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SINE

Special Intimacy Needs Educator

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IO1/A1.2 – Survey Report

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INTRODUCTION

LATVIA

The survey was carried out by an online questionnaire in Google Form format. The target group of the questionnaire was approached via e-mail, which was sent to different institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The invitation to participate in the survey was sent out to employees of one of the State Social Care Centres and to two main NGO's which are social service providers and family members living with people with disability. The answers were received from 6 social workers, 5 social educators, 5 family members and 5 tutors of family house working with differently abled people.

ITALY

The survey was carried out among 20 people dealing with people with disabilities. In order to be able to reach the relevant target group of the questionnaire, a meeting was organized where the project's aims, objectives and activities were presented along with the questionnaire. Since the Turin Institute for the Deaf deals with disabled people, they did the questionnaire to their staff. The feedback was very positive. All contacted people showed a great interest in the project topic and expressed their willingness in being involved in the further steps of the project such as training activities, dissemination and exploitation of the results.

SPAIN

The survey was carried out among 20 people working or having experience in dealing with people with disabilities. In order to be able to access a greater number of people, the survey was translated into Spanish. Open Europe mainly addressed it to associations of people with disabilities, people with disabilities themselves, as well as social workers from different departments of the Reus City Council and public services. The feedback was very positive. All contacted people showed a great interest in the project topic and expressed their willingness in being involved in the further steps of the project such as training activities, dissemination and exploitation of the results. During the survey phase, the first conference on sexuality and functional diversity took place in Reus, with more than 300 participants from all over Spain. Open Europe participated in this event and contacted many professionals in the sector to involve them in the project activities.

CYPRUS

Firstly, in order to collect responses, it was essential to identify all relevant stakeholders. For this reason, a number of administrative departments, organisations/NGOs and personal contacts working or having experience with disabled people were contacted via phone. It was important to have personal contact with them at the first stage so as to introduce the project and make it more familiar to them. In general, all parties indicated willingness in responding to the common questionnaire and expressed their interest in receiving updates on the development of the project. Afterwards, the survey was sent via email requesting their opinion. All respondents needed to complete an online questionnaire in a Google Form format. In this way, 20 responses were collected in total, from relatives/friends, caregivers, social educators and tutors.

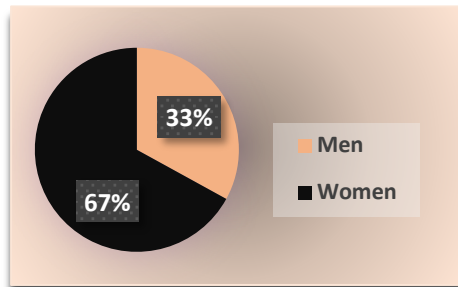
ROMANIA

The survey was carried out for approximately two months in the spring of 2019 with people working or dealing somehow with persons with disabilities of all sorts. The questionnaires were delivered to 20 people, both online and in a hardcopy format in English, as all of the respondents are English speakers on different levels of competency. In the few situations in which the respondents had difficulties in understanding some terms, the terms were explained and translated into Romanian.

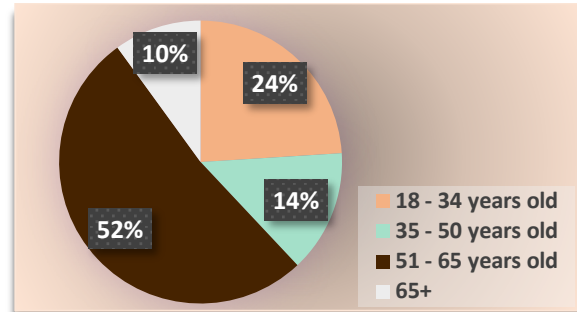
PARTICIPANTS

LATVIA

1. Gender

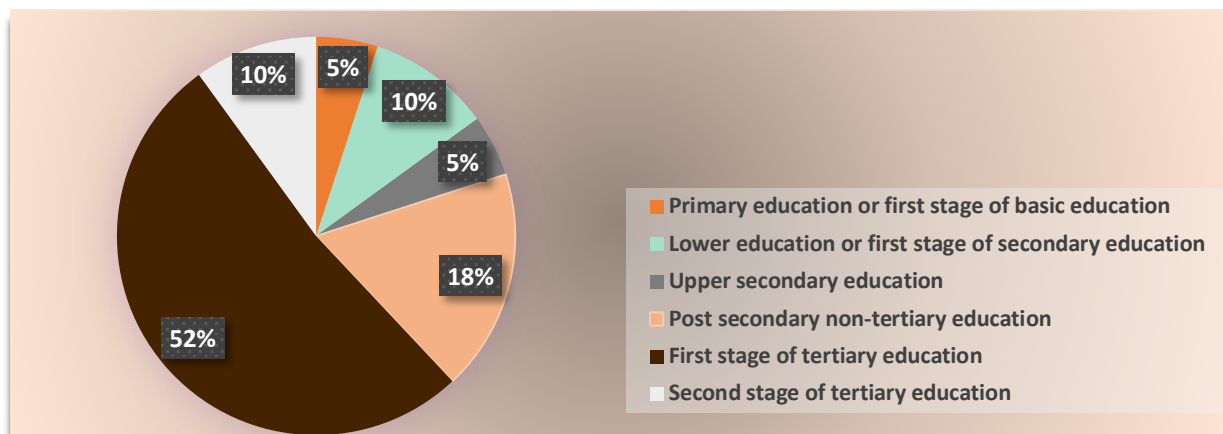


2. Age range



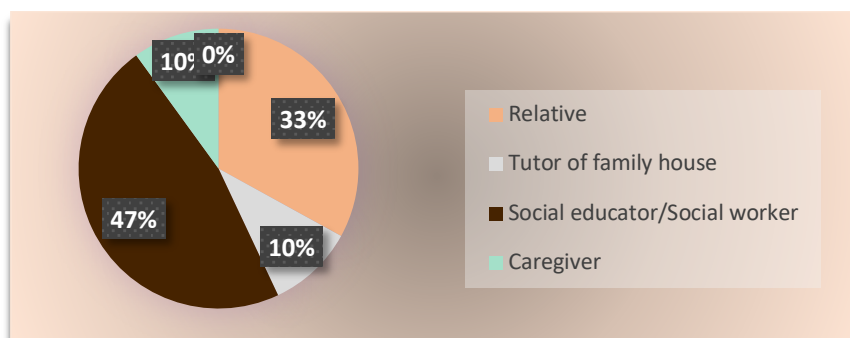
The average participant of the survey is a woman over 50 years old. The second largest group 24% were 18-34 years old, followed by 35-50 years old. 10% respondents were older than 65.

3. Level of education



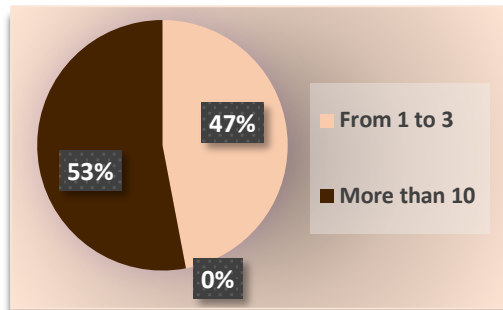
More than half of the respondents have at least tertiary education, 52% bachelor's degree, 19% master's degree.

4. Status regarding the people with disability

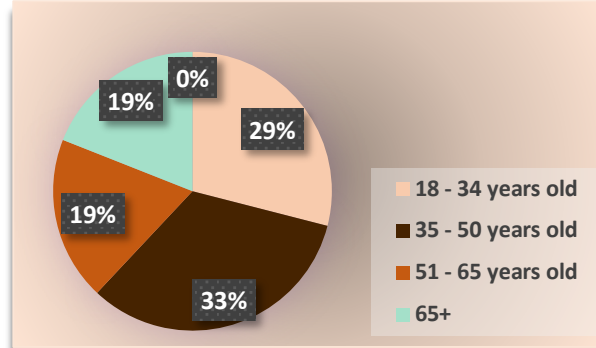


48% were social workers/educators and the second largest group of 33% were family members.

5. Number of people with disability respondents are living/working with

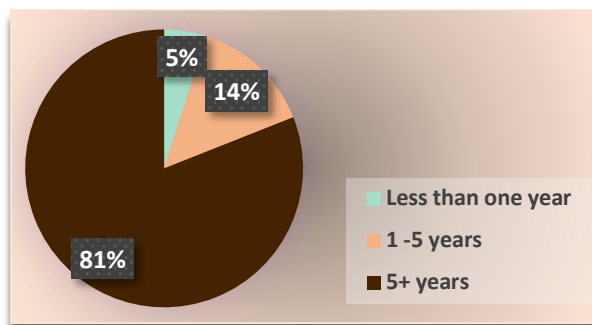


6. The age group of the people with disabilities respondents are living/working with



Regarding the question of how many people with disabilities are in your care, more than half works with more than 10 people. The age of people with disabilities they work with is divided equally between all age groups.

