

**FROM DISABLING TO ENRICHING
THE DEAF WORLD**

HELLENIC FEDERATION OF THE DEAF

The European Union



against discrimination

**From Disabling to Enriching the Deaf World:
Forms of discrimination Deaf people are faced with in Europe**

THE PROJECT

December 2001

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COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMME TO COMBAT DISCRIMINATION

“The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission”

THE PROJECT

INTRODUCTION

The project “***From Disabling to Enriching the Deaf World: A project to combat Multiple Discriminations Deaf People are faced with in all ages in Europe***” was designed and coordinated by the Hellenic Federation of the Deaf in cooperation with three other European organizations of the Deaf.

The practice of Deaf people themselves designing a project that concerns them is not widely adopted. Usually, hearing (organizations and individuals) design and implement projects for the Deaf without their participation. This common practice has led to the situation that exists today in the Deaf community.

The present situation is not the same in all European Union countries and the rest of the world. But even in the best conditions we have observed that the Deaf are faced with multiple discriminations throughout their life in multiple levels.

Our goal in this project is to identify the multiple discriminations that Deaf people are faced with in Belgium, Denmark, Greece and Spain listening to the views of Deaf people in these countries. Our ultimate goal is to draw up a Good Practice Guide hoping that when it is implemented these discriminations could be minimized.

In this project you will find information on the Hellenic Federation of the Deaf organizations that participated in the implementation of the project, information on the project itself and The Good Practice Guide.

The Hellenic Federation intends to continue the analysis of the survey results and to present them in a multimedia form. That will also include the transnational survey and its results, the play that was performed by the Hellenic Theatre of Deaf on the topic of discriminations Deaf people are faced with, in Greek Sign Language.

It is our hope that future programs will follow the practice and methodology that we have applied and will enrich them so that the proposals to be implemented, will be based on scientifically substantiated findings.

We would like to thank everyone involved in the project, individuals and organizations. Without their help this project would have never come to life.

We would like to thank all of the Deaf people that participated in the survey,

especially Mr. Nikos Spanos who undertook the difficult task of conducting the interviews.

We also would like to thank the Sign Language interpreters, the translators, the secretary of the Hellenic Federation of the Deaf and everyone who contributed in the success of the Conference in Rethymnon, Crete, which are too numerous to mention here.

On behalf of the Hellenic Federation of the Deaf,

The President
Konstantinos Gargalis

THE HELLENIC FEDERATION OF THE DEAF

The Hellenic Federation of the Deaf (HFD) is a national organization representing Deaf people in Greece through its 17 member associations. Here our interest is focused on its social aspect and activity.

The Hellenic Federation of the Deaf (HFD) has a long history of promoting equal opportunities and the welfare of the Deaf. It is a member of the National Association of Handicapped People (E.S.A.E.A.), the European Union of the Deaf (E.U.D.) and the World Federation of the Deaf (W.F.D.). It has a long-lasting successful cooperation with other public and private organizations that are interested in the welfare of the Deaf community and it has organized special committees (Women's Committees, the Committee for Greek Sign Language) that assist the Federation in designing and implementing its programs. The Federation covers the expenses of sign language interpreters for all its members whenever it is needed. For this reason it works closely with the Sign Language Interpreters' Union and it operates an interpreting service in its premises.

The Federation provides everyone interested with all information that concerns the Deaf in Greece.

- In its long and productive history The Federation has played a leading role in designing and implementing programs for the benefit of the Deaf.
- It is responsible for the coordination of the various activities of associations of the Deaf, which are members of the HFD.
- It has contributed to the cultural and social development of Deaf people all over Greece.
- It has promoted vocational training of Deaf adults that were unskilled.
- It has worked very hard for the rehabilitation and social inclusion of the Deaf and in general of handicapped people.
- It has conducted studies about sign language and has coordinated all the efforts in order for Greek Sign Language to be recognized as the official language of the Deaf and hard of hearing, which was achieved with success (L2817/2000).
- It promotes information and sensitizes the public opinion about the problems Deaf people are face with.
- It fights continuously for the equal participation of the Deaf in the social and political life.

- It has collaborated with other organizations of the European Union within the framework of different programs i.e. Horizon, Leonardo and the 5th Directorate.
- Programs that characterize the activities of the Federation are the following:

- ✓ Deaf Animatures
- ✓ Deaf Empowerment

Both of these programs had as an axis for their actions to empower and encourage the Deaf community of Greece in cooperation with other European organizations of the Deaf. These programs can be seen as forerunners of our project.

THE PARTNERS

The partners of this project were:

- ASSOCIATION OF DEAF PEOPLE IN RETHIMNO “ARKADI” CRETE
- FEVLADO BELGIAN FEDERATION OF THE DEAF
- CENTER FOR TEGNSPROG OG TEGNSTOTTET KOMMUNIKATION - DENMARK
- CONFEDERATION NATIONAL de SORDOS de ESPANA.

THE PROJECT

The project "From Disabling to Enriching the Deaf World" is a project to combat multiple discriminations Deaf people face in all ages in Europe.

It was designed and is coordinated as it was mentioned before by the Hellenic Federation of the Deaf.

It is funded by the European Union.

The partners of this project were:

- ASSOCIATION OF DEAF PEOPLE IN RETHIMNO "ARKADI" CRETE
- FEVLADO BELGIAN FEDERATION OF THE DEAF
- CENTER FOR TEGNSPROG OG TEGNSTOTTET KOMMUNIKATION - DENMARK
- CONFEDERATION NATIONAL de SORDOS de ESPANA

It is a continuation of previous projects that the HFD has implemented and the response to the dire need of the Deaf for full social inclusion and holistic development of their own potential.

The Deaf internationally face discrimination on multiple levels. One of the most obvious discrimination that Deaf people are faced with is the lack of communication services from the hearing community that could be accessible and effective for the Deaf community. The percentage of Deaf people in Europe who have hearing parents is 90% or more. They are faced with discrimination from the early years of their lives even inside their family. In Greece most of the hearing that have some kind of relation with the Deaf community (parents, teachers, experts, public services people) do not know or do not use Greek Sign Language. This practice has long-term consequences, which increases the oppression that members of the Deaf community face.

Most public services focus on the rehabilitation of Deaf people providing them with different financial benefits. This way, society itself might produce an alibi of "interest and welfare" but the Deaf continue to be confronted with obstacles, which are very difficult to overcome. This is the reason we decided that it was necessary and imperative to design and implement this project.

The project "From Disabling to Enriching the Deaf World" was designed and is being implemented by Deaf organizations. This fact is a good example of good practice to combat discriminations that Deaf people are faced with and a message of the goal of the program which is no other than to develop opportunities

for the Deaf in order to cultivate all of their abilities, to involve them in the research so that they themselves register their needs and problems and finally their equal participation in the policymaking of social politics especially in matters of their concern.

Four countries, Belgium, Denmark, Greece and Spain, are implementing this project. Thus we are given the opportunity to compare information on different levels of discrimination that exist in different socioeconomic environments but also various examples of a good practice against those discriminations.

The project began on 15 December 2000 and ended on 15 December 2001.

The goals of this project were:

- The detection and registration of the multiple discriminations that Deaf people are faced with throughout their life in each of the four partner countries.
- The empowerment of Deaf European communities so that they are able to collectively confront discrimination not only on a national but also on a transnational level.
- The information and sensitization of and finally the adoption by the European hearing communities of the Good Practice Guide for the removal of discriminations, so that the Deaf can have better access to goods and services in all aspects of their life.

The activities that were designed and implemented in the framework of the project were the following:

1. ***A transnational workshop with the topic being to define different ways of combating discrimination that Deaf people are faced with in the partner's countries.*** The workshop was held in Athens, March 2-4 2001. During this meeting the partners agreed that it is not enough to hypothesize about the discriminations Deaf people are faced with but that it is necessary to conduct a research in order to find out what Deaf people feel about these discriminations which they encounter in their every day living. Through this research we hoped that the multiple forms of discrimination would be brought to light as well as the ways of combating them. The methodology of the research was also agreed. Furthermore, each partner presented the situation that exists in its country. Finally, we concluded on a common Questionnaire that could satisfy the goals of the research and its results could be compared.
2. ***A second transnational workshop was held in Athens, June 8-9, 2001.*** In this workshop the partners discussed the progress of the survey in each of the four countries and agreed on a common way of coding the results, so that information that arises from them could be comparable and utilized in the direction of promoting and registering not only the similarities but also the

uniqueness of the discrimination Deaf people face in each country. We were also interested in common ways of combating discrimination effectively. During the meeting details of the preparation of the third and most important meeting, which was the European Conference, were discussed.

3. ***The European Conference was held in Rethymno Crete, October 19-20, 2001*** with the participation of many European organizations. The goal of the Conference was to announce the results of the research that was undertaken in Belgium, Denmark, Greece and Spain and also to adopt practices and strategies, on a pan-European level, in order to combat various forms of discrimination, for the removal of barriers to the access of goods and services that are available to the hearing of all ages in the European Union. The Conference, as it was stated, formed an example of good practice against discrimination by providing access to communication through the use of many interpreters for the different sign languages of the participants as well as the presence of an International Sign Language interpret. This would not have been a point of discussion, if the Conference was held in a northern European country, but we must point out that it is one of the very few times that this type of practice was applied in Greece. ARKADI, the local Deaf Association, was responsible for organizing the Conference, which provided the opportunity for the empowerment the local community. It is also important to mention that Deaf people from all over Greece participated in the Conference. A forum of exchange of ideas, practices and future actions was developed for the first time on a level so different from the pathological approach of the past! Deaf and hearing had the opportunity not only to express their views but also to be taken into consideration for the creation of a Good Practice Guide.
4. In this Conference it was also decided that the results of the transnational workshops and that of the Conference would be published in ***a Good Practice Guide in multimedia form***. This Guide, whose central points were announced at the end of the Conference, was presented to the European Union and will constitute a tool for the Deaf and hearing and a means of pressuring the people that are responsible in forming social policy, to apply practices that minimize discrimination.

HELLENIC FEDERATION OF THE DEAF

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THE STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

The most common approach to Deaf¹ people and to issues on Deafness can be summarized in the following statement: *Hearing people design and implement practices for the Deaf without any involvement of the Deaf as individuals or as a group.* This practice has resulted in disabling the Deaf community as a whole. The aim of this study is to investigate the possibility of a different approach that focuses on the Deaf community and what it has to say about Deaf people's lives and their future. We firmly believe that the results of this study will enrich and empower both the Deaf and the Hearing communities.

The European Commission states that: "People discriminate if on various grounds they treat someone less favorably than they would treat others. Indirect discrimination is the imposition of requirements of conditions having a discriminatory effect in that they disproportionately disadvantage a group" (EC, 2000).

Srobe & Insko (1989) define discrimination as any behavior (positive or negative) that indicates unequal treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of their natural or social group membership.

Discrimination is also defined by various dictionaries as the hostile treatment of a group of people by the society at large or the authorities with the ultimate result the infringement of human rights, or as the policy of prejudice for the disadvantage of certain people or social groups that differ from the majority.

Adopting any of the above definitions, we form the main hypothesis of this study: **Deaf people are faced with multiple forms of discrimination from the day they are diagnosed and for the rest of their lives.**

The issue of equal opportunities and full participation of Deaf people has been well documented and discussed for over a decade by organizations such as the United Nations and the World Federation of the Deaf, to mention only a few.

¹When we refer to deaf people we mean anybody with a severe hearing problem and when we refer to Deaf people with capital D we mean the group of deaf people that have Sign Language as their native language, have close ties with and form the Deaf community, have their unique organisations, life experiences and habits, in short their own unique culture.

Leaders of the disability movement the world over have presented a clear case of the general society's oppressing and discriminating practices against people with disabilities in education, in the labor market and in access to public services (Abberley, 87).

We all grow up learning about people through acculturation and experience. This is a process of socialization. Because our experience is dominated by interactions with other hearing people, we operate on a myth of "equality" of people in our interactions. As a result, there are very few stated rules of behavior and interaction. Therefore, we all learn the rules of the culture and how to interact from experience and not direct teaching (Hoffmeister, 2000). The same holds true for the Deaf community. Deaf culture, as any culture, is defined as a set of learned behaviors of a group of people who have their own language, values, rules for behavior and traditions (Padden and Humphries, 1988).

Feelings, thoughts and prejudices about diversity, people and cultures that differ from the mainstream, seem to be the main factors in the perception that the Deaf community simply does not exist. The Deaf community, on the contrary, exists in every country and society, and it is the center of the present study. It is not a very visible and well-known cultural group. There is a very strong and viable Deaf community in all countries involved in the present study. The language of each Deaf community is the national sign language of the country (Greek Sign Language, Danish Sign Language, etc).

When we are examining minority groups, the amount of control of the dominant language is directly related to power and control of the dominant group. In reference to the Deaf, the interrelation between the mode of communication and power seems to be at the root of discrimination, especially in the educational practices established for Deaf children. Language use also is a form of power. In the Deaf community, the written/spoken language is not viewed negatively, and it can assist members in gaining leadership roles in both the Greek hearing society and in the Deaf society.

The coexistence of the Deaf community and the hearing community suggests that interaction between the two communities is essential. Since Deaf and hearing people must interact especially in settings such as schools, the dominant language group tends to be in control. As in any society when you have a dominant and a non-dominant language in contact, certain changes in communicative style may ensue. In the case of the Deaf when contact is required between Deaf and hearing persons, for example in educational, professional or socio-political systems, the form of the signed language used may reflect elements derived from written or spoken language forms of the dominant language. When contact with the hearing community is not a factor, as in the clubs or sports organizations of the Deaf, sign language is the predominant language and is used

in its natural form.

