

Linz Appeal PART B Update 2010 **Social Firms& Different Approaches**

This is an update of Part B of “The Linz Appeal 2007”.

A brochure of 20 pages (part A only which remains up to date) is available in print at €3 per copy . To order a copy please email socialfirmseurope@cefec.biz.

Part A and B , can be found online at www.socialfirmseurope.org website and gives an overview of the Social Firms movement, summing up aims, beliefs, strategies and serves as a manual to organisations and countries who wish to spread Social Firms.

The updated information provided, includes, the original practical examples (formerley section 3 of the reports) now within section 4 of the reports from each Social Firms Europe CEFEC member.

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The Situation of the Social Firms in Austria



1. The Legal Situation to support Social Firms

There is no special legislation and therefore no special funding for Social Firms.

2. The National Umbrella Organisation to promote Social Firms

There is not a special umbrella organisation, but “Pro Mente Austria” and “Pro Mente”, in several provinces, such as in Carinthia, Salzburg, Tirol and Upper Austria are responsible not only for psychosocial projects but work projects and Social Firms as well. The biggest asset comes from “Pro Mente Upper Austria”, a large organisation for medical, social, vocation rehabilitation of psychiatric patients, including sheltered workshops and social firms.

3. The Number of Social Firms and business branches

The members of Pro Mente Austria run at about 20 social firms, half of which fulfil the criteria of CEFEC. Personal services such as restaurants and catering are predominate followed by joinery, laundries, copy shops and environmental services.

4. The General Situation and Perspectives of Social Firms

Psychiatric reforms in Austria are advanced and because of low unemployment there have been a whole variety of successful models and projects to place people with mental health problems back into work. However, despite good medical, social and vocational rehabilitation services, Social Firms are limited to the few regions mentioned above.

Government funding gives priority to job coaching and work assistance, all aiming to place disabled people in the open employment market. Alternatively the majority apply for and receive an invalidity pension.

Report by/delegate:	Rainhold Scharf
Organisation:	Pro Mente Austria
e-mail:	scharf.r@gpg-tirol.at
Website:	www.promenteaustria.at

The Situation of the Social Firms in Belgium



1. The Legal Situation to support Social Firms

In 2004 the new law “Titre Service” helped to open more possibilities for Social Firms and another legal act permits public subsidies of two social workers for 20 employees in registered Social Firms. It is part of government policy to support “adapted work firms”. There is a quota system for organisations and companies in public administration , but there is no penalty if the quota is not met.

Subsidies are granted to Social Firms as regards investment, cost for starting and training as well as compensation for reduced work performance of the employees.

2. The National Umbrella Organisation to promote Social Firms

There are different federations representing the vocational rehabilitation and training sector, such as CAIPS. The Social Firms have created umbrella organisations, such as ATOUT EI.

3. The Number of Social Firms and business branches

There are circa. 800 Social Firms which can be divided into

163 Firms of “Training by Work“

153 Firms for Rehabilitation

162 Organisations for socio professional insertion (vocational training)

30 Adapted work firms

200 Social Enterprise Firms

86 Emerging initiatives in the business line

794 Emerging initiatives in the service line

In general all Social Firms are open to people with all kinds of disabilities.

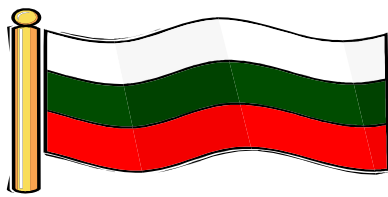
Most Social Firms operate in the service sector. Especially the cleaning sector which has grown, due to federal legislation promoting private house cleaning.

4. The General Situation and Perspectives of Social Firms

There is a need to promote Social Firms and open them up to new business sectors to increase employment for disabled people. There is also a need to tackle the problem that additional social workers cannot be employed if the Firms have more than 50 employees. There is a lack of specific regulations for social economy and even for global economy, concerning disabled and disadvantaged people.

Report by/delegate:	Bernard Jacob
Organisation:	AIGS - Association Interregionale de Guidance et de Sante, a.s.b.l
Email:	Bernard.jacob@aigs.be
Website:	www.aigs.be

The Situation of Social Firms in Bulgaria



1. Legal Situation to support Social Firms

Even before the political changes, there was a legal act concerning the resettlement of disabled persons. A new law in 2003, the “Social Assistance Act” improves and ensures the legal and practical mechanism for municipal and other providers of social services.

