of these kids are deaf or hard of hearing. They can join our institution when they are approximately 1 year old. Their program starts with more day-care-educational program in kindergarten, then we continue to work with them as part of primary and secondary education, we offer them residential education and health care, with the help of which we can fully deal with their disabilities and their needs, especially when it comes to the deaf and hard of hearing. We are very successful in what we do, people know us and we are that good, because we employ many disabled people. I would especially like to mention four of my deaf and hard of hearing colleague teachers, who, as young people, decided for a long, tough and challenging path, got a degree and today they can teach a class completely independently. They are great at what they do, but mainly they are role models to all kids in our school, who are yet to face the challenges of entering the labour market. We are trying new things, we are not afraid of them. I can mention two of them: interpretation for the deaf and hard of hearing children and supported employment for my deaf and hard of hearing colleagues, so they are even more successful at what they do. We are facing new challenges, new opportunities, we have resources and we are ready to cooperate with everyone. I hope and expect, that today's conference will guide us and gave us directions for future projects, because there are plenty of opportunities and we promise our support. I wish you all a productive conference.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Thank you. And lastly, Ms. Dragica Bac.

Dragica Bac, Directorate for Disabled, War Veterans and Victim of War, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

It was with great pleasure, that I have accepted an invitation to the conference Facing the Challenges and Opportunities of Deaf People in the Labour Market. Firstly, I would like, in my name and in the name of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, to greet all the participants and say my thanks to Dr. Igor Šoltes, Member of the European Parliament, Slovenian Association of Teachers of the Blind (transcripator note: Deaf) and to all, who helped in organizing this conference. Allow me to start by quoting Gustave Flaubert: "Work is still the best means of getting the better of life". Being deaf or hard of hearing is one of the toughest form of disabilities. Deafness is an invisible disability, which does not become apparent until we come in close contact with a deaf person. Effects of deafness transpire through communication and

information inaccessibility. The basic human need is a need to communicate, because human is a social being. And that basic need is very much obstructed for deaf people and therefore causes social exclusion. Communication is a base and fundamentally affects work, environment, social integration, in short, all areas of life. And that is one of the main obstacles, which deaf have to face when entering the labour market. We are aware that the unemployment rate among the deaf population is high. Despite that, I would like to point out, that the introduction of the quota system for disabled persons has led to higher deaf and hard of hearing employment rate. The country offers some benefits to employers who employ people with disabilities, among which are also deaf and hard of hearing. For example: if an employer employs deaf individual as a disabled person, he has fulfilled the quota and can therefore claim the benefit, he is also excused from paying contribution to the pension scheme. If an employer employs a deaf person, who uses sign language to communicate, he can, with the help of Public Guarantee, Maintenance and Disability Fund of the Republic of Slovenia (JPI), claim the benefit for covering costs of an interpreter use up to thirty hours per month. We all, deaf, hard of hearing, employees, employers and the whole country, are facing many unresolved questions, which present challenges for our future work. We can only solve them together, with cooperation, dialogue and setting great examples. We must not allow that the saying "Človek ni bil še nikoli tako blizu zvezdam in tako daleč od samega sebe"¹ (T. McCarroll) comes true. I hope your conclusion from today's conference will confirm that. The President of the Association has already mentioned a project under the Racio Social from Celje and Association Auris Kranj. Based on its good results, we actually put this project in the operational program for absorption of European Funds for the 5-year period and we plan to spread it all over Slovenia. I hope we will make progress, when dealing with people with disabilities, including deaf and hard of hearing, entering the labour market and then also do a systemic order. I wish all of you a great work success, many opportunities for gathering new knowledge, many meetups at similar conferences and a nice stay in Ljubljana. Thank you.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Thank you. With this we have finished with opening addresses and will start with the first panel. We are only an hour behind, no problem, we will catch up. Thank you again for all your patience. Now we go to the first panel, titled From Education to Employment. I would like to invite here, to the table, Ms. Ljubica Podboršek, Bernarda Kokalj, Petra Rezar, to join me, so we can start and continue discussion. I have another announcement. In this moment we are also witnessing a certain mini historic event, of which we, us organizers, are extremely proud of and thankful for. This is to say, to all of those, who could not attend this conference, a company TIPK TV, run by a deaf person, we will meet him and listen to him here today and he only employs deaf people. He enabled, through T-2, SiOL TV and Amis providers, a live stream of this event, which means that we are all present and seen on one classic TV program, so greetings also to all viewers somewhere on the other side of the screen. So, Ljubica Podboršek, I

think she does not need any further introduction, first interpreter of the sign language in Slovenia, winner of Ljubljana for the year 2014, honourable winner of our Association, please start.

Panel 1: From Education to Employment Ljubica Podboršek, the first interpreter of the sign language in Slovenia, the child of the deaf parents

Hello all. My today's presentation is titled Professions of the Deaf People in the Past. I think it is right to remember all of those deaf people, who worked in different professions and are maybe unknown to a lot of deaf people. Choosing a profession is definitely limited for the deaf, mainly because of communication barriers and many of them never realize their dreams and have a profession they want. Because the number of deaf people is not sufficient enough, it was not, nor it is possible, to establish a specific vocational school for the deaf, where they could be trained in certain desired professions. That was the situation in the past and that is still how it is today. Nevertheless, the situation today is still better than ever and the deaf can choose among many educational and professional training options, some of them are a part of the program of secondary school ZGN Ljubljana, School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, some of them are part of other schools' programs in which they can include themselves, so they get to a profession of their choosing. But how were things in the past? The deaf did perform different professions in the past, some of them were very successful and those are individuals of whom I will speak today. I grew up in a family with two deaf parents and I have them to thank for meeting many of their deaf friends and for getting acquainted with their professions. Unfortunately, some of these professions no longer exist or the deaf do not choose them for their occupation. I think it is right to remember and name some of the successful deaf, to keep a memory of them alive and make sure their names are remembered when talking about the history of the deaf culture in Slovenia. Let me start with my parents, they both came from the family of farmers. My father Ivan Kmetič from Močilno pri Radečah, my mother Stanka Bolka from Homec pri Kamniku. My father was a dentist, my mother a tailor, who studied tailoring with a master tailor Kosta in Ljubljana. She was also his employee for 7 years, until my birth, after which she stayed at home, like most of the deaf married women, who stayed at home after the birth of their child and looked after their families.

When my father finished his education in Gluhonemnica², a dental school has not existed yet, it was established later, in 1945. My father was set up by his family to become a shoemaker and he was supposed to be trained by the deaf master Mavrin Martina. I do not know if you remember Mavrin, but he had his own workshop in Radeče, near my father's home. My father's teacher, Vilko Mazi, saw and knew that my father had great manual skills and a great ability to learn, and he was the one who convinced my father's parents, so that my father could start studying with Dr. Jože Rant, a person who later formed and established a Stomatology Clinic, where my father was

also employed until his retirement. My father learned every possible dental technique from Dr. Rant, he specialized in orthodontics, that means straightening teeth, and he was given a Senior Dental Technician title. He was the first deaf dental technician in Slovenia. Due to his great knowledge about dental medicine, he also fixed a lot of people's teeth at his home (off the books). A few years later, Predovič Nikolaj has also decided to become a dental technician. I do not know if anyone remembers this, but he did his training with Dr. Pirc and was great at his job. Vinko Möderndorfer also decided to become a dental technician and in 1946, he enrolled in Dental School, where he graduated as a senior technician and got the right to work independently as a dental technician, a work position which he performed in clinics in Celje, Domžale, student campus in Ljubljana. I would also like to mention, that Vinko Möderndorfer was a partisan during the Second World War, part of the Cankar battalion, from 1943 until the end of the war. An interesting fact – as we are talking about medical professions, I would also like to mention Ms. Anda Štiglic, a pharmacist, who was educated in Zagreb and was employed as a pharmacist in a pharmacy in Prešeren Square in Ljubljana. She was taken under the wing of Mr. Puhar, teacher of the deaf, when she was very little, she was 4 years old, and he taught her of speech and prepared her for classes. She successfully finished her primary and secondary education in a hearing school and enrolled at the Faculty of Pharmacy in Ljubljana, finishing her studies in Zagreb. The most popular crafts in the time between the First and the Second World War were tailoring, sewing and shoemaking. For the most part, these were professions chosen by the deaf. Shoemaking was a popular profession among the deaf. Some of them became actual master shoemakers and had their own shops. They were taught the art of shoemaking by other hearing master shoemakers, home and abroad, mostly in Austria. They had their training there, made improvements and with all that great knowledge returned to Slovenia. One of these great shoemakers was already mentioned Martin Mavrin, from Radeče pri Zidanem Mostu, who also employed the deaf. Bajt Ivan was a master shoemaker in Ljubljana, who led a shoemaking workshop, which was founded by the Slovenian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, initiated by Ciril Sitar. Many deaf were trained by Bajt, I will name just a few: Milošič, Tomc, Češek, Kordiš Marko, etc. Jože Hrastnik had a shoemaking workshop in

The old name for an institution for the Deaf youth in Ljubljana, Slovenia, which opened its door in 1900. It was an educational establishment, surrounded by hospitals.

Štajerska region and was educated and trained in Austria. The deaf engravers were especially successful in their profession. Engraving was once a masterful and flourishing profession. In the 19th century there were thousands of engravers in Vienna alone. Anton Černe, Ciril Svetek in Ciril Sitar were all trained there. All three of them were highly educated and great promoters of the deaf community, especially because they initiated the start of the organized activities for the deaf. Mr. Černe was educated at School for the Deaf in Zagreb, because the School for the Deaf in Ljubljana has not existed yet. He then trained to become an engraver with master engraver, Pok was his

name, in Ljubljana, and he improved his knowledge in Vienna, Graz, Stuttgart, Munich, Leipzig and Prague. It is very interesting that, even though he was completely deaf and he mainly communicated through sign language, he decided to go abroad and do his trainings there. Ciril Svetek and Ciril Sitar were also trained by him. Ciril Sitar was a very important person in the deaf community. He was intelligent and capable and that is why he became a leader in organizing the deaf society and the Association of the Deaf, plus he also made a huge improvement in work organization of the deaf. He was a trained carpenter, but he was drawn to the printing industry, so he started working as an apprentice in Učiteljska tiskarna³ and later became a graphic designer. He also wanted a higher education, which he got with the help of the state scholarship, which he received when he went to Graz and Vienna to continue his further education. In 1920, Sitar opened a stamp-engraving workshop in Ljubljana, together with his friend Ciril Svetek. In 1931 Sitar opened a printery, where 30 deaf people were employed, I mean, there were 30 employees, among them were many deaf people. I have not checked, if they were all deaf. During the Second World War, when Ljubljana was occupied, master Sitar was secretly making Italian and German stamps, with the help of which people made forged documents and he also printed anti-fascist fliers. As I mentioned before, there were several deaf employees in the printery. They were manual typesetters, bookbinders. Mila Štampfelj, married Grže and a deaf manual typesetter, was also among the manual typesetters. This specific printery was actually a predecessor of the Učne delavnice printery, which was founded in 1948 and was the study base for students of the ZGN Ljubljana, School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The printery was initially led by Ciril Sitar. The Učne delavnice printery, where students were trained for all graphic professions and then also for tailoring, haberdashery and metalworking, was very famous for its quality graphic and bookbinding products. Especially well known and successful was the manual bookbinding shop, where they created and repaired even the most demanding archive books and documents, thanks to their highly trained bookbinders. Let me mention just a few: Kogovšek, Kolarič, later on also Radlak Milica, Lah Metka. Some of the deaf individuals in Učne delavnice have progressed substantially and became leaders. One of them was Franc Planinc, who trained to be a manual typesetter. He enrolled in Higher Graphic Design School in Zagreb, parallel to his job, successfully finished it and was printery in Slovenia, especially active between WWI and WWII. "Učiteljska tiskarna" translates to "Teacher's Printery", a production manager at Učne delavnice for many years. Due to their abilities, Polenšek Adolf, Razlag Milica and Juhart became leaders of the bookbinding department. Graphic designers were also very good and have shown their skills in other graphic companies, for example Grže Jože, Vinko Cepec, both worked for Delo newspaper, Šavs Ivo was a lithographer in Ljudska pravica, and there were many others. In the old Yugoslavia the majority of the deaf were trained by masters, without attending continuation schools of crafts. But some of them had an opportunity to educate themselves at other schools. Before the Second World War, not many deaf decided to pursue studies at secondary, higher or graduate level. One of them was Ivan Štrekelj, a sculptor and a painter, who

achieved University education. After he finished the School for the Deaf, he attended a Crafts School in Ljubljana, then he enrolled at the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade and after the war, he finished his studies at the Academy in Ljubljana. He made a living by working in a quarry, which strengthened his knowledge of sculpture. For a period of time, Štrekelj was also a drawing teacher at the Zavod za Gluho Mladino and he also gave individual lessons to talented deaf. One of them was Drago Jerman, an amateur painter, whose profession was sign making. I would also like to mention another good and well known stone mason of that time, Ivan Mohar. Vlado Mihevc was studying at the Secondary Technical School, Mirko Kos and Branko Vidic attended Secondary School of Textile. These were actually the first integrations of the deaf in hearing schools. A few years after the war, Meri Möderndorfer and Anton Čarman finished their primary education in Zavod and later started with their integration. They enrolled in Secondary School of Economics in Ljubljana and they have successfully finished it. Both of them also successfully worked in accountings in different companies and also Associations of the Deaf. Before the war started, Nežka Čepon successfully finished a private Merchant School and got employment in a home-based business, where she managed the books. After the war she found a job as a librarian in National and University Library in Ljubljana. Besides Štrekelj, Jože Bergant, a master tailor, also gave practical tailoring training at Zavod in Ljubljana. In the post-war period, sewing was a very common and spread profession among deaf women. Before the war, deaf men and women took sewing and tailoring lessons and training with masters and later, when they conquered all knowledge, performed quite well in this profession and they also sewed privately for costumers at home. They sewed the most complicated and demanding clothes for a very demanding costumers. Let me name a few of them: Žagar Jakob, Župančič Karolina, Šturm Ivanka, Vuga Ljudmila. Pušnik Albin was also a master tailor, who had his own workshop in Trbovlje. Kristan, a professional technical drawer and later also an employee of RTV Slovenia, taught drawing at the School for the Deaf in Portorož, for a short period of time. After the war, the professional training for the deaf was finally being taken care of, so the Zavod za Gluho Mladino established a Vocational School in 1946, that did not have regular classes, only courses. Regular school for students was established in school year 1947/48, which produced 325 qualified workers by the year 1970. The deaf could choose among several professions, most of them were in graphic field, tailoring, carpentry, metalworking and haberdashery. For all of these professions, except the carpentry, the deaf students could do practical training in Učne delavnice and later a lot of them found an employment there. Some rare professions practiced by the deaf were also very interesting, but are not being chosen by the deaf anymore, e.g. the profession of the builder. Let me mention Bavčar, who was a supervisor and Gorišek Miha, a qualified builder. Both of them were exceptional masons. When my father started building a house, they were present at all times, as were many other deaf individuals and I can say, that the house was mainly built by the deaf. The next in line of rare professions is a stableman that is what was called back then. It was a profession practiced by a deaf cook. His name was Puhar and I think he was employed at the