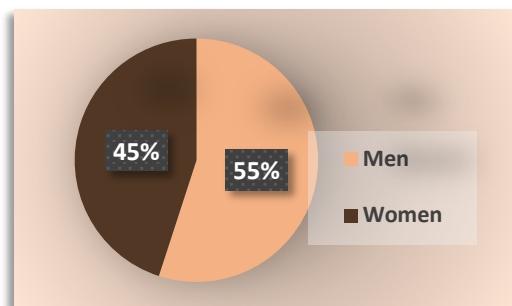
7. Duration of the experience with people with disabilities



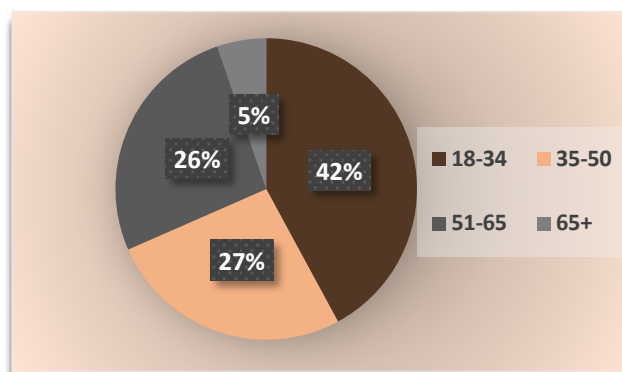
Most of respondents (around 60%) have more than 5 years experience, 14% had experience of 1-5 years, but 5% had experience less than one year.

ITALY

1. Gender

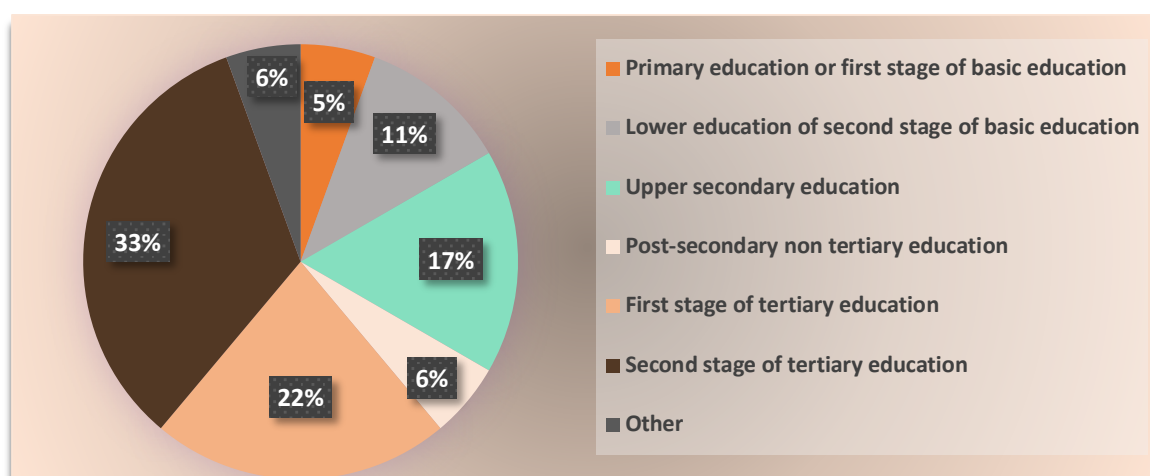


2. Age range



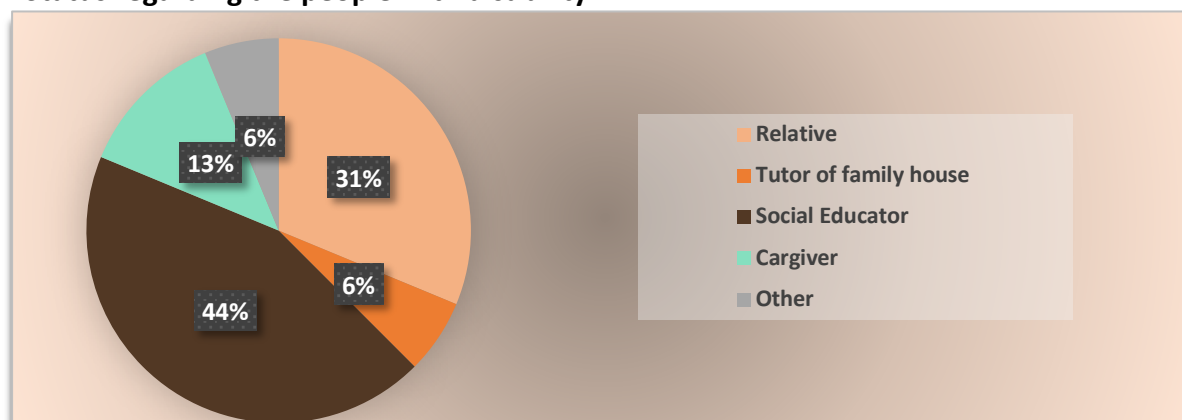
More than half of respondents were women. Regarding age range, all age groups were represented, even people over 65 years old.

3. Level of education



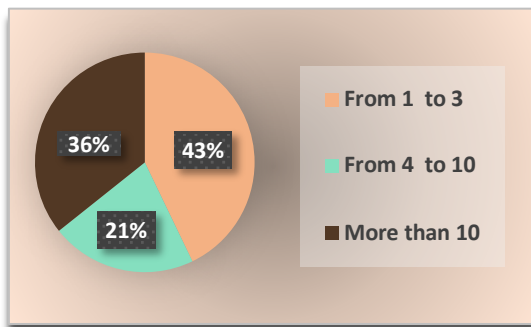
33% from respondents have second stage of tertiary education, 22% - the first stage education.

4. Status regarding the people with disability

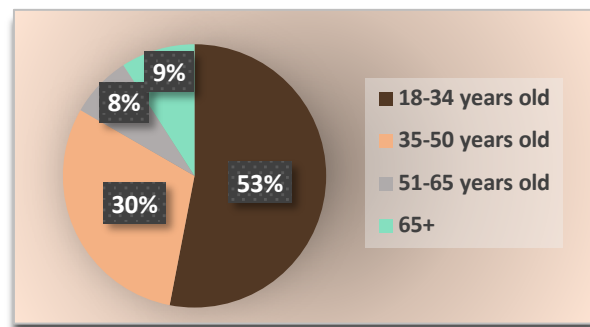


The largest part of respondents were social educators, followed by relatives (315) and caregivers (13%).

5. Number of people with disability respondents are living/working with

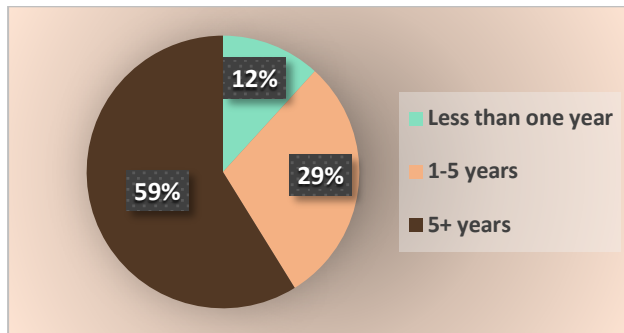


6. The age group of the people with disabilities respondents are living/working with



Approximately an equal number of respondents are living/working with different number of people with disabilities. 53% of the people with disabilities are 18-34 years old, 30% 35-50 years old.

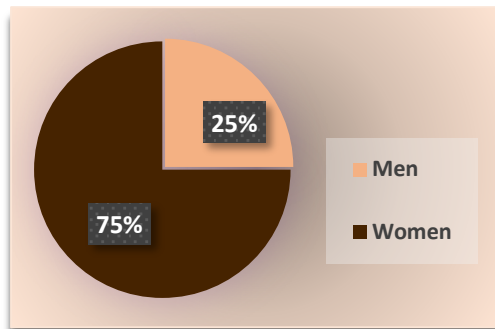
7. Duration of the experience with people with disabilities



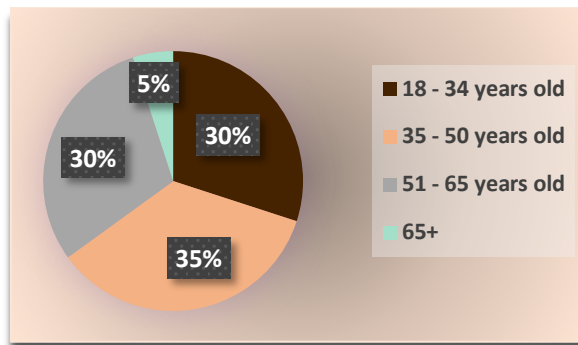
More than half of respondents had a more than 5 years experience, 29% from one to five years, but 12% less than one year.