2. The National Umbrella Organisation to promote Social Firms

There is no national Umbrella Organisation. At present Bulgaria is implementing the pilot phase of an “operation of social entrepreneurship – publicity and support social enterprise“. The district psychiatric dispensary in Rousse will benefit from this programme and set up a special project “smart“.

3. The Number of Social Firms and business branches

There are no Social Firms so far. Although the country currently lacks sustainable practice in the field of social economy, one is convinced that social enterprise is an appropriate form of social inclusion. However, often the communities do not have the financial resources to implement programmes.

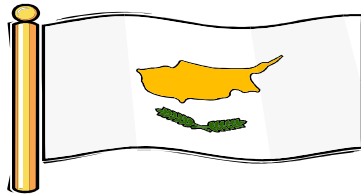
4. The General Situation and Perspectives of Social Firms

There is a high rate of unemployment in the country. It is hoped that the implementation of the social enterprise project will promote public awareness, consultation, training and qualifying the clients and help to create jobs.

Centres for rehabilitation are gradually moving from a medical to a vocational approach, from big institutions into community based settings with psychosocial care.

Report by/delegate:	Gyonyul Hayredin
Organisation	District Dispensary for Psychiatric Disorders with Wards, Rousse, Bulgaria
Email:	email: adagio@abv.bg
Website:	Not available

The Situation of Social Firms in Cyprus



1. The Legal Situation to support Social Firms

There is no special legislation supporting special schemes or social firms for disabled or disadvantaged people. There is, however, a National Action Plan (NAP) on Employment which has opened more possibilities for the employment of people with mental health problems.

In October 2009 a new law was passed for companies in the private sector to employ persons with disabilities and the percentage of persons employed by the government has been increased from 3% to 7%. Financial incentives are given to those companies which employ persons with disabilities.

2. The National Umbrella Organisation to promote Social Firms

There is no such organisation. The NGO “Cyprus Rehabilitation Counselling Association” (CRCA), however, is aiming to implement suitable structures.

3. The Number of Social Firms and business branches

There are no Social Firms in Cyprus, instead the concept of sheltered workshops and supported employment is widespread.

4. The General Situation and Perspective of Social Firms

The NAP has only had a small effect as there are not enough incentives for employers to give jobs to people with mental health problems. Other disabilities are in a better position.

There are vocational training centres and some supported employment projects but a systematic approach is lacking and makes the situation for people with mental health problems difficult.

Social Firms lack public financial support and therefore any initiatives are forced to use private money.

Report by/delegate:	Margarita Mouza
Organisation	Cyprus Rehabilitation Counselling Association” (CRCA)
Email:	<u>mouzmar@cytanet.com.cy</u>
Website	<u>www.crca.org.cy</u>

The Situation of Social Firms in the Czech Republic



1. Legal Situation to support Social Firms

There is no special legislation concerning social firms or any other types of social enterprise in the Czech Republic. The Employment law set up a quota system: 4% of disabled people should be employed in every company which has more than 25 staff.

There are some advantages for those who employ disabled people:

- apart from tax advantages, a claim for state contributions can be made by employers whose workforce comprises of 50% disabled people and there is the possibility of subsidies, which cover personal costs of the disabled employees.

2. The National Umbrella Organisation to promote Social Firms

There is no special organisation for social firms but two umbrella organisations of the community mental health care providers (Fokus Association, Association of the community services) play an active role in development in this field. The member organisations are starting to set up social firms.

In the field of the social economy and employment of disadvantaged people the national thematic network of the Equal programme support some mainstreaming activities and provide the project on building the infrastructure of social economy and raising awareness in society. Fokus Praha prepares projects and supports emerging new social firms and is setting up quality standards.

3. The Number of Social Firms and business branches

There is no official definition of social firms in the Czech Republic. More than 600 organisations report that 50% of the people they employ have a disability, but most of these are more like sheltered workshops and could not be marked as social firms in accordance with CEFEC definition. There are no evaluation standards yet. Approx. 35 organisations are moving in the direction of social firms and hopefully according to CEFEC standards. They usually operate as a part of NGO, which provide psychosocial and vocational rehabilitation (for example "Fokus" for people with mental health problems, "Sananim" for people who have been involved in drug abuse, etc.), or as a guarantee limited company. In addition there are more than 40 co-operatives for invalids using production work.