Biotechnical Faculty. He looked after horses, nourished them and cleaned after them. He once had an accident on the job, when a horse bit off a part of his ear. A jeweller was also a rare profession. Rangus from Kranj was a jeweller for a long time, because he inherited a family tradition. Now the tradition is carried on by his daughter. Emilija Štifter, married Lovenjak, from Polana pri Murski Soboti, also carries on the family tradition; she took over the restaurant, which has been very known and valued for years. Emilija Lovenjak is also an excellent cook and restaurateur. Anton Klančnik was also a part of a very interesting profession; he was a photographer and an employee for the Museum of Contemporary History in Ljubljana. He was a true master, restorer of the old, ruined photos and was very esteemed at the museum. Besides, he was a great mime and was part of all big events, which were organized by Societies and Associations of the Deaf. His wife was a painter. A somewhat unusual occupation for women, although I have to add, that women especially would excel in this line of work, because of their extreme precision. Carpentry was also much acknowledged profession and it remains such to this day. Carpenters in the past were always very capable people. One of them was Franc Klemenčič, who had great credit for establishing the first Society of the Deaf in 1931. He was already visiting Secondary Carpentry Technical School at that time and became a master carpenter for construction and house carpentry. I would also like to mention Alojzij Šturm, a very skilful and good carpenter. Judež was also a very successful carpenter and a restorer at the same time. Despite the fact, that the deaf had successfully practiced a whole line of very interesting professions, they do not perform them anymore. They were upholsterers, automobile upholsterers, car painters and auto body repairmen, moulders, confectioners, glaziers, tyre repairmen, precision mechanics. In the era after the Second World War the deaf had a special department in Zadobrova, where they were performing pottery, stove making and even gardening. The initiator was Sitar Ciril. I am certain I left out some active past professions and some important deaf individuals in my contribution, for which I apologize; all the facts presented are originating from my own personal knowledge and knowing. We should do a deep research about all professions and their performers. The craft professions have shown to be very suitable professions for the deaf. That is why I think that in the future, we should encourage all deaf teachers and students to start thinking about alternative options in professional training. Thank you.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Thank you Ljubica, for an interesting look in the past. The next speaker is Bernarda Kokalj, headmistress of the ZGN Ljubljana. She has been doing this job for more than 15 years. Please join us.

**Bernarda Kokalj, headmistress of the ZGN Ljubljana, School for the Deaf
Greetings.**

I would like to ask for a little bit of help with my e-slides. Thank you. Go to the next one, please. I would like to start my presentation with the verses of Nikola Predovič. Ms.

Ljubica mentioned someone by that name, but that is not the same person. I am talking about an ex-student, who finished his education in our institution last year and wrote: School for the deaf and hard of hearing, / obeying boys and pretty girls, / each of them can kiss me. Professors want, / that we get new experience / and to cover our past bad experience with leather. I think this perfectly demonstrates, that we are not only a school, which gives kids education and profession, otherwise our primary goal, but also a school for life, where all students can feel good and accepted. As Ljubica has already mentioned, the competent Ministry issued a decree in 1946, with which a Vocational School was established. This means that our school is celebrating a 70 anniversary of its activity. ZGN Ljubljana, School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is the only institution in Slovenia, that offers, concerning secondary and vocational education, a possibility of choosing among educational programs of equal educational standard, which are adapted to deaf and hard of hearing students, to students with speech and language impairments and there are also programs in which kids with autism can be included. I made a short summary of enrolments of the past ten years. It somehow shows that the bottom of the curve or sine wave and the blue column are a manifestation of all enrolments. I do not see, how do you see it? Is it orange or greenish-orange? The orange represents a percentage of the deaf and hard of hearing students. In 2006/07, 90 percent of kids in our school were either deaf or hard of hearing. Today, in school year 2015/16, only one third of them are deaf or hard of hearing. The other proportion of our students are kids with speech and language impairments and autistic students. So we can say, it is shown nicely, that the number of deaf students declines, but the graph also shows, how we somehow have overcome bottom and the enrolments in our school are getting higher. That has to be a result of our work. We have decided to have Open Days, we have visited a Centre in Maribor and primary school in Portorož. Three, four years ago we made videos, which have presented perfectly all the possible professions at our school and were also shown on TV screens. We also visit others schools, companies, but the really important things are, basing on our experience, the conversations we have with parents, where we try to explain, in depth, what is suitable for their kids, so they do not overreach. Our school is very diverse, even though we are quite small. As far as I know secondary schools' programs, we are definitely the most diverse. We have programs for lower vocational education, secondary vocational education, secondary professional and vocational-technical education. We therefore have four different levels of education, which we provide to our students, and these are programs for engraving, carpentry, computer science, engineering, media studies and textile. That, what you can see under the sun, are fields of hospitality and tourism, agriculture, horticulture and tailoring, and we have succeeded in renewing and preparing four new programs in this school year, which we want to offer to our future students in the next year. I have shown our programs in different levels, the new ones are blue and bold. We offer four different professions at lower vocational education; we have a new one, biotechnical and care assistant. The old name for that was caretaker. In secondary vocational education we have eight professional possibilities and the new

ones are: gastronomic and hotelier services, old name for that would be cook/chef, then confectioner and a gardener. Then we have a vocational-technical education: we have fields of technique, graphic, carpentry and engineering technician, computer science technician, dress designer and lastly, we have secondary vocational education, where only graphics and media technician programs exist. Why the need to introduce new programs? Parents' council and school's council have been pointing out for many years, that more professions need to be implemented in our school, especially professions for girls and more choices for the deaf and hard of hearing. That also means better chances for employment of these kids and easier transition to the labour market. The practices of the last years have shown, that only 60 percent of our pupils, who finish our primary school, continue their education at secondary level in our institution, that means that 40 percent of our children have decided to pursue professions outside our school and in areas in which they, in previous years, talked about and showed interests at our meetings, information days, open days, when we asked them in questionnaire, what they want to do. One of these questionnaire, even more detailed one, was carried out last school year, when four generations of children answered questions regarding professions and which of them they would have chosen and educate for. In all of this, I have to point out how extremely important the cooperation with regular schools is. We talked frequently, we have searched for many common solutions. When I was looking back, through the documents, I think, that the first term for partial integration was written in 2003, 2004, but back then, the interest for this form of education was relatively low from regular schools. But of course, this kind of novelty, which our school is offering now, shakes the present situation. Concerns were expressed, such as, that the programs were made too quickly, that they are not very well thought out, that we do not care about the kids, only the enrolments numbers and teachers, but I am sure we are going into the right direction. Yesterday I had the opportunity to visit renovated Plečnik house, I recommend everyone to go and see it and take the time. Plečnik is a very important Slovenian architect. In one of his quotes, this thought is expressed, I do not know it word by word, this is how I understood it: *Skozi dvome do izčiščenja*. That means that I wish, we would find all the right answers for all the questions that have arisen and that our future path would become crystal clear. I have mentioned before, that our programs are equal to other educational standards. That means, that the final test is being held in lower and secondary educational and at the secondary vocational and vocational-technical level the students take vocational matura. That is an external exam, same for all Slovenian students, who are finishing their education at this level. That means that our students write the same test for Slovene language as a student from secondary media school in Ljubljana. Of course there are some adjustments, which are assigned to our students at the beginning of their education and students have the right to use these adjustments in their final exams. There are of course some specificities at our school. Firstly, we only accept children, who fill the required means for Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and we also offer an extended education. If you cannot see from the previous table, our lower vocational program lasts three

instead of two years, secondary vocational program four instead of three years and our secondary professional program lasts five years instead of four. Then, we have lower norm for departments. Our biggest class in secondary school is, at this moment, consisted of eight pupils, our norm is four students in practical training, six in handwork, ten in theoretical class. Every student has an individual program, in which work methods and previously mentioned adjustments are defined. Every teacher at our school has a special extra professional education, which is necessary when working with our youth. An interpreter of Slovenian sign language has already been mentioned. I personally see deaf teachers as a great added worth to our work. Three out of four of our teachers are deaf. Our specialty is also the open curriculum. It represents 20 percent of all teaching hours that we have at our disposal. Every school arrange them as they please. We gave a huge advantage or emphasis on communication, Slovenian sign language, I have to tell you, it is on our curriculum since 2002, emotional literacy, social and communication skills, getting ready for life and many hours have been devoted to the preparations for final exams, i.e. getting ready for poklicna matura and final exam. In addition to all this, we also have extra curriculum, like interests' activities and project day. We made a couple of fantastic movies, for example Uprimo se nasilju (Let's rebel against violence), Kakšne so nevarnosti na spletu (What are the dangers of the internet), Kako prepoznavamo druge motnje drug drugega (How to recognize other disabilities of one another) and many other similar projects. Then, we also have our get-acquainted camp in first year of school and international projects. Our students are travelling abroad three times in this school year. They were already in Lithuania, they are returning there for two weeks in the spring and then they travel to Macedonia for three weeks. They will get an opportunity there, to actively integrate in certain companies and they will get an acknowledged practical training. Let me just mention our sport competitions, gatherings with regular schools etc. A special area which deals with our youth employment have got to be the practical training, made with a certain employer and work practice. The numbers here show how many weeks of practical training students have in a specific educational program. In the first year of lower vocational program none, then two and two more and so on. The most frequent and well represented is the area of secondary vocational education, which has 24 weeks of practical training. Two teachers cover this at our school and they cooperate with teachers for practical trainings in specific professions. There is a lot of work done, especially when it comes to cooperating with employers, we introduce the students, and we diminish prejudices. One of them was already mentioned by Mr. Veršič, and that is, that deaf and hard of hearing students are not capable of anything and cannot do any work. They are capable, they just need to be seen by employers and learn how to communicate and how to work. Then there are the evaluations and it has happened a couple of times, not often though, that the students get the opportunity of getting a job with this employer. And where do students go after they finish school? If you finish lower vocational school, you can continue your education at secondary vocational school. If you finish secondary vocational school, you can go to vocational-technical school. When you finish that one, you can of course

continue with your education, either at higher school or college or you can do a course for matura exam. Most of them or at least some of them decide to seek employment. They have opportunities in the industry, craft workshops, companies, and we especially want to encourage independent entrepreneurs, where already mentioned company Racio is a great help to us. And some critical views on the current situation. Our classes are taking place in combined departments. That means, that deaf, speech and language impaired and autistic students are listening to lectures together. It is not the best solution, but we cannot work otherwise. Currently students of different professions are also combined. That means that graphic designers and tailors are taking classes together. They are together in mathematics and Slovene language, but they are divided when it comes to certain professional subjects in different areas. We also have vertical combinations, because only two students are enrolled in the second year of media technician program and three students are enrolled in fourth year, so the classes are combined. That is because the Ministry does not allow smaller classes than five students. We also face space difficulties. Generally speaking, our school of secondary education is also hosting three classes from primary school in this school year. That meant we had to adjust the schedule, which is a difficult logistical problem for us. Let me also mention, that with all this diversity, our equipment is not the most modern, which is also a reason for cooperation with regular schools, because many things can be compensated with schools that are still opened. Specifically, I mean Secondary Vocational (and Technical) School Bežigrad – Ljubljana, where our engineers, i.e. our students, who study engineering, go and study on newer, more modern machines. This is how we cooperate, also with graphics school, especially printing department. We can achieve many things through cooperation with different schools. The field on the decrease is adult education. We are moving forward and making steps in the right direction in the areas, where we are not strong yet. Lately that means, granting a possibility for national vocational qualification. Let me just mention, that our institution is the only one for the entire Slovenia and that is the reason for our dormitory, which is an important factor for our students, who can live quite far away. This way, they can successfully attend and finish school and learn to live independently and responsibly. We have four educational groups, two residential ones, interest activities, but those are not the areas I want to point out today. And for the end, a bonus question – what do you think gold and secondary school for the deaf and hard of hearing have in common? I will answer you – a golden graduate⁵. That is the highest achievement in vocational matura. Last school year Žan Pogačnik got 21 points out of 22, which is an extraordinary success and he became the first golden graduate of our school. I, personally, am extremely proud of this. He also did a really nice interview. So much for now, we can maybe talk about more details later on. Thank you very much.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Thank you. We still have 10 minutes left, which are intended for this panel and we arranged with Petra, that she will, for an introduction, show a short video she has

prepared. Her presentation will be moved to the last, third panel, when we will talk about European Perspective, her presentation will fit there perfectly. After we finish watching this video, we will conclude our first panel and we will do a short, 15-minute break. You can go to the lobby in the meantime. We are serving coffee there; you can talk to each other and share your first impressions. We will return to our conference ten forty-five and will continue with the next panel, titled Access to the Labour Market: Between Jobseekers and Employers. I will already invite our future speakers to the table, so we do not waste time; Mr. Repše, who will be first, followed by Bojan Mord, Maja Skorupan, MA, Tamara Guzelj, MSc and Lea Kovač. So much for now. The discussion and debate, which were intended for this panel, will be held in the third panel, in which we assume, we will have enough time for these things, for all of your questions, which you have already prepared. I hope you understand. Thank you.

Panel 2: Access to the Labour Market: Between Jobseekers and Employers

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Before we start with this discussion, the first speaker is Mr. Marjan Repše, I would like to inform you about two matters. Firstly, you can see in front of you, on your desk, a survey. RTV Slovenia has asked us, if they can also use this event to do a research on deaf and hard of hearing people and their use of subtitles. They would like to ask you or us, to fill out this survey, if you want. There is a box outside this room, where you can leave a filled out survey. If you do not have time today to fill them out, you can do that later and send the survey by post – an envelope is attached. They are thanking us in advance. Secondly, I really owe an apology to our esteemed transcriber, Ms. Silvija. I am extremely sorry that this happened; it was neither intentional nor deliberate,

5A golden graduate (in Slovene: zlati maturant) is a graduate that got at least 30 points (out of 34) at general matura examination and a graduate who got at least 22 points (out of 23) at vocational matura examination.

It was just my inexperience and me being here, at the Parliament, for the first time. I am extremely sorry and let us all try to do our best and follow this through, so we can all be satisfied with the final result. I understand your effort and struggle. I regret it happened this way. Now we can begin. I would like to ask.

Mr. Repše, a deaf entrepreneur, to present his contribution, titled My Path.

