



## TOP STORY

# Workplace Inclusion – not a topic for the media?

## Study on media coverage of workplace inclusion

Can almost ten million people be virtually invisible? If you look at the media coverage of people with disabilities living in Germany, then the answer is yes. This is the conclusion of a study commissioned by the German Social Accident Insurance Institution for the Health and Welfare Services (BGW) which looked at more than 1.2 million news items in Germany's mainstream media between 2012 and 2016.

The study focused particularly on reports concerning workplace inclusion. The results were sobering: this is a topic that runs 'well below the awareness threshold'. There are three million people of working age in Germany who have a degree of disability of 50% or more – about the same number of all people working in the retail sector. Over a million of these people are employed in either a regular company or an enterprise for disabled persons. What are their working conditions like? How does inclusion work with this? What challenges does inclusion pose to employers and employees? The study shows that these issues receive almost zero media coverage.

Reports in recent years on people with disabilities were mostly about disability policies, sport or health. Even inclusion in schools received more coverage than workplace inclusion. When the focus was on employment, the reports almost always drew a positive picture of workplace participation. However, this does not reflect the true situation because participating in the labour market is much harder for people with disabilities than for those without disabilities. They are still twice as likely to be unemployed.

The analysis also showed that journalists still resort to clichés. For example, they talk of 'heroes'



Photo: Jonathon Rossbach

Working in the bakery: This photo by Jonathon Rossbach was awarded 5th place in the BGW's photo competition 'People – Work – Handicap'. The 16 award-winning photos focused on workplace inclusion. The photos can be viewed at [www.bgw-online.de/fotowettbewerb](http://www.bgw-online.de/fotowettbewerb)

who master their own destiny 'despite their disability' or of 'victims' who deserve our sympathy. Neither of these portrayals reflect the self-image of persons with disabilities or the idea of inclusion.

How can we improve the way the media portrays people with disabilities and their participation in the workforce? The study recommends that the media run more stories that are more professional, and it encourages companies to have the courage to be more transparent. It's important to not just show good examples. Only when problems and needs are addressed can there be a fruitful discussion. 'We still have a long way to go before we achieve true participation – strong media coverage showing different nuances would help', said Professor Stephan Brandenburg, Director General of the BGW.

## STUDY

### Matthias Vollbracht: Better than the reality?

#### Media coverage of workplace inclusion

The aim of the BGW's study is to improve workplace participation for people with disabilities. The study can be ordered for free at [medienstudie@bgw-online.de](mailto:medienstudie@bgw-online.de) (ISBN 978-3-906501-24-6, German only, stocks limited)

Original title of the study:  
Besser als die Wirklichkeit?  
Berufliche Inklusion im  
Spiegel der Medien



## Setting new standards

Dear Reader,

In 2012, the German social accident insurance system launched its first action plan for implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; followed by the second action plan in 2015. A few weeks ago, we took stock of the results at the closing session: Have we achieved our goals?

Taking a look at where we started five years ago and where we are today, I can comfortably say one thing: we have set new standards. We are the first branch of Germany's social insurance system to have come up with our own action plan. Statutory accident insurance has become a valued consulting partner when it comes to inclusion – both nationally and internationally. We are also an important partner of the Federal Government in matters concerning the National Action Plan. But we could also see from the results that not all areas of statutory accident insurance have been reached to the same extent. Raising awareness requires persistence, patience and time. It's an ongoing task.

The word "inclusion" might be new, but the idea behind it is very familiar to accident insurance. Our goal has always been to help people to participate in society, in the workforce and in education, according to their abilities. We should always keep this in mind when someone writes inclusion off as a marginal phenomenon or simply gets tired of it.

**Dr Joachim Breuer**  
Director General of the DGUV

# 'Popular and elite sport are inextricably linked'

In March 2018, the 12<sup>th</sup> Paralympic Winter Games will be held in Pyeongchang, South Korea. Around 670 athletes from some 45 countries will be competing. DGUV Kompakt spoke with Friedhelm Julius Beucher, President of the National Paralympic Committee Germany, about the upcoming Winter Games, the image of disabled sports and its relationship with the media and politics.