SPAIN

1. Gender

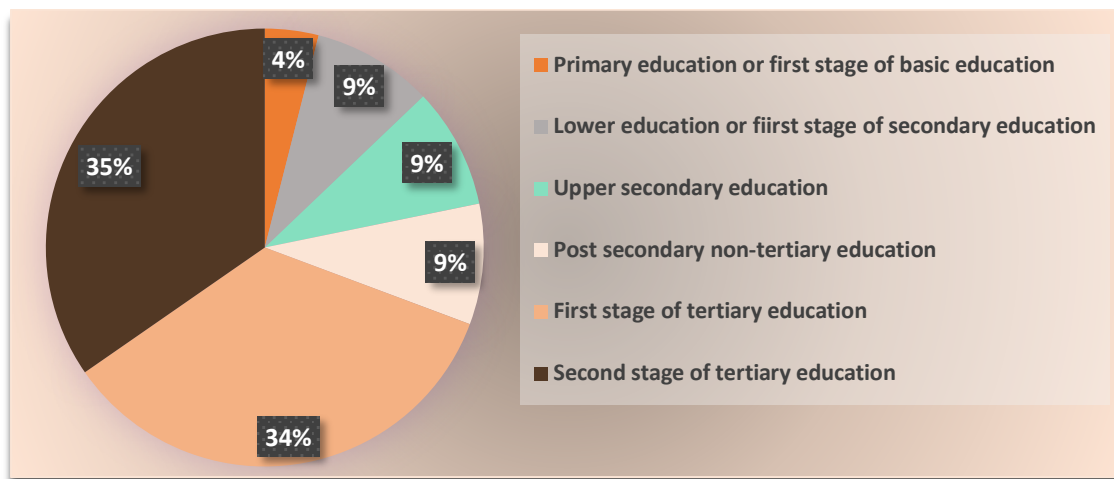


2. Age range



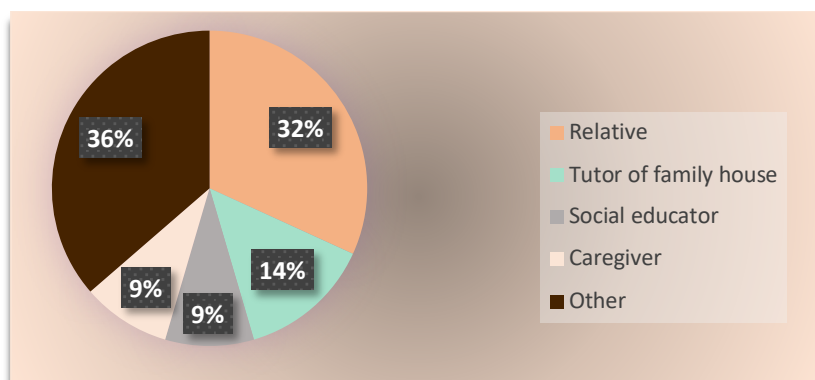
Most of the respondents were women. All age groups are represented. The least represented are people over 65. This is since the respondents are mostly professionals and people over 65 are normally not working.

3. Level of education



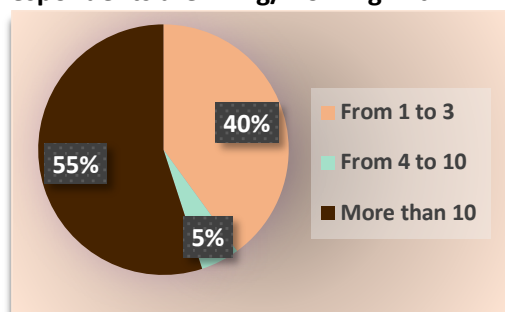
The level of education of the respondents is high. 70% have university studies, and some of them have a master's degree.

4. Status regarding the people with disability

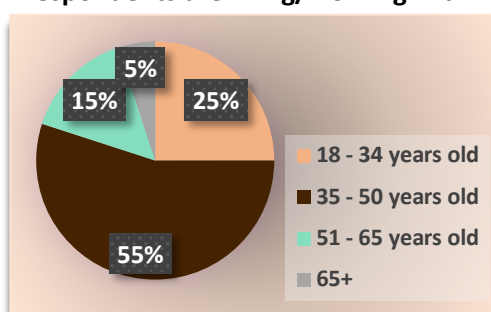


In this section, most of the respondents chose the section “Other” since other professional roles were not specified, for example, psychologists. Above those who answered “others”, there are 4 psychologists, a teacher, an expert in social insertion and a responsible for an assisted dwelling.

5. Number of people with disability respondents are living/working with

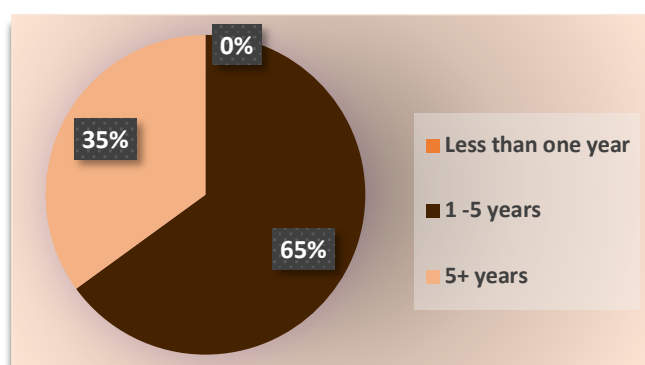


6. The age group of the people with disabilities respondents are living/working with



Most of the respondents are living/working with more than 10 people with disabilities. This is easily explained because most of the respondents are professionals working daily with groups of people with disabilities. The next group is living/working with 1 to 3 people. This group mostly represents close relatives of people with disabilities. The majority of people with disabilities living/working with the respondents are in the age group from 35 to 50 years old, followed by the 18 to 34 years old. The group 65+ is less represented.

7. Duration of the experience with people with disabilities

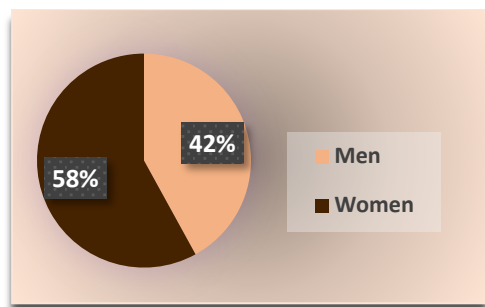


Most of the respondents have from 1 to 5 years' experience with people with disabilities and there is no respondent with less than a year of experience. This confirms that our respondents are either professionals or relatives.

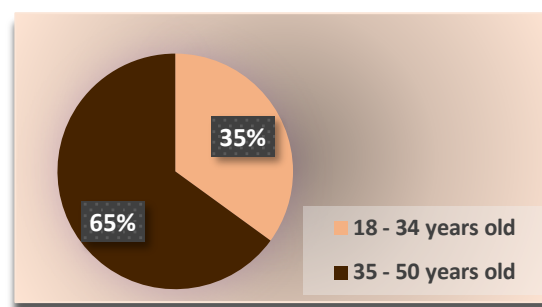
It is important to emphasize that the sample addressed to carry out the survey included strongly motivated professionals, with extensive experience and who showed much interest in the project.

CYPRUS

1. Gender

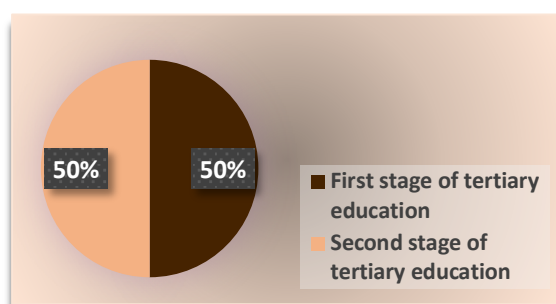


2. Age range

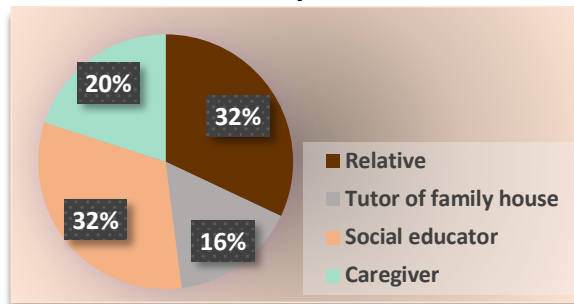


The largest part of the respondents were women. Most of the respondents' age is between 35-50 years old and the rest are 18-34 years old.

3. Level of education

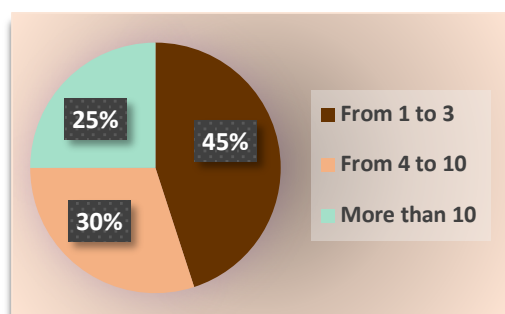


4. Status regarding the people with disability

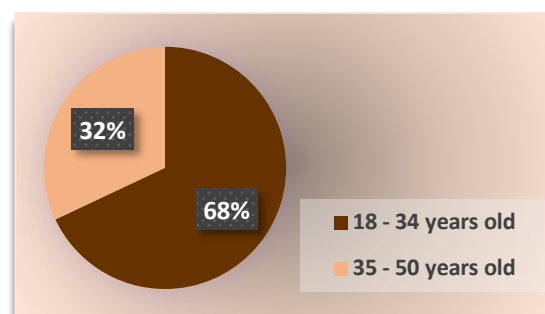


All participants have been through tertiary education since they have either a bachelor's degree/diploma or a master's degree. The pool of responses consists of 6 relative/family friends, 3 tutors, 6 social educators and 4 caregivers.

5. Number of people with disability respondents are living/working with

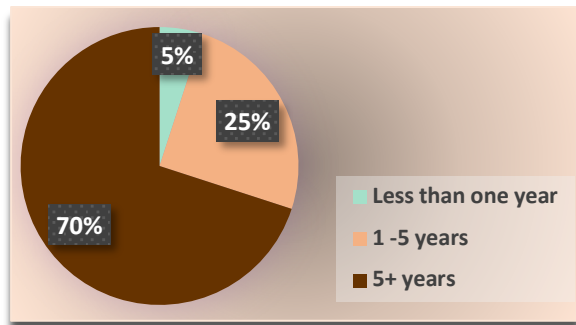


6. The age group of the people with disabilities respondents are living/working with



Most respondents have 5 years and more experience with disabled people for (Chart 7) and mostly work with the age group of 18-35 years old. Concerning the number of disabled people, they work or live with, a balance was observed in the three indicative options offered. Furthermore, the respondents work with a number of disabilities, i.e. mobility issues, visual and hearing disabilities, mental issues etc.