Marjan Repše, deaf entrepreneur Hello to you all. Allow me to share my story. Do you know who I am? My name is Marjan Repše, I am an entrepreneur, deaf and a person with an invisible disability. I am completely deaf. I come from Trzin, where I live with my family and where my business office and workshop are. I work in tool industry. We make tools, we cast all sorts of plastics. I will briefly say a few words about my path. I was in the ZGN Ljubljana and I was thinking about professions. I thought about being

a dentist, but that did not work. Then they said to me: "It is better that you become a tailor". And I replied: "No, I do not want that". Then they suggested that I should become a blacksmith. I really did not want that. Luckily I went to do professional training after I finished 8. grade , master accepted me and taught me. Then I worked in ELMO company. We were apprentices there, unfortunately they went out of business and those people are not there anymore, some of them who worked there also retired. Then I went to Iskra. Different machines were there, different work orders. It was interesting. Then I started thinking and I somehow encouraged my now-deceased wife, that we should open our own business. I would help. I would make tools and she would inject plastic. And so, my wife decided and opened her business, where we both worked. That was in 1987, when I started with my business. I have saved a lot of money beforehand, so I could buy a machine from Germany. Back then, my first product was a toothbrush. That is how we started and that is what we put on the market. There was another problem. It was communication, I did not hear. Luckily my father-in-law helped with the phone calls. When fax arrived, things improved, but still were not perfect, because it was time-consuming. It is better now. We have new technology, e-mail, video chats, messages, but all this still is not enough. Our communication is not fast, in comparison, the hearing can make a phone call, they get their needed information fast, the deaf do not. We have different new things now, communication is easier. Our company employed only deaf people throughout all these years. My daughter is the only hearing individual and she does office work, she is the company's secretary. We have a contract with ZGN Ljubljana, School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, so students can do professional training in our company. There are not any problems, they attend their trainings for a week, two weeks, but I can tell there is no real enthusiasm for work. Besides, those who come to their trainings, should do, let us say, a 100 hours, but they do not do them; they say they have other obligations, they are taking sick days, just excuses. If somebody did their training with me, I would hire him/her, but in this current situation I cannot. I remember, when I was looking for a new employee, I searched for an unemployed deaf, somehow I pulled one to my company. But I did not know that this person was unemployed and under Racio (Employment and Vocational Rehabilitation). I did not know. That was maybe 20 years ago. He went to seminars in Zadobrova Society, they had a lecture with Racio there, two times a week. And I placed him in my company. Maybe a month later or sometimes during the first year, Racio started looking for this person, who did not attend seminars. And he was already employed in my company. I somehow did not expect that, an interpreter was also present, who asked him, where is he officially employed. He said: "I am already employed and I have a contract". It was not clear though, what kind of contract this was and I did not get any supplements because he was hired through Racio. Unfortunately, I only practice tool making business, although I get many offers for assemblies and other jobs. At this point I also have to tell you something. I remember the year 2003 well. Back then, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, was the place where we sent our first application for an establishment of a disability company. We have

waited for a year and never got any reply. We sent our application again, and it was the same, still no answer. We asked, what was wrong, and then they told us, that there were changes in the government management and that we should wait. We repeated the process, but we gave up later, we completely gave up. We continued to work in the same manner as before, we had our limited liability company and the work went on. We did not get the status of a disability company. In a company, where deaf people and a person with the knowledge of sign language are employed, communication is definitely optimal. There are no problems regarding communication. The problems arise when dealing with additional education, e.g. the course for mechanical computer software. Let us say, 3D modelling, designing. An interpreter is there, I have to look at him, but I also have to look at the projection. It is extremely hard to follow. Despite this, I have succeeded and finished this education. I have bought the program later on and have individually cooperated with an instructor; everything was a lot clearer immediately. Luckily, I also got a computer and personal assistance, so the course went on normally. Deaf people get thirty hours' right or so called vouchers for an interpreter per year. If I ran out of those hours, I personally, have to pay for an interpreter. Vouchers are intended for your personal matters and there are a few of them. We get thirty of them. For everything else, I have to pay interpreters for myself. As I mentioned before, my wife helped tremendously with my business, she was hard of hearing, and she helped with communication, phone calls, then the children took over. Children always helped me. It is also true, that I have great costumers, who know I am a precise and good worker, so they believe in me. Communicating with them is not a problem, my daughter is present or I take an interpreter to those meetings. 8th grade is the final year of primary school in Slovenia (students are approx. 14/15 years old), after which the student chooses a school of secondary education.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

You can slowly finish.

Marjan Repše

Deaf entrepreneur Not long ago I had a meeting, where we had a problem with the interpreter. We had our meeting with the notary and it was about important matters. The meeting ran a little long and the interpreter was in a hurry, so the process stopped. That should not have happened. For me, the biggest problem is the secondary vocational school. It was great in my time. We had theoretical lessons for half of the school year, and practical trainings in certain companies for the other half. We received a lot of knowledge there, practical knowledge, and we had seen, in practice, how things are done. The apprentice saw it, he researched it and made progress. It was the same with me. That is how it was. I would somehow like to see the come-back of this process, of course those are Ministry's matters. I see now, when kids finish school, they have the paper, but they do not get a job. In the past they got it, now they do not. Many of them are unemployed. I want to get my hands on a person, whom I could train so well, that

he could open his own business and be independent, like I was. If he had faced any problems, he could have asked me and I would help him. And I also wish they would have state support, so they could succeed, because I surely would not, without my family's help. Thank you.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Thank you. Bojan Mord is next. The contribution is called Best Practices and Experiences. Bojan Mord is from TIPK TV, I.I.c. Welcome.

Bojan Mord, Tipk TV, I.I.c.

Greetings. Once again I say hello to you all. I am here as an employee of the ZGN Ljubljana, School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and I work with Peter Potočnik, Petra, Marjetka Kulovec. I have also brought six students with me from the ZGN Ljubljana, who are interested in this conference and want to participate. Representatives of Slovenian Association of Teachers of the Deaf asked me, to introduce my company TIPK TV, I.I.c. I would also like to kindly greet all of our respected guests and representatives of different companies and all other participants. I have established TIPK I.I.c. in 2010, but all of the paper work and bureaucracy postponed the actual launch of TIPK I.I.c. until July 1st 2013. We have four departments: call center, education, technology and television. At the present time, three deaf people are employed. There are also four deaf and three hearing individuals working for us as external contractors. We like to make possible, what was perhaps previously not possible for the deaf. I run my company entirely in the way I want and I work with people, who are similar to me and equals. You will look at the company's history now, chronologically, I will not go into detailed explanation. The most important thing is, we got our TV activity registration. It was a historic registration, which allowed our TV station to become regular TV station from December 1st 2013 onward. That means TIPK TV has become a part of every household TV programme, like programs Slovenia 1, 2, POP TV. T-2 provider listened to us and enabled us to join the programme. SIOL and Amis also connected our program to their programme list. This was an honour for me and my co-workers, to see our TV program live for the first time, and we are also broadcasting this conference live on our program right now. You could see the picture there. We celebrated our first year of business here. There are 13 people on the picture, ten of them are deaf. Ten deaf people are working at TIPK TV program and there are other hearing workers, who help. Six of my students from ZGN Ljubljana also work there, where I first taught them and then invited them to stay in the company as employees. I hired some of them, others are working as external contractors. We are cooperating great. And the problems? There are many of them. Firstly, the communication with state institutions, Ministries. Company, deaf company, what do you need? This and this and that. And then you realize that the country is not prepared and adapted for deaf entrepreneurs. We know, the competition is tough, that goes for the hearing as well. But a deaf company must sometimes do three time the work to stay

competitive. We are a company on the market, we are not an association, we are not some organization. It is not the same. For example, when we participate in co-financing competitions in the economy field, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology issues invitations and projects, other Ministries have their own projects and invitations, for which we cannot apply. There were many misinformations in the past, that we cannot be a candidate for financial means in the same way that other associations and organizations are. They are separate. Confidentiality and discretion present a great problem, when communicating with clients and business partners. Some companies do not want an interpreter present. No. Why? Because they want that the information, shared by them, stays between us, face to face. And that is a problem sometimes. Zavod za združenje tolmačev slovenskega znakovnega jezika (Slovenian Association for Interpreters of Sign Language) is sometimes helpful, but it can also be an obstacle. I have thirty vouchers, like every deaf person. But I can only use them for business matters, e.g. when I want to visit some company regarding technology, telephony, and call centre and so on. If an interpreter comes with me, I give him a voucher, he writes down where I've been and the Association can then decide to run for the call centre area. They have the insight to the competition there. That means, what I do, where I go, in which companies I attend meetings, and they can get information there. That is controversial. The costs of work and hiring a person with disability are two to three times higher than usual. Why? Because more time, communication and explanation is needed when working with deaf individuals. The process is longer, that also applies for, let us say, operations, work procedure, everything takes two to three times longer, you have to pay for all these things, that includes grants etc. I could just say no, I will not employ deaf workers, I could have a hearing worker, I would explain everything and that is it. That is the problem. We could earn 1000 euros, unfortunately we only get 100 euros on these public tenders. When we are competing and take part in these projects and tenders, other organizations also apply, which force us to lower our price. We are on the market and we have to make our living. We pay three, four, five deaf workers and some other organization applies. Even if they do not get the money or they do because of their activities, they will not go out of business; they can still continue and will. But what about us? The sad part is, that the contributor is willing to pay 1000 euros. The Deaf Association, I hope you will understand this in the right way, is an obstacle and a burden. I dream and think of working with you every day. That means, how could I. It is a great burden. Why? TIPK TV exists for three years now. And some associations do not even know we exist. When I visit an association, or let us say, an association or organization, I will say jokingly, that I would sooner wait my turn for an open heart surgery, then visit the Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The Mass Media Act and other acts are not adapted for us, for a deaf company. They are not adjusted. The legislator has not considered special status for people's specific needs. As for the state on the market. When I visit different companies, I notice things, I talk to business partners, I see and realize, that the person with the disability status, who gets employed by a company, basically wins the lottery. There are four things, as we

mentioned before. The contributions, rewards, the novelty are covered – an employed deaf person inside the company has a right to thirty hours of interpretations per month, i.e. for work matters. That exists since 2007. How many of you use this? In the Association for the Deaf, two got the decree. That was the third thing. The fourth matter – it is possible to co-finance a worker. From zero to thirty percent on his salary, of course with some specific conditions, but if a deaf person is difficult to employ, numerous options exist. I can see, that the quota system did not come to life quite so well. Companies rather pay a fine and on the other hand, the companies with many employed disabled get money because of that. Minimal wages, grants, payments for overtime. Many deaf say, they do not get those, that facing their employer is hard, we also know, people do twenty hours' overtime per month, but the deaf have more, approximately forty hours. And then they ask their boss or employer: "You know, I have 120 hours of overtime, can you pay them?" And they reply: "No, you know what, you are deaf and you work longer, so we will erase those overtime hours". Then there is the workers' protection regarding disability status. Who protects them, who asks them about their work situation? Is everything alright or not? There is no such thing, it does not exist. Many deaf people have a decree for, let us say, thirty hours of interpretation, but the company is afraid to call the interpreter, because the employer does not want it or it is a secret. The deaf ask, quotation marks, stupid questions many times, there is no time for communication. So the deaf just kind of step aside and wish to be as little burden for his employer as he can be and just be good at his job. This happens. The distress of the deaf workers on their work place is higher, than you or I can imagine. Regardless of our good Slovenian legislation, still not enough people know their rights, which go for employees and workers. When a deaf person comes and gets a minimum wage, let us say that is approximately 600 euros, what will he be his whole life? A social problem, country's social problem. Why? A deaf worker gets 600 euros and barely makes it through life. He retires, gets 200, 300 euros of pension. How will he live? He asks the country to help him. 40 years, 40 years you work, 40 years of pension, I hope we will live that long, but is this a good life for the deaf? If the laws were good, deaf people would get employment benefits and so on, and still the question of deaf people quality of life remains. An idea, suggestion, solution. The country puts out public tenders and is financing approximately up to ten deaf and hard of hearing per year. The so-called part time studies, with a job on the side, can cover all the costs, but there are also benefits for basic salary, i.e. they freeze the worker's work position so he can go study. As the president of the Association already said, the problem of the deaf is their low level of education. I know many deaf. The school system is good or bad. It has two sides, but the deaf do not realize during their education time, just how important this education is. They get bad grades and then, in three years' time, realize: "It is a problem, I want an education, I want to progress to higher levels, how will I get my education now? Either I am working or studying late into the night, I cannot do this". So there is one suggestion, that the country could suggest to freeze work position for, let us say, ten individuals and cover their expenses for school. Because the deaf, once they

get a higher education, can be competitive to the hearing and that means they can get a better work position and salary. And they cease to be a social problem. Let us invest into a certain individual and his education for three, four years and then we know he can be competitive and have a higher salary, and the country need less worrying about him. That is my way of thinking.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

I apologize, but please slowly finish with your speech.

Bojan Mord, Tipk TV

Legislators, let us say companies, which have three, four deaf employees, as it should be, if there is only one deaf employee, he tends to be lonely. Let us encourage those as well, who employ the deaf, e.g. through competitions, so they have a certain education. Why? In my job, for example, I ask my boss: "I would like to attend an educational program, but they do not invest in a deaf person". There should be some assistance, some organizations should offer educational programs and that is how the deaf could become competitive in the market. Deaf should connect, also organizations and companies, but that almost does not exist now. We should form a syndicate, we know Slovenian syndicates are strong. Who will defend the deaf people's rights? Why is not a syndicate established? And then these competitions, public tenders, which have certain benefits, but those are not fair in most cases. For example, a hearing person records a video, which costs e.g. 200 euros, they set a price and it is cheap. The deaf pay an interpreter for one hour, we pay the deaf etc. The costs are much higher, e.g. 800 euros. The other group applies to the competition with lower costs and they get the financing.

When a deaf or hard of hearing person from the Association applies to the Employment Services, he should immediately get all the rights, but no, he has to go through procedure one more time, through commission one more time, to the psychologist, doctor etc. He has already done all of this, we know about his medical condition since he was a baby. We have his medical file, you can read it in five minutes. And for the conclusion, my vision. We already wanted, in 2012, that RTV would include in their programs 1, 2, 3, 4 a live interpreter or subtitles in their live news broadcast. We have been discussing this since 2012. We want to connect with organizations, associations, societies, because cooperation is essential. We want to train existing interpreters, because they need continuous education. That means, they would achieve higher level of qualification. A call centre. We want that the technology is in the right hands. We have ideas and solutions in this smart home system. And lastly – an expansion of the TIPK TV's activities. i.e. a broader programme scheme. That is it, I am finished. If you have any questions, you can ask them, I will reply, I have much more to say, I have many ideas. I believe we can achieve much more through communication, than giving each other evil eyes. Thank you.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Thank you. There will be time for questions at the end of the panel, probably not the second one, but the third one. Next up is a Maja Skorupan, MA, independent legal advisor with Employers' Association of Slovenia. Her contribution is titled The role of Employers and their Dilemmas.