4. The General Situation and Perspectives of Social Firms

In the Czech Republic the interest to create social firms only started a few years ago. The first move was to change sheltered workshops into social firms. This came from the providers of mental health or generally social health care. The second move was led by enterprises, which wanted to obtain state contributions or EU funds. Over the last 3 – 4 years EU programmes focussing on employment have been set up in the Czech Republic and numerous organizations now aim to promote social firms in the Czech Republic as a suitable model for employment of disadvantaged people on the open labour market (disabled people including people with mental health problems as well as socially disadvantaged people). There is chance to set up a social firm platform and to pave the way for future association.

However as a consequence of the economic crisis many projects reduced products and social firms are having a problem competing with main stream firms.

Politicians and public administration officials have begun to take an interest in the social economy sector and financial tools have been proposed for its development as part of the national allocation of EU funds. This was voiced at the XXII Conference of Social Firms Europe CEFEC in Prague in 2009. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs called for new social enterprise initiatives with the aid of EU funding for marketing strategies, financial and social planning.

Report by/delegate:	Pavel Novak
Organisation:	FOKUS PRAHA
Email:	<u>fokus@fokus-praha.cz</u>
Website:	<u>www.fokus-praha.cz</u> <u>www.socialnifirmy.cz</u>

The Situation of the Social Firms in Finland



Mielenterveyden
keskusliitto

1. The Legal Situation for the support for Social Firms

The Act of the Social Enterprises was implemented in 2004 and prepared with various disability organisations and NGOs. The Ministry of Employment and Economy renewed the Act in 2007. The Social Enterprise term in Finland is the equivalent to the CEFEC Definition of a “Social Firm”. A quota system of 30% of the employees in the Social Firm has to be disabled, including long term unemployed people.

2. The National Umbrella Organisation promotes Social Firms

The umbrella organisation and network of Social Firms was set up and managed by Vates Foundation from 2004 to 2008 by project funding. The organization helped to establish new Social Firms by giving business advice, including to improve the knowledge about Social Firms. One of the aims was to observe and report how the new legislation was working. This was done in co-operation with different NGOs, projects and organizations such as Finnish Central Association for Mental Health. Supported by the EU Equal project 13 initiatives between 05 – 07 aimed to set up social enterprises. Since 2009 new regional EU continue the process.

3. The Number of Social Firms and business branches

There are 210 registered Social Firms in December 2009. Those firms employ approximately 1500 people of which 500 are people with disabilities and 500 with long term unemployment.

4. The General Situation and Perspectives of Social Firms

The Social Firms movement started with the EU Horizon Programme in 1997 and was taken up by the national organisation of Vates Foundation.

The next aim is to employ more people with mental health problems and to improve the situation of disabled employees by reforming the Act of Social Enterprises. It is necessary to campaign more actively for the setting up of social firms. The number of Social Firms depend strongly on regional projects and managers.

Report by/delegate:	Eija Rautakorpi
Organisation	Finnish Central Association for Mental Health
Email:	eija.rautakorpi@mtkl.fi
Website	www.mtkl.fi www.vates.fi

The Situation of the Social Firms in Germany



1. The Legal Situation to support Social Firms

There has been long standing supportive legislation for the disabled in Germany, including a quota system. A special framework for Social Firms was issued in 2001 and the following subsidies are available to them:

- special funding for each new workplace
- wage subsidy of 30% for each disabled employee
- finance psychosocial support of the employees
- Coaching and support for business managers

Main stream businesses whose workforce does not comprise 3 – 6% disabled people have to pay a fee which is used to finance projects along the above named subsidies.

2. The National Umbrella Organisation to promote Social Firms

The umbrella organisation, now “Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Integrationsfirmen “ (BAG), a charitable company, has represented Social Firms in Germany since 1987. the BAG has helped to create social firms, develop new opportunities, give advice at all stages and organize lobbying .Over the last ten years a special advice and counselling service (FAF) has developed alongside for the financial and economic implementation of new firms. The political and lobbying activities helped to influence legislation and the continuous setting up of Social Firms over the last twenty years.

3. The Number of Social Firms and business branches

There are 600 Social Firms in Germany with an estimated 15,000 employees. 20% of them have a mental health problem and 30% have other disabilities. Industrial service industry including electronics and crafts are on the decrease, whereas new service branches are emerging such as catering, hotels and restaurants, facility management and food markets.

