EXCLUSION AND DISABILITY

By

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1. In France, as in all Western countries, poverty is undeniably on the increase and it is tempting to see the exclusion debate as the consequence of this phenomenon. However, exclusion is not as recent a concept one might think. It was first popularised in 1974 with the publication of a work by the then Secretary of State for Social Action, René Lenoir. At the time, it expressed a need to improve conditions for those that economic growth had left behind by introducing more social justice into economics and giving growth a human face. The aim was to eliminate the dangers inherent in social inequalities and in the various forms of “exclusion” that would ultimately threaten to shatter the principles on which our economic system is based. The term as it was then used referred to the “physically disabled”, the “mentally disabled” and the “socially maladjusted”, the latter category including the mentally ill, those with suicidal tendencies, alcoholics, adult offenders, drop-outs and the asocial.

2. Some twenty years on, the concept of exclusion is more widespread than ever, but its meaning has changed since, now, it appears to have become the social issue of most concern to the French public as a whole. A special commission was set up in 1991 under the Commissariat Général du Plan on the initiative of P. Nasse to profile the socially excluded and catalogue and identify exclusion processes. A report by the Committee for social cohesion and the prevention of exclusion, chaired by B. Fragonard, concluded that the new social problem stemmed from economic exclusion and the process of alienation that it engenders. It regards social cohesion as the key issue confronting all of the actors in our economic

1. The Chassériaud report for instance, estimates that in 1993 some 1 400 000 people were experiencing social problems that put them at risk of being unable to benefit or excluded them outright from various measures to help rehabilitate the unemployed. See C. Chassériaud, La grande exclusion sociale, questions liées à l’Insertion et au devenir des publics en grande difficulté sociale, report to the Minister of Social Affairs, Health and the City, November 1993, p. 29.


4. It was in 1991 that “Face à l’exclusion, le modèle Français” was published under the direction of C. Donzelot, describing exclusion as the social issue that society had to face.
and social environment. The groups it refers to have also changed since the term “excluded” now refers primarily to those suffering extreme poverty, those on income support (Revenu Minimum d’Insertion or RMI), the long-term unemployed, young people, etc., in short, to all the new categories of society that are experiencing difficulties due to the sweeping economic and social changes that France underwent in the course of the 1980s.

3. To understand why the concept of exclusion has taken off in this way, we need to ask what conditions have contributed to its redefinition. This paper will also attempt to identify the consequences for those referred to as disabled, who are, in a way, in competition with the new categories of excluded who -- like the disabled -- benefit from subsistence allowances and from measures to encourage their social reintegration and re-employment. This competition may well give grounds for fearing that the disabled will find it even more difficult than before to find a job or appropriate education.

I. Social status as conferred by the earnings model

1. A social model that is being called into question

4. Increasing job insecurity, mass unemployment, widespread long-term and very long-term unemployment are obviously not totally unrelated to the redefinition of the exclusion concept. However, these factors alone are not enough to explain it since the acceptance of the concept cannot be divorced from the ineffectiveness of the regulatory systems on which the cohesion of the wage-earning society is founded.

5. The new methods of organising work which companies have introduced greatly undermine their ability to be a force for social integration. By making responsiveness and flexibility the priority, these new methods of organisation sanction the advent of a “selective” corporate culture which prefers “just-in-time” employment to steady salaried employment. This undermines career progression patterns and makes versatility and adaptability the prerequisites for getting and keeping jobs. The increasing weight given to educational qualifications and the importance attributed to general capacity for motivation and adaptability “disqualify” whole sectors of the population which, in the past, could hope to get a job. The development of fast-track careers with selection at an ever earlier age means that people rapidly become “too old” for the job market, as witnessed by long-term unemployment among the over fifties and the popularity of early retirement schemes.

6. Then again, the social security systems which developed in the course of this century appear to be more and more patently unsuited to the needs and problems of the most vulnerable, or even a source of exclusion. For example, the unemployment benefit system plunges the long-term unemployed into penury and destitution despite the fact that it was designed to provide cover for them should they become unemployed: the unemployed follow-up survey conducted by the INSEE shows that of 54 per cent still unemployed after two years, 27 per cent were receiving no benefit and were without private or statutory resources. In the 1980s findings on the health care system came to similar conclusions: designed to

5. Income support (Revenue Minimum d’Insertion or RMI) was introduced in 1988 in order to provide the least well off with a minimum income, social status, better access to the healthcare system and, in general, a means of integrating themselves into social and working life.


provide health care for the employed and their families, it became steadily more unable to protect those who most needed protection -- the homeless, the long-term unemployed -- against illness and its consequences.