**The 12<sup>th</sup> Winter Paralympics take place between 9 and 18 March 2018. What are your expectations for these Winter Games and the German team?**

Definitely high hopes. Our German athletes achieved great results last winter and we're going to Korea with a very strong team. But I'm concerned about the political situation. The Olympic and Paralympic Games are peaceful events where people from all over the world come together. I hope that the various international associations and committees allow North Korean athletes to participate in the 2018 Winter Games. Sport is a social event, and this means that it's also a political football. We've seen this many times before, but I'm an optimist.

**In your opinion, what has changed in disabled sports in recent years?**

We, as the federal association, have developed rapidly, and this also can be said about the 17 state associations and the more than 6000 disabled sports clubs in Germany. Just a few years ago, the Paralympics wasn't on the radar of many people, but today there are disabled athletes who are just as famous as athletes without a disability. Media coverage has increased and diversified, which has raised public awareness of

the Paralympic Games, as well as disabled sports in general. This has also increased awareness of people with disabilities in everyday life. But there's still room for improvement; disabled sport still hasn't gotten to where it should be.

**How does popular sport benefit from elite sport?**

*'Just a few years ago, the Paralympics wasn't on the radar of many people, but today there are disabled athletes who are just as famous as athletes without a disability. Media coverage has increased and diversified.'*

Friedhelm Julius Beucher

It's to be expected that a sitting volleyball tournament in a small town will get less media coverage than the 8.4m long jump by Markus Rehm. But the impressive achievements of our elite athletes have a carry-on effect on popular sport. That's why popular and elite sport are inextricably linked. Many people with disabilities only become aware of

disabled sport because of increased media coverage. Sport can really help people find courage to face life again after a serious accident or illness, in both their private and professional lives. That's why rehabilitation sports are medically prescribed. But popular sport does more than just this. Not only does sport help with fitness and prevention, club sport creates a sense of community and positive experiences that continue over the long term. Popular sports receive more attention because of media reports on elite sports. Everyone benefits from this.



Photo: picture alliance / DBS

Friedhelm Julius Beucher has been head of the National Paralympic Committee Germany since 2009, representing almost 600,000 members and 6,200 clubs. Highlights next year include the Paralympic Winter Games, the World Para Athletics European Championships in Berlin and the Wheelchair Basketball World Championships in Hamburg.

**Social accident insurance has been involved in disabled sports for many years now; for example, with media projects such as the *Paralympics Zeitung* magazine and the German Paralympic Media Award, of which you're a jury member. How important are these kinds of projects?**

Both *Paralympics Zeitung* and the German Paralympic Media Award are examples of how to raise the profile of disabled sports. This also includes what happens every day in the BG trauma hospitals and clinics. Following an amputation or paraplegia, there's not only medical care but also rehabilitation in its broadest sense. Sport can do a lot here. I'd also like to mention that the BG hospitals often organise peers, who themselves are disabled, to support patients on the path to their new way of life. Athletes also provide support as peers. This completes the circle. Projects such as these are indispensable for raising awareness of what disabled sports can do.

**Finally, taking a look into the future: will there ever be a time when there is a joint Olympic Games for people with and without disabilities?**

I don't believe there will and I also hope there won't be. Firstly, it's logistically difficult; secondly, the uniqueness of Paralympic sports should be championed with a major event of its own. We need to continue fighting for equal treatment of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. This starts with the simplest things: for example, many people with disabilities can't do their sport because of the lack of accessibility in public spaces or because of a lack of equipment in training facilities. A joint Olympic Games would be like a fight between David and Goliath when it comes to existing structures. Not to mention that the attention span of spectators, viewers and readers is also limited. If the men's 100-meter final race takes place at the Olympics, then the subsequent 400-meter final for prosthesis wearers simply won't get the attention that it deserves. That's why it's good that both games go their own way.