4. The General Situation and Perspectives of Social Firms

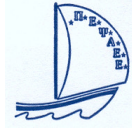
Politicians have understood that Social Firms are successful models, not only for disabled but other neglected target groups. Costly sheltered workshops are challenged and beginning to develop and outsource Social Firms .

Over the last three years public funding has been limited because of the economic squeeze and it has become more difficult to implement firms. However recently there have again been more financial resources available .The authorities realize that social firms are continuing to create jobs for disabled persons whereas the private sector is discharging disabled persons on a large scale. This indicates a further growth of Social Firms in Germany.

A new development is to be seen with main stream firms, implementing of special departments within their organization, being entitled to the same subsidies as in social firms.

Report by/delegate:	Toni Senner/ Christiane Haerlin
Organisation:	Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Integrationsfirmen e.V.
Email	senner@bag-if.de christiane.haerlin@netcologne.de
Website:	www.bag-if.de

The Situation of the Social Firms in Greece



1. The Legal Situation to support Social Firms

A new law in 1999 (2716, article 12) gave a new framework for Social Cooperatives of Limited Liability ("Koispe") The law helped to overcome difficulties with the employment of the disabled, especially for people with mental health problems.

2. The National Umbrella Organisation to promote Social Firms

The Pan-Hellenic Union for Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Work Integration ("PEPSAEE") is the Umbrella Organisation with 200 individual and 20 organizational members.

3. The Number of Social Firms and business branches

There are 15 Social Cooperatives starting or in action with 200 disabled employees, mainly with mental problems and further 250 disadvantaged persons. Most of the residential homes are trying to set up social enterprises. According to the law all business sectors are feasible. The present firms cover the service sector, the industrial, environmental and tourist sector. There are a small number of social firms (ca. 5 firms) that are working in the open market as a regular business. This situation is very difficult and creates hazards and extra burden. We try to include them under the law for KOISPE 2716/99.

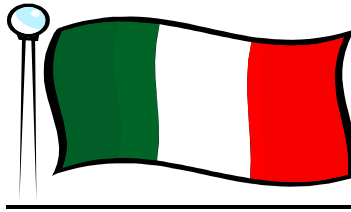
4. The General Situation and Perspectives of Social Firms

Social Firms are currently having difficulty finding staff from a social work background with enough "know – how" in business strategies. There is a general motivation in psychosocial centres to set up social enterprises and if possible social firms.
More information:

- Hadjantonis, d.(2003) "The Social Cooperatives of the Law 2716/99....." in "Social Economy, European Social Firms Cooperatives.." 16th CEFEC Conference 2003, Athens
- Seyfried, E and Ziomas, D. (2005) "The establishment of Social cooperatives in Greece..." Synthesis Report. Peer Review on behalf of the European Commission. (www.peer-review-social-inclusion.net)

Report by/delegate:	Athena Frangouli
Organisation:	Pan-Hellenic Union for Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Work Integration ("PEPSAEE")
Email:	ekpsath@otenet.gr
Website:	www.pepsaee.gr

The Situation of the Social Firms in Italy



1. The Legal Situation to support Social Firms

There have been legal frameworks as early as 1991 continuously expanded till 2006 to define Social Cooperatives in the social, educational and health sector (type A) and Social Cooperatives in the work sector (type B) . Social enterprise was defined in 2006 and includes a wide range of profit and non profit organisations of which the Social Cooperatives are part of it. There have also been legal acts for business organisations to take a minimum quota of 7% disabled employees ; Cooperatives type B have to take 30% disabled. Recently experts demanded to rationalize the great number of laws in this sector.

2. The National Umbrella Organisation to promote Social Firms

There are two umbrella organisations , one for charities, NGOs and Social Cooperatives as part of a national network, called "Third Sector Forum". Their main task is to represent their members at all levels , lobbying the government and dealing with public authorities. The other umbrella organisation is within this third sector representing the special group of Social Cooperatives. Most of these are under three big umbrella organisations, which have close links to the trade unions. One umbrella organisation, member of Social Firms Europe CEFEC , is called Legacoopsociali with 1,950 members of which 550 are disabled employees. The other work in the field of educational, social and health care services.

3. The Number of Social Firms and business branches

There were about 8,000 Social Cooperatives in 2005 , more than half belonging to type A and the others to type B. These organisations employed 30,141 disadvantaged persons (detainees, drug abusers, long term unemployed). About 15% were psychiatric patients.