Maja Skorupan, MA, independent legal advisor, Employers' Association of Slovenia

Greetings to you all in my name as well. When I got a decree, an assignment in November 2015 from our Secretary General, that I will participate in this conference, my first thought was "O God, what will I say". I am an employee in the Employers' Association for eleven years now and in all these years we have not participated, not even once, in any conference, which would revolve around the topic of employment of the deaf or better said, we did not cooperate on any project that would deal with this topic. Up to this moment, we have never got any questions from our members' side as well, regarding the issue of employment of the deaf. And when I told Ms. Rezar that I will, of course, attend this conference, but I will just generally talk about importance of participation in the labour market, she replied instantaneously, that they do not want to hear those information, that they already know all that, that they need valid information from employers on why do they not employ the deaf, where are the barriers for deaf job seekers and what are their suggestions for overcoming those barriers. That was the reason for me to do a short survey among our members; I gave them a questionnaire, in which I asked them about information and barriers regarding employment of the deaf. I designed the questionnaire for medium and larger sized companies, basing on their employee numbers. My assumption was, that with an employer with many employees, there is a bigger chance, he also has a deaf employee, therefore he can offer some valuable information about this subject. I was wrong. Only a handful of those, who answered me, employ one, two deaf people at most, and many of them has never encountered a deaf candidate in real life, so they did not even think about employment of the deaf. Still, I think, I got some useable information from our members' side, for which I am certain will be of use to us all. There was plenty said about educational issues today, I agree with the fact, that only a deaf with good education can be competitive in obtaining and keeping a job. Without a doubt, employers can contribute to higher qualification and education of workers. As part of today's preparation, I also received a question, whether deaf can get a promotion in their work place and if they will have support from the management with their continuous education. I have to emphasis, that deafness cannot be the reason for not getting a chance of promotion. The fact that a person is deaf cannot and should not affect promotion possibilities. So, employer must not, due to deafness, deny deaf person's right to workplace education. That is also discrimination at work, which is forbidden by Labour Law. As for the workers' additional education, that is, of course, a matter of employer's needs and an

agreement between employer and employee. In my experience, employers actually support their workers in trainings and gaining higher or different education, and also in collective negotiations, i.e. when making collective agreements at activity level; employers agree to give workers certain rights in these circumstances. And they apply regardless of the fact if the person is hearing or deaf. In the companies where a deaf person is employed, employers are extremely satisfied with this individual. That does not mean that the work place did not need any adjustments. That is almost a necessity when employing a deaf person, but they all agree with the fact, that a deaf person is not any less productive than a hearing one. As a matter of fact, some of them are of an opinion, and that made me laugh, that deaf people have extremely good predispositions for being a great worker, because their opportunities of excessive social integration are lower. For example: too much chatting in the workplace can reduce the worker's productivity. Our members, the ones who replied to my questions, also said, that they see a deaf person as someone who is very caring, thoughtful and persistent, some of them see deaf people as people without physical limitation and they take that as an advantage. That means that they do not have physical limitations, which are result of illness or an injury. Some of them even answered, that adjusting workplace for a deaf worker takes less effort than adjusting workplace for someone with back problem or problems with cardiovascular system. All of them, those who have a deaf employee, confirmed that there are obstacles also. That makes sense; my predecessor mentioned that those obstacles are mainly in communication area. So, a deaf person can mainly get a job, where communication with clients is not necessary. I also addressed my questionnaire to some trading companies, some of them are the biggest in our country, and they all replied that a deaf person is not suitable to work in a store, because she or he could not, or could, but with great difficulties, communicate with clients. For them deafness is an insurmountable barrier when working with clients. They assume that a deaf person would have difficulties hearing a client in a noisy cash register environment or just doing ordinary work in the store, like stocking shelves, where an employee is facing the store with his back. The members also said that the communication with the deaf takes longer. That can be an aggravating circumstance when dealing with workplaces without serial production; so workplaces, where constant instructions are needed or instruction change. In these cases, instructions for the deaf employee need to be written down. That means, despite some organized meeting, where leader explains work procedures, he also needs to prepare instructions in writing and that of course affects work hours. Employers also confessed that they are afraid to communicate with a deaf person. They are afraid, because they do not know sign language and they assume they will not know how to communicate with a deaf person. Most of them never had any contact with deaf people that include their private life. I did not have this experience, until I have met Ms. Rezar. And I have to say, that I did think about our communication and if I will be able to communicate with her, and how the meeting will go. And I admit, my experience was very positive. There were absolutely no problems, the meeting was not any longer in comparison to the meeting with a hearing

person. I think those are all just prejudices and we need to get rid of them. Employers did say, that the company needs time, to get used to different ways of communicating and that some prejudices and fears needed to be overcome. There are also issues with safety and health at work. Most workplaces of those employers, who replied, require a perfect hearing and a deaf person would not get the needed medical fitness certification from occupational medicine. That is especially transparent with jobs in warehouses or production, where work instructions are given through headphones, where workers work with fork-lift trucks, dangerous machinery and where a lot of traffic is done in the employers' workplace of business. Most of them also confessed that they do not have light signals installed, but they did not tell me the reason for it. I assume it is also linked to the lack of money. They have also mentioned, in regards to work safety that the training for safety at work have to be adapted to a deaf person. So the training for them takes place separately from the rest of the group. In connection to this, a written material needs to be prepared and a special individual written explanation from the safety engineer and that also causes some extra costs for employer. Another problem, which they sensed and mentioned regarding a deaf employee, can also be their lesser flexibility, or in some cases, inflexibility when allocating them to other work positions. There are some situations in a company, when an employer has to relocate workers, to do their job at some other workplace. If another workplace is not adjusted for a deaf worker, relocation of such workers will not be possible. Despite knowing the barriers which come when hiring a deaf person, employers still decided to employ a deaf person. So, all the obstacles were not insurmountable for them. It also turned out later on, that only a small workplace adjustment is needed, of course for some work positions, and they can hire a deaf job candidate. And they all confirmed the same that they would also employ a deaf person in the future and that deafness in itself will not be an obstacle. And for the end, it is obvious that employers expect financial stimulation and benefits for adjusting workplace to a deaf person. Some of those means can already be used, what I noticed is, that employers mostly do not even know, what their options are. My participation in this conference today has encouraged us, at the Employers' Association, to discuss this topic more in depth. Ms. Rezar, I already mentioned her three times today, wrote an article titled *Gluhi na trgu dela* (The Deaf in the Labour Market) for our monthly magazine *Delodajalec* (Employer), so our members and others, who read our magazine, can become accustomed to this issue. We are also arranging with the ZRZS (Employment Service), so they would prepare short explanations for possible benefits, which companies can use if they hire a deaf person. I hope that will also encourage employers to employ more deaf individuals. One of our members replied, that fear, which is connected to the question of communication problem and safety at work, will have to be eradicated through good practices. Thank you for your attention. If there is any question, I am of course available later on.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Thank you. The magazine of which Ms. talked about is here, with me, if someone is interested, he/she can come search it. I have five copies and they can circle around and you can look at them. Next up is Tamara Guzelj, MSc, from Partner Consulting, I.I.c. She will introduce her contribution, titled How to Find a Job – What Do Employers Really Want from the Jobseekers? Please.

Tamara Guzelj, MSc, Partner Consulting

Hello from me as well. I am the author of the book, that Petra Rezar talked about in the beginning. The title of the book is Kako do službe? (How to Find a Job?). It was published by the Uradni list Publishing House. I think that was way back, in the year 2014. I work in HR consulting and HR field of expertise for the last fifteen years, because my mission in life is to find the best possible personnel for employers. I can see myself, that there are available work positions. But what I see more, are desperate jobseekers, who cannot find a job. Today I will talk about what is it like to seek for a job in modern times. Because the job seeking process is different than in the past. I will talk about, how people are looking for a job and how anyone can get it, that goes for hearing and deaf. In the last five years, the job seeking process completely changed. We all know, that if we look for a job in the same way that our parents looked for it, a chance of getting a job is extremely small. Why? Because employer puts out a job add and many applications come.; for a certain job position, on average, from 200 to 1500 applications. There can be the best candidate in the world, or 20, in that application pile, but it is quite possible we will not find him/her. Why? Because we do not have the time, we are overburdened and we are just flying through that pile. So, how can you find a job these days? How do you do it? Of course we are dealing with recession and technological progress is also something we have to take into account, and there is something else, which contributed a great deal in changing the ways of job seeking compared to five years ago. Employers went along with modern technology progression, they use these modern technologies, meanwhile most job seekers do not. We know new tools for job seeking today. Among these tools are definitely LinkedIn profile and social network Facebook. Did you know, that many companies post their free work positions on Facebook? How do you find a job today? The advice I give in the book How to find a Job? is, that everyone who wants to get a job, one way or another, acts like I do, like his or her own manager. That means managing yourself as a firm that includes everyone from manager to cleaning crew and everything in-between. It is about the fact that you need to be proactive in your search for a job. Firstly, each and every one of us must ask themselves, what is it that I want to do, what I know, what makes me happy. You cannot start without it. Those are the basics. Then the next question follows, which is where I want to work. That means in what kind of company, field, big or small business, how far from your home town this company can be, what their work hours are. You have to use your own criteria here. After that, it is very wise to do a research, with the help of the

internet, on employers you are potentially interested in. It is not necessary that these employers have vacant job positions. Everyone should find 30 of them and find out about them everything that he/she legally can. Then you have to form a marketing campaign, like every good business and sales campaign. Marketing campaign definitely includes sales tools, which we call résumé. If you are applying for job openings in companies, which are in public domain, you need to have a Europass CV. If you are applying for a job in a business sector, Europass maybe is not a smart choice. You have to think about something else. Motivational letter is important, because employers want to find out two things about you. Firstly, that you are literate, and secondly, that you want to work for them. Most jobseekers show very well, that they are literate, but a rare few say, that they want that particular job. But that is something an employer wants to hear, see, read and feel. Next thing, which is extremely important for all jobseekers, is a very well made LinkedIn profile. It is a social network. It used to be called professional network, today it is actually a social network for all working people. LinkedIn is a tool that HR consultant and agencies use, to find workers for employers. When an employer says to me: "Find me, let us say, a chef. And do not make a public add, because then I will get 500 applications, who has the time to read them all. Find him/her, on your own". What will I do? I will go to LinkedIn and with its help I will find chefs. How can I find you, if you are not on LinkedIn? If you are not present on LinkedIn, you do not exist for employers. Other social networks are also important, like Facebook, Twitter, Web and Blogosphere. Those networks are all also important because you can prove through them, before applying anywhere, your professional training. If you can show you are a professional, people will start to take you seriously instantaneously. Then you have to create your sales campaign. i.e. you have to sell yourself. You have to start talking to those 30 chosen employers. For a deaf person, e-mail is the most suitable form of communication. It is extremely important that you start your communication with an employer before they announce a vacant job position. Why? Because, when they will feel the need for a new worker, they will automatically think of you, before an announcement will even be made. What will your competition be? None. What is your competition after a public announcement? At least 500 people. So, when you have your CV, motivational letter, when you communicate with an employer through e-mail, you are proving your professionalism. And then they invite you to a job interview. A job interview is a stressful situation for everyone; that much more for a deaf person. You always have to know, what employers want. Let me generalize this. What does every employer in our beloved Slovenia want? Every employer wants to hire an expert, who is the best, not only in Slovenia, but in region. He wants to employ an expert, who wants to work for them and in a specific work position. They want to hire someone who is always in a good mood, does not have any bad days, and has good relationships with his superiors, inferiors and a constant smile on his face. They want to hire someone, who is happy to stay and work after hours and at weekends and does not expect to get paid for that. They want someone, who will not make a fuss, if payments are late. In short, they want a superman. But most employers also know that superheroes only exist

in cartoons, movies and comic books, and that is why they are happy to contend with us, mere mortals. What is it then that they want? First and foremost, education is important. And here the education of the deaf is problematic, because, as we heard multiple times today, the deaf often have low education. Employers want intelligence. That does not mean you need to have a PhD for every job position. No, it just means, you need to have a good common sense. That is all. They want passion and commitment in certain job positions. They want to hear the jobseeker say: “I want to work for you and at this position”. I, myself, am looking for workers for different employers for the last 15 years. Very often I have ten or more interviews per day. How many times do you think I heard, in my 15-year career “I want to do this, I want to work for you, give me a chance”? Ten times. And they all got jobs. Yes, of course, a jobseeker must be culturally appropriate for an organization, employer always asks himself, whether he will fit in the team? That means, will this candidate fit in our company, and of course, with a deaf person, communication is a barrier. But today, with all the modern technology he can work with an employer in different ways. He can work from home, just typing. Sometimes an interpreter is not even needed. Employers need to know about all the benefits that come, if he hires a deaf person. But most of all, positivity, enthusiasm and excitement need to be shown. A deaf person is also facing a tough challenge because, he needs to overcome the fear on the employer side. Because, you know, employers are afraid. They are afraid, because they do not know these things and that is the reason the whole community needs to be educated, let them know, nothing catastrophic is going to happen, that a deaf person is not a worse worker than any other person. Employers are afraid because of their unknowing.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Slowly finish, please.

Tamara Guzelj, MSc, Partner Consulting

What I wanted to point out is, that a deaf person needs to overcome a huge barrier, the fear is present on both sides. Deaf person is afraid of how to communicate. Employer is afraid whether he will understand a deaf person. It is a difficult task. And lastly. Really quickly. What do you do in a job interview? Be confident, but not arrogant. There are three things that are very important during a job interview – a smile on your face, good eye contact and firm hand shake. When do you think employers decide whether they want to hire someone or not? In the first ten seconds. And in those seconds, verbal communication is completely irrelevant. If you can manage to say Hello in those first ten seconds, is plenty. If deaf people knew that, if they had been aware of that, they could be more confident and would take on the challenge of seeking a job in a more relaxed manner. Thank you.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Thank you. At the end of the second panel I welcome Ms. Lea Kovač from Employment

Service of Slovenia. The title of her contribution is The Role of the Employment Service of Slovenia in Assisting the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Job Search. Please.