Leadership in these different communities (the Deaf and the hearing) is usually not held by the same Deaf persons. At the club, high level leadership is usually restricted to those persons who are fluent in sign language. In the contact situation, those Deaf or Hard of Hearing members of the community who have fluency in both the written or spoken language and are also fluent in sign language are more eligible to become leaders. These contact leaders tend to be more educated and knowledgeable about “hearing ways”, while the club leaders tend to be more grass roots and to have less contact with hearing people (Hoffmeister, 2000).

Membership in the Deaf Community is based on hearing loss and use of a signed language. However, a member does not have to be fluent in sign language nor have a significant hearing loss. The level and type of sign language used by the person usually displays the attitude they have towards the Deaf Community and whether they wish to be part of this Community (Lane, Hoffmeister, & Bahan, 1996).

To gain a better understanding of Deaf people, the Community, and the value of language, one must respect and accept sign language. To appreciate sign language and the Deaf Community, one does not have to use sign language fluently, but one must recognize its importance, learn its structure, and respect its use and its speakers. Recognition of sign language will result in recognition of its speakers. These attitudes permit one to become a full member of the community and participate in all of the activities and honors associated with it.

Both the Deaf and hearing communities have evolved into the cultures that exist today. They have evolved into their respective cultures based on their accessibility to and acceptance of each culture. Hearing people have developed a lifestyle based on hearing or auditory processing of information. Deaf people have developed a lifestyle based on vision or visual processing of information. This distinction may be the main cause of cross-cultural miscommunication. There is a lack of understanding by both groups, but more so by hearing people since they learn about the Deaf culture and language externally, where as the Deaf learn about interacting in the Hearing culture through experience. Conflict occurs because of the difference in seeing and hearing approaches, when the Deaf community interacts with the hearing world. It is the intent of this project to identify some of the root causes of the differences in interaction and attitudes of each community.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

Hodge (1990) presents a theoretical framework of the moral concept of the dualism of good and evil. Using this framework, we present the concept of normal hearing and not normal hearing.

The dualism of normal and not normal is a necessary part of the justification of oppression and discriminative practices. The problem we encounter is that normal is defined by the group and from the group's perspective. From the hearing point of view, it is not normal to be deaf. From the Deaf point of view, it is not normal to be hearing. Hence, we have a boundary that both groups identify but view from a different center and the attempt to "normalize" Deaf children, from the hearing perspective, seems reasonable and justifiable.

From the Deaf perspective, being denied the use of one's own or preferred language is regarded as a violation of human rights. Deaf people cannot be required to communicate with hearing people exclusively in written or spoken language because of a biological impossibility (Grosjean, 1982).

Although sometimes there is not an evident and documented discrimination against Deaf people by institutions or administrative authorities, there continues to be discrimination against this group, caused by the vast limitations with respect to its access to information and its possibilities of communication. This access has been limited by the negative attitudes and the misunderstanding of how Deaf people live, function, and communicate.

Hearing vs. Deaf

Hearing and Deaf people, or more specifically hearing parents and Deaf parents of Deaf children, view deafness and related issues from very different centers: in general, hearing people are socialized to regard the whole issue of deafness as a medical problem. This is clearly influenced by the health authorities' way of thinking. The medical approach considers deafness as an illness and as such it has to be cured.

Hearing aids in the past and more recently cochlear implants are felt to be the main tools for the elimination of deafness. This way of thinking is advocated by doctors, orally oriented educators and related professionals. The 'extinction' of deafness is their ultimate goal. In such an approach, sign language has no merit because there would not be any use for it (Lane, 1992).

Deaf people and parents who refuse a cochlear implant for themselves and their child are viewed as hopeless enemies of progress. According to this pathological approach, many medical procedures are not always successful whether it is a cochlear implant or a new technologically advanced hearing aid. When children who use these medical and technological devices are not able to progress with them, the children are regarded as 'failures'. These failures tend to become members of the Deaf community as adults.

This is in contrast to the idea held by Deaf people that the issue of deafness is to be regarded as a question of language, culture and identity, and not one of disease or defective persons. Consequently, from the Deaf communities' perspec-

tive there is a drastically different strategy for solving the problems that arise from deafness. The real problem lies in self-determination and quality of life in all-human aspects. There are expressed demands by the Deaf for social recognition of their culture and their language. They should be accepted as part of society. It should be acknowledged that Deaf people will not be able to function like hearing people, but this does not mean they will function at a loss. Even if technological or surgical procedures advance, most Deaf children and Deaf adults will not be able to function as a hearing person. There are limitations on hearing but not on everything else. Deaf people will always have equal access to vision. In this framework, hearing people will learn sign language and use it when dealing with Deaf people, similar to other minority languages.

Given the above description, Deaf people see themselves as a minority group, with their own language, and their own culture. In this dualistic framework, the normally hearing person sees the Deaf as a not normal person that needs to be changed, and not as somebody with the same worth that should be treated equally.

When one group is in control and views others as normal versus not normal, it is assumed that the group is objective and will act for the benefit of the not normal, to control and to change their destiny (Lane, 1992).

In a framework of equality, people are not measured on the spectrum of normal versus not normal but rather as different with equal moral worth. In this framework, difference is more likely to be respected.

We believe that a society based on equality can emerge out of a consequence of change in moral beliefs, institutions and legal systems. This framework of equality is adopted in this study.

The areas of interest that effect the everyday life of Deaf people can be examined using the above theoretical framework.

Families with Deaf members

Most Deaf people are born into hearing families and a small percentage (5 to 10%) are born into Deaf families. The two families function very differently. Numerous studies have demonstrated the differences are found the world over (For a detailed description see Moores, 1996, Lane, Hoffmeister and Behan, 1996).

In contrasting the two types of families, we see that Deaf families in most cases demonstrate an automatic acceptance of the Deaf child born into the family. The Deaf parents use visual communication and technical aids (such as flashers, TTY's, etc.) and provide a nurturing environment for the social, emotional, psychological, cognitive and linguistic development of the child. They structure their environment to maximize the potential for world knowledge and communica-

tive development.

Hearing families on the other hand tend to go through a painful experience after the diagnosis of hearing loss. Their approach is to use aural communication and acoustic devices recommended and supported by hearing professionals. The family climate can be described as one in which communication failure prevails without satisfying basic communication needs, which results in frustration for all family members. Grief, mourning, denial and anger have been reported to describe the feelings and stages hearing parents go through in their attempt to provide for their Deaf children. Decisions about the lives of Deaf children that are based on guilt and fear can only impact development in a negative way. Deaf people as members of hearing families feel excluded from general information and the decision making process within their families. Even when some communication is established they still feel the same way (Gregory, Bishop and Sheldon, 1995). It is rare that hearing parents acquire enough skills to communicate with their Deaf children beyond rudimentary conversations.

Parents, overwhelmingly, obtain their information about hearing loss and its impact on the future from medical and audiological professionals. Physicians do not have adequate training on Deaf issues. The training they receive is singularly focused on the ear and how it functions, not on the whole person and how it functions. The result of information presented to parents can lead to the establishment of a pathological problem solving approach (Schlesinger & Meadow, 1972).

The amount of comprehensible communication is of great importance in any child's life. What is the case with Deaf children? How is their basic human right to effective interactive communication exercised? Is there any difference between parents and siblings? Is there a relation between the two? How do Deaf parents function when they have a child? These are some of the questions we seek answers for with the present study.

Education

The educational situation for Deaf children all over the world is being described in "Sign on Europe" (Kyle, 1997, p. 7) with the following statement:

"No hearing community would tolerate their children being educated solely by those who cannot communicate with or understand their children. Yet, Deaf children with normal cognitive ability are expected to function in just this environment".

Deaf people do not have complete access to their national spoken language nor to a recognized national signed language.

Education in schools and programs for Deaf children in many countries of the European Community are still characterized by a large amount of spoken language training. The large amount of time spent on such training, mostly combined

with inadequate methods, leads to lower than average achievement in spoken and written language as well as to limited knowledge in most subject fields. Consequently, the access of Deaf persons to opportunities in life is reduced, not only because of the lack of accessibility to the spoken language but also because of the lack of written language competence. All this leads to deficiencies in basic knowledge.

Since the 1980's, there has been a distinct movement away from oralism towards the use of visual means of communication in the education system (fingerspelling, Signed English, Signed French, French Signed Language, Greek Signed Language, etc.). In most advanced countries bilingual methods are being used, which means that the instructional approaches recognize signed language as the first or natural language of the Deaf child and spoken language as the second or learned language of the Deaf. Understanding and adopting this principle consequently leads to wide changes of the educational process.

Education of the Deaf in Greece

Since the beginning of formal education of the Deaf in Greece (early 1900s), all educational institutions have used a single method of teaching Deaf children, the oral-aural method (Kourbetis, 1987).

During the past decade, there have been shifts in the philosophy and methodology employed in different programs. Educators claim that Total Communication is used in many of the programs. In reality, this means the simultaneous presentation of lexicon/words of Greek Sign Language (GSL) and spoken Greek word order as the mode of communication. Mostly hearing professionals that work with the Deaf use this system or methodology.

Currently, the presence of Deaf adults in the educational system is minimal but growing. Because the education system has not recognized or used GSL (with the exception of the PL2817/2000), some of the Deaf professionals, as result of this system, do not have a good command of GSL. Very few hearing professionals working with Deaf children know and use GSL fluently. As a result they require an interpreter to communicate with Deaf members of the Greek Deaf Community. Most teachers of the Deaf claim they communicate adequately with their students. In truth, they don't understand what the children are saying when they sign among themselves (Kourbetis, 2000). The language of instruction is therefore a monolingual one dependent on the primary use of spoken Greek in all academic subjects including the learning of Greek.

Sign language instruction to Deaf children is virtually non-existent except in some residential programs, but even then without the use of a curriculum design for this purpose. Sign language instruction to hearing parents of Deaf children is also minimal but growing. Sign language literature on narratives and folk tales of the

Greek Deaf Community are limited and only recently published. (Kourbetis, 2000).

The lack of formal education and training of the so-called specialists and the low status of GSL are the main reasons for this state of the education of the Deaf.

The status of Sign language in Greece

GSL is believed by the general public to be a pantomimic, iconic, non verbal, and/or gesture form of communication. Many believe that GSL is the same as other sign languages of the world. These beliefs promote the myth that GSL has a minimal range of capabilities. These are myths perpetrated by an ignorance of the language. The sad part is that professionals also hold similar beliefs about the language.

Greek Sign Language is an oppressed language, which has a very low status in Greece among the members of the hearing community. Up to a few years ago the only hearing people that knew GSL were children of Deaf adults and a few hearing professionals that worked closely with the Deaf. Since the introduction of teaching GSL and allowing sign language to be used in schools, the situation has changed. We now have waiting lists for sign language classes whenever offered. While the general attitude towards GSL is changing in the public sector, professionals still resist in learning sign language. This resistance results in the fact that many professionals cannot produce or comprehend GSL. This lack of signed language skill is immediately apparent in their attempts to communicate with Deaf people. The problem is that only the Deaf recognize when professionals are unable to interact with them.

Since GSL has been excluded from all vocations, the language has not developed the extensive vocabulary needed to transfer information from Greek to GSL. Initialized signs and fingerspelled words are practically non-existent or used very little (Kourbetis and Hoffmeister, 1987).

Exact Signed Greek is also not seen in the educational settings. Do to simultaneous communication of some teachers that know GSL vocabulary we see a practice of Signed Greek in some schools.

In an effort to avoid learning the language of Deaf people, professionals in the educational system have devised different ways to sign. Because professionals believe that the spoken language is the best language and because they do not know a signed language very well, when communicating with Deaf people the hearing person will sign and speak at the same time. This is referred to as "simultaneous communication". Consequently, some of the signs from GSL are used but they follow the order of the spoken words. This has been found easier to do than try to learn and use GSL. Therefore, this practice is mostly used in educational settings. The Deaf child is not exposed to GSL or a full signed

language but a composite form of a spoken language and a number of signs. The average deaf child ends up learning neither GSL nor spoken Greek very well (Kourbetis & Hoffmeister , 2000).

Some major changes are taking place in Greece and can be summarized in the following:

1. Formal Recognition of GSL by the government (PL 2817/2000).
2. Professionals who work with the Deaf are now required by law to become competent in GSL. (PL 2817/2000)
3. The law also indirectly states that GSL be the language of business at all educational programs serving Deaf children.
4. There has been an expansion of Sign language research, development of teaching curriculum and materials.
5. There is in effect a pilot program of teaching GSL as a second language in public schools.

Teaching of GSL to parents of Deaf children

As stated in a previous section, parents have been discouraged from learning about the Deaf community. This attitude has resulted in very little instruction of GSL to hearing parents of Deaf children. In interviews with all major programs educating Deaf children in Greece, only two reported having classes for parents. One program reported having some occasional instruction and counseling for parents. The largest school for the Deaf in Greece was reported to have two GSL classes for parents. However, we found that only a small number of parents take advantage of those GSL classes (Kourbetis, 2000).

Currently the teachers of GSL are Deaf themselves. They have found that teaching GSL as a second language to parents is not an easy task. They report as general problems in the teaching of the language issues such as the absence of appropriate curriculum, very little research concerning the description of GSL, and a significant lack of teaching materials. These problems are magnified, when the physiological, social, demographic and financial problems are added to the burden of the hearing parent.