There are no recent and total numbers of disabled on the national level and no total number of persons with mental health problems, due to the lack of coordination between social and health services, different ways of classifying the persons and to the fact that many do not want to be registered as disabled.

4. The General Situation and Perspectives of Social Firms

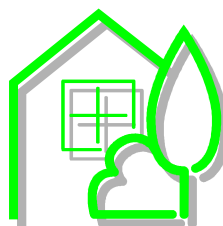
The Social Cooperatives are the best functioning part of the Third Sector from a business and employment point of view. However reorganisation of the legal framework of the whole non profit and charity sector is necessary. Legal status and salaries need to be revised to ensure that fair employment conditions are guaranteed and discrimination is prevented.

The most crucial issues to be tackled in the years to come are

- to ensure that sectors for disabled persons are reserved . The corresponding legal act is twenty years old .
- Work sectors need to be expanded into health care and education services for profit. So fare Social Cooperatives are still excluded.
- The categories of disadvantaged persons who can be employed by Cooperatives should be expanded and rationalized.

Report by:	Gian Luigi Bettoli
Organisation:	Legacoopsociali
Email:	<u>g.bettoli@itaca.coopsoc.it</u>
Website:	<u>www.legacoopsociali.it</u>

The Situation of the Social Firms in Portugal



1. The Legal Situation to support Social Firms

There has been longstanding legislation since 1998 which helped to set up Social Firms. However, there is a need to improve this legislation so that users are protected in a better way. Also more technical and financial support is needed, especially during the start-up phase of a Social Firm.

2. The National Umbrella Organisation to promote Social Firms

There is no umbrella organisation in Portugal, ARIA is starting for Portuguese Social Firms with the aim to create such organization.

3. The Number of Social Firms and business branches

In Portugal the first social firm opened in 1999. Two years after the first Social Firm was started, there are now more than 130 Social Firms with 1,230 employees with integration problems in existence.

According to REAPN Portugal at the end of 2004 there exists in Portugal 420 Social Firms, representing a growth of 30%, between the 4 years, promoting the employment of approximately 8000 persons. There are 470 Social Firms of 3643 persons.

In 2009, the main activities of the 470 social firms were : Laundry and Washing (23%), Home Support (20%), Alimentary Services (13%), Gardening (9%), Parish work and Culture Services (8%), and other activities (27%).

4. The General Situation and Perspectives of Social Firms

Because of the general economic squeeze and rising unemployment there has been a lack of support for Social Firms. The fight against stigmatizing groups of disabled and disadvantaged persons goes on. There is a great need to create an umbrella organisation to support the structure of Social Firms, to fight for better legislation and subsidies for starting firms.

Report by/delegate:	Carla Silva
Organisation:	ARIA - Associação de Reabilitação e Integração Ajuda
Email:	<u>aria.direccao@gmail.com</u>
Website:	<u>www.aria.com.pt</u>

The Situation of Social Firms in Romania



1. The Legal Situation to support Social Firms

There is no specific legislation for social economy in Romania. There are though some articles on financial legislation, which describe ways of special exemption for firms who are hiring people with disabilities. Also there is the legal obligation for medium and large enterprises to have 4% of their employees, representing people with disabilities, or to pay 50% of the minimum salary for the number of vacant places for people with disabilities, or to buy products and services from protected facilities, in due amounts .

2. The National Umbrella Organisation to promote Social Firms

There is no umbrella organization which strictly promotes social economy. Yet there are , on regional levels, organizations which develop and promote social economy. For example AREAS, operates in the North -East regional level. Organizing a federation by NGOs or enterprises which have social economy activities, is still taken into account.

3. The Number of Social Firms and business branches

There are no statistics on the number of social firms Romania. In 2008, strategic projects were applied, on ESF, at national level, which had the purpose to support social firms foundation, professional training and also resource centers for the social entrepreneurs. In the past year, an avalanche of activities, exists, which promote social economy in Romania. Common areas for social economy in Romania are: technical equipment assembly, orthopedic equipment repair, copy and printing, gardening and greenhouses.

4. The General Situation and Perspectives of Social Firms

Since 2004, social economy promotion began in Romania, through PHARE financed programmes. The income of these social economy attempts in 2008 reached 700 million RON (<http://www.banknews.ro>). Many initiatives exist now, but they are still financed through different european programmes.