Lea Kovač, Employment Service of Slovenia

Hello and greetings to you all, from me and all my co-workers, rehabilitation advisors, who are unfortunately not here today, but they surely contributed plenty with their many experience, so we can actually say, that we have here, in Slovenia, a couple of good and encouraging solutions at systemic level. I am very grateful for this opportunity, to be here today amongst you and that I could listen to all of your important personal experience, all of them are genuine, sincere and tell a story of what can happen in the labour market to a deaf or hard of hearing person, when he/she embarks on a road from education to the labour market or when he/she is searching for a new job in case if he/she is already employed. We hear very often, also in professional field, that the situation in the labour market is practically impossible, that conditions are catastrophic and that we cannot say anything good regarding this subject, especially if we are talking about employment of people with certain limitations and barriers when trying to integrate in the labour market. So I definitely want to mention all those examples, we heard about in the previous addresses again and say that they are real, genuine. Today we are in the institution, that actually deals with preparation of legislative acts, presents a base for certain things to unfold like they are supposed to, but still I want to emphasize, that we have more than 71 regulations in Slovenia, which are about disability scheme, which is an important piece of information. But its content and we heard that many times today, remains fairly unknown or people interpret it in the wrong way or sometimes, information is just coming from the wrong channel. I would like to tell you about and present a broader view on things, it revolves around my experience and my co-workers', who are looking after training and employment of disabled individuals in the Employment Service of Slovenia. You might be surprised when you hear a fact that the numbers of unemployed disabled in our evidence is actually decreasing for the second year in a row. This decrease is important. In the last year, in 2015, the numbers of unemployed disabled went down for more than a thousand. On the other hand, actually ever since the implementation of the quota system, the number of employing an unemployed disabled is rising. That information you just heard is, in my opinion, very, very encouraging. But still, this issue must be additionally talked about. People with disabilities are not some homogenous group and we always say, an individual approach is necessary and in that sense, deaf and hard of hearing take a special place. On the other hand, we heard a lot about employers today. Employers are also a very, very heterogeneous group. We make contact with more than 1500 employers on a yearly basis, when we are discussing employment of people with disabilities. Those are mostly small and medium sized employers, who then, in the end, actually hire a person with disability. There are approximately 3000 new employments each year, we are talking about all unemployed people with disabilities, which means, that the information, which was actually confirmed by the colleague sooner, is not surprising and that there is not a

huge employment going on in the sense, that one employer would hire 10, 20, 50 or a 100 people with disability, like it was happening maybe 20 years ago, such employers practically do not exist. Our experience proves, that we are actually witnessing a very, very boutique employment, where one employer does not hire more than one, or maybe two, disabled. Why are rehabilitation commissions and vocational rehabilitation important and what are their roles? A very important fact is, and it applies and presents certain legality with employment of all unemployed, especially young people and young people with disability status, so that includes deaf and hard of hearing that these groups of people are our costumers numerous times. What does that mean? That means that in five or ten years, they return to us five times, seven times or more. So fixed-term employment is a fact. And it is a fact, which applies to disabled and to the deaf and hard of hearing. Here, I have to confirm starting points and, in one of my slides, I specifically exposed knowledge as key factor, as key measure, also basing on the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, so as the key ingredient, based on which we also asses and realize the need for services of vocational rehabilitation, so knowledge and education are definitely on the first place. But everyone who is entering the labour market, or is already there, that goes for all of us, must know and be prepared for the fact, that he will do many different jobs in his life and that education, formal education, which he got in the educational process, is just a base for everything else. So there is an important message in realizing, that people need to work on their transferable knowledge, competences, skills, because those are that key flexibility that matters in the labour market. This is why there has to be a rehabilitation commission procedure from Employment Service before individuals can enter vocational rehabilitation, I really must say here, and that this is the base for every decision about different subventions from the Employment Service. Our external partners, i.e. commissioners, who perform these vocational rehabilitation services, one of them was already mentioned here today a couple of times, but that is only one of 19 teams, which perform these services in collaboration with us. So, people who come and are discussed in the rehabilitation commission, are not only people who just finished their education and decided to come. Sometimes, actually, years or even decades have passed by, since their last professional evaluation and discussion by the commission. I would point out the fact, which speaks very loudly for itself, that we had, in the last ten years, in rehabilitation commissions, I summed up this data from concrete opinions, rehabilitation opinions, more than 450 people, whose main diagnose was deafness or hearing impairment. 450, even a couple more, among them there were 70 of those, whose main diagnose was deafness. But I have to emphasize, that next to this number, there is at least this many people in rehabilitation commissions, who have different hearing impairments, but they and their problems are treated in a completely separate category of some other diagnose and other issues that can arise afterward. That is why this is an important part of services, especially support services for the deaf and hard of hearing in connection to these issues, which we see in the rehabilitation commissions and is actually a reflection of a general state of our whole society, when we are discussing increase of diseases

and mental health problems, so we are dealing with extremely complex and difficult cases, for which we are searching solutions, and in this framework we are not searching for an answer for merely one, but multiple barriers. I do not know if you are familiar with the fact or know the information, that when concerning treatments at our rehabilitation commissions, we are practically the only system in this part of Europe, that also uses an International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, so we do not only use the medical model and international classification of a certain disease, but also the functioning of a person, and that in average, a person who is treated by the commission and then needs vocational rehabilitation services, has in average six barriers, different barriers, which directly or indirectly influence her/his employment. Specifically, when we analyzed a group of disabled, who were included in rehabilitation in the last concession period, that present a little over 4500 people with disabilities and we realized, part of this group were also people who were, in the end, deemed as unfit for work, that in the first place, as a barrier, which most represent an obstacle when entering the labour market, is, in fact, knowledge. Knowledge and professional experience. Disability in itself was only on the third place. I am not saying this basing on some verbal talk, but an actual analysis, actual examples, their numbers so big, that we actually cannot talk only about some personal experience, but about facts, that we actually have a system and that a system does exist, in which there is room for examples of good and bad practice. But I have to say that now as a special educator at Employment Service and before at the Institute for Pension and Disability Insurance, I have been working for nearly 25 years and we have come across, in the last two or three years, more and more examples of good practice as ever before. So, saying and telling, that employers do not want, that they are not prepared, that simply is not true. Employers are not all alike, just like we, gathered here, are not all alike. The whole encouragement system, which derive and is a prerogative of people with disabilities, is something that goes on continually in Slovenia in the last ten years, ever since the implementation of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, but we can talk about prior practice, which has taken place since 1976. Even back then, we had possibilities and legislative foundation for formation of disability businesses and for employment of people with disabilities in the open labour market. Today we heard a couple of times that we cannot actually talk about actual encouragements, which are, in a way, a starting point for acquiring all the declarations. And that starting point is, even for employed disabled, Employment Service of Slovenia. The disabled cannot assert those rights in the Institute for Pension and Disability Insurance. I would like to find a certain slide, with the help of which I would like to explain to you some facts regarding employment of the deaf and hard of hearing. It is a short summary, i.e., behind each number stands an actual person, an actual disabled person. You have to know, that on a yearly basis, in vocational rehabilitation, besides every other form of active inclusion either in life-long career orientation or active employment policies, you are probably familiar with public works. More than 2200 people join the vocational rehabilitation per year – those are only people with disabilities. Among them, 10 to 15 percent of people are deaf or hard of hearing; of

course the split between the deaf and hard of hearing is, approximately, 20 to 80. The presentation of issued decrees is about employment after they have finished their vocational rehabilitation. Very important information, SE stands for Supported Employment, SHE stands for Sheltered Employment, and unemployment is the third column. What is important? In all of these years, there was not even one deaf or hard of hearing amongst the issued decrees of unemployment. That is an extremely important fact, which says a lot about your place in the market and it shows that there is a place for you in the labour market. There is practically not a single target group of disabled who are a part of the rehabilitation, which is not, that some of them are not among the unemployable. On the other hand, among those, who do have a decree of supported employment, the biggest part presents the deaf and hard of hearing. What does that mean? That they can in fact get a job and they do get them, especially in the ordinary labour market, because the numbers of issued decrees for supported employment for deaf and hard of hearing is essentially higher in comparison to the issued decrees for sheltered employment. So that means, in some special environment, where a special support is present. That means, that there is room and there are possibilities for getting employment. A student asked me recently, if it is true, that when a person with a disability enters a vocational rehabilitation and has a high level of education, that he will only be offered, and that is already decided in advance, jobs that are not suitable for them, i.e. some low-entry jobs. My answer is no, even though the real situation is different, not because of disability or some pointers inside the vocational rehabilitation, but because of the fact, that we have so many young jobseekers with tertiary education in the labour market. The whole structure of the labour market's needs is not built that way. We still are not some high developed technological society, that would exclusively employ only highly educated personnel, there is still room under this sun for those, and I am extremely happy a previous speaker already mentioned it, with special professions in certain crafts, with which certain vocational education can be linked and conclusions can be formed, that most of the disabled are employed in small or medium sized businesses. Thank you.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Thank you. With this we concluded our second panel. Based on our program, we should already be out there, drinking coffee, but we have decided, because some of our guests unfortunately have to leave us, that we will try to do a short discussion, which means, ten minutes, just a trial run, a longer discussion will be held in the third panel and you can ask question then as well. I invite you to ask questions in the next ten minutes, if you have one, use this time, join us and ask our guests whatever you want. Please. When you ask a question I only want that you stick to two things. Firstly, say for who the question is for and then ...

Petra Rezar, MA, President of the Slovenian Association of the Teachers of the Deaf

You said, that deaf cannot work at those jobs, where communication is a barrier. Why? That is what employers think. For example, I am a deaf teacher and I would want to teach in a regular school or I would want to work on television or some place with a lot of communication. Why should I be deprived? That goes for all deaf people. M.A. Maja Skorupan, independent legal advisor, Employers' Association of Slovenia Thank you for your question. I have already said in my presentation, that that is a prejudice, which employers are facing before hiring a deaf person and they, themselves, stated that they need to get free of this prejudice, i.e. they need to eradicate it. And this communication problem will probably go away, when employers will start adjusting workplaces for deaf people. As said before, to adjust workplaces, financial encouragements are expected. And in my opinion, that is the main reason for communication barrier to also be a barrier for employing a deaf person.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Thank you. Interpreter Dušan, that letter, can you look at it, please?

I have gotten a letter, it is a little long. Petra, would you like me to read this letter? I read it before and I got the impression that you would be the most suitable to give an answer. You will be the judge of it. That being said, you can tell from the letter, that it regards some lady, who worked in Ani company in Trzin between years 2006 and 2016. She worked on fixed-term contract and because they cut down their business, she was let go. She then started to work in a different company – Labod. She only worked for three months, then she got diabetes and she could not work any longer. In September 2012 she applied to Employment Service in Slovenia, where they realized, basing on the employment data from Institute for Pension and Disability Insurance, that she needs one additional month of work service, before she can retire, according to the old Pension Act. She found a job for a month. When she returned to the Employment Service, they told her, that the Institute for Pension and Disability Insurance were wrong regarding required work service and that she needs additional three months of work service and she needs them soon. She could not get a job. The Institute for Pension and Disability Insurance informed her through Employment Service, that she needs to work additional eight more years before she can retire, which was a shock to her, mainly because of her disability, she is deaf and also because of her extreme form of diabetes. She was looking for employment with the help of disability company Racio, which got her a job as a cleaning lady in a dairy. There she was supposed to have a five-day trial run. Unfortunately, she had a serious accident, a severe one, she has fallen on the stairs after three days, hurt her shoulder and is still in recovery. It has been 15 months now and it is still not finished. To make matters worse, Racio did not provide a proper health insurance, so now, because of a negligent work from Institute for Pension and Disability Insurance when determining her work service years and bad services from Racio, she is disappointed and desperate, without a job and cannot get a job because of her injuries. Do I have any chance of ever getting my pension? is her question.

Lea Kovač, Employment Service of Slovenia

Ms. gave us quite a lot of information, which probably present an integral part of her professional career. She also included the part, when she was employed and what happened next, even after she became unemployed. She has confirmed all those daily stories, that fixed-term employment, loss of employment, multiple loss of employment are all facts, which unemployed and even employed, in a way, are facing, that includes the disabled. Based on the fact, that Ms. has numerous health and other problems, I think an assessment of her working abilities would be appropriate in her case, and basing on the fact, that she has a certain work service period; I would recommend a hearing in Disability Commission at the Institute for Pension and Disability Insurance. In the case, when certain health changes happened in the time of her insurance. So, it will be possible to assess, because she has some years of work service, a certain change in her working abilities and then she will probably fit in one disability category and from that, she can get certain compensation or partially even a disability pension. But I would like, again, to point out, that integration in its final stages means, that when changes happen, let us say in a retirement system, that that change applies to everyone, including the disabled. So, longer work service, necessary for retirement, is a fact. And that is precisely why I emphasized the connection between education as a one-time activity, which happens prior to entering the labour market, and some form of life-long education. So, somebody getting an education and then have one work position his whole life, this does not exist anymore. And that goes for the disabled as well. In this specific example, although I do not know all the details, I would have to know more, but in regards to all her basic problems, she is also deaf and probably has other health issues, which arose in the time of insurance, I would definitely recommend solving this with the Institute for Pension and Disability Insurance.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Thank you. Another question, here you go. We have time for one more question, and then we finish with this set of questions.

Tanja Potočnik Hönigsman

Hello. I work for the most successful company in Slovenia. This company enables me, or better said, gave me a great boost of confidence and believes in my abilities. And that is why a chance needs to be given to the deaf and hard of hearing, to show, that deaf and hard of hearing are also capable. As I am listening to our speakers today, insufficient knowledge about communication with the deaf and hard of hearing is a key, maybe we should educate more in this field; also the way on how to communicate with the deaf. You learn how to communicate with the deaf and hard of hearing and then you know how to communicate with them in the future. Thank you.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Is there a question?

Tanja Potočnik Hönigsman

I would ask, if you can do a course, actually a lecture, with employers, so you can connect and explain to them, how to work with deaf and communicate with the deaf and hard of hearing.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Aha, so you are giving more of a suggestion?

Tanja Potočnik Hönigsman

Yes.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

OK, thank you. Interpreter Can Mr. Veršič say something, one minute?

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

We will have time later on. Is there any other specific question, for the employers?

Mladen Veršič, President of the Slovenian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing .

Yes, similar, of course it regards this subject. Just a short question.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Come, please.

Mladen Veršič, President of the Slovenian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

We really are facing big obstacles when it comes to employment of deaf and hard of hearing. I think that the biggest problem is, among employees as well, mobbing/ victimization, if a deaf employer is working in a team of all hearing employees. We need to pay attention to these sorts of problems; we need to respect our co-workers and all our differences. I want to show and tell you that these things do happen, not only among employers, but among employees as well.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

OK. I will consider your suggestion and remark, although that I wanted this to be more of a discussion. I will end this part now and invite you all to the lobby for a 15-minute break, but before we really finish this, I will tell you what the next panel will be about. We will take on a European perspective and experience. We will start with a guest from Netherlands, Mr. Rob van Maanen. His presentation will be in English, so those of you, who want to have a translation to Slovene language, set up your headphones in time, you can get them on the right side, so you can follow the presentation.

So much about that, at the same time, I would like to thank all the speakers. The presentations were great and thank you again.