The opportunities for parents to learn GSL in a natural learning environment with Deaf adults are minimal. Ironically, parents have learned most of the sign language from their own children. The role of the provider of the linguistic input has been reversed.

The provision of services to improve language acceptance and the teaching of GSL in structured settings and the creation of environments for the natural learning of GSL are the most significant challenges we are faced with.

Services, Employment and Social life

Deaf people exhibit typical features of a group that is underprivileged and discriminated against: On average, they have only unskilled and semi-skilled occupations; only a few succeed in rising to higher management or organizational levels. Moreover, their chances of finding a job are worse than those of the average hearing person.

Despite the communicative barriers and the poor level of educational training Deaf people have a positive self-image and lead normal productive lives. They grow up, obtain jobs, get married, buy or rent housing, have children, and enjoy life. The community is highly organized and multi-level. The most important component of the community is their language: their national Sign Language.

Through this language, the community has developed sets of beliefs about themselves, their behavior, their community and the hearing world (Lane, Hoffmeister & Bahan, 1996). The Deaf community has a complex organizational structure, which is built around daily habits and preferred practices of living as a Deaf person, and has leaders with varying leadership qualities depending on the area needs. Areas of organizational level reflect activities such as, signed fables and stories, and collective or individual artistic presentations. All of these in total make up many of the characteristics of what is referred to as DEAF CULTURE.

Deaf people see themselves as a group that chooses to be together. They function as a linguistic and cultural minority. Many of the community's idiosyncrasies dictate the development of that culture.

Its level of acceptance by the hearing community is low and this is frequently the topic of discussion at home, the Deaf club or school. Rarely is it the topic of instruction at schools for the Deaf.

Deaf organizations in Greece, as all over the world, play multipurpose roles. The organizations exist where Deaf people live, in metropolitan areas. The organizations serve as recreational, social, political, athletic and cultural centers.

In small rural cities, the Deaf club fulfills all the above roles. In Athens, the largest city in Greece, we have two of the largest and most diverse Deaf organizations. There are two organizations of the Deaf, the National Federation of the Deaf and the Athletic Federation of the Deaf. They are members of international federations such as the European Union of the Deaf (EUD) and the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD).

The structure and relation of the federations, the associations and the Deaf clubs are similar to that of organizations of the Deaf worldwide (see Lane, Hoffmeister, & Bahan, 1996 for more information about other Deaf communities in the world).

Organizations of the Deaf are even involved in issues such as Cochlear Implants. National associations of the Deaf around the world, and some parent

organizations as well, have published position papers disapproving of implant surgery on Deaf children. They have demonstrated and demanded that children are not operated on. On the other hand, the medical profession is for cochlear implant surgery on children despite the opposition of the Deaf organizations worldwide (Lane, Hoffmeister and Behan, 1996, Gargalis, 2001).

Methodology

This study is part of the European project *“From Disabling to Enriching the Deaf World”* that was conducted in Belgium, Denmark, Greece and Spain with the same theme and methodology.

The aim of the study was to identify the factors that cause discriminative behavior towards Deaf people in the countries involved, and to develop a “Good Practice Guide to Combat Discrimination” which will provide firm suggestions for immediate implication, so that institutions in Europe can be effective in their role. For this purpose four studies were conducted. The data collection was carried out from May to September of 2001. All four studies are presented here.

Preparation of the study

Before the data collection, two workshop meetings were held in Athens, Greece, with all partners participation. In those meetings the methodological approach of the study in all its details was discussed and decided upon. Each partner contributed to the design and the implementation of each individual study and the combined study as well.

THE PARTICIPANTS

The study was designed to interview Deaf people of all ages from each country, members of the Deaf community, from all educational background as shown in Tables 1-3.

Table 1. The participants

COUNTRY	Interviewees	Percent
Belgium	32	26,0
Denmark	27	22,0
Greece	44	35,8
Spain	20	16,3
Total	123	100,0

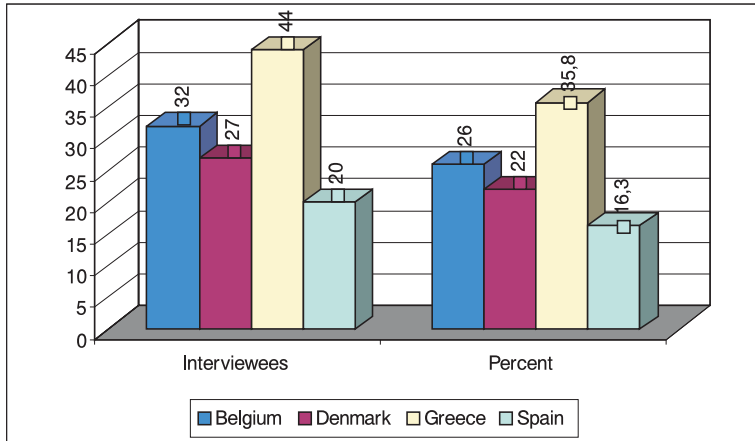


Chart 1

The study was designed to interview at least twenty people from each country. Spain had the lowest participation and Greece had the highest. The reasons for the variation of the numbers of interviews are due to resources available and time limitations.

Table 2. Gender of the participants

	Frequency	Percent
Female	60	48,8
Male	63	51,2
Total	123	100,0

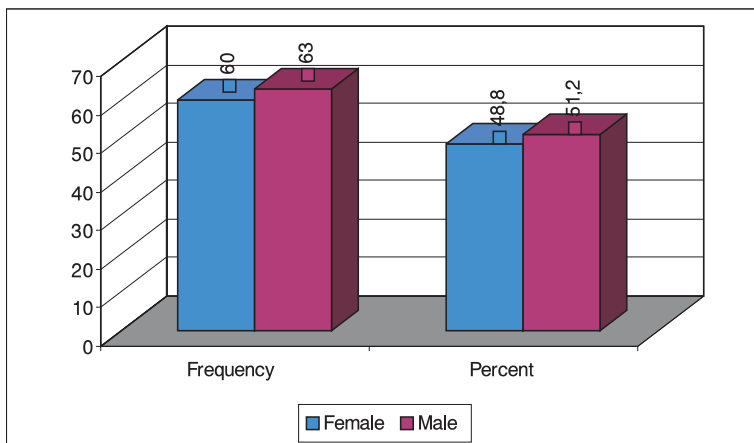


Chart 2

Special care was given to have an equal representation of women and men in the study although in some countries like Greece, women are less involved in the Deaf community than men.

Table 2a. Age of the participants

AGE	Frequency	Percent
18-29	35	28,7
30-41	40	32,8
41-53	28	23,0
54-65	19	15,6
Total	122	100,0

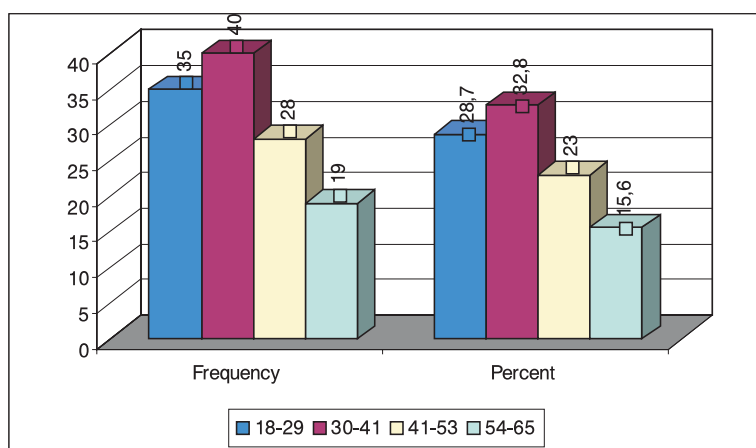


Chart 2a

The aim of the study was to collect information from all ages of Deaf people, and the table shows the spread of age groups with an emphasis on a younger group from 18 to 41 years of age that represents 61,5% of the participants of the study.

Table 3. Level of school education completed

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Elementary	0.0*	0.0*	22.7	40.0	14.6
Secondary	90.6*	40.7	22.7*	5.0	41.5
After secondary	9.4*	44.4	50.0*	45.0	37.4
Post graduate	0.0	14.8*	4.5	10.0	6.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*p<0.001

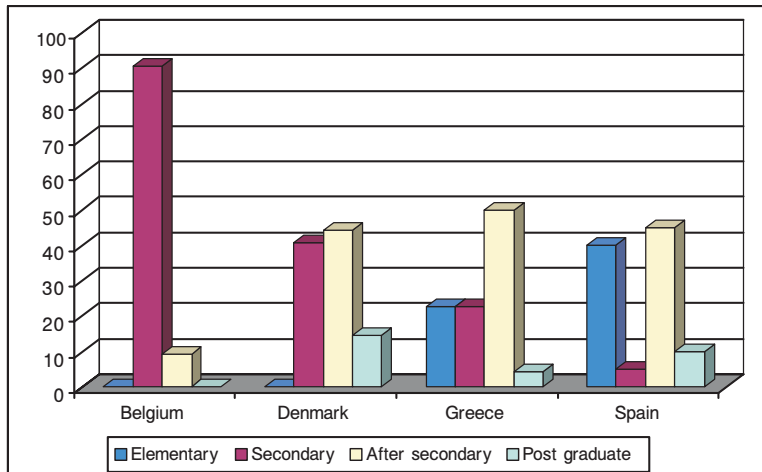


Chart 3

The sample is representative of the community and was selected with the assistance of organizations of the Deaf such as the Hellenic Federation of the Deaf. It is apparent however, that the educational level of the participants varies in each country. There is a statistically significant difference between the countries studied ($X^2(9) = 63.030, p < 0.001$).

The most notable fact is that Spain and Greece show a significant number of Deaf people active in the community who do not continue their education after elementary school, while Denmark reports a significant number of Deaf people to have completed post graduate work. By no means is the educational level completed representative of the communities of each country, since this was not a factor for selection of the participants.

Study instruments

The main instrument employed in this study was a structured questionnaire that was used to conduct the interviews with the participants. The interview was a structured one that included a total of 6 personal information questions and 81 questions in the areas of Family, Education, Employment, Services and Social life. See Appendix A for the full questionnaire of the interview in both English and Greek.

A content analysis of the collected data was employed. The emerged categories of the answers of the Greek interviews were the basis for the structured questionnaire used by the other three countries.

THE INTERVIEWS

Conducting the Interviews in Greece

A Deaf researcher, a native signer and leader in the community, trained for this project conducted the interviews. This minimized any possible code switching and hesitations in free expression on the subject matter of the interview.

The interviewer videotaped the interviews. Later, professional interpreters appointed by the Association of Interpreters of Greek Sign Language interpreted the video taped interviews. Reversed translation and multiple interpretations were conducted which demonstrated high reliability of the accuracy of the interpretation. The interviews were then transcribed into written Greek and a qualitative content analysis was performed. All taped interviews were given to the Hellenic Federation of the Deaf and code numbers were used to refer to specific interviews, so confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process.

Analysis of the Interviews

Each interview took one to two and half-hours. The transcription of the interviews ranged from ten to twenty five single space pages each. The analysis of the interview was both qualitative and quantitative. The quantitative analysis was derived from coding the categories that emerged from the qualitative analysis. These categories were then used for the closed questionnaires used by the three other partner countries, Belgium, Denmark and Spain.

Conducting the Interviews in Belgium, Denmark and Spain

Due to time and financial limitations, the other three partners were not able to conduct open, in depth interviews. Therefore, they used the preliminary categories that emerged from the Greek interviews to establish a closed questionnaire to conduct their respective interviews. It was agreed that all participants could freely add anything that they felt they should at any point in the interview and also at the end of the process of the interview. Since this was a closed questionnaire there was no need to videotape the interviews. All interviews were conducted in the national sign language of the participants and the data was coded into the written language of the country and then translated into English for the purpose of writing the report.

All coded data from all four countries were entered in SPSS for the quantitative analysis presented here. There is a vast amount of data, which is not reported here due to time limitations, which overwhelmingly supports the descriptive analysis we present in the present report.

RESULTS

Results are presented descriptively in percentage figures within and between countries. When a statistically significant difference is observed, it is noted and the level of significance is reported. When the given answers to a question are more than one, the total of the percentage reported in each column can be more than 100%. In this case we did not run a significance analysis and the results are presented only descriptively.

FAMILY

There were a total of twenty one questions given to the participants, that were designed to deal with issues of communication, involvement in the community and basic everyday life experiences of the participants' family.

As might be predicted Table 4 shows that in all four countries the hearing parents' interaction with Deaf adults is minimal.