7. Duration of the experience with people with disabilities

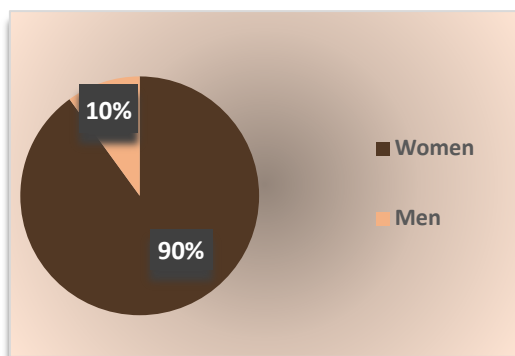


More than half of respondents (70%) had more than five years experience with people with disabilities, 25% from one to five years and 5% less than one year.

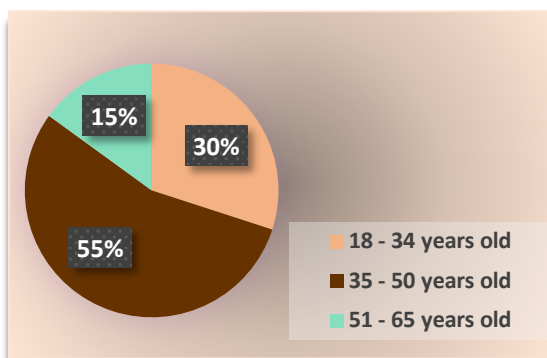
ROMANIA

The research sample in Romania has the following structure:

1. Gender

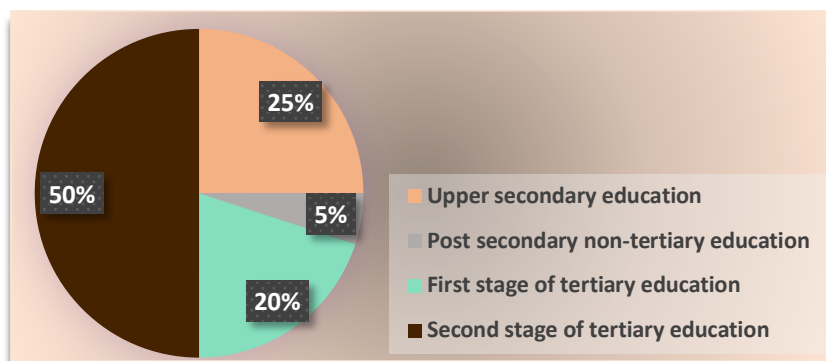


2. Age range



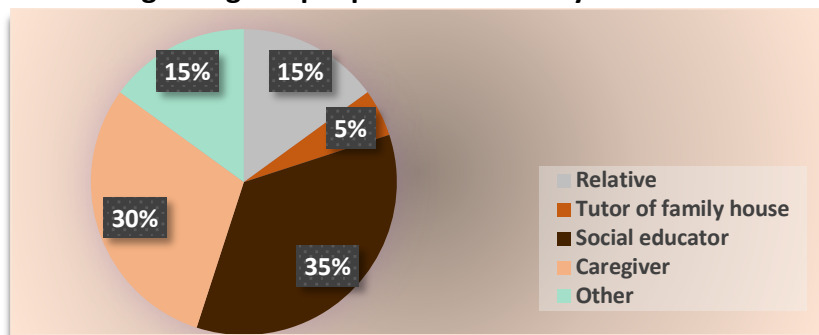
Most of the respondents were women aged 35-50 years. The second largest group was aged 18-34 years.

3. Level of education



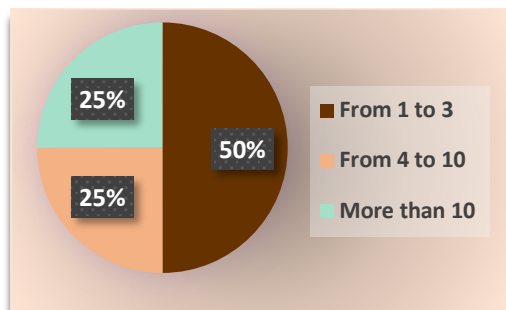
Half of the respondents has the maximum level of education - the second stage of tertiary education, four respondents have the first stage of tertiary education, five respondents the upper secondary education and one respondent has post-secondary non-tertiary education.

4. Status regarding the people with disability



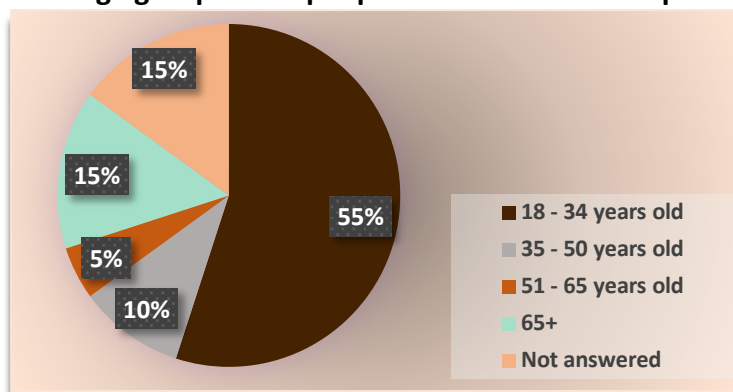
Categorized by the status in respect with disabled person, the answers were received from seven social educators, six caregivers, three relatives, two volunteers, as well as from one tutor of family house and one psychotherapist.

5. Number of people with disability respondents are living/working with



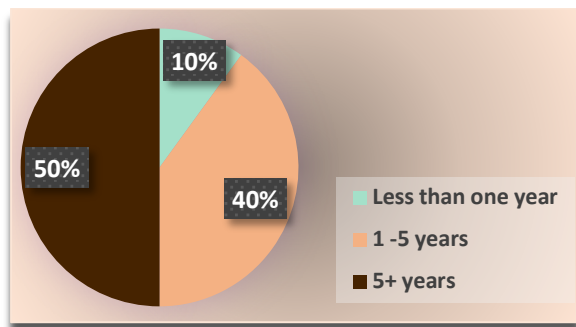
Ten respondents work with 1-3 persons with disabilities, equal number of the respondents work with 4-10 persons and more than 10 persons with disabilities.

6. The age group of the people with disabilities respondents are living/working with



According to the age of the persons with disabilities that the respondents are working/ dealing with, more than half work/deal with disabled persons aged 18-34 years, two respondents - with 35-50 years old disabled persons, one respondent - with 51-65 years old disabled persons, three of them work/deal with disabled persons over 65 years old and three of respondents have not answered the question.

7. Duration of the experience with people with disabilities



Ten respondents have more than 5 years experience, eight of the respondents have between 1 and 5 years experience and two have less than one year experience with disabled persons.

DISABILITY ISSUES

1. How is the term disability defined by you?

Regarding the definition of disability, responses were different from country to country. In **Cyprus**, most of the respondents pointed out that there is an official legal term on disability highlighted in the [official legislation for disabled people](#). *“Disability”, in relation to a person, shall mean any kind of insufficiency or impairment which cause permanent or long lasting bodily or intellectual or mental restriction to the person and, taking into consideration his history and other personal elements of the person, substantially reduce or exclude the possibility to perform one or more activities or functions which are considered natural and substantial for the quality of life of each person of the same age, who does not experience such insufficiency or impairment* (official definition).

In **Italy** each respondent wrote their own definition of the word disability. Among the definitions, there are many repeated ideas, as “Disability is the incapacity to be responsible for oneself” or “Disability is firstly a social impairment”, “Limitation of the person in carrying out activities according to the parameters” or “Any limitation of the ability to perform an activity in the manner or breadth”.

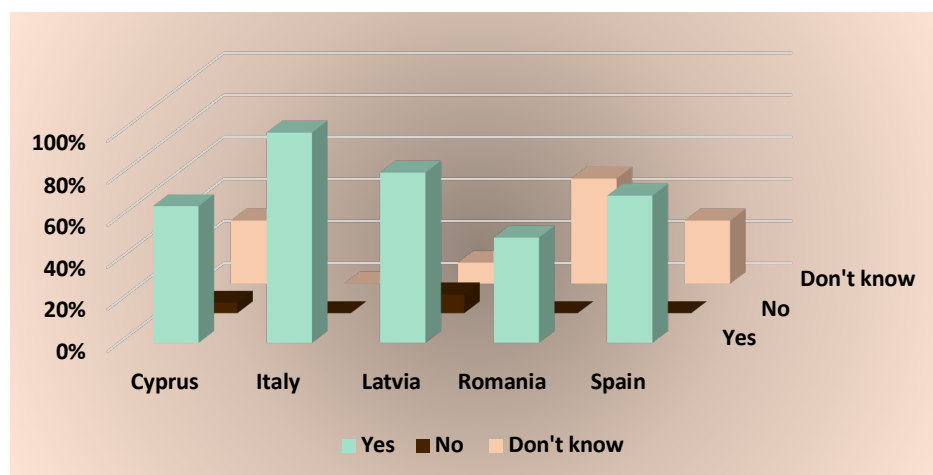
In **Latvia**, respondents answered that disability is defined by the Disability law (2010) as physical or mental impairment or limitation of working abilities.

In **Romania** the majority of the respondents mentioned in different words that disability means a limitation of the body or of the mind in doing something in a regular way. Among the most interesting definitions given to the term “disability” was: “a gap between what a person wants to do and what he/she can do”; “challenge”; “a mindset”; “a different set of abilities”; “an opportunity to become a fighter”.