As investment opportunities in the Romanian social economy : wood manufacturing, tourism, organic food, e-business, manufacturing, medicinal and aromatic plant growing.

Report by/delegate:	Petru Vasile Gafuic, President
Organisation:	The Regional Association for Adult Education Suceava (AREAS)
Email:	areasv@gmail.com
Website:	www.areas.ro

The Situation of the Social Firms in Slovenia



1. The Legal Situation to support Social Firms

In 2004 a new law on vocational rehabilitation and employment of the disabled was issued and then implemented in 2006.

2. The National Umbrella Organisation to promote Social Firms

There is no special umbrella organisation for Social Firms, the Slovenian Association for Mental Health, SENT, is the biggest organisation catering for people with mental health problems. Amongst other activities it has set up Social Firms and is the founder of 3 employment centres . The target group of these employment centres are disabled people with mental health problems. Other organizations are OZARA and ALTRA.

3. The Number of Social Firms and business branches

There are around 170 Social Firms in Slovenia with around 6,400 disabled employees. Dominant business sectors are farming, cleaning, gardening, office and administrative work.

4. The General Situation and Perspectives of Social Firms

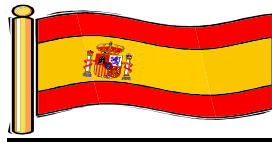
In 1976 a movement within sheltered workshops started to develop and convert them into Social Firms. This process went on till 1988.

The firms are mostly concerned with the effects of hospitalisation of the former patients. The training aims at coping with the change of role from patient to employee in the Social Firms. The aim is to employ more disabled people with mental health problems in the future.

Over the last two years employment centres have increased to 27 in Slovenia.

Report by/delegate:	Igor Pavel
Organisation:	SENT Slovenian Association for Mental Health
Email:	<u>Igor@dobrovita.com</u>
Website:	<u>www.sent-si.org</u>

The Situation of the Social Firms in Spain



1. The Legal Situation to support Social Firms

In Spain there is no special legislation for people with mental health problems. Social firms are supported by general legislation about social inclusion and employment. There is an old specific regulation of Social firms for people with disability, which are called “Special Employment Centres” (CEE) in Spain.

In Andalusia employment programs for people with disabilities (included people with severe mental disorders) are supported by a regional public agency: the “Andalusian Employment Service” (SAE).

2. The National Umbrella Organisation to promote Social Firms

Andalusia is the first region that has created Social Firms for people with severe mental health problems, with IDEA (“Andalusian Employment Initiatives”) as an umbrella organisation. IDEA is a specific organisation set up by FAISEM (“Andalusian Foundation for Social Inclusion of Mentally ill People”) and ONCE (“National organization for Blind People”). FAISEM, in close coordination with the Mental Health Services, develops vocational programmes for people with mental health disabilities, with vocational training and orientation, sheltered workshops, social firms and supported employment programmes.

In the last years IDEA has promoted a national umbrella organisation of social firms for people with mental health problems: ADECEM. And there is also a new national organization from the family associative movement.

3. The Number of Social Firms and business branches

In Spain there are many social firms and social enterprises for people with disabilities, but only a few of them have workers with severe mental health problems. At the moment ADECEM has 29 Social Firms (with about 500 workers with these kinds of problems), 10 of them in Andalusia, coordinated by IDEA, and with 256 workers with severe mental health problems (534 workers in total)

There is a variety of business branches such as carpentry, gardening, printing, catering, domestic care and cleaning, telecommunication, computers etc.

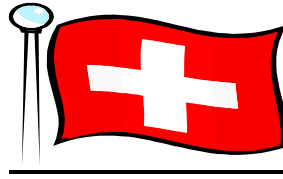
4. The General Situation and Perspectives of Social Firms

Andalusia has experienced a successful psychiatric reform and developed psychosocial and work programmes as well as Social Firms over the last 20 years. The situation is not the same in other regions of Spain, but there is an increasing interest on employment programs for people with mental health problems despite the negative impact of current economical crisis.

General information : Spain is a Federal State with 17 autonomous regions with a high degree of autonomy in some health and social policies. Andalusia is one of these regions, with about 8,000,000 inhabitants and with some specific situations in terms of mental health policies and services, as a result of the Psychiatric Reform started in 1984.