Table 4. Parents' interaction with Deaf adults before the child's hearing loss diagnosis % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Never	69.0	69.2	77.3	68.4	72.0
Random (less than once a month)	10.3	3.8	6.8	0.0	5.9
Sometimes (more than once a month)	0.0	3.8	2.3	5.3	2.5
Often (weekly contact)	20.7	23.1	13.6	26.3	19.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

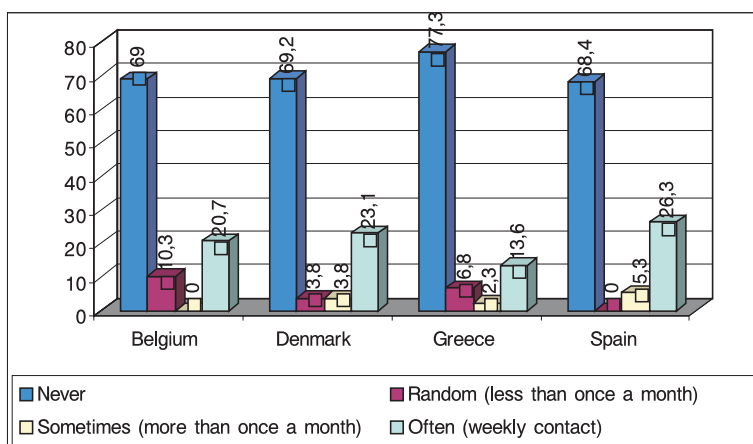


Chart 4

Most of the parents of the participants have never interacted with Deaf adults before the hearing loss diagnosis which could be expected since only about 20% of our subjects had Deaf parents. The choice of weekly contact follows, and finally, with a small percentage, the choice of “Random” and “Sometimes” describes the contact of parents. There is no significant differences observed in all four countries ($X^2(9) = 5.494, p > 0.05$)

Table 5. Parents' interaction with Deaf adults after the child's hearing loss diagnosis % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Never	54.8	23*	61.5	68.4	52.2
Random (less than once a month)	22.6	34.6*	17.9	0.0	20.0
Sometimes (more than once a month)	0.0	15.4*	5.1	5.3	6.1
Often (weekly contact)	22.6	26.9	15.4	26.3	21.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* $p < .05$

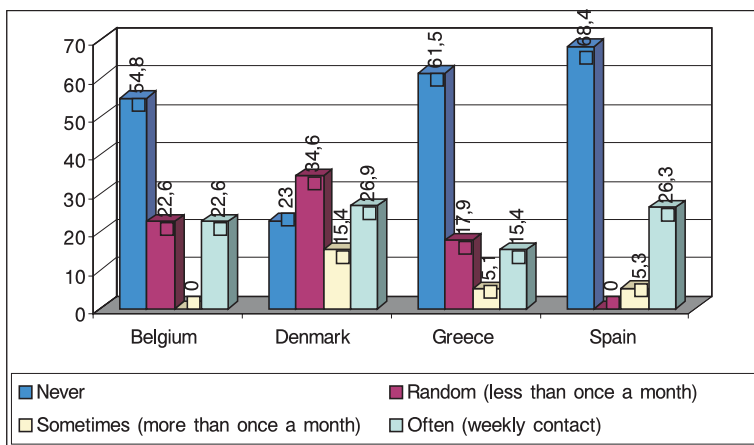


Chart 5

Most of the participants' parents never come in contact with Deaf adults even after the hearing loss diagnosis as seen in Table 5. There is a significant difference observed between the countries ($X^2(9) = 19.539, p < 0.05$) due to the difference observed in the interaction of the Danish parents with Deaf adults after the diagnosis of a hearing loss. The Danish change their interaction more than any other country, leaving Spanish and Greek parents still isolated from Deaf adults.

Even with the impact of the Danish change of interaction, hearing parents in all four countries show limited interaction with the Deaf.

Interaction with the Deaf community requires some knowledge of the language of the community. Even if parents are willing to interact with the community, they cannot do so effectively if they do not know the language of the community.

Table 5. Parents' knowledge of Sign Language. Mothers knowledge of Sign Language % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Sign fluently	12.5	37*	18.2	15.0	20.3
Sign well	6.3	7.4	4.5	15.0	7.3
A few signs	9.4	14.8	13.6	20.0	13.8
Not at all	71.9	40.7*	63.6	50.0	58.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*p<.05

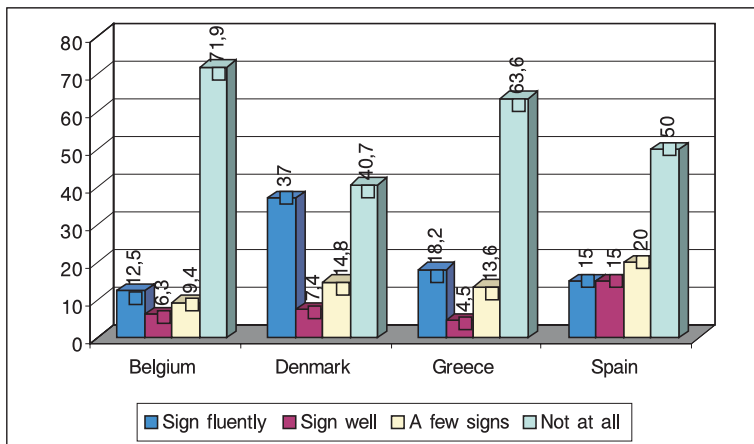
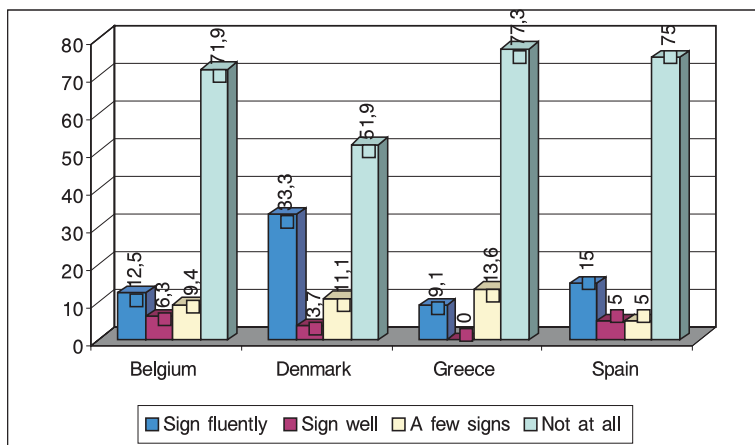


Chart 5

Table 6. Parents' knowledge of Sign Language Fathers knowledge of Sign Language % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Sign fluently	12.5	33.3*	9.1	15.0	16.3
Sign well	6.3	3.7	0.0	5.0	3.3
A few signs	9.4	11.1	13.6	5.0	10.6
Not at all	71.9	51.9*	77.3	75.0	69.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* p<.05

**Chart 6**

The major trend observed in Tables 5-6 is that hearing parents of the Deaf do not know sign language at all. The differences observed in all countries are not significant. Mothers tend to know sign language better than fathers in all countries studied. The Danish parents show a significantly higher level of SL knowledge than the rest of the countries. ($X^2(9) = 11.086$, $p > 0.05$ for the mothers and $X^2(9) = 11.770$, $p > 0.05$ for the fathers). The mothers are leading the way, leaving Greek fathers at the other end of the spectrum with 77,3% not knowing even a few signs.

This lack of communicative competence is identified by the Greek participants as the root of all problems arising in the family. Further statistical analysis will show a high correlation between parents' communicative competence in SL and levels and quality of interaction with their Deaf children.

Table 7. Did parents tell fairytales to Deaf children? % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Yes	16.1*	70.4*	22.7	31.6	33.1
No	83.9*	29.6*	77.3	68.4	66.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*p<.0001

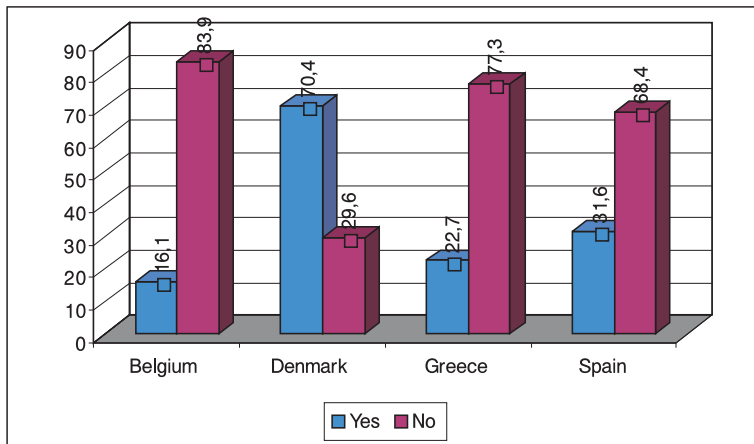
**Chart 7**

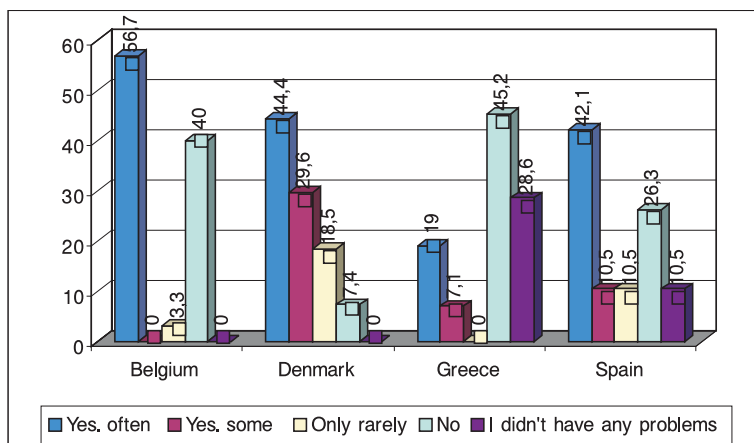
Table 7 indicates that most parents of deaf children do not tell fairytales to their children.

The Danish differ drastically from the rest of the groups and seem to tell fairytales to their Deaf children more than any one else. The Belgian parents are on the other side of the spectrum with the Spanish and the Greek very close behind. The different behavior of the Danish and the Belgians is statistically significant ($X^2(3) = 23.142, p < 0.001$) and needs further investigation on its causes. From the data on SL knowledge of the mothers it seems that the more SL the mother knows the more fairytales the children are told.

Table 8. Sharing problems with parents % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Yes, often	56.7*	44.4	19*	42.1	38.1
Yes, some	0.0	29.6*	7.1	10.5	11.0
Only rarely	3.3	18.5*	0.0	10.5	6.8
No	40.0	7.4*	45.2*	26.3	32.2
I didn't have any problems	0.0	0.0	28.6*	10.5	11.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* p<.001

**Chart 8**

The main trend regarding problem sharing in Table 8 is split between positive and negative choices, however a significant difference is observed between countries ($X^2(12) = 53.514$, $P < 0.001$).

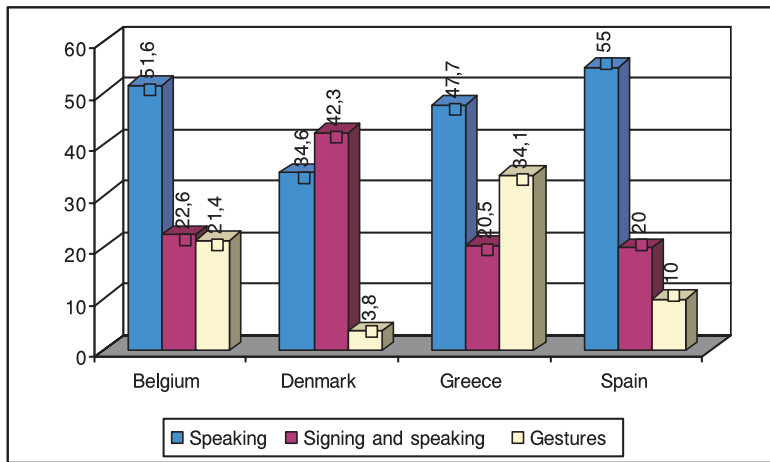
The Danish and Belgians lead the way, leaving the Greeks isolated from problem sharing with the immediate family behind. An interesting finding is that Greek and Spanish participants report a lack of problems, probably due to a cultural difference of South and North. Sharing problems can be seen as a combination of communicative competence, acceptance and respect of the children's rights to share their problems.

In order for a child to share its problems with his/her parents he/she needs to have common communication modes that allow an effective two-way communication. We have asked about the communication mode used by the parents and children in everyday circumstances in Table 9.

Table 9. Communication form used in interaction with parents % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Speaking	51.6	34.6	47.7	55.0	47.1
Signing and speaking	22.6	42.3*	20.5	20.0	25.6
Gestures	21.4	3.8*	34.1*	10.0	20.3

* p<.05

**Chart 9**

Children seem to use all kinds of communication possible. The prevailing communication mode is oral. The difference observed between countries is significant ($X^2(3) = 9.667$, $p < 0.05$). The Danish use significantly more sign language than any other and the Greeks are relying more on gestures than any other group.

Table 10. Technical equipment put into the house for convenience % within country % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
None	50.0	40.7*	84*	60.0	61.8
1-3	31.3	44*	15.9	15.0	26.0
Over 3	18.8	14.8	0*	25.0	12.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*p<.01

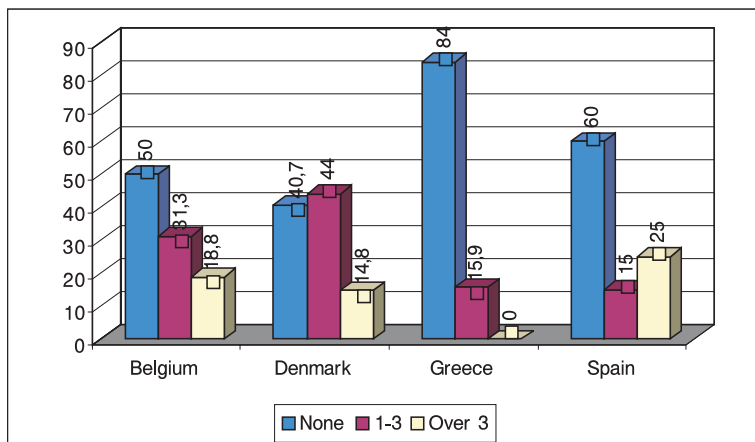


Chart 10

The data in Table 10 shows an overall statistically significant difference between the countries on the issue of technical equipment in the homes. (X^2 (6) =22.064, $P<0.01$). The findings are not encouraging by any measure or explanation. Most of the participants have not had any technical equipment put into their house for their convenience when they were children. This is not the case today. The data reflects experiences for the past 60 years where technology was not readily available. The data however shows clearly that Greece has a long way to go to obtain the levels of convenience that Denmark offers to Deaf people. In Spain, there is a drastic change as evidenced in the government policy to provide the Deaf with technical equipment free of charge.