7. Furthermore, the education system, the ultimate instrument of social justice, flagship of republican ideals, is becoming more and more patently a vehicle for exclusion, ill-suited to today’s needs, incapable of guaranteeing jobs and fulfilling its obligations. The reappearance of illiteracy (a phenomenon which was thought to have been eradicated or confined to certain categories of the population), the more and more obvious underachievement of an increasing number of pupils and, generally, the selective nature of schools calls into question their ability to guarantee a future for their pupils. This question is central to the report by Father Wrezinski in which he stigmatises schools as elitist and divisive, when they should be the exact opposite -- a force for integration -- and as vehicles for instability and exclusion. This is a stance with many politicians have taken up, following in the footsteps of J.P. Fuchs, who described the education system as a system of exclusion, stressing its inability to take into consideration the special educational needs of pupils who found it difficult to keep up in the traditional system.

8. The redefinition of the role of companies, the more and more patent rigidity of our systems of social regulation which were set up for the very purpose of redistributing the wealth created by economic growth and ensuring greater social justice have sown the seeds of an inevitable major upheaval in our social organisation. Unable to protect the neediest and those most vulnerable to the social consequences of economic upheaval, that is, to abject poverty and destitution, those very systems become vehicles for exclusion. By leaving the vulnerable with no protection, plunging them into insecurity and encouraging failure they are turning them into people with no rights, who do not matter and who have no identity.

2. Full employment -- an abandoned Utopia

9. The “social condemnation” of those sectors of the population most disadvantaged by sweeping economic and social changes is certainly a factor to be considered. Contrary to the prevailing theories up to then, the end of the 1980s showed that economic recovery did not necessarily mean a return to full employment. The report on long-term unemployment published in 1991 by France’s Economic and Social Council points out that the recovery of 1988 and 1989 was very selective: while it helped prevent further job losses and improved youth employment opportunities, it did not enable those who were already unemployed to return to work and they saw their periods of unemployment lengthen. With the selectivity of the recovery, a “hard core” of job seekers emerged whose employment prospects did not improve with the economic situation. From that point on the existence of this “hard core” lends credibility to the notion of an “unemployment divide” between the traditional unemployed who are helped by economic growth and the long-term unemployed who are at risk of financial, moral and social impoverishment.

10. The divide is becoming all the more firmly entrenched because more and more of the people eligible for employment schemes are facing social problems that reduce their job prospects to such an extent that they are highly unlikely to be employed. Many of them have serious social problems. A report

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by the ENA assessing the Individual Training Credits scheme10 pointed out that 39 per cent of young people interviewed by respondents were faced with serious problems: 14 per cent had health problems, the parents of 12 per cent had financial problems, and 9 per cent came from broken families following the death of a parent or divorce. The report noted that only 28 per cent of long-term job seekers received the basic allowance. Conversely, 32 per cent received no benefit at all or only the RMI, which would suggest that they were groups whose problems were primarily social. The increase in economic and social problems in the wider context of the employment problem is also reflected in the benefits paid out by local community schemes: in 1996, 3501 young people, or 45.6 per cent of the total registered under the schemes applied for assistance with health matters, housing, income, etc. from the Strasbourg community scheme11.

11. The establishment of this “hard core”, the increasingly apparent fact that there are groups of people confronted with the scourge of unemployment despite the vast range of measures implemented to help them, the “impotence” imposed by the economic climate, are all factors which prompt a pessimistic view of the employment prospects for certain groups of the unemployed. It is now thought that there are people who will have no access to traditional forms of employment, now that they have been sucked into the spiral of unemployment given the selectivity of the labour market and existing training measures. So permanent and irremediable does their situation appear that it seems that they will be for ever excluded, as Senator Boeuf suggests when he says that we had now “entered a three-speed economic society consisting of those who have the power to decide, and the money, those who are fortunate enough to have a job, and the rest, that is, the marginalised, the excluded, the underclass”.12

12. This has totally transformed the “social question” that has been exercising the authorities since the late 1980s, since their main concern now is the social inclusion of those whose marginalisation seems almost permanent along with or rather than the question of inequalities. Many people think that, in many respects, our society is starting to seem like a society of exclusion which has lost sight of the ideal of progress which once inspired it.