In **Spain** respondents also wrote their own definition of the word disability. Among the definitions, repeated ideas were that disability is a “functional diversity”, “other capabilities”, “doing things differently” or “the condition of some people who have a physical or mental disability, e.g. who have some mobility problem which makes daily life difficult for them on an independent basis” or “the need for support to perform certain tasks, special needs”.

The whole spectrum of answers regarding the definition of disability in the country legislation is in the following Chart.

2. Is there an official term regarding "disability" in your country?



In **Italy**, out of all respondents giving answers about the term "disability" in his/her country legislation, 70% used the word "disabilità" (Italian for disability), 10% used word "handicap" and 10% used word "menomazione" (Italian for impairment).

In **Romania**, out of those who offered an answer, one third used the correct term "dizabilitate" (which is the Romanian for disability), while 10% used the term "handicapped", which is not the correct legal term anymore, but it was in the legislation 20 years ago. The links where references regarding the term of disability in Romania could be found are: https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/44575/9789730135978_rum.pdf;jsessionid=5C660997D23650DA7F7B1EC9991899ED?sequence=20 and <http://anpd.gov.ro/web/despre-noi/legislatie/legi/>.

In **Cyprus** most of the respondents stated there is an official term of "disability" which, in relation to a person, shall mean any kind of insufficiency or impairment which cause permanent or long lasting bodily or intellectual or mental restriction to the person and, taking into consideration his history and other personal elements of the person, substantially reduce or exclude the possibility to perform one or more activities or functions which are considered natural and substantial for the quality of life of each person of the same age, who does not experience such insufficiency or impairment.

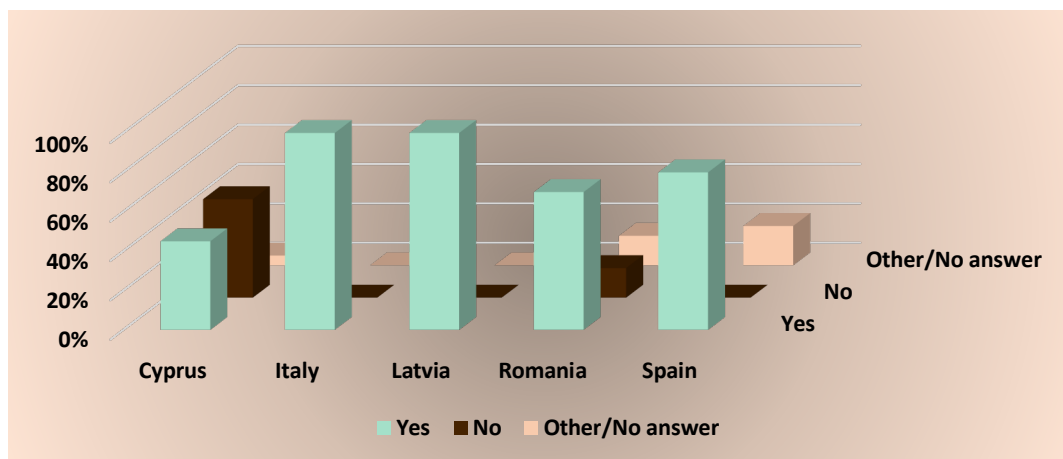
In **Spain**, among the respondents, 30% gave the definition of the World Health Organization (WHO): *"Disability is a general term covering impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. Impairments are problems that affect a body structure or function; activity limitations are difficulties in performing actions or tasks, and participation restrictions are problems in participating in life situations. Consequently, disability is a complex phenomenon that reflects an interaction between the characteristics of the human organism and the characteristics of the society in which it lives."* <https://www.who.int/topics/disabilities/es/>. 30% gave as a definition "functional diversity", 7% refers to the Spanish constitution, where there is a section called "Disabled persons", but 7% refer to the website from the Department of Work, Social Affairs and Family of Catalonia (http://treballiaferssocials.gencat.cat/ca/ambits_tematicas/persones_amb_discapacitat/que_es_i_com_es_reconeix_la_situacio_de_discapacitat/).

In this page, in the section named "recognising disability" there is the following information:

"The disability degree recognition resolution (commonly certified) is the administrative document that accredits the disability. This document facilitates access to various rights, services, programs and benefits aimed at compensating for social disadvantages resulting from disability or social barriers that limit full and effective participation in society.

In order to be able to access the aid established for people with disabilities, it is an essential requirement to have a disability equal to or greater than 33%."

3. Is it true that many people with disabilities and/or long-term health conditions do not "self-identify" as having a disability?



In **Cyprus** the results indicate a controversy since half of the respondents mentioned that disabled people recognise their disability and the other respondents say they do not. In **Italy** and **Latvia** all the respondents answered "yes" to this question. In **Romania**, regarding the truthfulness of the statement that people with disabilities and/or long term health conditions do not "self-identify" as having a disability, 70% of the respondents confirm the statement, while 15% of them infirm the statement and 10% of them state the fact that disabled people define themselves as being different (there was one answer missing). In **Spain** 80% of the respondents answered "yes" to this question.

4. List all kind of disabilities existing and/or you have dealt with

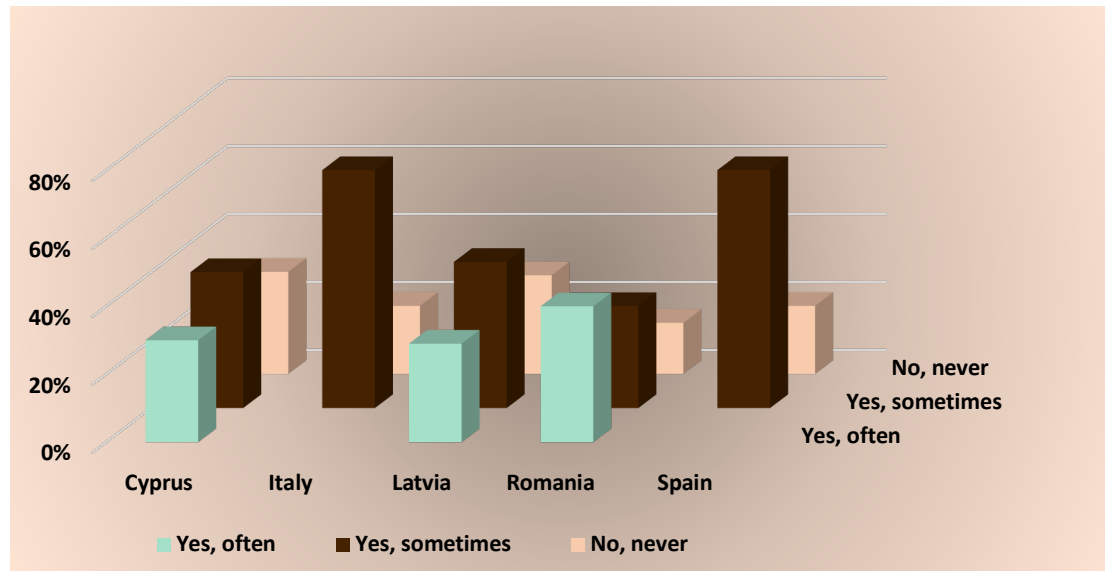
In **Italy** respondents gave a wide range of responses from Physical and Psychic disability, Sensorial disorders: visual and hearing impairments to Physical, cognitive and sensorial. In **Latvia** all of the respondents are informed about disability caused by limited functional abilities, 86% on mental disability, 62% on learning difficulties. In **Romania** respondents offered a wide range of examples of disabilities, such as autism, Down syndrome, Alzheimer, dementia, ADHD, paresis, epilepsy, blindness, deafness etc. Some of them offered classifications of disabilities, grouping them in: intellectual, sensorial, motor, emotional, due to a medical condition (diabetes, heart disease, cancer etc.); or medical and psychological/ physical and mental. In **Spain** regarding this question respondents gave a wide range of responses, including Mental disorders, such as autism, anxiety, depression, ADHD, TGD, Asperger's Syndrome, intellectual deficit, down syndrome, personality disorders, psychosis, schizophrenia, dual pathologies (mental+physics, drugs+mental), bipolar disorder; Sensorial disorders: visual and hearing impairments; Motor problems, such as reduced mobility. Most of the respondents have experience in

dealing with more than one disability. In **Cyprus** respondents also provided a wide range of examples, like: mobility issues, hearing problems, mental illness and mental disability, autism spectrum disorder, Down Syndrome, ADHD, and brain damage, mental retardation, visual disability, low mental privation and difficulty in perception and movements, atrophy of upper limb food, muscular dystrophy.