Table 11. Parents help with homework % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Yes, often	50.0	29.6	34.1	27.8	36.1
Yes, some	0*	29.6*	13.6	16.7	14.3
Only rarely	0.0	22.2*	11.4	0.0	9.2
No	50.0	18.5*	40.9	55.6	40.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* $p<.01$

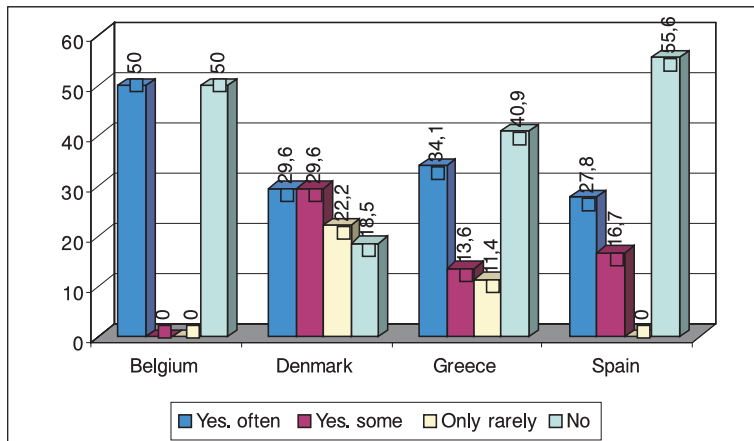


Chart 11

In Table 11 There is a significant difference observed between countries ($X^2(9) = 25.620, p < 0.01$). Over all, most parents do not help their children with homework, followed by often help. The situation seems to be better in Denmark where parents show a wider spread of assistance given to the children and also a more helpful behavior towards homework. If we consider the lack of effective bilateral communication between parents and children, we would expect even larger figures in this trend.

Conclusion

It is clear from the data that the young Deaf child is faced with various levels of discrimination, direct and indirect, from the day he/she is born and within his immediate family. Especially if he/she is born to hearing parents, this is the situation he/she is forced to experience. He/she is well isolated from other Deaf people. His/her parents do not know and do not learn his/her natural language and he/she is forced to use a language he/she cannot naturally comprehend. He/she is deprived of story telling experiences. He/she does not share with his/her parents problems he/she faces. He/she does homework unassisted and there is no technical equipment put in the house for his/her convenience.

The experience of being a Deaf child varies from country to country. The overall conditions are better in Denmark than in the other countries, which present greater lack of adequate practices at home. For all countries involved, there is a long way to go in order to achieve an acceptable environment where discriminative barriers are removed.

SCHOOL

There were a total of 15 questions given to the participants, designed to deal with communication between all people involved in the educational practice, curriculum, training, problems and possible solutions. Since education is a fundamental human right, and educational practice therefore is important to the Deaf community as to most communities, it is of great importance to examine this issue from the perspective of the ultimate receivers. The results represent a variety of age groups and shows the past, the present but also the trend for the future.

Table 12. Communication with the other children at school: % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Signing always	15.6*	53.8	65.9*	70*	50.8
Signing outside the classroom	0.0*	7.7	22.7*	10.0	11.5
Speaking always	3.1	15.4	9.1	20.0	10.7
Signing and speaking	81.3*	23.1	2.3*	0.0*	27.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* p<.001

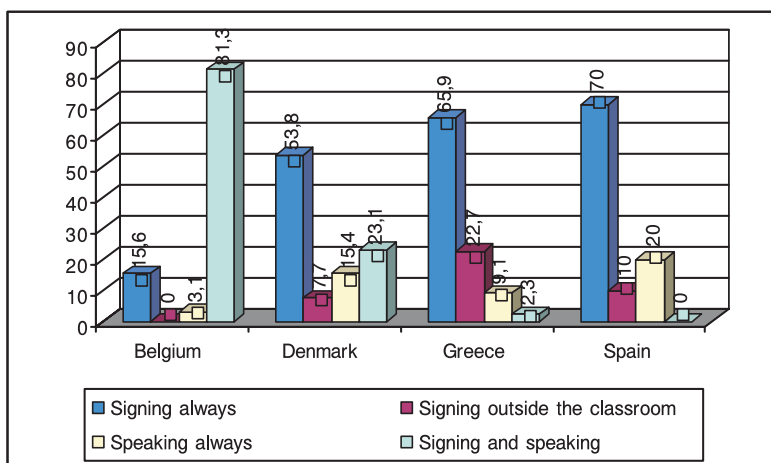


Chart 12

Table 12 shows that, overall, only a small percent of the Deaf students use speaking as the main communication mode in their interaction with other students. The preferred mode of communication is always signing and the use of signing in special allowed circumstances, with the additional use of speech. There is a significant difference observed between the countries ($X^2(15) = 68.727$,

$p < 0.001$). In Spain and Greece, the vast majority of the participants prefer “signing always” as their mode of communication compared to the other countries. Signing outside the classroom is not a choice at all for the Belgians, while in the other countries it represents a significant percentage. Signing and speaking is not a mode of communication Deaf children use in Spain and Greece, in contrast with the participants in Belgium, that clearly use it more than in any other country.

Table 13. Communication with teachers at school % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Signing always	6.3	22.2*	2.3*	10.5	9.0
Signing outside the classroom	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.3*	0.8
Signing inside the classroom	3.1	0.0	2.3	0.0	1.6
Speaking always	18.8*	33.3	75*	57.9	48.4
Signing and speaking	71.9*	44.4	20.5*	26.3	40.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* $p < .001$

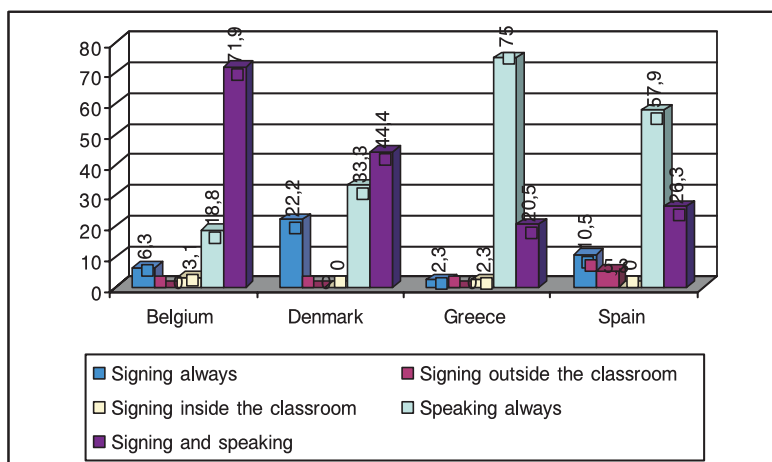


Chart 13

The communication with teachers at school is different than the communication with the other children at school. Table 13 indicates that overall, only a small percent of the Deaf students use signing always as the main communication mode in their interaction with other teachers at school. The main mode of communication used is speaking and the use of signing with the additional use of speech. There is a significant difference observed between the countries ($X^2(12) = 41.649$, $p < 0.001$) which reflects the preferred educational methodology applied

in each country as well as the status of sign language within the school system of all countries examined. A significant finding to point out is the dominant mode of communication Signing and speaking is the mode of communication between teachers and students in Belgium and is significantly higher than any other country. Denmark seems to make a stronger statement than any other country about sign language use within the school system, offering children a communicative environment accessible to them and closer to their preferred mode of communication. This is not the case in Greece where oral communication prevails more than in any other country.

Table 14. Teachers communication among themselves % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Signing always	3.1	7.4	0.0	0.0	2.4
Signing inside the classroom	0.0	18.5*	0.0	0.0	4.1
Speaking always	56.3	63*	95.5*	90.0	77.2
Signing and speaking	40.6*	11.1	4.5*	10.0	16.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* $p < .001$

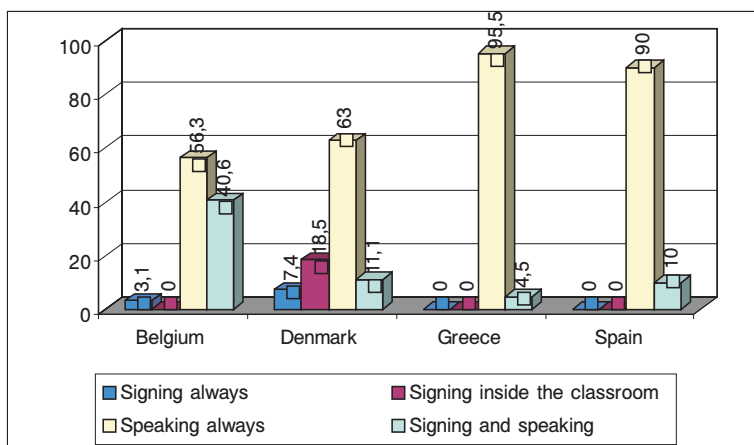


Chart 14

There is a significant difference observed between the countries in how teachers communicate among themselves as shown in Table 14. ($X^2(9) = 43.301$, $p < 0.001$). Teachers of the Deaf when communicating among themselves at a school for the Deaf prefer to speak always followed closely by with the additional use of sign language. Greece leads the way, followed by Spain in this linguistic communicative behavior with 95.5% of the teachers communicating with each

other by speech and a small percent using signing as well. The use of sign language for teacher communication is gaining ground in Denmark and Belgium reflecting the educational change that is taking place in these countries.

Since we could predict the communicative climate at school we wanted to document the wish of the Deaf community in the most discussed area of educational practice: The use of sign language in the teaching process.

Table 15. Teaching should be conducted in Sign Language % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Yes	100.0	100.0	92.3	90.0	95.7
No	0.0	0.0	7.7	10.0	4.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* $p < .05$

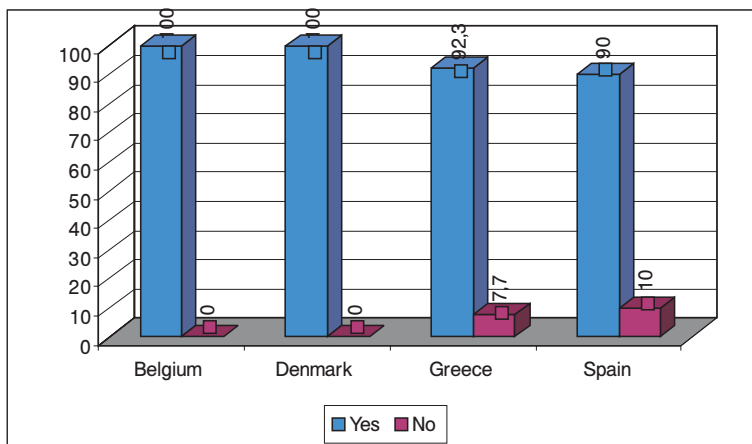


Chart 15

Apparently Deaf people believe that the situation described so far is not satisfactory and overwhelmingly agree that teaching should be conducted in sign language as reflected in Table 15. There is no significant difference observed between the countries on the issue of sign language use in teaching ($X^2(6) = 5.307, p > 0.05$). This is the strongest agreement between groups and clearly demonstrates Deaf peoples need to use sign language in the teaching process. Sign language use still remains the most important issue in the field of Deafness.

Since sign language use alone is not the only thing that defines an appropriate educational environment for Deaf children, we asked the participants' opinion about the elements that constitute the ideal school for the Deaf.

