



INFOSHEET ITALY

2009

Rafaello Belli

Expert on direct payments

1

THE PURPOSE OF THIS INFOSHEET

The goal of the Expertise Center Independent Life is the gathering of expertise on direct payments in Flanders and Europe.

A first report entitled “Direct payments in care. Actual situation in 8 European countries” was published in February 2008. It contained an overview of the way in which direct payments are organized in the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Spain, France, Norway and Finland.

We would have liked to extend the research to all European countries, but we lack the means to that end. That is why we have asked some experts in the field of direct payments to give a brief overview of the current situation in their respective home countries. As a support we have used a questionnaire. Thanks to the people that have responded to our emails we have been able to gather this extra information.

As a result this text does not pretend to be exhaustive. The idea is to just give information about the most important initiatives of direct payments in different European countries.

Rafaello Belli, an expert on direct payments in Italy has given us the ensuing information. We would also like to thank Annalisa Gadaleta, parliamentary assistant at the Flemish Parliament.

ACTUAL SITUATION WITH REGARD TO DIRECT PAYMENTS

The initiatives with regard to direct payments take place on different administrative levels:

- On the national level a person with a physical, intellectual or psychological deficiency may apply to the “indennità di accompagnamento”. This is payed on a regular basis (about 470 euro, sufficient enough to cover for 50 hours of assistance/ month), and in principle it is not income related, although it is sometimes interpreted differently. The amount is the same for every person, independent of his place of residence and is not dependent on the severity of the deficiency. Often this money goes only to people with a severe deficiency.
- On the municipal level: some municipalities provide for a certain amount with which you may pay for assistance. Not all municipalities provide this kind of financial support however. Florence, amongst others, provides a small amount. In most municipalities it concerns a small amount and above all it is not an enforceable right.
- National legislation, responsibility for execution lies with the regional parliaments. The 1992 bill (number 162) stipulates that Personal Assistance should be provided for disabled people. Personal Assistance is a right and moreover it is destined for every person in need of support to be able to enjoy a minimum of freedom in his or her life.

Some important side notes:

- ✓ It is not specified how much money should be made available.
- ✓ It is the regional parliaments which should execute this law. They may interpret these laws otherwise and hence not execute them e.g. it is impossible to bring the regional parliaments to justice for that.
- ✓

Who executes the law: Tuscany and Friuli Venezia Giulia, Piemonte region; they have some general rules concerning Independent Living. It is however still not an enforceable right and on top of that the budget is too low. There exist some other regions that have taken initiatives, but they do not concern binding, administrative rules.

Generally speaking there is not much going on in the field of Personal Assistance in the Southern part of Italy. In the North things are going better, but then we are talking about projects, and certain problems persist: it is still not an enforceable right, few disabled people can make use of it and when the budget comes to end, the budget disappears as well.

In general the following are the problems that stand in the way of a full fledged system of direct payments for disabled persons:

- Too little money is made available for Personal Assistance
- Personal assistance is no enforceable right
- There is a growing resistance against direct payments
- The empowerment of disabled persons remains at a low level.¹²³

¹ Correspondence with Raffaello Belli.

² Direct Payments and the Italian Experience. [Raffaello Belli](#).

³ <http://www.vane.to/Vammaisia%20koskevaa%20lainsaadantoa/Italy%20-%20Personal+Assistance+Legislation+in.htm>