INTIMACY RIGHTS OF DISABLED PEOPLE

The third section of the questionnaire was dedicated to exploring the knowledge of sexual and reproductive rights of people with disabilities. The following Chart reflects the answers of respondents to the question

1. Has/Have the person/people with disabilities you're dealing with expressed any need for intimacy (emotional/sexual)?



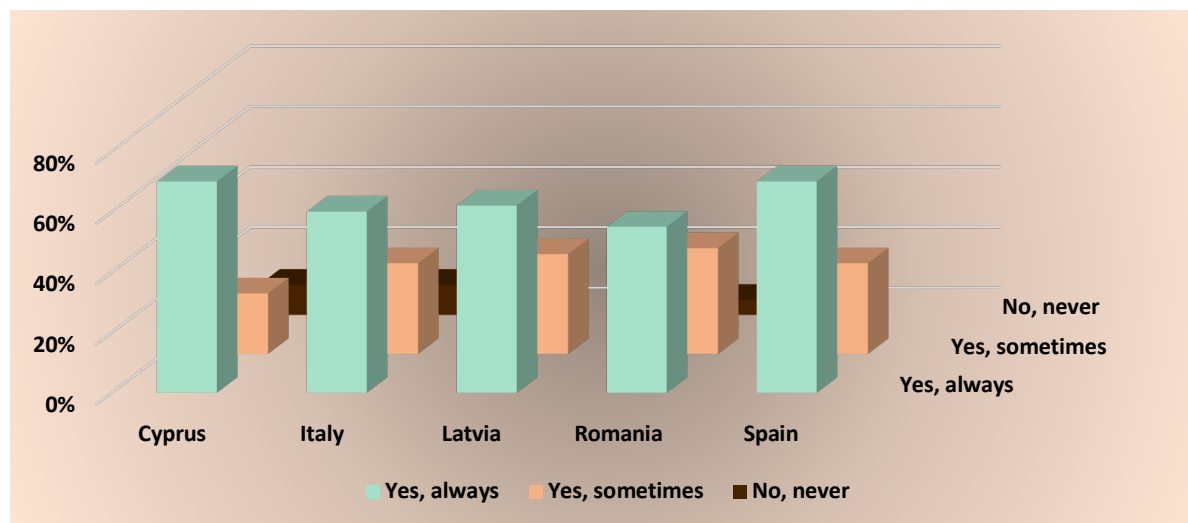
In **Cyprus** most of the people with disabilities, with whom respondents work with, expressed their need either for emotional or sexual intimacy and all respondents consider it normal for people with disabilities to express emotional/sexual needs and desires and that people with disabilities should be respected for that. In **Italy** 70% of the respondents chose the option “Yes, sometimes” and 20% chose “No, never”. In **Latvia** 29% of the respondents chose the option “Yes, often”, 43% - “Yes, sometimes” and 29% chose “No, never”. Approximately one third answered that they have never had experience with people with disabilities expressing any sexuality.

In regard with the frequency of the expression of the need for intimacy by the people with disabilities that the respondents are interacting with, 40% of the respondents in **Romania** admit the fact that the intimacy need is expressed often, 30% say that the intimacy need is expressed sometimes, 10% say that they heard it being expressed once, 15% state that the need has never been expressed in their presence. But one respondent did not give an answer. In **Spain** 70% of the respondents have chosen the option “Yes, sometimes” and 20% have chosen “No, never”.

2. Do you recognize him/her/them as a person/people with emotional/sexual needs and desires?

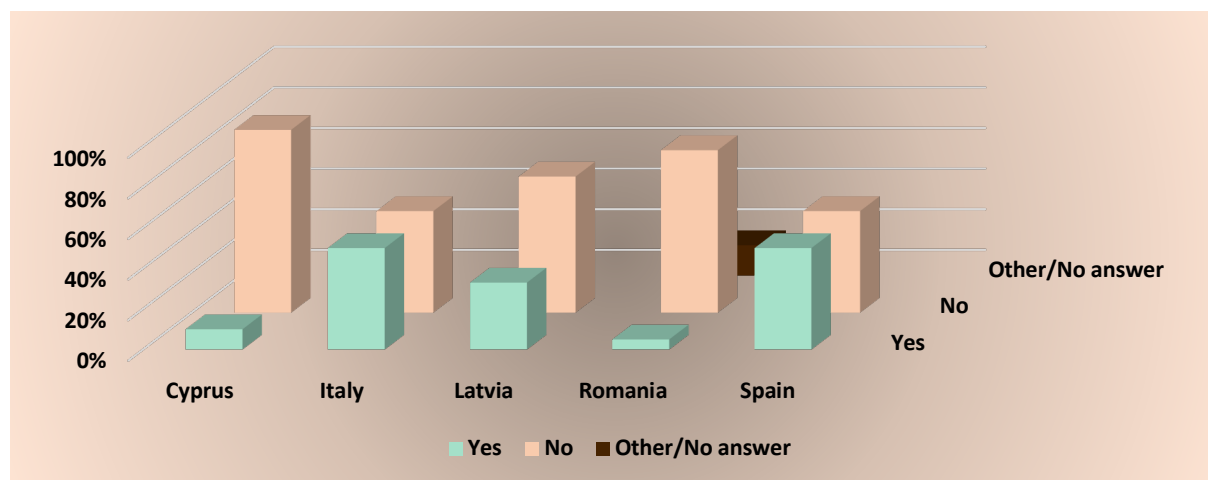
Almost all of the respondents in **Latvia** answered that they approach a person with a disability as a person with needs and desires for intimacy, only one respondent answered negatively. In **Italy** 60% of the respondents chose the answer “Yes, always” and 30% “Yes, but sometimes” and 10% “No, never”. 70% of the respondents in **Spain** chose the answer “Yes, always” and 30% “Yes, but sometimes”. In

Romania regarding the disabled person having emotional/sexual needs and desire, 55% said they always do, 35% said that they do it sometimes and 5% admit they never do. (There is one answer missing.) In **Cyprus** all respondents consider it as normal for people with disabilities to express emotional/sexual needs and desires and they should be respected for that. 70% of respondents said that they always do, 20% that they do sometimes and 10% that they never do. A specific response mentioned that “In Cyprus, we are far behind on making progress in order for them to have equal rights to a number of aspects of their lives”. The majority of the professionals, friends and family are willing to support them emotionally and guide them through dealing with their needs but, based on their saying, they lack the know-how. The following Chart reflects four partner countries.



The situation regarding initiatives concerning the rights of disabled for a natural emotional and sexuality education differs from country to country.

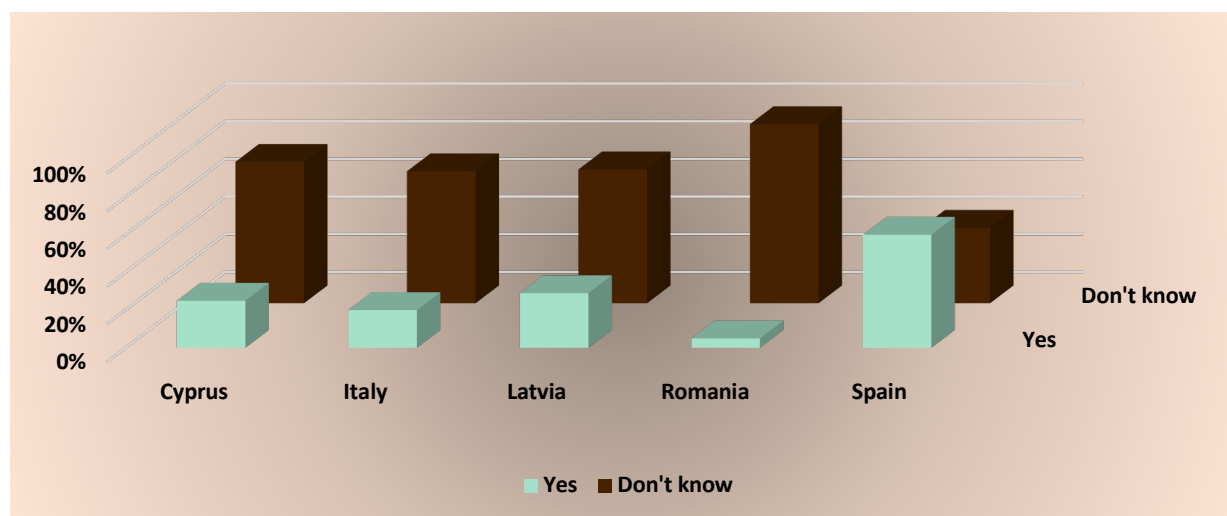
3. Do you know any initiative concerning the rights of disabled for a natural emotional and sexuality education?



In **Cyprus** 90% of respondents answered that they do not know any initiative concerning the rights of disabled for a natural emotional and sexuality education and only 10% said they do, but did not provide any names of such initiatives. In **Italy** and **Spain** answers are divided: 50% know an initiative and 50% don't know. As an initiatives in Italy were named: Sensuability (<https://sensuability.it>); <https://www.lovegiver.it>; <https://aiasmilano.it/> and <https://www.erickson.it/it/sessualita-e-disabilita-intellettiva-corso-di-formazione?default-group=corsi-online>. As an initiatives named in Spain were the first conference on sexuality and functional diversity, which took place in Reus on 29th April 2019, activities organized by Centre Civic in Reus, such as Cineforum, where the documentary <http://www.yeswefuck.org/> was screened; workshops "Sexo i afectivitat" (Sex and Affectivity) in Taller Baix Camp, "Obrint camins" (paving the way) – Villablanca, acra.cat (Healthcare resources association), Jo també vull i puc (I also want and can), Asociación Pere Mata <http://www.fundacioperemata.cat/> and Plena Inclusión:

<https://www.plenainclusion.org/informate/actualidad/noticias/2017/posicionamiento-institucional-sobre-sexualidad-de-las-personas>. Outside Spain, sexual assistants. In **Latvia** 33% of the respondents answered that they know initiatives, although when asked, didn't specify where, but 67% answered negatively. In **Romania** 95% of the respondents offered a negative answer, while 5% didn't answer the question.