Table 16. An ideal school for a Deaf child % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Deaf teachers	17.4	8.3	11.4	35.3	15.7
Adequate support services	16.7	0.0	38.6	11.8	21.1
Adequate Curriculum	54.2	16.7	43.2	11.8	34.9
High expectations	41.7	8.3	25.0	0.0	21.1
Bilingual/ Bicultural education	73.9	87.5	84.1	88.2	83.3

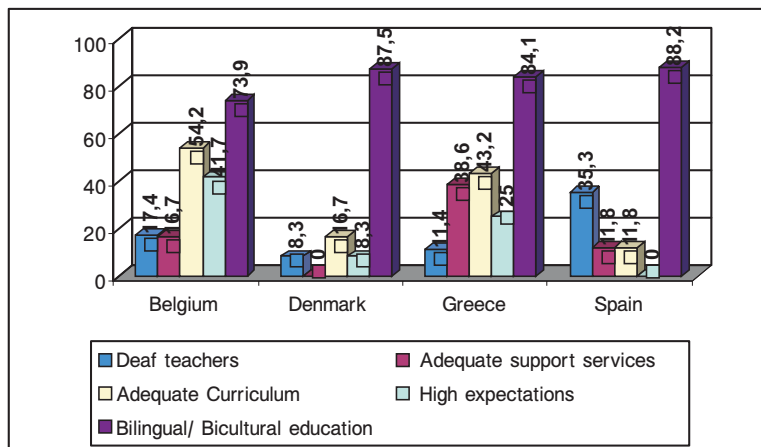
**Chart 16**

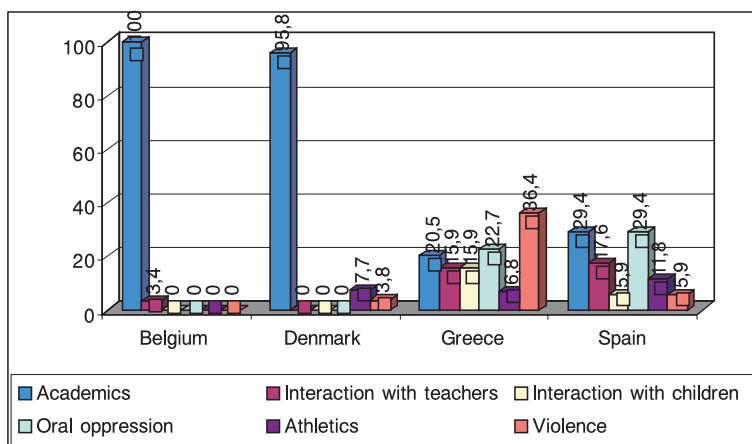
Table 16 shows an overall agreement that a Bilingual/Bicultural education model should be applied in all countries. This element of educational practice received the highest percentage of choice by all countries combined and also within each country separately. It seems that the recent educational practices have gained the support of the communities, and there is a great desire to see them expanded as the first priority in the educational system. Great emphasis is placed on adequate curriculum and support services. High expectations from the students are requested. A Deaf teacher is also an element of an ideal school for the Deaf.

Each country demonstrates different priorities that are probably due to the lack of such elements in the educational practice or the need to see them expanded.

The school experience of the participants is an important finding that needs to be taken into consideration when planning educational strategies, methodologies and models. We were expecting to see different responses to what the participants dislike at school because of variations of educational practices in the countries studied.

Table 17. Topics disliked the most at school: % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Academics	100	95.8	20.5	29.4	57.1
Interaction with teachers	3.4	0.0	15.9	17.6	9.5
Interaction with children	0.0	0.0	15.9	5.9	6.9
Oral oppression	0.0	0.0	22.7	29.4	12.9
Athletics	0.0	7.7	6.8	11.8	6.0
Violence	0.0	3.8	36.4	5.9	15.5

**Chart 17**

Academics seem to be the topic mostly disliked by the participants as indicated in Table 17. Taking into consideration the previous results this is not surprising. What is surprising is that Belgium and Denmark demonstrate this dislike to academics. This topic needs more qualitative analysis to determine the cause of this dislike since such an emphasis is placed on academics by all educational institutions. It is not surprising however to see oral oppression as a significant dislike of participants in Spain and Greece since the educational system has mainly been using an oral approach and methodology of teaching and interaction even today. Violence is documented in Greece significantly more than any other country. Violence is an issue that teachers have always claimed as non-existent, but the Deaf participants of the study report it as the mostly disliked they face in their schooling experience. Their descriptions are detailed and show many aspects of violence practiced in schools. The encouraging factor is that this violence seems to be minimized in the younger group. This is a significant finding and strongly suggests that such practices should no longer be acceptable.

Human resources and teachers in particular play a significant role in the lives of Deaf children. They can be the decisive factor in the quality of education offered

and help remove the barriers Deaf children face. We wanted to know what special qualifications hearing and Deaf teachers of the Deaf should have.

Table 18. Qualifications hearing teachers of the Deaf should have: % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Bilingual Bicultural	70.4	64.0	88.6	80.0	77.5
High teacher qualifications	40.7	36.0	59.1	40.0	46.8
Experience	11.1	0.0	6.8	40	10.8
Active in the Deaf community	0.0	0.0	15.9	46.6	12.6

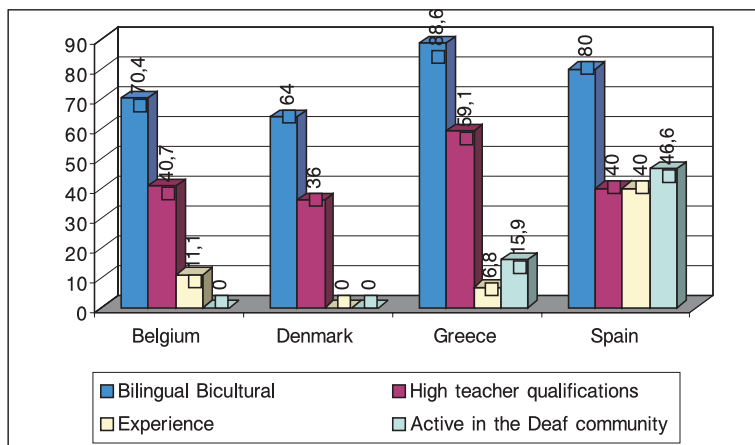


Chart 18

Table 18 shows there is an overall agreement that the most important qualification hearing teachers should have is to be bilingual and bicultural. This is not surprising considering the previous findings but it is supportive of the whole point of view that the Deaf have in all countries involved. The Greek participants support this need even stronger. The data also shows that there is an across the border demand for high teacher qualifications. The most demanding group seems to be the Spanish who insist on participation in the Deaf community, whereas the Belgian and Danish groups do not express this desire, perhaps because this is covered by the bicultural qualification.

Table 19. Qualifications Deaf teachers of the Deaf should have % within country

	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Bilingual Bicultural	25	40.9	93.3	45.8
High teacher qualifications	54.2	63.6	53.3	59.0
Experience	20.8	2.3	53.3	16.9
Active in the Deaf community	0.0	11.4	46.7	14.5

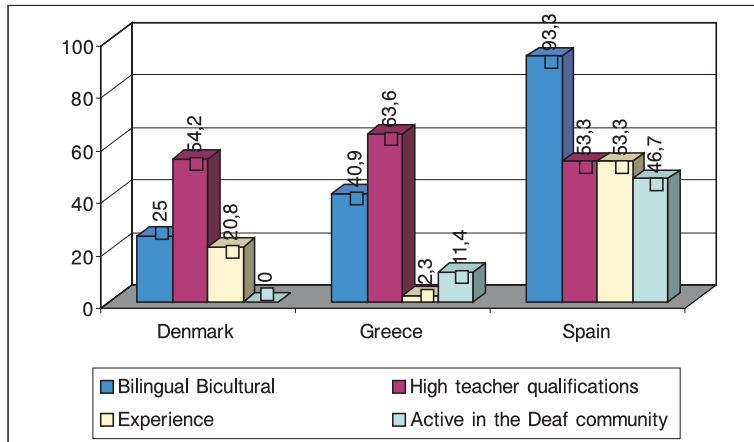
**Chart 19**

Table 19 looks at qualifications Deaf teacher of the Deaf should have. To this question, the Belgian group did not answer because of a translation error but the data remains generally consistent with what has been reported so far. Overall, the most important factor is high teacher qualifications. Bilingual bicultural abilities of the Deaf teachers of the Deaf are especially emphasized by the Spanish group and the least by the Danish. Experience and being active in the Deaf community is of greater importance to the Spanish and least important to the Greek participants.

The participants of all the countries tend to expect similar qualifications for both Deaf and hearing teachers of the Deaf. They definitely want them to be highly qualified bilingual and bicultural teachers.

Secondary education was also a major interest of the study, and data was collected from the participants that had completed this level (85.4%). See Table 3. "Level of school education completed" for better explanation of the findings.

Table 20. Communication at High school % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Signing always	27.6	8.7	6.8	16.7	13.9
Signing outside the classroom	10.3	0.0	2.3	0.0	3.7
Speaking always	10.3	39.1	50	66.7	38.9
Signing and speaking	96.6	26.1	20.5	16.7	41.7
Writing	0.0	87	40.9	8.3	36.1
With interpreter	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.9

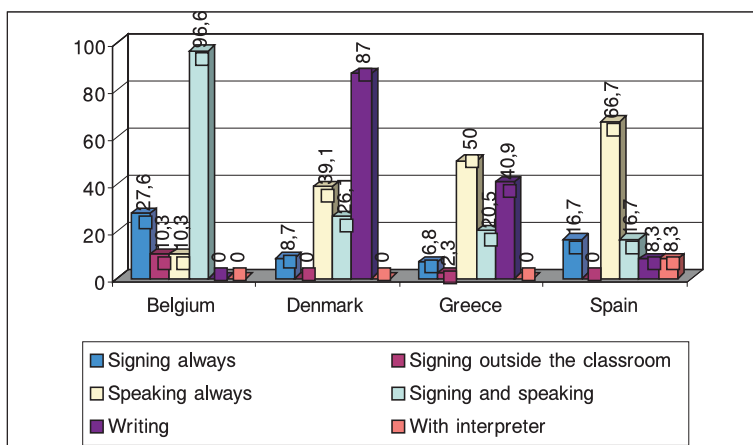
**Chart 20**

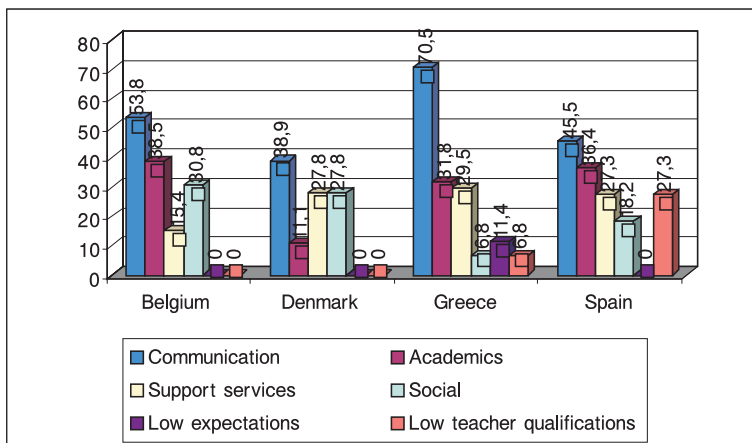
Table 20 shows that writing and the limited use of an interpreter are new modes of communication introduced at this educational level, when compared with modes of communication used in elementary school. “Signing and speaking” and “oral communication” are the main modes of communication used at this level of education.

Consistent with previous findings Spain and Greece demonstrate a dominantly oral practice, while Belgium and Denmark have shifted away and the use of signing and written language are more widely used.

The identification of difficulties Deaf people encounter in higher education could lead us to face and combat them to the extent that Deaf people will continue to enjoy one of the most important human rights, that of education.

Table 21. Difficulties encountered in High School or/and University: % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Communication	53.8	38.9	70.5	45.5	58.1
Academics	38.5	11.1	31.8	36.4	29.1
Support services	15.4	27.8	29.5	27.3	26.7
Social	30.8	27.8	6.8	18.2	16.3
Low expectations	0.0	0.0	11.4	0.0	5.8
Low teacher qualifications	0.0	0.0	6.8	27.3	7.0

**Chart 21**

It is not surprising that most difficulties Deaf people are faced with in all countries, with Greece leading the way, are related to communication. The educational system communicates in modes that are not accessible to Deaf students. Along with the lack of support services, academics constitute a major difficulty to overcome. Social difficulties can also be traced back to the communication climate. Low teacher qualifications are strongly noted in Spain and to a lesser extent, but still evidently in Greece.

Conclusion

Menandros, a Greek philosopher, has stated that "Education is for man the only gain that no one can ever take away." What educational gains are Deaf people offered today? The data shows a clear picture of what educational practices are implemented in the countries we have studied. They can be summarized as follows.

Deaf children prefer to communicate with the use of their natural language, their national sign language. Teachers force children to attempt to communicate

with the natural language of the teachers. Fortunately there is change on the horizon with Denmark and Belgium leading the way. Teachers use a communication mode natural to them but inaccessible to Deaf students when communicating among themselves in school. Deaf people strongly disagree with this practice and demand that sign language should be used in schools. They express their need for improvement of the schools for the Deaf and suggest state of the art solutions and methodologies. They do not like what is practiced today and demand change. They want to see a Bilingual-Bicultural school with adequate curriculum, support services and high expectations from the students as well as qualified Deaf and hearing teachers. The problems identified do not stop at the elementary level of education but continue in secondary and higher education as well. Deaf people suggest sound solutions that all decision-making authorities should seriously take into consideration.

Education is too precious and a fundamental human right, which the Deaf do not enjoy as the hearing do.

EMPLOYMENT

It is important to state one more time that this data does not reflect the employment problems Deaf people face in their every day life. It has been reported that Deaf people face tremendous difficulties in finding an appropriate job, they are generally underemployed, obtain poorer jobs than their hearing counterparts and their promotion within the workplace is at a disadvantage. We have interviewed employed Deaf people, and our aim was not the investigation of the employment issue but rather the problems Deaf people face in their workplace.

Thirteen questions were given to the participants, designed to describe their vocational situation.