Report by/delegate:	Marcelino Lopez
Organization	Fundación Andaluza para la Integración Social del Enfermo Mental
Email:	marcelino.lopez@juntadeandalucia.es
Website	www.faisem.es

The Situation of the Social Firms in Switzerland



1. The Legal Situation to support Social Firms

Lobby groups are trying hard to get special legislation to promote Social Firms . The next revision of the invalids act is being prepared and it is hoped that there will be more rehabilitation activities and perhaps support for Social Firms instead of granting pensions on a large scale. There is no legal obligation in main stream firms to employ disabled persons as there is in Germany.

2. The National Umbrella Organisation to promote Social Firms

In 2008 an umbrella organization ASSOF was founded , coordinated by the University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland. The aim is

- social firms to be officially recognized as business
- Networking Social Firms in Switzerland and internationally
- to develop quality and standards
- to help to implement and run Social Firms

3. The Number of Social Firms and business branches

There are a few projects which are similar to Social Firms. As there is no legal basis for these, they only receive very limited public subsidies for disabled employees .

4. The General Situation and Perspectives of Social Firms

There are hopes for more Social Firms to be set up, even if not all standards are met because of the lack of legal frameworks. Increasing interest and engagement to start Social Firms can be seen as well as a movement in the country to support employment and provide job coaching. Financial pressures might positively add to this perspective.

Report by/delegate:	Christine Kraemer
Organisation:	ASSOF
Email:	c.kraemer@kraemer-beratung.ch
Website:	www.swissocialfirms.ch

The Situation of the Social Firms in United Kingdom



1. The Legal Situation to support Social Firms

There is no specific legislation for Social Firms in the UK. The definition for Social Firms in the UK relates to people with severe disadvantages in the labour market, so it can include ex-offenders and homeless people as well as people with disabilities and mental health problems. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) introduced in 2005 should provide some protection for disabled people in employment, but it has yet to be really tested. There is no quota system for employing disabled people as it was scrapped in favour of the DDA.

2. The National Umbrella Organisation to promote Social Firms

The umbrella Organisation "Social Firms UK" is a charitable company formed in 1999 to lead and develop the Social Firms sector in UK. It also works with partner organisations Social Firms Scotland and Social Firms Wales to achieve its objectives. There are over 300 members (comprised of Full and Associate members) and the aim is to promote Social Firms, provide support, represent members at government level, promote research in this field, create new opportunities, maintain a Resource Centre and encourage best practice. Social Firms UK is also lobbying the government in the UK to introduce financial support to the Social Firm sector because of the jobs that they are creating for individuals with severe disadvantages who would otherwise not be employed.

3. The Number of Social Firms and business branches

In 2009 there were an estimated 80 Social Firms and a further 80 emerging Social Firms. The full data for 2009 is yet to be finalised, so it is best to refer to the 2006 mapping data for detail, e.g:

- The Social Firm sector has created 1,652 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs, of which 52% were filled by disabled people;
- While many of the firms created employment for people with any type of disability, 34 Social Firms focus only on creating the minimum of 25% of jobs for people with mental health problems;
- The level of employment retention is high and there are an average of 841 trainees who benefit from Social Firm involvement each week;
- Over 80% operated in the sectors of service industries including maintenance and catering. There is a wide variety of niche market businesses, but also mainstream furniture industry and window glazing.

4. The General Situation and Perspectives of Social Firms

Social Firms are one type of social enterprise in the UK and there is general government support for the social enterprise sector. According to recent research there are an estimated 62,000 social enterprises across the UK, so the number of Social Firms is a very small part of this broader sector. There is still a very low understanding of the Social Firm model within the relevant government department (Department for Work and Pensions – DWP). People with mental health problems still have the lowest employment rate of all disability groups, in spite of requirements on employers to make adjustments in order to employ this target group. There will be more research done on Social Firms in the UK regarding their cost benefit which should help with government lobbying to show the amount of money saved. When people with severe disadvantages are employed they contribute to the gross national product and it can also contribute to health gain as well as other perspectives (e.g. an SROI study of Six Mary’s Place Guesthouse Social Firm in Edinburgh showed that the firm was saving the National Health Service alone approx. £21,000 per year for every person with a mental health problem employed!

Report by/delegate:	Sally Reynolds
Organisation:	Social Firms UK
Email:	<u>s.reynolds@socialfirmsuk.co.uk</u>
Website:	<u>www.socialfirms.co.uk</u>