4. Are there any organizations working on raising awareness on the topic?



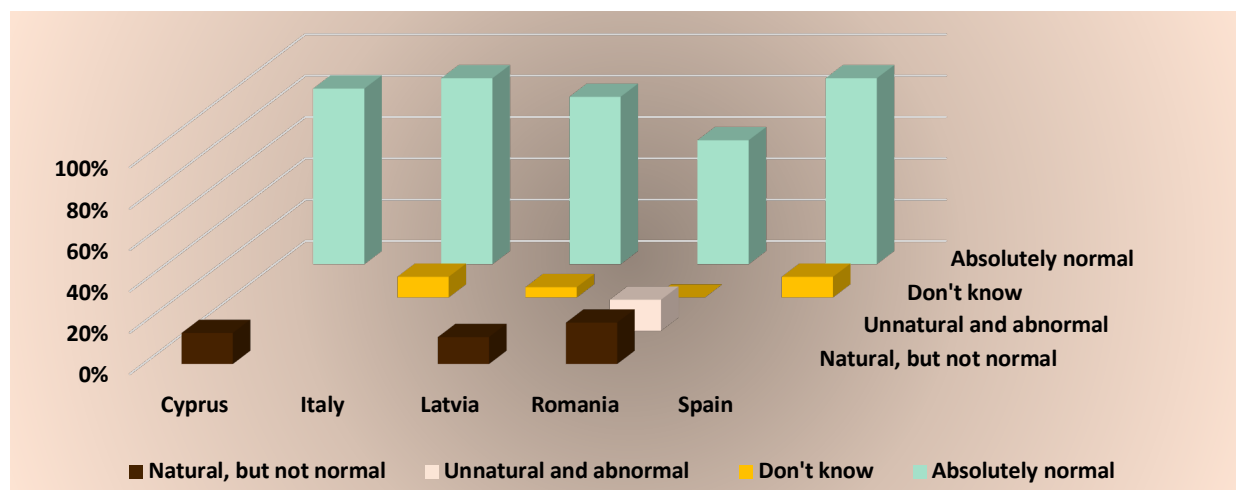
This question shows lack of knowledge about organisations, working in the field of disability. In **Cyprus** most of the respondents were unaware of any initiatives or organisations which work on raising awareness regarding the rights of disabled people for a natural emotional and sexuality education. 75% from the respondents said they do not know any organizations and 25% said they know. The only association identified is the [Cyprus Family Planning Association](#), an NGO which works with emotional and sexual education. The association offers support to adults and teens on emotional and sexual needs but does not have a specialized training course focused on disabled people. The association strongly supports the inclusion of sexual education and is working on including the school curriculum. Small progress has been done related to this but based on the survey responses the sexual education is not specific for disabled people. In **Italy** 70% of the respondents answered that they “Don't know” any organizations working on raising awareness on the topic. 20% answered that there are organisations working on raising awareness on the topic. The organisations mentioned are <https://aiasmilano.it/> and <https://www.lovegiver.it>. In **Latvia** as main organizations that inform people with disabilities on their sexual rights were mentioned “Rūpju Bērs”, “Apeirons” (<https://www.apeirons.lv>) and “Papardes zieds” (<http://papardeszieds.lv/en/>). In **Romania** when asked about the existence of organizations working on raising awareness on the topic, 80% of the respondents say that they don't know, 10% of them say that there is no such organization, 5% don't answer the question and just one person answers yes (5%) and mentions one organization – Tineret in actiune (Youth in action), but the reference was given in order to prove that organizations promote the rights of people with disabilities in general, not the specific intimacy needs.

The better situation is in **Spain**, where 60% of the respondents answered that there are organisations working on raising awareness on the topic. The organisations mentioned are:

- <https://www.tandemteambcn.com/>
- <http://sexualidadydiscapacidad.es/entidad/quienes-somos/>
- Plena inclusion <http://www.plenainclusion.org/>
- Dincat <http://www.dincat.cat/en>

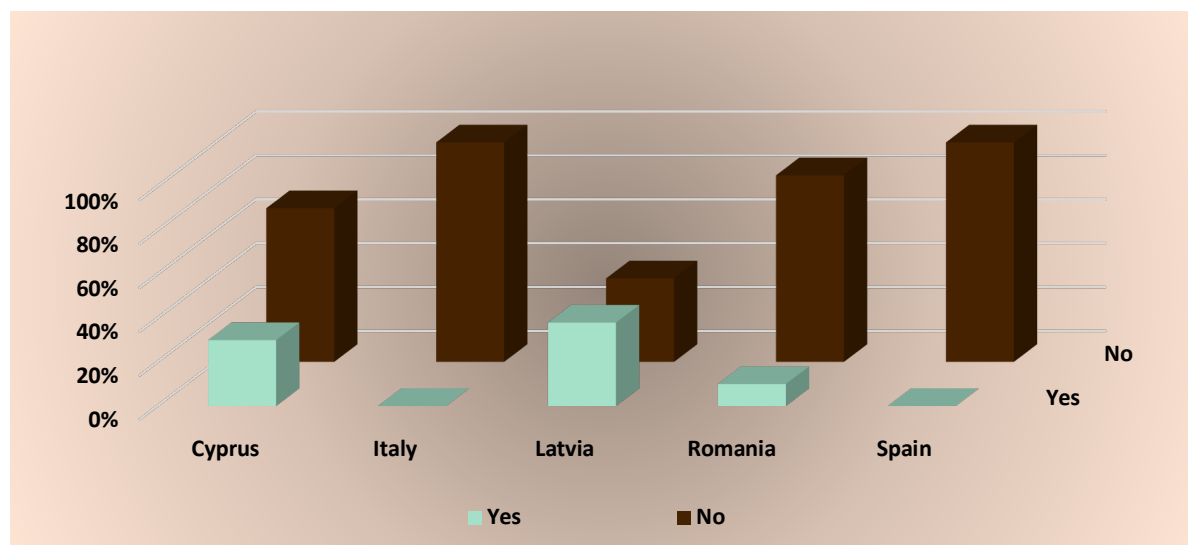
- Villablanca SS AA, <http://www.serveisvillablanca.cat/>
- Ajuntament de Reus <https://www.reus.cat/serveis/persones-amb-discapacitat>
- Asociación Asperger TEA Camp de Tarragona <https://aspercamp.cat>
- Fundació Ecom - www.ecom.cat
- <https://www.bienestaryproteccioninfantil.es/fuentes1.asp?sec=17&subs=228&cod=2071&page=>
- <http://www.yeswefuck.org/>
<https://campus.usal.es/~inico/actividades/actasuruguay2001/9.pdf>

5. How do you comprehend the expression of person's emotional/sexual needs or desires?



In **Cyprus** 85% from all respondents' answer, that expression of person's emotional/sexual needs or desires are absolutely normal, 15% think, that these needs or desires are natural but not normal. In **Italy** and **Spain** 90% of the respondents answered that the expression of person's with disability emotional/sexual needs or desires is absolutely normal. In **Latvia** 81% of respondents answered that the sexual and emotional desires of people with disabilities are approached as natural, 13% as natural but unacceptable, but only one couldn't give an answer. In what concerns the comprehension of the expression of a disabled person's emotional/sexual needs or desires, 60% of the respondents in **Romania** state that is absolutely normal, 20% of the respondents state that is natural, but not normal and 15% say that they don't know. One respondent did not give an answer.

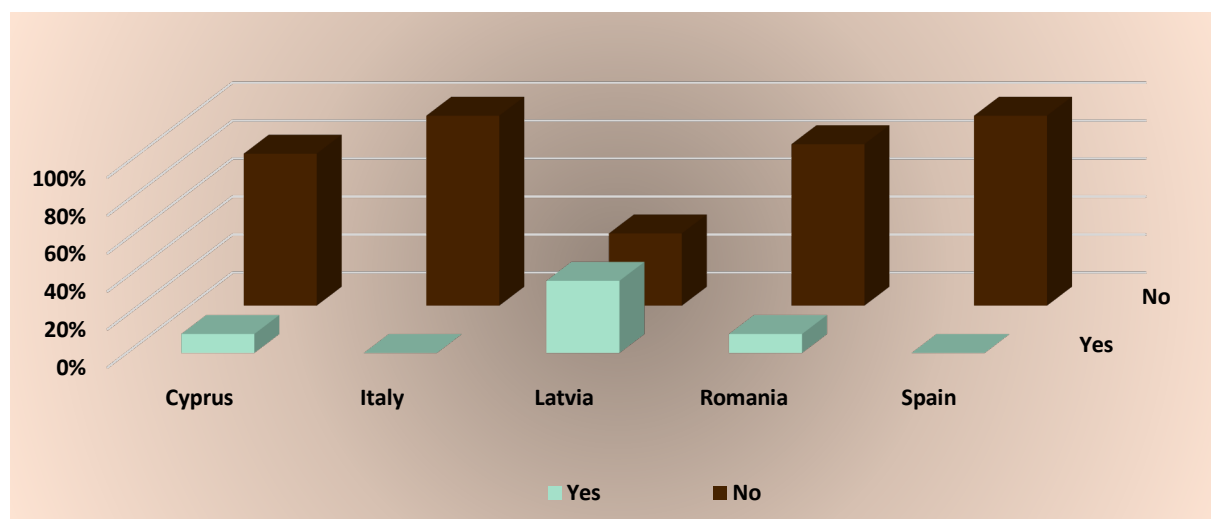
6. Is there a legislation which requires an individual to state his/her consent to (or agree to) have sexual intercourse?