Table 22. Problems finding a job % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Yes, because of my hearing loss	48.3	16.7*	39.0	47.4	38.1
Yes, but not because of my hearing loss	13.8	4.2	7.3	0.0	7.1
No	37.9*	79.2*	53.7	52.6	54.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* $p < .005$

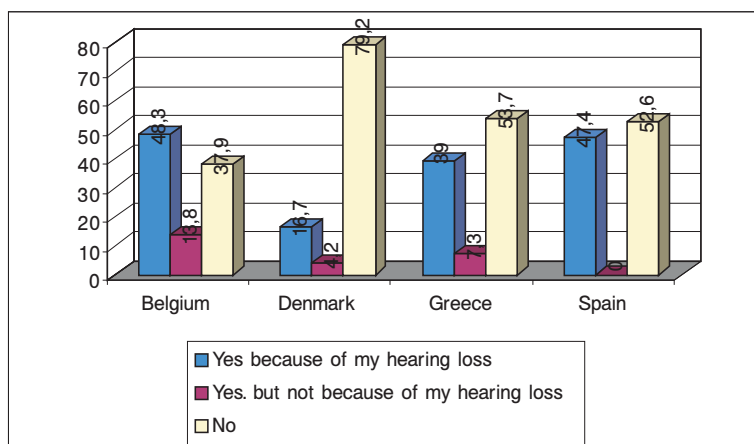


Chart 22

Table 22 shows that overall, in the countries investigated Deaf people reported that when they had problems finding a job it was due to their hearing loss. There is a significant difference observed between the countries ($X^2(6) = 11.734$,

$p < 0.005$). The Danish group seems to have the least problems finding a job and significantly lower attribution of the problem to their hearing loss. The Belgians seem to have most of the problems and they attribute them mainly to their hearing loss. It is important to investigate further the employment policies that are in effect in each country to determine the causes of these differences.

Choosing a job is not an easy task, it reflects the educational and the socio-political system of each country.

Table 23. Choosing a job % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Mainly out of interest	53.8	95.8*	37.5*	73.7	60.6
Mainly out of necessity	46.2	4.2*	60*	26.3	38.5
Other	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.0	.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* $p < .001$

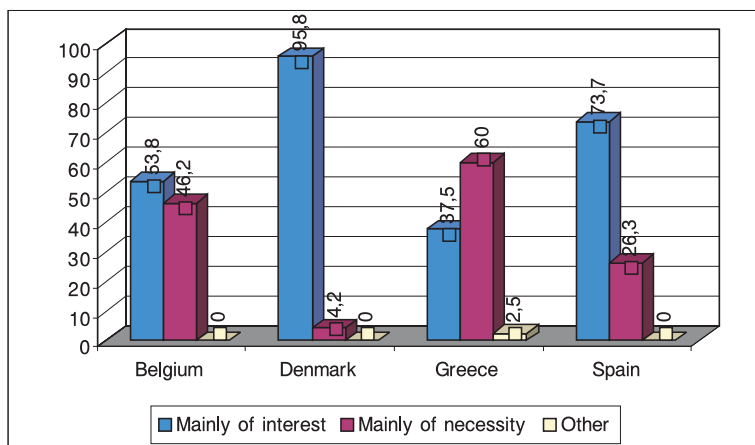


Chart 23

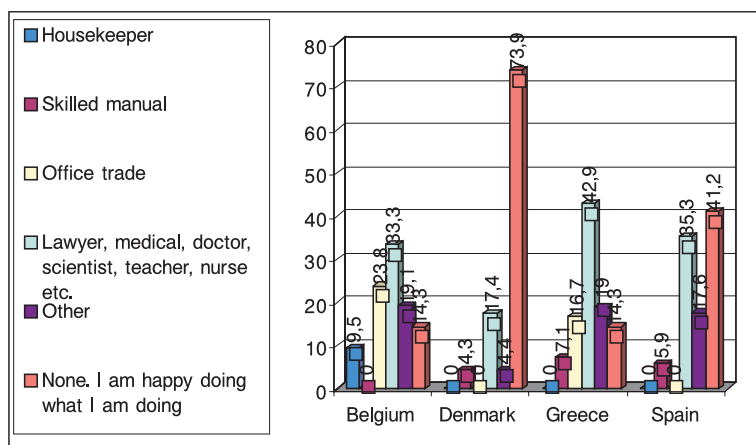
In Table 23 there is a significant difference observed between the countries in reasons for choosing a job ($X^2(6) = 24.171, p < 0.001$). It is very encouraging to report that 60.6% of the population has chosen a job mainly out of interest. This is evident mostly in Denmark followed by Spain, in contrast to the situation in Greece. Greek Deaf people seem to choose their job mainly out of necessity, closely followed by the Belgians.

It is evident that the job found is not necessarily the job someone wants.

If someone wanted and could change their job what would it be? To a hypothetical question, we received a hypothetical answer. It is also a verification of the previous question.

Table 24. Preference of profession % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Housekeeper	9.5*	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9
Skilled manual	0.0	4.3	7.1	5.9	4.9
Office, trade	23.8	0.0	16.7	0.0	11.7
Lawyer, medical doctor, scientist, teacher, nurse, etc.	33.3	17.4*	42.9	35.3	34.0
Other	19.0	4.3	19.0	17.6	15.5
None, I am happy doing what I do	14.3*	73.9*	14.3*	41.2	32.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

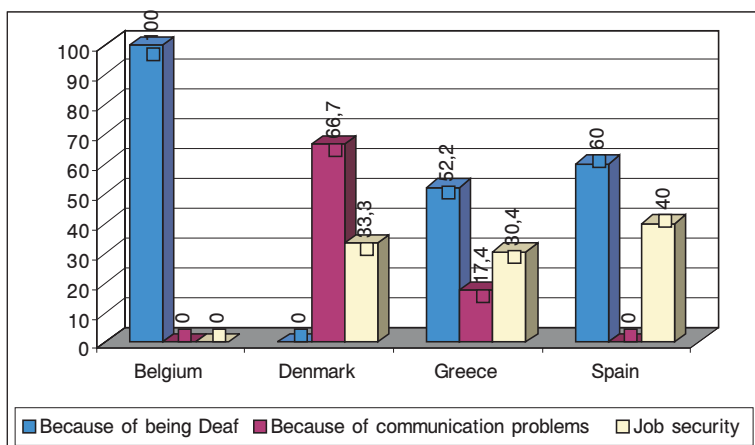
* $p < .001$ **Chart 24**

In Table 24 for job preference the majority of the participants are split between the employment status that they have and a list of professions that are characterized by social, scientific and financial benefits. There is a significant difference observed between the countries ($X^2(15) = 42.042, p < 0.001$). Even when Deaf people choose a profession according to their interest, only half of them are happy doing what they do. Here the results are consistent within the countries. The Danish are happy doing what they do while the Greeks and the Belgians want a major change. The tendency for those who want a change is towards a white-collar profession.

Describing a situation is useful. Investigating the reasons for its existence is the main aim of every study. In Table 25 we wanted to know why Deaf people did not do the job they really wanted to do.

Table 25. Why not in favorite profession % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Because of being Deaf	100*	0.0*	52.2	60.0	63.6
Because of communication problems	0.0	66.7*	17.4	0.0	13.6
Job security	0.0*	33.3	30.4	40.0	22.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* $p < .01$ **Chart 25**

There is a significant difference observed between the countries ($X^2(6) = 18.335$, $p < 0.01$). It is apparent that Deaf people feel discriminated against in the market place. They believe that they are not in their favorite profession mainly because they are Deaf. Leading supporters of this notion are the Belgians closely followed by the Spanish and the Greeks. The Danish have shifted their focus and they identify the problem as one of communication, a notion also shared by the Greeks. Job security is a main factor for not attempting to change the job selected so far for several of the participants.

Table 26. Income and advancement at work the same as hearing colleagues % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Yes	44.0*	86.4	77.5	94.1*	74.0
No	56.0*	13.6	22.5	5.9*	26.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

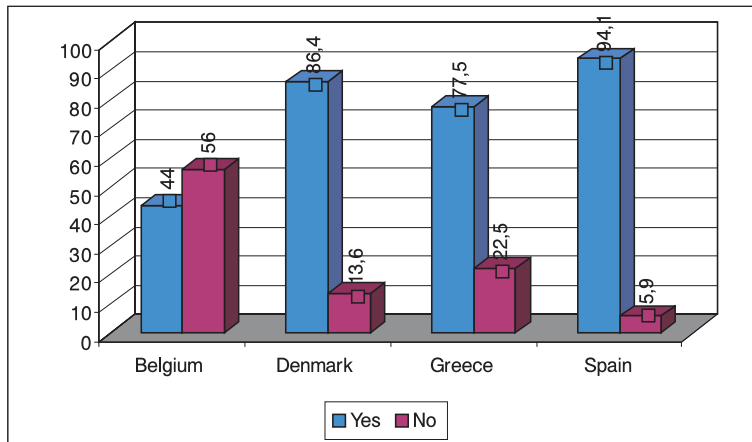
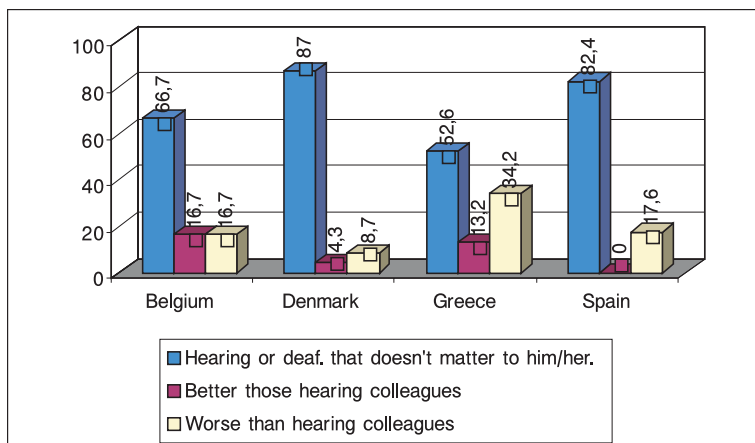
* $p < .01$ **Chart 26**

Table 26 shows that a large percent of Deaf people enjoy an equal income and advancement as their hearing colleagues. This is probably because the sample of our study was not selected to investigate this issue properly. This finding is not in line with previous findings in the literature. There is a significant difference observed between the countries ($X^2(3) = 17.280, p < 0.01$). However, we see differences between countries that probably reflect the national employment policies previously mentioned. We could predict that Spain has more favorable policies in income and advancement issues than Belgium.

Table 27. Employer treatment in comparison with hearing colleagues % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Hearing or deaf, that doesn't matter to him/her.	66.7	87.0*	52.6*	82.4	68.6
Better than hearing colleagues	16.7	4.3	13.2	0.0	9.8
Worse than hearing colleagues	16.7	8.7	34.2*	17.6	21.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* p<.05

**Chart 27**

In Table 27 there is a significant difference observed between the countries ($X^2(6) = 11.948$, $p < 0.05$) for employer treatment. Deaf people report that their employers, especially in Denmark followed by Spain, treat them equally at work. Deaf people in Greece report being in the least favorable position on this issue.

Deaf people need specific technical devices and facilities in order to work effectively at their workplace. Table 28 looks at what special facilities employees offer to Deaf people for their convenience, productivity, safety and communication.

Table 28. Facilities offered at workplace % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain
None	31.8	4.3	69.0	18.8
TTY/ Fax/ E-mail/ Teleloop	63.6	91.3	2.4	68.8
Light flash	100.0	43.5	0.0	75.0
Interpreters/ Communication with colleagues in Sign Language	40.9	91.3	26.2	56.3
Other	4.5	8.7	4.8	50.0
Total	240.91	239.13	102.38	268.75

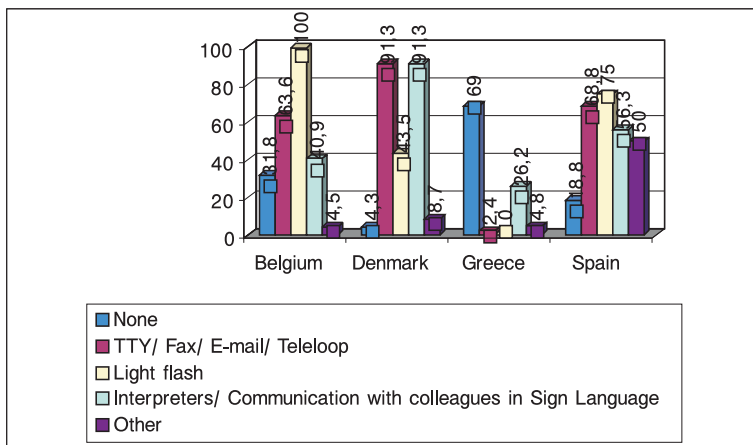


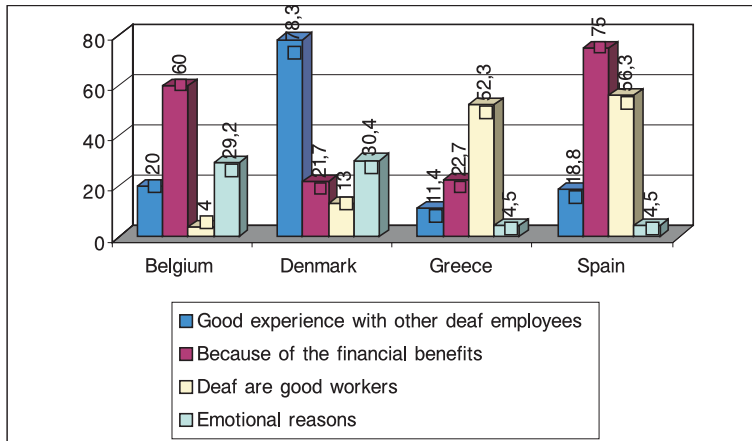
Chart 28

The participants report various facilities in all countries studied. Greece is the country in which Deaf people are offered the least facilities (None 69%) at their work place, and they rely on the occasional use of interpreters and communication with colleagues in Sign Language to cover the above needs. Even though technology such as Fax and e-mail are widely used in all countries studied, they do not seem to be available to the Deaf, whereas in Denmark their existence is taken for granted. Even a basic and inexpensive but extremely useful devise such as a light flash is not installed in the workplace of Deaf people in Greece. In Belgium this is always installed, followed by Spain. Denmark leads in the use of interpreters and colleagues that communicate in sign language.