3. Social action that shapes our image of the “excluded”

13. The institutional framework set up in 1982 to reintegrate job seekers into society and into the labour market, by the very principles on which it operates, has undeniably played a major part in publicising the exclusion concept. First, it instituted a new social approach to unemployment which attributed joblessness to the inadequacies of the unemployed by comparison with normal employability standards. Indeed, the reintegration of the unemployed derives from an analysis model that identifies unemployment with an inadequate education system that is regarded as less and less able to provide a guarantee of employment for those it educates or a skilled workforce for business and industry. It is the large proportion of young people “starting life without an adequate education, without qualifications that would help them find the job and the place in society to which they aspire”13 which is highlighted in the
preamble to Circulars no. 566 of 8 February 1982 and no. 82-9565 (1505) of 14 April 1982. The marginalisation of the unemployed is attributed to the marginalisation of the education system with regard to the requirements of business and industry. According to this viewpoint the basic solution to the unemployment problem, particularly youth unemployment, lies in a “radical revision of the education system” together with the development of day release and sandwich courses. Like the politician who describes young people as “the casualties of basic education” it puts the blame for the “unemployability” of the unemployed on schools. This attempt to objectify the causes of joblessness has changed the interpretation of this major (in terms of its extent and consequences for individuals) “risk”, which we are unable either to ignore or to eradicate and which, consequently, we must make socially acceptable. Far from explaining unemployment in terms of recession or economic upheaval, which make it seem inescapable, it is basically the result of a dysfunctional education system and lack of training, i.e., in the last analysis, the result of the latter’s unsuitability for the requirements of the labour market.

14. Secondly, this institutional framework is based on divisive principles which marginalise people who have been made vulnerable by change. The way in which measures have been designed exposes the most vulnerable groups to the most precarious schemes (or places them on a protected market) and reserves schemes leading to qualifications and a direct route to employment to those whose joblessness is due to a depressed market or to lack of qualifications. Unlike schemes in which work experience is part of an educational approach (skills acquisition and re-skilling contracts, etc.) the community work schemes set up in 1984, like the various types of “assisted contract” introduced later, were not intended to offer those on the scheme professionally recognised qualifications. They were schemes supporting or substituting for labour market selectivity, which gave those who had no access to qualifications recognised by firms a chance to gain experience of socially useful work. This was particularly true of economic employment measures: employing firms, like intermediate associations, directed their efforts mainly towards the most disadvantaged groups, those whom Bichot calls “the socially disadvantaged” and who are unable to avail themselves of other measures because of certain technicalities and “disqualifying policies” adopted in the past.

15. The classification criteria governing the design of measures divide the population into different educational, social and occupational groups and as a result the benefits system for job seekers divides the latter into groups that are as uniform as possible. Designing measures in this way means that eligibility for different measures is structured in a way that mimics market selectivity: those that provide the best qualifications, i.e. those closest to the entrepreneurial rationale and, consequently, the closest to labour market requirements are, in a way, reserved to the most qualified and the most “employable”. In contrast, the least skilled groups and the least employable are offered essentially unemployment support schemes designed as an alternative to abject poverty through initiatives and opportunities in residual markets.

16. The institutional framework thus distinguishes between those who have some hope of a steady job or something like it and those who are incapable of so doing and thus makes the idea that there are some people who are irrevocably condemned to precarious or marginal activities, and even total exclusion from the job market, appear almost natural. By the very principles on which it operates, it thus helps to


15. P. Louvot: Senate parliamentary debates, J.O., 1 February 1984, p. 84.

perpetuate the image of the socially excluded as people who will never have access to the labour market or to those employment schemes which are closest to it.

17. Clearly, the exclusion concept derives from an analysis model that takes wage-earning society as the benchmark. As a result, it is itself inseparable from the crisis that is affecting the regulatory systems, utopias and ideals of progress that the wage-earning model embodied. It reflects a society that is no longer experienced as a society of inequalities but as a dual society which sets those who have managed to adapt to change against those who have not been able to do so and who have been isolated or irrevocably excluded from that society. It reveals a society that is totally at a loss and is discovering and confirming that it is one of exclusion, whose ideals, social organisation and ability to define and guarantee social solidarity are being called into question. It is the outward manifestation of a social attitude that ascribes joblessness to the inadequacies of the unemployed and sees the reinsertion problems which make it difficult for them to benefit from assistance schemes and measures as a basic characteristic of the most disadvantaged: not only are they incapable of getting a job, they also seem to be incapable of taking advantage of employment training or indeed of any other scheme involving economic or job-related requirements.