Panel 3: European Perspectives and Experiences

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Welcome to the third panel. As we announced, the speakers of the third panel will be Rob van Maanen, Helga Stevens and Mr. Àdàm Kòsa, who will talk to us via video call. But our first speaker is Rob van Maanen. He comes from Netherlands. I will just shortly introduce him. He has been the manager of the firm FlexPay since 2001, where he works in people employment department, including disabled employment. His contribution is titled What do I know about myself? Rob, please.

Rob van Maanen, FlexPay, The Netherlands.

Good day, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for this opportunity, to come on stage after lunch break. This is the toughest part, so I ask you to please, wake up, or I will start speaking in Dutch language. I know at least one person will understand me. That would be my colleague from Flemish region of Belgium, which is very close to Holland. I am very proud that we gathered here and that we can discuss these very important questions. We come from Belgium, Slovenia and the Netherlands, i.e. Holland. We can exchange information here and return home somewhat happier than we were when we arrived here. If I am going on too fast, tap me. My name is Rob van Maanen, I am the manager of a company called FlexPay. And do not worry, I am an employer also and employers are not people you should be afraid of. We live in the same world, employers and employees. We established FlexPay in 1999, which is a while ago. We support company and local community integration. So let us start employing individuals. We specialize in unemployed individuals; we are even more specialized in people with disabilities. It is an unusual phrase, but still, we also work with deaf and blind. Those are people, who want to work, who want a job. I was a manager of some other company for seven years. I worked in HR, now I work under the company FlexJob. I will skip some of the slides, which I introduced, because we do not have enough time. Let us look at the factors of success and challenges. After everything we have already heard, it is important to talk about where you, we and all of us, can be successful together.

I will skip this too, challenges, a lot has been said about this. Now, the factors of success. I will not read everything that is on the slides, you can get that later. I will focus on the question, which I asked myself as well, what do I know about myself, what do I want to say about myself in general, especially when you are deaf or hard of hearing. I have noticed in my line of work, when I talk to jobseekers, that multiple reasons exist for them not having a job. Often they are subjected to discrimination. You must know your ambitions, what is it that you want and then step on that path. Especially when you are weaker in the labour market, I do not know why we call it like that, but we are talking

about those, who are the weaker ones in the labour market. When you are getting ready for an interview with an employer, you need to know your advantages, your competences and you need to foresee, what your potential employer is interested in. You can take advantage of that, if you have special competences. In this way you will get the employer to listen to you. We often notice the lack of self-interest. When I meet up with older people and people with disabilities, jobseekers, they all know that society is discriminative, but that statement is too general. And that is often an excuse, so they do not need to deal with themselves, so they do not need to get to know themselves better. The most important question was already expressed by the children in the video. The question is, what do I want to become? What motivates me? That is of extreme importance. If we do not have some sort of passion, we need to find it and then talk about what that passion is. And that is also your motivation simultaneously. You need to motivate yourself. We have motivation, when, e.g. we go to the mall, we know exactly what we want. Therefore, you need to know yourself. That does not only apply to the deaf and hard of hearing, I noticed that in others as well, because majority of jobseekers do not know what they are capable of exactly. They will tell you, I am a bookkeeper. But when we ask him, what are your skills, how can you contribute to this company and employer with your bookkeeping. My second or third question is always, what kind of bookkeeper do you wish to be? Good or not so good? It is unusual, but everybody takes time, before giving an answer. But the answer should be clear. You want to be the best bookkeeper, but if you say: "I am not so good in this and that," you have already lost the battle. When you want to be the best, you need to know yourself. You need to know your own competences. Did I learn this by myself? We heard that some people learned a lot in a completely informal way. Sometimes you have the knowledge, but you do not have credentials or certificate and you need to tell this. I often meet with young and old, who do not tell me, that they use computers in their private life, very complex programs even, and they just forget to mention this. Of course you need to say this. It is also very important to know, that the labour market is big and small at the same time. It is not an animal, it is not alive. The labour market is something you need to read about, ask about. What does the labour market represent to me? Are there work positions for me? What are the companies suitable for me? One of the previous speakers said: "I work for the best company in Slovenia". Then you ask yourself, which are these companies? Are they hiring? You read newspapers, the internet offers you all the information that you need, but still, you need to sit down and go through our knowledge of the labour market. It is important that you connect the labour market with your competences. You will realize there are many people looking for a job, but at the same time, that there are also many available jobs, waiting for you. Everything needs to be connected to your own competences and opportunities you can handle. It is like wanting to play football, American football. The coach will ask you, what can you bring to the team. You will say: "I am the best defender." or "I am the best tackler". Those are great examples. My assistant is also great at his job. I am always surprised, when I talk to the deaf and hard of hearing and I ask them for examples. They are too quiet after that question. And I am

very surprised, that they do not have a long list of people, who are employed, because there are deaf and hard of hearing that have their own employment. They also have part-time jobs. Many of them are present in this room. On the other hand, we have those, who have regular employment. You need to make inquiries. Sometimes these people are very close to you, but you do not know that, because they are so self-assured in their work, so they get paid. You need to share. I am also surprised, that when I ask a question in Netherlands: What do you know about these cases? What examples do you know? And I ask them: "Did you search for that on the internet?" And they will say: "When I google in Dutch, I do not find many examples". And then I say: "I did not say you need to use Dutch, when you are typing words in the search engine. Try English. You will find many examples then". Most of them forget that YouTube is also a search engine and I advise you, go to YouTube and watch posts about hard of hearing employees, deaf employees and you will see how long the list is. You can find long lists from USA, Australia, of course everything is in English, but still, you can help yourself with sign language. Nobody says you cannot send an e-mail to a company and ask them how they manage that. Using e-mail is easy. I would like to present another very interesting case to you. I never thought about this before. I also work with a Flemish employment agency in Brussels. I was preparing this presentation and I asked them: "Do you have deaf or hard of hearing employees in your organization?" And they told me: "Yes, yes, we have two employees, who work in our main centre, in our call centre." And I said to myself, how come two deaf people can work in a call centre? It is about creativity here. Call centre today does not work based on a phone. There are other communication ways, electronic way, e-mail, messages. These two people have a regular employment in a call centre. Ask people around you, if that is possible. They might say: "No, no". There might be blind employees, but I cannot imagine that a deaf person would work in a call centre. Everything is available on the internet, write a question and you will get an answer. Do not use phones. They are too expensive. Company can become more profitable, if you offer them a cheaper solution. So much about exploring the labour market. I would like to share a few more suggestions with you. You can find all of this online. You can find everything there. You evaluate yourself, you figure out what that evaluation tells about you and, of course, be fair in that assessment. The evaluation, which you will do on a Monday morning, will be different from the one from Friday afternoon. Nevertheless, information will be similar. And I ask you, do not dwell on the negative. Always focus on facts, which tell you that you are strong and on the areas, in which you can become stronger. Eliminate the negative and use the positive. If you want to be a manager, think about your assessment and what does it tell you. Ms. talked about social networks. Those are definitely important. Sometimes I had to use a phone, to arrange meetings, today everything is different. On Saturday, Sunday I am arranging meetings through LinkedIn. It is easy to write an e-mail and getting an instant reply and know, whether someone wants to invite you to the interview or not. You can make a decision fast. I have spoken about jobs, how important it is to do research, to ask others. You have to ask, not wait. You can also go

to the Employment Service, but that is just a part of the things you need to do. Rely on your own research. When you are asking questions, show them, that you, as a deaf person, are looking for a job. You can ask me, as an employer, or any other employer, if we can meet and talk shortly about jobs, suitable for a deaf person. Tell me, that you want a short meeting. Of course you can bring an interpreter, but still I ask you, that you do not feel too much pressure. So, what do I bring from Holland, from the Netherlands? I do not think that employers have insufficient knowledge. How can they, if they have never dealt with an issue, never paid any attention to it. So what can you do or what can we do? The lack of knowledge needs to be defeated with providing information, to explain to them, so bring extra information with you and teach them. Our company is small and it is growing. This poster is, although in Dutch, a poster, a simple one, with simple suggestions and advices, on how to deal or communicate with a deaf person in the company. Everybody says: "We have read it, it is interesting, but we do not employ deaf people". But still, this kind of poster can be the first step. I can translate this for you. This kind of poster does not cost much, but it can be a part of information, a part of basic information. I was convinced by this, as a manager, and I did not say: "This is too much. This is hard". I have another example from the same organization. It is a small thing, a little brochure with tips for employers. It can be that simple. It is easy to read and you can offer this to someone, when you meet them. You say: "You might want to read this, it is not 20 pages long. These are simple, effective tips". You can easily have those tips for the deaf and hard of hearing. We, employers, need to join and when an employer reads this, he can read both sides. The one meant for employer and the one meant for jobseekers, who are deaf or hard of hearing. It is a very useful tool. When you have a plan, formed in your head and when you know how the labour market works, you always make a plan, a business plan, what are the steps you need to make, that is essential. And this project is very much similar to the project of the hearing. You always need to say hello, introduce yourself. That is my offer. He has a business; you can ask him for example, take your time. The first meeting is merely passing on the information. What is your company like? Can I visit it? I wish I could look at your office. It is interesting, that I never had, in my entire life, a mentor or a manager, who would ask me, if I am interested in deaf employment or employment of people with chronic illness or someone who is on a wheelchair. I never got that question. And that is way there is a lack of information. Technical things. Here you need to talk about adjusting workplace, but when you have an interesting story, an employer will definitely listen to you, let that be the manager of the company or the manager of human resources. You can get many opportunities for a job. There is a lot of information about hiring a deaf person. I listed them on my slides. You can get my whole presentation later. Look at the advantages, which can be very general. Figure out, if that is you. If you are not patient, for example, you are not suitable for a certain job. You need to realize, what your advantages and competences are. And when you discover them, share them. We have already mentioned YouTube. Please, look at it. I have some video clips with me, but there is no time to show them to you. Look at them; they can be really funny sometimes. Presented

here are also work positions; you might never have thought about, you did not even think they exist. I already gave you some tips in regards to brochures, presentations, posters. I will leave you this, you can translate it and use it. And what are your next steps? If nothing happens, you need to think ahead. Maybe a special working group needs to be formed. We have working groups for basically everything these days. Sit down and talk about challenges. Talk about how you can succeed. Think about it.,because you will not be thinking about how to spend every last cent as fast as you can. The question is how to sell your product. And that product is you. We have many programs in Europe, I can mention Erasmus+, this one is very known, of course getting money is not easy, but it is worth giving it a try. Usually you get money, you get the means, if you present a good program. Bad programs are the programs, which are prepared in a rush, too quickly. A good program is the one, which has a good suggestion, when a reader of this program feels your passion, your passionate commitment and sees what you want to share with other European citizens and what is the thing that will strengthen you and them. You can find more information on my website. You can write to me. I would like to thank you for your attention. Thank you.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Thank you. I would now like to ask Helga Stevens, Member of the European Parliament, to present her contribution, titled My Career as a Deaf Politician. Helga comes from Belgium. She is a member of the European Parliament from European Conservatives and Reformists Group. Please.

Helga Stevens, Member of the European Parliament, European Conservatives and Reformists Group

Hello. A nice welcome to you all, once more. My name is Helga, my gesture. Helga, I apologize. I forgot to show you my gesture for my name this morning. I am Helga Stevens. I am a member of the European Parliament. I want to shortly introduce myself. I am a deaf user of sign language. I have a hearing family, but I was born deaf. I live in Flemish region. Belgium is separated into two regions. Some of us speak Dutch-French-German, three languages. And I am the first deaf attorney. I am also the first politician at the European Parliament. There are not many deaf attorneys, there were none before. I would say 23 years ago, there were not any. And I am a member of the European Parliament. I would like to present to you my history, concerning employment. You have to remember, deaf, hearing, disabled, it does not even matter. It is important for everyone to have an education. A degree, if we do not have one, our future, regarding a job, will be bad. There used to be school for the deaf. I went there, then entered integration, a regular school and let us say; in time ... It was a secondary school. You can see your options there. And there are very few of them – tailoring, shoe making, bakery, a moment, yes, butchery also.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

All of you who had headphones, please put them down and turn them off properly, because if you do not, a certain beep remains, which is disturbing to the hearing participants. Problem of the hearing. We solved it straight away.

Helga Stevens, Member of the European Parliament, European Conservatives and Reformists Group

As I was saying, we had very limited curriculum at the school for the deaf. And my mother said: “You are deaf, but you are not stupid”. She negotiated in this government organization, where they said to her: “It is school for the deaf; it is an adjusted establishment and if you want the same program as the hearing school, then go to the hearing school”. And then we thought about this integration, this inclusion and they tried to integrate me. I saw I can manage. I got support. Because I was not good at languages and then I had to quickly adapt and slowly I started to catch up to the hearing students. Not just in writing, yes in writing, verbally not yet. And the university where I studied, I wanted to go to the University and firstly I wanted to go to the exchange program to America for a year. And my family went to see what it is like and they saw, that there are not any deaf students, but they did have a school for the deaf outside of the University. That is how we came into contact with the deaf and saw, that the communication, American English and American sign language, is not an obstacle. And that is how I started to socialize and later I enrolled in the University. (Just a moment). And then I studied law. Then I did my masters in England, in Leeds, I was there for seven and a half months, to do my studies. During my education I also attended an exchange program and I went to America, as I have said before, and then I went back. The next year I went to England and studied there. And then back to Belgium and that was my path and I got my degree. I have finished my studies and I have become a graduate attorney. I started thinking, that I want a little bit more, I want to study further. And then I continued with my studies, did my masters and returned to Belgium and started to work. I did not rest during the holidays, but I took part in the educational institution, where I helped, trained, teach, because in America an institution exists, for teaching and assisting the deaf, basically for helping all discriminated disabled. Because they need our support and that is why I contributed part of my experience. When it comes to employment, I say we need to look for it ourselves. My mother said: “I saw them, aha, the deaf”. And we said: “If you do not understand the meaning of a certain word, do a research, find the meaning of that word, look for yourself, do not ask around. Your mother and father should not consult you and protect you, because they do not do you any good with that”. When I started working in politics, in non-profit organization – EUD (The European Union of the Deaf), I was a sort of a moderator and a president for the European Disability Forum and I was also in a committee for women’s and disabled’s rights. I was also a member of the Flemish Deaf Community. I know how non-profit organizations work, I know the law; I know the rights of volunteers,

who decide to help in this matter. I was voted into the Flemish Parliament in 2004. That means, I was elected and included in the Parliament in 2004. My first candidacy for my place in the Parliament was in 1999. I was a candidate multiple times, but they never chose me. But I have succeeded in 2004 and I was elected. That means, it took quite a while. I wrote many applications, did interviews, was a candidate, and was on bills, there was a lot of work. All for the purpose of finally being elected in 2004. I was re-elected in 2009. It was similar to Yugoslavia back in the days, a federation. Yugoslavia was federal, it was the same here. The system was the same and I became part of it. I was included in the Belgium Senate. I was also a representative of the Flemish Parliament in this Senate, a representative in the Belgium Senate. A lot of work. In both places, at the Flemish Parliament and in the Belgium Senate, then in 2007 I was also elected into the City Council in a city Ghent. I was elected into City Council two times. And in 2014 I was elected into the European Parliament. I had many meetings in the City Council and then many meetings at the European Parliament. I went to Strasbourg, I travelled there all the time and then I realized, that it is impossible, being in the City Council and European Parliament simultaneously. And then I decided to resign from the City Council and concentrate solely on the Parliament. The City Council has a lot of meetings and often I had to ask for a replacement. If that had happened only once, there would not have been a problem, but I had to ask for replacements many times and I could not do it any longer, so I consequently decided to resign from the City Council. At the Parliament an interpreter is with me all the time. I have to have him. It is very important I have a very good interpreter. If the interpreter is not good, every member of the Parliament thinks about, what is Helga like. I need a good interpreter, who talks well, who interpreters well and then the members say, that I am good. I do not make things up and I do not choose different interpreters. I choose a quality interpreter, who does the right interpretation, and that is very important for my work, for my future. What are opinions about my work at the Parliament? I have very different committees, many committees. Each member chooses two committees at most. Same as Dr. Šoltes, he has two committees; I have two committees as well. I am a part of the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee. And I am also a part of the Employment and Social Affairs Committee. We direct law there. For example, we can see the situation now. A lot of migrants come in contacts from different countries. We can see, that many migrants are coming to Europe and now the questions present themselves; how to solve this situation and human's basic rights, how to honour people's basic rights, of course it is also about protecting personal information, to keep their personal data safe, because plenty of people are selling that personal information all over the internet with the help of online frauds. I am working on keeping this personal information safe. I also help people, who have difficulties finding a job, or having health problems, I help solving many different problems. There a few things I can say, regarding social area, which is also very important. Mr. Šoltes and I, share an opinion regarding accessibility and what it will be like in the future and I hope that accessibility will be more open and useable in the future. State institutions should also be more approachable. It is about cooperation.