Photo: picture alliance / DBS



**Friedhelm Julius Beucher**  
President of the National Paralympic Committee Germany (DBS)

## TOPIC

# Digital public administration

In addition to the digital world of work and the digitalisation of healthcare, the European Union is increasingly working to digitalise all public administrations in the Member States. The eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020 calls for public administrations to provide cross-border, personalised and fully digitalised public services to all EU citizens by 2020.

In recent years, a number of steps have been taken to reduce obstacles to accessing digital procedures and information in another Member State. According to the European Commission, there is still insufficient access. Therefore, it has proposed that a single digital gateway be established. It will be based on existing portals, contact points and networks, and will bundle all information and procedures needed for cross-border transactions. Information that is relevant to citizens and companies include social security rights and obligations, as well as occu-

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**The European Commission has proposed that a single digital gateway be established.**

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pational safety and health. Procedures are also to be digitalised. The proposal specifically mentions procedures such as applying for social security benefits, informing social insurance institutions upon termination of employment, and setting up social security contributions. This assumes that the relevant procedures in each of the Member States are digitalised. However, given the division of competences between the EU and the Member States, the proposals should not go so far as to interfere with national social security procedures. The Council's Working Group on Competitiveness and Growth will continue to discuss the draft proposal at its meeting on 30 November and 1 December 2017.



## What is 'DGUV job'?



Sometimes people have to take a new direction in their career following a workplace accident or occupational disease. DGUV job was set up to help with this. DGUV job is the German Social Accident Insurance's national placement and employment service. Following the motto of 'Everything under one roof', regional consultants help people find a new job using the know-how and skills that they bring with them. To help successfully place people, DGUV job works with its own employer network and one of the largest job pools in Germany. DGUV job offers companies tailored solutions for orientation and training, or financial support for job applicants. Two new videos show exactly how DGUV job works – one for employers and one for job seekers.

**Web:** [www.dguv.de/job](http://www.dguv.de/job) (German only)

### NEWS IN BRIEF

## New portal on occupational diseases for doctors

On behalf of the Federal Government, the German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV), the Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (IFA) and the Institute for Prevention and Occupational Medicine (IPA) have developed an information portal for occupational diseases called 'BK-Info'. BK is the German abbreviation for Berufskrankheit (occupational disease). This helps doctors to determine whether an occupational disease could be present when a diagnosis is made. The basis for this are leaflets from the Federal Government's Medical Advisory Committee for Occupational Diseases. The aim is for doctors to recognise the possibility of an occupational disease with just a few clicks and to file a report for a suspected case of occupational



Photo: Robert Kneschke / Adobe Stock

**Doctors are required to report a suspected case of occupational disease.**

disease. There is a search function to help check individual diagnoses. Other services include relevant forms and databases, legal information, and general information on occupational diseases, such as the official List of Occupational Diseases. Currently, information on musculoskeletal diseases is available; additional information and FAQs will be continually added for other diagnoses.

**Web:** [www.dguv.de/bk-info](http://www.dguv.de/bk-info) (German only)

## Social Security Compass for Europe

The German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has revamped its 'Social Security Compass for Europe' website. It is now possible to compare the different labour, social and legal systems in the EU on your mobile device. The website is in German only, but you can download a brochure in English [here](#).

**Web:** [www.sozialkompass.eu](http://www.sozialkompass.eu)



### IMPORTANT DATES

**29 November 2017**

**Safer Machines – requirements for being placed on the market**

**DRESDEN**

[www.baua.de](http://www.baua.de) > alle Veranstaltungen

**4-5. December 2017**

**7<sup>th</sup> FUK-Forum "Safety"**

**HAMBURG**

[www.dguv.de](http://www.dguv.de) > Presse > Termine

**5 December 2017**

**Protection against the risks of optical radiation**

**DRESDEN**

[www.baua.de](http://www.baua.de) > alle Veranstaltungen

**27 January 2018**

**Office Trends Forum:**

**'The office of the future'**

**FRANKFURT AM MAIN**

[www.basi.de/events](http://www.basi.de/events)

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