18. All of these factors have radically revised the social connotations of exclusion: from being something unacceptable that has to be prevented because of the inequality it engenders, it has come to denote an economic and social era that has brought with it requirements for which certain groups of people are unprepared. Exclusion has in many respects become a cipher for modern times which allows us to grasp the changes our civilisation is undergoing. Hence, the integration policies implemented by the authorities give rise to social regulation procedures that take the socially excluded into consideration: i.e. the unwaged and/or those who do not benefit from the protection systems instituted by the wage-earning society.

II. Marked change in the disability concept

19. The advent of new problem groups in the community owing to the marginalisation of an increasing proportion of the population is not without consequences for people suffering from impairments.

I. From unemployed to disabled status

20. Firstly, the position of the so-called disabled is being identified with that of the destitute, as seen in maladjustment or disability terminology, which is very frequently used by elected representatives and professional circles when speaking about those receiving unemployment benefits. Such is the case of the elected representative who relates unemployment to occupational maladjustment, or the ANPE (Agence Nationale pour l’Emplois) which associates the difficulties encountered by young people who are to be allowed a second chance with failures and “social and occupational handicaps”. In the Circular of 6 December 1988 on the training programme for the long-term unemployed, the lack of training was seen as a “serious disability”. All these comments suggest that the lack of skills, and the inability to adapt to

the new methods of organising work and keep up with the developments resulting from economic and social change, are seen as a handicap, meaning that they are identified with a disadvantage or lost ground that should be made up.

21. Secondly, although people affected by impairments and the elderly once formed the bulk of the population whose health problems resulted in social and occupational difficulties, they are now being joined by new groups owing to the pathogenic nature of poverty. Various studies have shown that the state of health among the destitute sections of the community is not only frequently poor but that in many cases it prevents them from working: 11 per cent of respondents in the “poverty” survey of 1995 and 13 per cent of RMI (social minimum income) beneficiaries interviewed in 1992 considered that the state of their health prevented them from doing any kind of job. The report on the evaluation of RMI system showed that RMI recipients who had been classified as partially or completely unfit for work were suffering mainly from mental and osteoarticular disorders. The same report showed that over a third of the recipients who had left the RMI scheme were now claiming other welfare benefits, in particular those allocated for withdrawal from the conventional labour market: 13 per cent of welfare benefits were in the form of pensions (7 per cent) or the handicapped adult’s allowance (6 per cent). These findings substantiate the idea that these categories of “excluded people” are “disabled” since their difficulties in finding a job are partly due to health or impairment problems. Moreover, the report by the French Economic and Social Council on serious poverty shows that 7 per cent of the respondents in the poverty survey were suffering from a physical, mental or sensory disorder and were in an even more hapless situation since the number of jobless and homeless among them exceeded the average. According to the same report, 17 per cent of the respondents had submitted an application to COTOREP (committee for the redeployment of the disabled) and 66 per cent of them had been accepted.

22. Moreover, the welfare authorities are unanimous in saying that the education of a growing number of children and young people has been seriously disrupted if not actually impeded. It is difficult for children who have never known their parents to work to perceive success at school as important, and very often it is practically impossible for them to consider their occupational options. Problems in the home environment are a breeding ground for educational failure: as noted by the report on serious poverty, the very low educational level and destitution of families encourage absenteeism and result in chaotic school careers, or even removal from the school system, which undermine children and condemn them to being semi-outcasts. This is particularly true of pupils who have been expelled from their secondary schools three times in a year and cannot find another school willing to take them. The destitution of the home environment also causes health problems that affect children’s education: nutrition and even malnutrition, sleep and health care problems are increasingly noted by the various categories of personnel (teachers, social workers, etc.), particularly those working in ZEPs (zones of educational priorities). Owing to these disruptions, there is a tendency to identify these children with “handicapped” children who create problems in schools as they have to be given special treatment. This is what is meant, for example, when it is said that “if a youngster is a troublemaker at school and he is under 16, he can be expelled without the schools inspectorate being informed. The child may be off school for quite some time.”