In **Italy** 80% of the responders answered that there is no legislation which requires an individual to state his/her consent to (or agree to) have sexual intercourse. 20% of the responders provide one legislation - Decreto 24 Ottobre 2011, Tribunale di Varese http://www.tribunale.varese.it/index.phtml?Id_VMenu=1211. In **Latvia** except for one respondent, the rest answered that there is no regulation that determines the consent of all parties involved in sexual activity, or they didn't know any. The only respondent gave the reference to the part 16 of Criminal Law. In **Romania** 50% of the respondents state that they don't know, 30% answer with "No" and 15% believe that there is a law regarding the consent for sex, but the law is still work in progress. One answer is missing. In **Spain** 80% of the responders answered that there is no legislation which requires an individual to state his/her consent to (or agree to) have sexual intercourse. Relevant legislation related to this topic could be found at <https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/2010/BOE-A-2010-3514-consolidado.pdf> or <https://www.un.org/es/universal-declaration-human-rights/>. In **Cyprus** the respondents did not indicate legislation about disabled people giving their consent on having sexual intercourse. Although, some respondents pointed out the Law on [Criminal Offences Against Ethics](#) which defines sexual offences against disabled people.

The following sections of questionnaire demonstrates **PSYCHOLOGICAL APTITUDES** to work in informal education regarding the intimacy of people with disabilities and **EXISTING EXPERIENCES, NETWORKING AND LOBBYING FOR THE RIGHTS OF DISABLED FOR A NATURAL EMOTIONAL AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION.**

1. Do people with disabilities are being respected and have the same opportunities as people without disabilities?



In **Cyprus** 10% from the respondents answered that people with disabilities are being respected and have the same opportunities as people without disabilities, 10% did not provide an answer at all, but 80% of respondents think that people with disabilities are not being respected and do not have the same opportunities as others. In **Italy** and **Spain** 100% of the respondents answered that people with disabilities are not being respected and don't have the same opportunities as people without disabilities. In **Latvia** an equal number of respondents (38%) think that people with disabilities have the same rights and possibilities as everybody else but at the same time they have not. Respondents demonstrate that there are rights, but no opportunities, rights are not respected, though there are laws and regulations, they are not in action. In **Romania** regarding the respect and the equal opportunities that persons with disabilities seem to get, 85% of the respondents agree that disabled people don't get the same respect and opportunities that regular people do, while only 10% disagree. One answer is missing. Some say the answer to the question depends on the environment that disabled people get involved in, as there are organizations in the cities which hire people with disabilities and provide access and special facilities for them, but there are as well institutions and segments of the community in which people are a little afraid and avoid people with disabilities.

In **Cyprus** people with disability have lower expectations and self-esteem than people without disabilities. In **Latvia** 52% from respondents answered that the expectations of people with disabilities are lower than of those without. Approximately one third answered that the expectations are the same as for others, but only one that didn't know anything on this topic. The questions of people with disabilities are approached as normal and natural. As a medium for informal education or training people

choose online courses, face-to-face training and guidelines for further work. About 57% of respondents answered that they didn't know about laws providing punishment for sexual exploitation of people with disabilities, but 43%, that they know of such law. Concerning the main legislation, they demonstrated the Disability Law and Criminal Law. Regarding the question on specially adapted sexual education for people with disabilities in special schools 70% answered that they don't know, but 25%, that there is no such programme and only one, that there is. At the same time, nobody could give any links or information on it.

In **Romania** 95% of the respondents agree on the statement that most people with disabilities have lower expectations and self-esteem than people without disabilities. When questioned about how they usually give disabled people questions on how to express their needs and desires, 60% of the respondents declare that they reply in an honest, direct, truthful, accepting way, while 10% specifies that they also use images, metaphors, games. 30% offer no answer to the question. In regard to the desired way of obtaining support and guidance on how to educate people with disabilities on the topic of sexuality and emotions, 85% of the respondents are wishing for the support of a mentor, 70% of the respondents desire specific guidelines, 65% of them wish for both e-learning and face to face training, while 55% of them opt for an e-learning course. When asked if they have any knowledge about a policy / legislation on criminal law (sexual offences) in Romania with a special focus on disabled people, 70% of the respondents declare that they don't have such knowledge, while 20% say that there isn't such a law and 5% don't answer the question. One person only states that offending a disabled person might involve more severe punishments.

When asked if the school curricula include sexual education specifically for disabled people, 80% of the people offer a negative answer, which is accurate, while 15% declare that they don't know and 5% don't answer the question. 10% of the respondents said that they gained some knowledge about the sexual needs of the people with disabilities within a sensory therapy course.

CONCLUSIONS

RESPONDENTS' GENDER, AGE, LEVEL OF EDUCATION, ROLE, NUMBER OF DISABLE TO WORK WITH, EXPERIENCE:

In all countries women are mainly involved in the assistance of disabled. The average age of these women is 35-50 except for Latvia where they are 51-65. In most countries these figures have a second stage of tertiary education, in Cyprus and Latvia some of them only have a first stage of tertiary education. These people have different roles, they are mainly educators in Italy, Latvia and Romania, mostly relatives but also educators in Cyprus and they are specialist professionals in Spain. In Latvia, Italy and Spain respondents usually deal with up to 10 disabled, aged between 18-34 in Italy and 35 to 50 in Spain and Latvia. In Cyprus and Romania they deal with a minor number (1-3) aged between 18-34. In Italy, Cyprus, Latvia and Romania respondents have more than 5 years experience with disabled, in Spain is about 1 to 3 years experience.

BASIC KNOWLEDGE ABOUT TYPES OF DISABILITY

Official definition of disability: In some countries as Latvia and Cyprus, respondents mentioned the official definition of disability according to their national law. In other countries as Italy, Spain and Romania the most common given definitions are personal ideas of the subject. Especially in Romania an old and incorrect synonym of disability is still mentioned which is handicapped.

Self-identify of their disability: All countries agree on this question, in fact most of respondents affirm disabled don't really consider them selves that. Only in Cyprus the results indicate a controversy since half of the respondents mentioned that disabled people recognise their disability and the other half said they do not.

Types of disabilities: in all countries involved respondents mentioned a wide range of disability kinds, here is the list of those that were written:

Cyprus: Mobility issues, hearing problems, mental illness and disability, Autism spectrum disorder, Down Syndrome, ADHD, brain damage, mental retardation, visual disability, hearing problems, muscular dystrophy;

Italy: Physical and Psychic disability, Sensorial disorders: visual and hearing impairments to Physical, cognitive and sensorial;

Latvia: 86% mental disability, 62% on learning difficulties.

Romania: autism, Down syndrome, Alzheimer, dementia, ADHD, paresis, epilepsy, blindness, deafness etc. Some of them offered classifications of disabilities, grouping them in: intellectual, sensorial, motor, emotional, due to a medical condition (diabetes, heart disease, cancer etc.); or medical and psychological/ physical and mental;

Spain: Mental disorders, such as autism, anxiety, depression, ADHD, TGD, Asperger's Syndrome, intellectual deficit, down syndrome, personality disorders, psychosis, schizophrenia, dual pathologies (mental+physics, drugs+mental), bipolar disorder; Sensorial disorders: visual and hearing impairments;

Motor problems, such as reduced mobility. The majority of the respondents have experience in dealing with more than one disability.

INTIMACY RIGHTS OF DISABLED PEOPLE

In general, in all countries involved in this research, people with disabilities express their need for intimacy and the people who are supporting them consider it absolutely normal. But at the same time, most respondents from all countries stated that there is no respect for the disabled people's rights. When participants were asked about initiatives they knew for disabled's rights for a natural sexuality, most respondents from Latvia said they don't, in Italy and Spain answers "yes" and "no" had the same percentage which means just half of the respondents know about these initiatives, In Cyprus 90% of respondents answered that they do not know any initiative concerning the rights of disabled for a natural emotional and sexuality education and only 10% said they do, but did not provide any names of such initiatives. In Romania 95% of participants said they don't know any. Regarding organizations that work to raise awareness o the topic of disabled's intimacy, most participants said they don't know any. Only Spain shows a better situation because 60% mentioned different organization involved in the subject. One third of people in Latvia said they did but couldn't mention any when asked to specify. Only in Italy and Spain participants mentioned different inititives about the topic. Concerning legislation which requires an individual to state his/her consent to (or agree to) have sexual intercourse, Italy shows a confused situation, because only 20% of respondents said there is a law about this. In Latvia only one participant mentioned a law, the rest said no/don't know. In Spain, Cyprus and Romania answers only went from "No" to "Don't know".

PSYCHOLOGICAL APTITUDES TO TACKLE THE ISSUES ABOUT EMOTIONAL AND SEXUAL NEEDS OF DISABLED

Not all countries have provided information for this section but in general, the conclusion drawn is the below:

- A high percentage of respondents in Romania, Cyprus and Latvia indicate that people with disabilities have lower expectations/ self-esteem than people without disabilities.
- Most of respondents in Cyprus, Italy, Spain and Romania stated that disabled are not fully and equally respected as those without disabilities.
- Most respondents in all countries indicated blended learning as their most preferable option together with supportive guidelines. Mentoring was also mentioned as a preference but not in all countries.

EXISTING EXPERIENCES, NETWORKING AND LOBBYING FOR THE RIGHTS OF DISABLED FOR A NATURAL EMOTIONAL AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Policy/legislation: In Latvia the Criminal Law is protecting people with disabilities regarding sexual offences against them as all others. In the other countries, most of the respondents either didn't know or stated that there isn't a legislation/policy with a special focus on disabled people.



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Sexual education: Most respondents stated that either they don't know or there is no sexual education in schools specifically focused on people with disabilities.