



Bernd Marin,  
Christopher Prinz,  
Monika Queisser (Eds.)

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# Transforming Disability Welfare Policies

Towards Work and  
Equal Opportunities

European Centre Vienna

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Ashgate

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On the occasion of “The European Year of People with Disabilities 2003”, the OECD and the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research organised an international conference at the UNOV in Vienna on “Transforming Disability into Ability”. The purpose of this event was to discuss disability policies for the working-age population. The conference addressed key challenges in disability policy, and discussed policy recommendations as outlined in the recent OECD report. The main policy conclusions from the report formed the basis for the thematic sessions. The conference was organised around five themes:

- What do we mean by “being disabled”?
- What rights and responsibilities for society and for persons with disabilities?
- Who needs activation, how, and when?
- How should disability benefits be structured?
- What should and what can employers do?

More than 40 invited speakers discussed proposals for more effective disability policies and the improvement of existing institutions and measures in light of best practices in international comparison. Particular emphasis was placed on the implementation of the report’s policy conclusions. One session of the conference was devoted to the discussion of “Barriers to Participation” from the perspective of disabled people; it was organized by an international association of organisations representing disabled people.

This book is a follow-up of the OECD report on “Transforming Disability into Ability” (2003) as well as a twin publication to the recent Ashgate volume on “European Disability Pension Policies” (Prinz Ed. 2003) and to the companion booklet on “Facts and Figures on Disability Welfare. A Pictographic Portrait of an OECD Report” (Marin / Prinz 2003). It brings together contributions from inter-governmental institutions such as the OECD, the European Centre, the WHO, the World Bank, from several former and acting government representatives, ministries concerned with disability issues, the business community, the European Disability Forum and from experts from national, regional and local NGOs, as well as authors from universities and research centres.

*Bernd Marin* is Executive Director of the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Vienna. *Christopher Prinz* is Policy Analyst at the Employment Analysis and Policy Division of the OECD, Paris. *Monika Queisser* is Principal Administrator at the Employment Analysis and Policy Division of the OECD, Paris.



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