23. As an increasing proportion of the child or adult population is marginalised, the “excluded” and the “disabled” are placed in a similar, if not the same, position. The “disabled” label is limited less than ever to those affected by an impairment, since the “social disadvantage” which defines the handicap no longer applies only to the social consequences of an impairment but also includes those resulting from unemployment and, more generally, from all the situations reflecting social precarity.

2. Once excluded, now privileged

24. As a result of this merger of the two groups, people affected by an impairment “compete” with the other “excluded” members of the community, for although the handicapped were usually referred to as the “excluded par excellence” or “the poorest of the poor”, such terms are now applied to those in an extremely precarious social and occupational position. For instance, the Minister of Social Affairs at the time, Claude Evin, stated explicitly during a parliamentary debate on the social minimum income, that people affected by an impairment could no longer be regarded as an excluded category, considering the inevitable rise in unemployment and poverty. The disabled are not included either in the sections of the community exposed to the exclusion risk which are listed in the report on the survey of excluded groups and on the assessment of the exclusion trend. This report focuses on the long-term unemployed, young people who are underperforming at school, the poor and those who are in trouble with the law, but it does not mention people affected by impairments. A similar conclusion may be reached by reading the special issue of “La Croix” on exclusion and the possibilities of overcoming it: although it discusses the long-term unemployed, the homeless, the poorly housed, the illiterate, RMI recipients, underperformance at school and the distress of children in run-down suburbs, the loneliness of the elderly living in a rural environment, drug addicts, etc., only a fleeting reference is made to people suffering from an impairment.

25. It goes without saying that these omissions in no way suggest that the so-called disabled have been integrated or that they are no longer marginals. The various studies conducted on this subject stress how far they are still educationally, occupationally and socially at a disadvantage: their level of training is much lower than that of their able-bodied counterparts and, accordingly, their unemployment rate is much higher. Candidates who are in good health and have a high level of skills are 1.78 times more likely to obtain a positive reaction to spontaneous applications for jobs than their disabled competitors. Lastly, the shortcomings of specialised training structures and the fact that they are isolated from the standard system give the impression that, in many respects, these types of structures contribute to marginalisation, to the detriment of those for whom they are intended, and not to integration.

26. These omissions in fact suggest that the close link between exclusion and welfare provisions has helped to transform those who were once excluded into those who are now privileged. Unlike many of the unemployed or those confronted with social marginalisation who find it very difficult to obtain access to health care, people affected by an impairment benefit from health cover which, although not perfect, does

protect them against the risks of illness. Similarly, while the lack of resources is a basic characteristic of those who have been undermined by economic and social change, people affected by an impairment have a guaranteed income that places them above the poverty threshold. Moreover, although limited, the income to which they are entitled is usually higher than that which can be expected by RMI recipients: the minimum income for an unmarried RMI recipient amounted in 1997 to FF 2 402 per month, as against the FF 3 433 paid to a disabled adult.²⁷

²⁷ Judging by existing welfare provisions, people affected by an impairment become privileged persons owing to these differences which place them in a special position: although not classified as excluded, they cannot be classified as integrated either. It is as if the principles originally used for the definition of the unemployed and the poor as excluded groups had led to a situation in which an impairment was no longer seen as an exclusion risk. An article on the disabled in “La Croix”, the daily referred to above, is quite revealing about this change in outlook, since it discusses in detail an initiative by disabled adolescents for the benefit of the homeless, thus suggesting that, to a certain extent, the former enjoy better welfare provisions than the latter²⁸.

3. New opportunities

²⁸ Paradoxically enough, this widespread development of the exclusion debate has opened doors for the disabled and increased their possibilities of integration. The serious consequences of underperformance at school, and the increasingly obvious difficulties with writing and reading among a growing number of youngsters have brought home to the authorities and teachers the importance of providing back-up for pupils and developing educational practices that meet their needs and expectations more effectively. The Guideline Act on Education of 10 July 1989 thus states that every youngster is entitled to an education that will enable him to find a job, and makes it one of the basic functions of schools to adapt to the diversity and particularities of their students. On its side, the persistence of high unemployment is an incentive to seek alternatives to dependent employment by encouraging initiative, creating jobs and by identifying untapped possibilities of jobs. On this point it is also worth mentioning the system for the creation of family service jobs set up by the Act of 31 December 1991 on vocational training and employment which promotes activities carried out in private households, such as housework, child-minding, supervision of children’s homework, helping an elderly or disabled person, etc.

