**Foundation Activation** – the largest non-governmental organization in Poland which supports professional integration of people with disabilities – puts forward for discussion substancial topics regarding situation of people with disabilities in Poland, in the light of Article 27:

1. Salary of working people with disabilities
2. The type of work in context of education
3. Outdated legal measures concerning the labor market
4. The employment rate
5. The role of NGOs in professional integration process
6. Feasibility of assumptions of the Govermental Strategy for People with Disabilities.

The biggest problems of people with disabilities on the labour market in Poland:

1. Salary of working people with disabilities

Over the years people with disabilities in Poland have received salary around the national minimum wage (the lowest rate concerning full time job defined by the government authorities). This status was noticed in 2017 during the nationwide studies regarding situation of people with disabilities, more over the same results were confirmed in the research carried out between 2018-2020 by Fundacja Aktywizacja (over 1000 questioned interviewees). According to the Fundacja Aktywizacja study only 4,9% people with disabilities receive salary above the national minimum wage.

1. The type of work in context of education

According to data the rate of people with disabilities with university degree systematically grows. However, despite this increase the situation of people with disabilities on the labor market has not improved. The majority of people with disabilities work in simple jobs or services (security and cleaning services). There is no change in perceiving disabled employees as people who can work on higher and better-paid positions.

1. Outdated legal measures concerning the labor market

The law regulating employment of people with disabilities has been implemented in 1991 and major changes were made in 1997 by introducing the system of salary subsidies for employers hiring people with disabilities. The mentioned solution has been functioning with minor changes for 24 years. As practice shows the current legal system is not efficient as it does not increase the employment rate of people with disabilities.

1. The employment rate

The employment rate of people with disabilities has not changed for years. Currently it is 26,8% and is significantly lower than the average employment rate in the EU. A positive change is the reduction in the number of people with disabilities working in sheltered workshops in favor of the open labor market. Nevertheless, it is an apparent change and it is a result of reduction of the number of sheltered workshops in Poland. Generally, people with disabilities work in the same workplace but its status was changed.

1. The role of NGOs in professional integration

The professional integration in Poland is mainly realized by NGOs. Public labor market institutions are not able to place and keep people with disabilities on the labor market effectively. Only 2% of people in the age of professional activity seek jobs at public labor market institutions. NGOs in Poland do not have permanent sources of funding, their financing is based on projects by the ESF or government funds. The lack of permanent funding makes Polish NGOs incapable of running their actions as the continuous system. NGOs support people with disabilities much more efficiently, because they know this environment well and provide services dedicated to factual needs. Research shows the significant role of NGOs – employment effectivness of Fundacja Aktywizacja (surveyed 6 months after taking up employment) is on the level of 79% (even during COVID-19 pandemic).

1. Feasibility of assumptions of the Governmental Strategy for People with Disabilities.

In February 2021 the Governmental Strategy for People with Disabilities was launched. The Strategy assumes reaching 40% of the employment rate by 2030 (it means increasing the number of working people with disabilities by over 224 000 people). The assumption is correct, but actions planned
to achieve the employment rate raise some doubts. Among the planned activities, there are any related to the basic employment support mechanisms which are specified in the Act on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of People with Disabilities. Planned actions have the short-term perspective and are based on projects. Strategy, analysis and preparation for changes implementation are the key activities regarding the labor market – however there are too few activities plannedfor realization in the implementing period of the Strategy.