They are thinking about online accessibility, because deaf people are a visual type, but what is the problem. If you open a laptop, a computer, you can see people speak, but you do not understand, you cannot hear, that is why you need an interpreter present. If, for example, a person is blind, he cannot see anything and he needs a speaker present. A discussion about this problem is in session now. I cannot see it. I apologize. I would also like to say something about sign language. We have results at the Parliament. The Committee and Government Organization need to follow the policy. That means they have to educate interpreters, they have to ensure them. In years 1988 and 1998, in that period, I apologize. In the year 2018, which means in two years, I hope we will be able to offer something new. You could say that the sign language is and will be very important. You know about United Nation Convention and how it ensures rights for people, their political rights and of course their other rights. You know about this? We have many problems regarding interpretation at the Parliament. For example, a leader of the Parliament offers little financial means for interpreters, I am fighting for the same rights as the hearing have them, who have their own interpreters, have their official language, have their rights, but a sign language does not have an official language. We are fighting for this now, so we can also have an official language, so I can have an interpreter present at all times. Àdàm Kòsa, who is deaf, and I, we both try to make this happen; we are both fighting for this together. We ask the president of the European Parliament many times, to arrange our right to an interpretation. We talk about this subject a lot, the discussions are going on for a long time now, but that is not right for a European Parliament. I hope that Dr. Šoltés will support us in this interpreters' matter. In July, when we will, I hope, organize a big discussion on how to organize languages. That includes all spoken languages and sign language, to show Europe, what are the differences between spoken and sign language. Because generally they are thinking: "Ah, sign language, ok, that is not a big deal". That there is only one sign language, one universal language, but that is not true. Sign languages differ and there are many variations of it, just as with spoken languages. That is why, we want to organize a big conference about this topic at the Parliament and we can hope we will come to an agreement. If we can, we will notify you. And to Mr. President, no, not to the president, my apology, to the Holland representative. He talks a lot about the European program, about exchanges, Erasmus. We have many projects, but what about sign language? We do not have money for sign language. We can create projects for opinions, exchanges and ideas. If it is a good idea, then we can also write content. But I am deaf. I need an interpreter. So, you have an idea, you write it down, but there are extra costs, if a deaf person is present, because he/she needs a room with an interpreter present, and interpreter needs to get paid. That means, if you want to include a deaf person in a certain project, expenses for an interpreter need to be covered. It often happens that a project is rejected, if a deaf person is included, because it costs too much due to an interpreter and his price. And shortly I want to talk about general accepted opinion, that I, as an example, cannot be a politician. I can be, look at me, I am a deaf politician. And Àdàm, whom I mentioned before, is also one and is a member of the Hungarian

National Assembly and is deaf. And we also have a deaf politician from Spain and Austria. Just look at that, how many different deaf politicians. You can see that we have deaf politicians. So, you have the same possibility. It is not true, that they are not capable, go into politics. Thank you.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Thank you. Great. Next in line, based on our program, is a video address from our other deaf Member of the European Parliament, who was invited to our conference. We will show the speech of Dr. Ádám Kòsa, Hungarian Member of the European Parliament, who is also deaf. He is a representative of the European People's Party.

Dr. Ádám Kòsa, Member of the European Parliament, Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)

VIDEO ADDRESS

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator Great,

Thank you. Thank you for your video contribution, special thanks to the European Parliament who enabled the making of this video and for then sending it here, so we could translate it etc., it took quite an effort to make this possible. Thank you, Mr. Šoltes, who took care of all those things through his office. It is ten minutes to two. According to the program, we have to be finished until a quarter past two, which means, we still have twenty minutes. Petra Rezar called off her contribution, which she should have had in the first panel, and you will be able to read it in our Conference Journal. She thinks it is better, if we have a discussion. We owe you a discussion and I think that twenty minutes will be enough time. The conclusions of this conference, which should be presented in this time, were also gathered. It is up to us, whether we spent the remaining time for a discussion, so you can ask questions, while we still have our esteemed guests with us. Now is the time to ask them something. And the conclusions can still be read on the website of Dr. Šoltes' office or on the website of the Slovenian Association of Teachers of the Deaf. I suggest we continue with the discussion, the debate, which means, the instructions are similar to the ones before, when we tried with the discussion already. Anyone who wants to say something, express an opinion and have a question for a specific speaker, great, suggestions are welcome as well. Let us limit ourselves. Let us see, you can talk for twenty minutes, because we only have twenty minutes for the whole discussion. Be short and concise. So, please, the stage is yours. I ask that everyone introduce themselves.

Vanda Sagovac (A participant from Zagreb.)

Hello to you all. My name is Vanda and I am from Zagreb, Croatia. I am also a deaf person. I have a degree, I am a tourism manager. I have thirty-years' experience in this field. I see and know about the issues regarding employment of the deaf. I can see that the deaf are facing many barriers. Before, in the Yugoslavia time, conditions were

better, jobs were better, but now, when we are part of the European Union, something went wrong. I have an example: one deaf person has been working as a truck driver for many years and he is hard of hearing. He has a driver's license. This license has now expired. And when he went to extend his license, they said to him: "You cannot work in this profession anymore". They said to him, overnight: "You can no longer drive a truck". This hard of hearing person got scared and asked: "Why?". They replied: "European regulation. It is written in European regulations". All the doctors concluded in the same way, they were unanimous and said he cannot drive any longer. My co-workers and I, we all asked ourselves, how did it come to this? Who is responsible for this final decision? Who has the responsibility? And then we were really baffled why they decided like this. Unfortunately, it was a windmill fight to get his license back and they were unsuccessful.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Is there a question?

Vanda Šagovac (A participant from Zagreb.)

This hard of hearing person had to find a different job.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Is there a question?

Vanda Šagovac (A participant from Zagreb.)

I want to ask you, I want to urge all of you, to attend a world congress this year, in October, from 25th to 28th of October, the topic is About Social Tourism. That means tourism for everybody. We will talk about innovation and technology and other things in connection to tourism. This congress is not just for the deaf, it can be for every disabled. The main discussion will be about an adjustment in access for the disabled. For the deaf, for example, deaf, how the communication would go on, how the communication in tourism, in hotels goes on, because we need an interpreter present, how can you book check into a hotel, how to order a room ...

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Fine. We will stop here. Let us give the opportunity to somebody else. We are missing the point of our main topic here.

Vanda Šagovac (A participant from Zagreb.)

I had an awkward situation in America, when I travelled to America. A person came to greet me with a wheelchair. They thought I am a disabled. That means, yes, of course, the deaf are people with an invisible disability. Aha, so the other person did come with a wheelchair, because they thought I need it, because deafness is invisible disability. That means, it is a different form of disability, invisible one, and it is a problem all over

the world. I want that in this congress, we do some sort of employment network, that includes work for the deaf in tourism, let us say, in agencies, where deaf could work as tourist guides, for the deaf of course. A deaf person could work as a tourist guide for the deaf.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

OK. Thank you.

Vanda Šagovac (A participant from Zagreb.)

I am a tourist guide for the deaf. Thank you all, who attended. You are all welcome, from 25th to 28th of October, to attend the congress. I just wanted to inform you. Thanks to Petra Rezar and to all of you.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Thank you. I really want to ask you again, to limit yourself to today's topic, and I can see that we have something here. Aha, yes, an answer, from Ms. Helga. Please.

Helga Stevens, Member of the European Parliament, European Conservatives and Reformists Group

I would like to answer the lady from Croatia. She presented an example of the truck driver that he cannot work as a driver any longer. The problem lies in insurance, who will pay for expenses, for example. Maybe the problem is in the Insurance Company. We also have a problem in Belgium; a deaf person, a man, who worked in some fairly big company, which dealt in rail transport. He wanted to work in lasers department and they said: "It is dangerous, you cannot work there". And he replied: "I can see, I see everything, I am looking". And they said: "No, no, you do not hear, you cannot". There were a lot of struggles, a lot of bickering. And then, as a sign of protest, he stopped shaving and grew his beard. And the community helped him then. That means that the community helped him. Why are deaf discriminated? I think it is the same problem with this insurance. That the situation is risky and they are worried about who will take the responsibility. The problem is that there is not enough knowledge. It is important to show, that the deaf are independent and capable. They need to be protected, not immediately say: "No, you are deaf, you cannot do this. You will cause an accident and something will happen". You need to examine all possibilities, if there are any problems you can send it to me. You have my contact information. I would also like to add, that in America ... I remember a small-truck driver. He was a man, who worked as a volunteer. He was an elderly and he helped the elderly people. He did not have any problems, and then, all of a sudden, a problem appeared and he was asked to show his papers, to prove he is deaf. And they said that he needs to wear his hearing aid. And he replied: "Why? I am deaf; I do not need a hearing aid". And they said: "No, no, you have to have it, you have to wear it".

And he replied: "That is strange. I have the aid, but it is on off". That means it was turned off and that is ridiculous. To wear your hearing aid, but turned off.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Thank you. I need an interpreter. Here you go.

Aleš Peperko, the President of the Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Celje

I wish you all a nice welcome as well. I am the president of the Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Celje. Today's debate about employment was, I can say, very interesting. Thirty years ago all deaf people had jobs; I did not know anyone, who would be unemployed. Now, when we are part of the European Union, everything is different. We have to follow European regulations and simultaneously work in the same ways, here, in Slovenia. I do not know the system, the state laws exactly, but I think it would be right, if we had system quotas, so the deaf could have jobs at public institutions, like hospital, police and in other public and other institutions. For example, I know that deaf are employed in police departments, hospitals etc. all throughout Europe. We do not have that here. I still feel discrimination in deaf employment. It needs to end. The country needs to be the first in line for being an example to all other employers. And if they do not employ the deaf, why would other companies do that? What is the biggest problem here? When an employer sees a deaf person, he has doubts straight away, whether to hire him or not. And many deaf come, for example, into the company and work for free, for a week. They are willing to work for free, just so they can get an opportunity from employers. Employers have benefits, e.g. physical impairment, subventions, tax relief; those are all benefits they can use if they hire deaf or hard of hearing person. When a lady talked before, from the Employment Service, I do not remember her name. When she said, that employment numbers went down, that the numbers of unemployed went down, but the question remains, who are these disabled, that got hired. It could only be someone, who lost a finger and is registered as a person with a disability. Are among these hired disabled also deaf people? You need to do a research on that. I have two deaf kids. One is still a student at Collage of Nursing. She had had big problems with communication. All the professor told her straight away: "Oh my, where will you get a nursing job? The communication problem and so on". But employers' horizons need to be broadened and it needs to be proven to them, that deaf people are extremely diligent, precise, hardworking people, so they do not have some kind of resistance towards us straight away: "Oh no, you are deaf, you cannot get a job in our company". We need to repeat this and be informative. We must not give up. I am very thankful that Dr. Šoltes initiated this topic and supported this conference. We must keep lobbying, be persistent and do things repeatedly in order to get things done. Thank you.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Unfortunately, we are running out of time. One more sentence Helga, and then ...

Helga Stevens, Member of the European Parliament, European Conservatives and Reformists Group

They have deaf doctors in Netherlands. I do not know where the problem lies. They also have deaf dentists, two of them. So I can give an example of two deaf dentists. I do not know the problem in health department.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Unfortunately, we must finish. Two matters remain. Firstly, I will give a word to Dr. Šoltes, to say his conclusion and then a word will also be given to Petra Rezar. Petra, can you hear me, see me? Please.

**Dr. Igor Šoltes, Member of the European Parliament, Group of the Greens/
European Free Alliance Esteemed colleagues.**

Thank you for allowing me to address you one more time. One final thought. Firstly, I think that this conference was held and carried out at a very high level. Our conclusions or better said, our suggested conclusion, will be, as the moderator said, posted on websites and you are all welcome to leave comments and additions. My impression is the following, more of a conclusion, of course. There is still discrimination going on, when we are discussing deaf people's situations, and we can split that discrimination into two ways: to conscious or aware and on the other hand, to unwitting, because of the unknown, fear, misunderstandings. I think we need to work on both of these sides. In some way, there is a relationship with employers, where we need to do a campaign for employers' awareness and educate them about the meaning of people's inclusion, also deaf people, in the society and labour market. The second activity is, of course, the sole deaf activity. That, what esteemed colleague from Holland said, deaf also have a duty to themselves, to educate, to understand and of course, to define what they want and in which areas they can offer their skill set the most. We did say earlier on: we have deaf doctors, dentists and as historical view back showed us, there used to be dental technicians and highly skilled masters in different crafts and professions. And it seems, that sometimes, no regulation can replace the societal and cultural awareness. And I think, not only regulations, because quotas for people with disabilities, for the deaf are, of course, very much needed, but insufficient step. A whole society must strive for that, for improvements and we, at the European Parliament, together with my colleague Helga and the rest of them, will give our best and help as much as we can. And thank you again, for your participation. I hope we meet again soon, to continue and discuss all the positive results as well, which will derive from this conference. Thank you all, including the Associations, Mr. Mladen Veršič and Petra Rezar. I am certain we are creating new ways of communications and only united we are strong enough to do a step forward. Thank you.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

Now I would ask Petra Rezar to do another final speech. And then we will conclude everything with acknowledgments and say goodbye. Petra, come please.