²⁹ Such a context is particularly suitable for the integration in school of children affected by an impairment, as shown by the various circulars issued on this subject since the start of the 1990s. Circular No. 91-302 of 18 November 1991 set up integration classes (CLIS) to replace the special classes created by the Act of 15 April 1909. Circular No. 95-125 of 17.5.1995 set up Educational Integration Units (UPI) to promote the integration of backward pupils in junior secondary schools. A guideline paper published in 1997 considered that back-up for pupils was a necessity and therefore recommended its development.

³⁰ Some initiatives taken in line with these regulations also show their impact. At the start of the 1990s, action was taken to set up a new function, that of the integration auxiliary. The integration auxiliary assists the teacher and, under his responsibility, carries out various tasks that make it easier to run the class and make it possible to integrate the individual pupil. He is a resource person who provides


teaching and psychological back-up for the so-called handicapped pupil and gives him the necessary autonomy to keep his place in the class. The auxiliary provides moral support for the teacher who usually has some misgivings about taking on a handicapped child as he feels he will not have the skills to deal properly with the child, and takes any extra work for the class as a whole off the teacher’s shoulders. He provides back-up for the pupils who are finding the going difficult or who are underperforming.

31. This activity is carried out by young Job seekers who see it as a means of obtaining a place on a skills formation course and finding a job consistent with their wishes and ambitions. Sandwich training is provided for them. It lasts three years and gives them a knowledge of a child’s physical, psychological and social development, as well as knowledge of impairments and their implications for the adjustments required for socialisation and learning. It also teaches them how to react properly to the various situations which may occur in practice. In other words, it is a kind of training that imparts the necessary comprehensive skills required by a function in which the main role in the handicapped child’s development is played by the child himself or his family. The integration auxiliary is therefore expected to understand all about the educational project for the child, know something about teaching, serve as a relay between the child and the teacher and co-operate closely with the teacher, be able to work as part of a team and have a good grasp of interdisciplinary postulates.

32. This formula is being extensively developed as it appears to be very closely geared to current economic and social requirements: it creates new jobs, promotes integration in schools and meets parents’ needs and expectations. At present the Alsace Region employs about 50 integration auxiliaries. A hundred more are to be trained in the next two years. There are also plans to set up a training course to allow the use of integration auxiliaries over the entire range of establishments, from nursery school to university.

33. This widespread development of the exclusion debate is obviously also to the advantage of adults. The various measures taken for the redeployment of Job seekers make it easier for disabled adults to obtain access to training courses or jobs. For instance Circular CDE No. 91-49 of 4 October 1991 extended the back-to-work contract, which had been previously limited to the long-term unemployed and RMI recipients, to handicapped workers. Under this type of contract, employers who take on handicapped workers are exempt from social security contributions and handicapped persons are eligible for skills formation courses.

34. Another example of this trend is given by the Local Plans for Entry into Employment (PLIE) since they are intended for the long-term unemployed, young people who are having great difficulty in finding a job, RMI recipients, etc., as well as handicapped workers. The object of these plans is to improve access to employment for people with serious social problems by taking specific kinds of comprehensive and personalised action. Such action must be in the form of a programme comprising enrolment, guidance, welfare support, help with finding a job, sandwich training, work simulation and monitoring of work performance to pave the way for secure employment. The PLIE are intended for members of the community who have long been excluded from the labour market (very long-term unemployed, RMI recipients), who are affected by occupational difficulties and social problems involving the family, housing or health, or who have been seriously marginalised.

35. From 1993 to 1997, the Strasbourg urban area respected the quotas previously defined by the municipality for participants in its PLIE, 5 per cent of whom were affected by an impairment. Most of them obtained jobs or received training lasting at least six months on the basis of measures devised under ordinary law provisions to get job seekers into work.
Initiatives aimed at integration in school and entry into employment would probably not have existed without the widespread development of the exclusion debate and the great increase in the number of people seen as outsiders. This being so, it can be said, on the one hand, that people affected by an impairment may well increasingly find themselves in a no-man’s land where, although benefiting from government support, they will be neither integrated nor excluded, but that, on the other, they will not be in a hopeless situation since they have an increasing number of opportunities for access to a normal kind of life.