Petra Rezar, President of the Slovenian Association of Teachers of the Deaf

I misplaced my paper, I apologize. Thank you all. For the conclusion, I would like to say, that informal education also should not be limited. What does that mean? The language policy did not solve anything, so the deaf could include themselves easier in the usual educational formats in foreign languages. Even today, the deaf cannot apply, for example, for a course in Italian, English or some other language. Limitations. Where are they? Where are these limitations? The limitations are 30 hours of vouchers we get. That is not enough. If the deaf want to be candidates in politics, finding support and understanding, is extremely hard. Of course, we do not even have a possibility of acquiring an interpreter, because 30 hours' vouchers are insufficient. Who will cover the costs for interpretation? Third point. I wish we would stop talking about communication barriers. Actually, we do not have communication barriers. These are all just some make believes. Imaginary barriers. A deaf person can do whatever he wants, they can be doctors, teachers, they can be theatre actors. There are no obstacles. There are barriers when talking on the phone, but that can be easily solved. Fourth point. To all the young participants, who are here today, some of them are my former students. Look at Helga, she succeeded. Adam succeeded. Maja, she is great, me, Marjetka Kulovec, Tanja. Everybody, everyone worked hard. You need to do something, not just say: "It cannot be done, I am deaf". I know, I know, nearly everyone says that, "I cannot, I am deaf". But no, that is not true. My mother never taught me that. My mother said: "You are the same, you can do everything. Never mind what other people are saying. Do not listen, focus on yourself". Thank you.

Dušan Dvorščak, MSc, moderator

So, the final act. It needs to be done, acknowledgments. Because we need to know, that without a whole bunch of people, in the vernacular, therefore numerous people, this event would not exist or would be very different. So firstly, I would like to express our gratitude to Member of the European Parliament, Dr. Igor Šoltes, who supported this idea, who made this conference possible, also our gratitude goes to the Slovenian Association of Teachers of the Deaf, which, together with Dr. Šoltes' office, invited and attracted all these interesting speakers, of course I express my gratitude to all speakers today, who introduced themselves and try to present all these ideas and thoughts they have regarding this issue. Special thanks go to Natalija Ferlež, a person in the background, from the office of the member of the European Parliament, who really made an effort and coordinated everything, so hats off to you. Of course we also have Nika Travner, who helped from the office of Mr. Šoltes. The big thanks also goes to all of our interpreters. An interpreter for the international sign language Maja Kuzma, and for the Slovenian sign language Martin Klepec, Tanja Džuljat Davinič, Mojca also

helped. Thanks you, all translators from and to English language, up there in that room, sitting here all the time. Thank you so much. And there is our transcriber Silviya Pavčič. Thank you again. Let me just say. She told me, as a trivia, that she is the president of the Secretaries' Club Ljubljana and they are celebrating their 20-year anniversary, so congratulations. I would also like to thank ZGN Ljubljana, who helped with making the videos, subtitles, graphic designs, and of course to the National Council, who offered us their room, technical support and their staff, who were all very helpful. In the end I also thank all of you; you were wonderful participants, interesting speakers, listeners, so thank you for this great event. I agree with the thought that we should definitely meet again in the future. Thank you.

CONCLUSIONS

The conference “Facing the challenges and opportunities of deaf people in the labour market” has taken place on 29.1.2016 on the premises of the National council of the Republic of Slovenia and was organized by **the Office of the MEP dr. Igor Šoltes** (Group of the Green/EFA) and **the Slovenian Association of Teachers of the Deaf**. The conference addressed obstacles and challenges that deaf people have to overcome when becoming a part of the labour market and it exposed all the dilemmas that arise on the employers’ side. The participants in the conference were representatives of different deaf and hard of hearing organizations; deaf individuals, who first-handedly experienced all the challenges when becoming a part of the labour market; representatives for different employers, state institutions, educational establishments and guests from abroad, among them was also a deaf European commissioner from Belgium, Ms. Helga Stevens. The conference pointed out, that deaf people have to face many barriers – unfitting education systems, dealing with employers who do not understand them and are inflexible, unsuitable work conditions, inadequate access to information in visual form, lack of support programs in offices etc. The deaf individuals that find jobs have low level working positions and lower income, resulting in social exclusion. European commissioner Dr. Igor Šoltes said: “This is a very pressing issue, because the unemployment rate among the deaf in Europe is high, situation getting even worse during economic and financial crisis. Having access to the labour market, which gives a chance to fulfil the right to employment, is a basic need for a proper life of every individual, because having a job does not only take care of financial independence, but also affects people’s social involvement, physical and mental health and over-all feeling of self-fulfilment.” He added: “We must not forget that these problems are just a part of a bigger picture, which exposes many misunderstandings and inconsideration of the deaf people’s needs in many different areas of life. I can point out issues with poor access to information and education in sign language, a problem which I also emphasized to European Parliament. At the same time, I also want that sign languages become part of official languages of the European Union.” Dr. Šoltes has also reminded us of the fact, that in December 2015, the European Accessibility Act has finally see the light of day, and Dr. Šoltes hopes that this Act will bring positive changes for all disabled individuals, including the deaf. This document will improve access to some essential services and products for approximately 80 million disabled people in the EU, which is of extreme importance. “We cannot forget that accessibility is the basic precondition for equal participation and active role in the society,” concluded dr. Šoltes.

There were many other speakers at the conference, besides **dr. Šoltes**, that greeted the participants: **Mitja Bervar, President of the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia, Mladen Veršič, President of the Slovenian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Petra Rezar, President of the Slovenian Association of Teachers of the Deaf, Helga Stevens, Member of the European Parliament,**

European Conservatives and Reformist Group, Boris Černilec, Director of the ZGN Ljubljana, School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Dragica Bac from the Ministry of labour, family, social affairs and equal opportunities.

The president of the National Council of the Republic of Slovenia Mitja Brevar has pointed out, that the National Council, which is a part of the legislative authority, is a place where topics concerning suitability of the legislation can be discussed, especially their effective implementation in everyday life, which also applies to the problematic of the deaf and hard of hearing; to this he added, that Slovenian people have made some significant steps in the right direction in improving the chances of social integration of the deaf and hard of hearing. President of the Slovenian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Mladen Veršič, has introduced the work of the Slovenian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, which is celebrating its 85th birthday of activity and he highlighted, that many employers share the fear of employing the deaf or hard of hearing, due to the fact that people do not know deaf people's specific needs and that does damage the deaf community. He has also warned us about the fact, that despite of the actualization of the right to interpreter, the deaf people should also get the right to personal assistance. Petra Rezar, President of the Slovenian Association of Teachers of the Deaf, has addressed the meaning of volunteer work, which is very important for non-formal education of the deaf and hard of hearing. "We do 1800 hours of volunteer work in our Association. We would happily employ someone, if we had the means for it, but unfortunately we do not." Deaf European Commissioner from Belgium, Helga Stevens said, that the fight for the implementation of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is very important: "It must not stay a dead letter on a piece of paper, accessibility must be assured in everyday life." She added, that education for deaf people is very important, just like for all people, and that it is also an area that needs more attention. "It is not true, that the deaf cannot participate in politics – look at me and other colleagues, there are plenty of us all over Europe. This is also an opportunity for you, for bravely participate in politics, believe me, you have that ability," she finished with a positive thought for everyone gathered. Dragica Mac from the Ministry of labour, family, social affairs and equal opportunities said in her speech, that the people in the Ministry are aware of the high share of unemployed deaf people and that, in her assessment, the initiation of the quota system for employing the disabled people contributed to higher employment rates. Boris Černilec, Director of the ZGN Ljubljana, School for the Deaf and Hard of hearing, has introduced the actions of the institution, which represents the central institution that works with the deaf and hard of hearing in Slovenia. There are currently 250 children being educated in this institution. There were many different and important issues considered and underlined during the discussion about this topic and we will present them in the form of content conclusions further on. The main conference content Firstly, we have to mention that the deaf and hard of hearing have some acknowledged benefits when it comes to employment. Employers, who employ a deaf person with the disability status, have a chance to

enforce reduced company tax base benefit and there is also an option of subsidy. There is also an established quota system in Slovenia when employing a disabled person, which determines the duty for all employers with at least 20 employees, to employ a certain percentage of disabled individuals. The percentage of obligatory employed disabled people is approx. 2 % to 6 %, it depends on the company's main registered activity. Regardless of these system measurements, there are still many problems in real life practice. The deaf and hard of hearing have a feeling, that society still often considers them as second-class citizens and that employers still see them as an inappropriate work force due to certain stereotypes, among which are: the deaf and hard of hearing are less capable for certain professions and work; they are not adaptable enough; not reliable enough; not persistent enough and they need a constant attention. The employers' representatives who participated in the conference explained, that employers are mostly afraid of communication barriers, which would arise due to unfamiliarity with the sign language and they also expose the safety and health in the workplace, because it is necessary, when hiring a deaf employee, to adjust working conditions and to employers that is just an extra expense. Employers also expect financial encouragements and reliefs from the state, which are needed for making adjustments in the workplace and they wish to be better informed, especially about different benefits. Participating deaf entrepreneurs have pointed out, that a deaf businessman has to work harder than any other individual without hearing disabilities, if he/she wants to achieve business success. Plus, the costs for hiring a disabled person are two to three times higher than usual and that affects competitiveness of the companies. When working, more practical problems often arise, e.g. some business partners do not want interpreters in meetings due to secrecy and confidentiality and that hardens the communication. The participants noted that the country needs to show more attention to the deaf and hard of hearing and encourage them when starting their own business. The education structure for the deaf and hard of hearing also presents a substantial problem, because it is below average compared to other population; about 89% of the deaf and hard of hearing have only primary or professional education, 10% secondary education and only 1% graduate education. Those are all factors that affect their competitive factor in the labour market and there is also the fact, that employed deaf are often paid less, especially women and they do not get promotions or more responsible tasks. Despite all the barriers and problems that occur in employment of the deaf and hard of hearing, we can find multiple good examples in Slovenia, when deaf businessmen did succeed with their businesses. Among them are, also participants in this conference, Marjan Repše, who founded his company back in 1987 and Bojan Mord, the owner of the TIPK TV Company, which creates TV program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Besides this kind of individual examples of good practices, it is important that we also mention Employment and Vocational rehabilitation, which is an important form of employment encouragement among the disabled. It is carried out by a concessioner Racio for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Slovenia and offers different kinds of help through individual treatment when looking for work; from consultation,

education and training for work, to employment integration. Important employers for the Deaf are also numerous disability companies, including a well-known construction company Zaupanje, which mainly employs the deaf and hard of hearing. As for efforts made on the European level, the main problem, which was also pointed out during this conference, is still an inadequate implementation of already accepted documents, where numerous rights of the deaf and hard of hearing are written down. One of the most important document was pointed out, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was also ratified by the European Union. The mentioned Convention is crucial for many areas, from education, employment, traffic, sports, subtitles for TV programs, to political participation. European Accessibility Act, which was proposed by the European commission in December 2015, is also very important, because it regulates accessibility of bank services, computer areas, phone services, TV equipment, internet use etc. All the gathered also warned about the fact, that accessibility needs to be arranged specifically in everyday life. The right to interpreter was also highlighted in the discussion, which is a basic deaf people's right, but at the same time, even on European level, still highly overlooked and violated. According to problems, which were identified in the conference and discussed in different speeches by today's speakers and participants.

We can show further possible actions in improving employment for the deaf and hard of hearing:

- Developing certain actions, which would help raise awareness and information level of the deaf and hard of hearing people's workplace needs among employers, the deaf and general public (introduction of a deaf confidant or member in the syndicate, who will develop advocacy for the deaf; higher supervision in rehabilitation centre);
- Development and implementation of active policy of employment, which is going to be adapted for the needs of the deaf community, especially for the young and women;
- Workplaces in accordance to attributes of the target group: it means that all jobs, where hearing is not important, are accessible to the deaf (they can be the best engineers, teachers, doctors, carpenters, etc.);
- Positive discrimination for the deaf/hard of hearing in employment in a public sector;
- Financial stimulations for companies that would provide an employment for the deaf/ hard of hearing regardless of the degree of disability, tax reliefs for deaf people's personal income;
- Encouraging social businesses among the deaf/hard of hearing;
- Financial and educational support for self-employment;
- More investments to education programs for improving knowledge, key competences,

with which the employment chances of the deaf/hard of hearing will increase, especially with young deaf women;

- More investments for individual counselling support and for improving the skills to find employment; career orientation workshops for the deaf/hard of hearing;

- Professional trainings for young deaf/hard of hearing, that should be focused on regular forms of employment and should not be extended indefinitely:

- Enable to the deaf and hard of hearing to acquire new language skills and foreign language knowledge with a work method adapted for them (eradicate the restrictions of Slovenian sign language interpretation usage);

- No restrictions for non-formal education for the deaf (eradicate the restrictions of Slovenian sign language interpretation usage);

- Unemployed deaf should participate in active workshop programs to strengthen and improve their self-confidence and should be included in volunteer program, so they can develop social network and stay socially active:

- Open new official professions for the deaf: interpreter for Slovenian sign language, interpreter for international sign language;

- In support for the Deaf, we need to ensure quality interpretation services in Slovenian sign language and implement a Recorder, which would encourage university studies for interpreters of Slovenian sign language and create new professions, that would help the deaf: Recorder for the deaf, who would get his/her education through education system;

- Strengthen the public image of deaf workers and professionals so that increasing number of people will become aware of the deaf and their success in their workplaces and the fact, that deaf people can be employed everywhere and are equal, should be taken for granted.

THE CONFERENCE AIMS AT ADDRESSING THE BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES FACING DEAF WHEN ENTERING THE LABOR SQUARE AND DILEMMAS ARISING IN THIS EMERGING EMPLOYERS' SIDE.

The conference addresses issues that, according to the World Health Organization directly touch as much as 5% of the global population, or 360 million people, who are faced with different hearing problems, of which there are approximately 80 million deaf. The proportion of unemployment among deaf people is extremely high, which raises a lot of reasons for concern and suggests that the need for active treatment of the issue is very high.

The conference aims to bring together key stakeholders and clearly identify the problems and challenges in the field of employment and deaf on the basis of dialogue, exchange of experiences and good practices to reach common solutions, which will lead to greater.

Integration of deaf people into the labor market. It is necessary to promptly adapting to the current needs in the field of education and in the labor market.