In Table 29, the everyday experience of Deaf people with their employers offers some insight about their beliefs for the reasons some employers hire and others don't hire Deaf people.

Table 29. Why some employers hire Deaf people % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Good experience with other deaf employees	20.0	78.3	11.4	18.8	32.13
Because of the financial benefits	60.0	21.7	22.7	75.0	44.85
The Deaf are good workers	4.0	13.0	52.3	56.3	31.40
Emotional reasons	29.2	30.4	4.5	4.5	17.15
Total	113.2	143.4	90.9	154.6	125.53

**Chart 29**

The participants believe that the leading reason for some employers to hire Deaf people is the financial benefits the employers receive from the state. This is the case in Spain followed by Belgium. The positive belief and experience with Deaf people is, however, the major reason Deaf people believe that employers hire them. This is true for Denmark, Spain and Greece but not so evident in Belgium. Emotional reasons do not seem to be important in Greece and Spain, in contrast to Denmark and Belgium.

Table 30. Why some employers do not employ Deaf people % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Fear/ Because of ignorance / lack of information	67.9	92.6	31.8	50.0	60.58
Communication problems	71.4	63.0	34.1	54.8	55.83
Decrease of output	3.6	11.1	4.5	6.3	6.38
Bad experience with other deaf employees in the past	14.3	40.7	13.6	25.0	23.40
Total	156.6	207.4	84.0	136.1	183.37

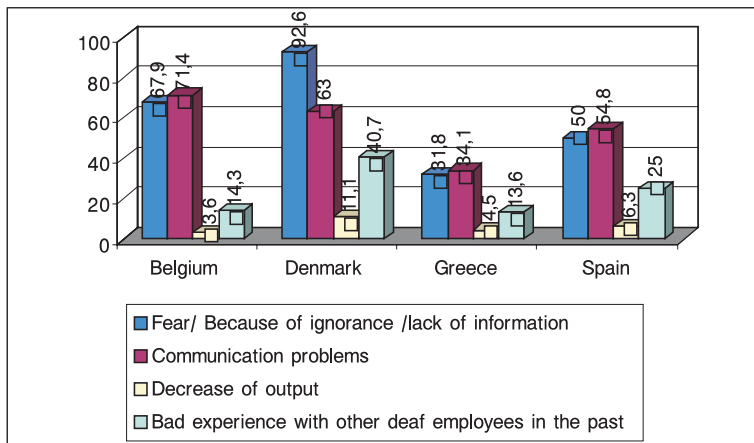


Chart 30

As indicated in Table 30, it is believed that fear, ignorance and lack of information are the leading reasons that employers do not hire Deaf people. Communication problems are also considered an important reason for such an attitude. Low output and some bad experience are not considered important reasons for why some employees refuse to hire Deaf people.

Conclusion

It is necessary to repeat that this is not a study designed to investigate the employment status of the Deaf in the countries mentioned. The problems that the Deaf face are more than what is reported here and need further investigation. It is however apparent that Deaf people experience problems in finding employment, which they attribute mainly to their deafness. Deafness itself, along with communication problems are also the reasons, which are considered as causes of the fact that the vast majority of Deaf people are not employed in a profession they actually like. The Deaf generally have no access to those services that

ensure an accessible work environment, life-long education and training.

There are Deaf people who believe that their income and promotion at work are not equal to that of their hearing colleagues and that their employer treats them in a more unfavorable way than that of their hearing colleagues. They also believe that employers who avoid hiring Deaf people do it mainly because of fear, ignorance and lack of information about the Deaf.

The reported significant differences between the countries are a hope for the future. The employment of Deaf people can reach levels of equality with the hearing if all involved work towards this goal.

SERVICES

The amount and quality of services offered by a group to another could be a significant measure of discrimination practice in any given society. We have identified various areas of possible discriminative practices and investigated them with a set of 22 questions.

In Table 31 we were interested in investigating if different communication modes are used in different service areas, which range from a hospital to a retail shop.

Table 31. Communication with a hospital % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Without assistance, in Sign Language	6.5	8.3	2.3	0.0	4.28
Without assistance orally	51.6	4.2	47.7	65.0	42.13
With interpreter	32.3	8.3	29.5	35.0	26.28
Hearing relative or hearing acquaintance	54.8	4.2	25.0	45.0	32.25
Written	48.4	83.3	38.6	45.0	53.83
Other	6.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.63

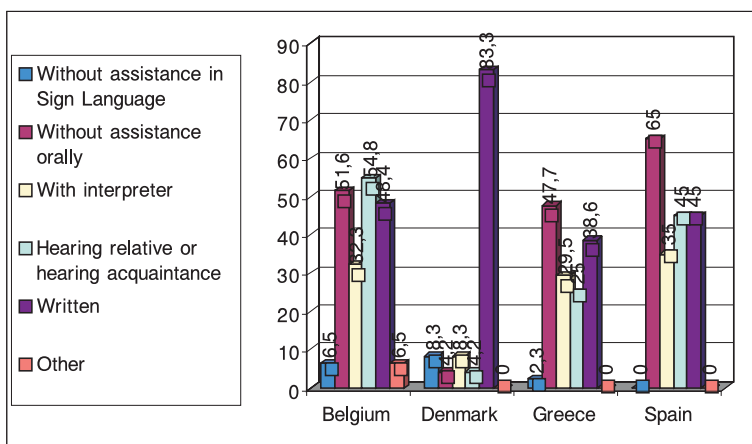


Chart 31

In a hospital all modes of communication are used with written mode being the most preferred especially in Denmark. It is followed by oral communication with no assistance used most often in Spain and least often in Denmark. The use of a hearing relative or acquaintance is also a highly selected option in most countries but not in Denmark. Finally, interpreters are also used but not in Den-

mark. Very few Deaf people dare to use sign language as their preferred mode of communication with a hospital in all countries studied.

Table 32. Communication with Transport firm (airport, railways, etc) % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Without assistance in Sign Language	18.5	7.4	0.0	0.0	6.48
Without assistance, orally	66.7	3.7	68.2	100.0	59.65
With interpreter	3.7	11.1	0.0	0.0	3.70
Hearing relative or hearing acquaintance	29.6	0.0	9.1	0.0	2.28
Written	74.1	81.5	50.0	84.2	72.45
Other	7.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.85

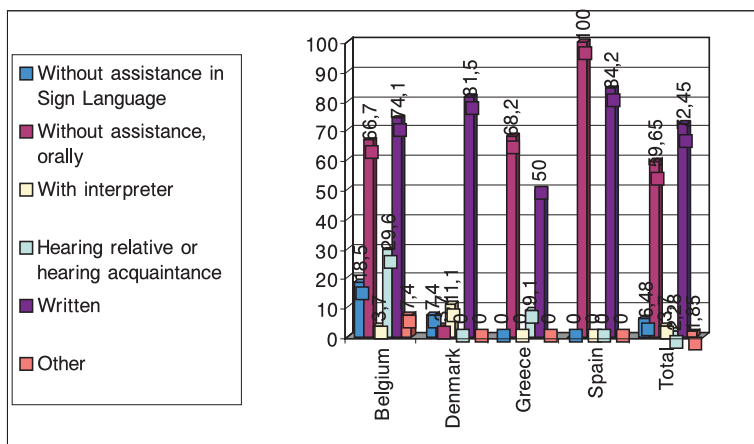


Chart 32

Table 32 shows that communication with a transport firm is done mainly in written mode of communication and is used mostly in Spain and least in Greece. It is followed by oral communication with no assistance mostly in Spain and less in Denmark. Very few Deaf people will use a relative or an interpreter in this service and, with the exception of Belgians, sign language is not used.

Table 33. Communication with pizzeria % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Without assistance, in Sign Language	17.9	16.7	0.0	0.0	8.65
Without assistance, orally	67.9	29.2	68.2	72.2	59.38
With interpreter	7.1	4.2	0.0	5.6	1.40
Hearing relative or hearing acquaintance	21.4	4.2	9.1	0.0	8.68
Written	71.4	54.2	38.6	33.3	49.38
Other	7.1	0.0	0.0	16.7	4.18

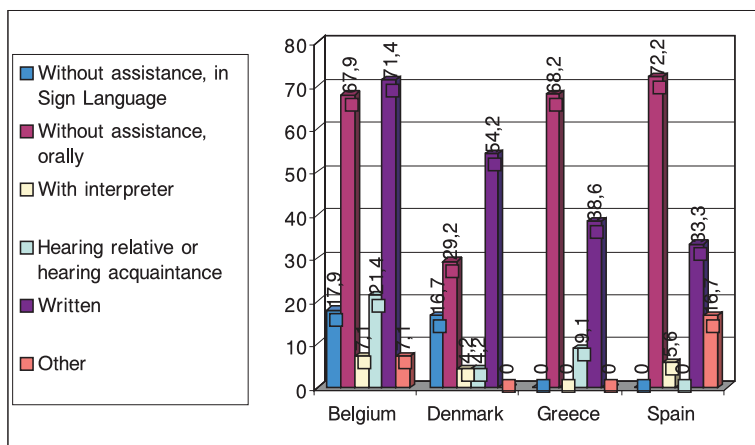
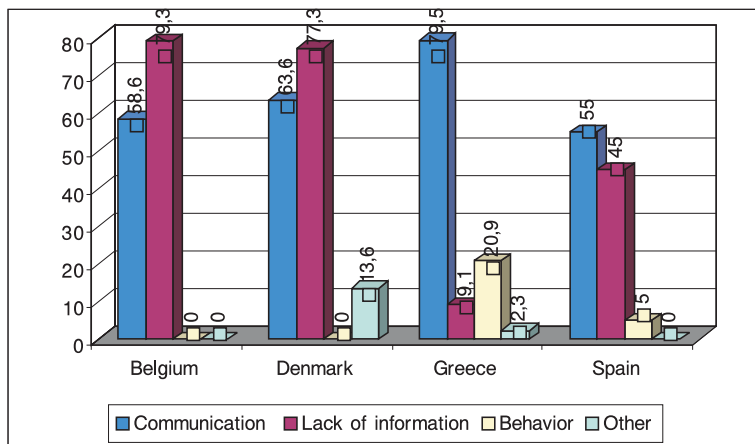
**Chart 33**

Table 33 shows that in a retail shop such as a pizza place Deaf people rely on oral communication for service followed by written communication. The use of sign language, interpreters or relatives is not a common choice. There is a clear difference however between countries: In Denmark oral communication is not widely used, while in Belgium they rely on written communication more than in any other country but they also use the biggest variety of possible modes, of all the countries. There is a significant use of sign language in Belgium and Denmark as compared with Greece and Spain.

In communicative conditions as mentioned above, it is not surprising to see that the most important problem Deaf people face is that of communication as indicated in Table 34. This is reported by all participants in all countries and in all areas of services.

Table 34. Problems in a hospital % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Communication	58.6	63.6	79.5	55.0	64.18
Lack of information	79.3	77.3	9.1	45.0	52.68
Behavior	0.0	0.0	20.9	5.0	6.48
Other	0.0	13.6	2.3	0.0	3.98

**Chart 34**

Another major problem reported is the lack of information that staff has about Deaf people and Deaf people have about the services offered. These two problems combined can actually make receiving services a very difficult task. In Greece the communication problem is stressed and the issue of negative behavior is reported more than in all other countries.

Table 35. Problems in public services (community, city) % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Communication	63.0	75.0	75.0	73.3	71.58
Lack of information	74.1	70.8	4.5	20.0	42.35
Behavior	0.0	0.0	15.9	6.7	6.48
Other	0.0	12.5	2.3	0.0	3.98

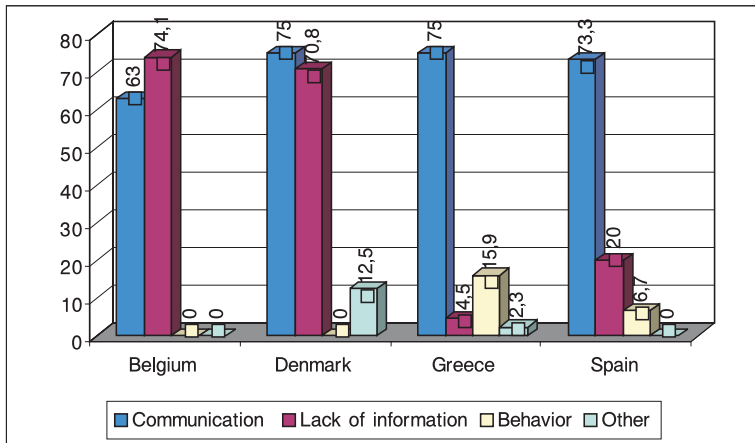


Chart 35

The findings for public services in Table 35 are consistent with and follow the patterns of the findings for hospitals.

Table 36. Problems in shops % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Communication	75.0	62.5	72.7	71.4	70.40
Lack of information	45.8	58.3	4.5	0.0	27.15
Behavior	0.0	0.0	2.3	14.3	4.15
Other	0.0	25.0	2.3	14.3	10.40

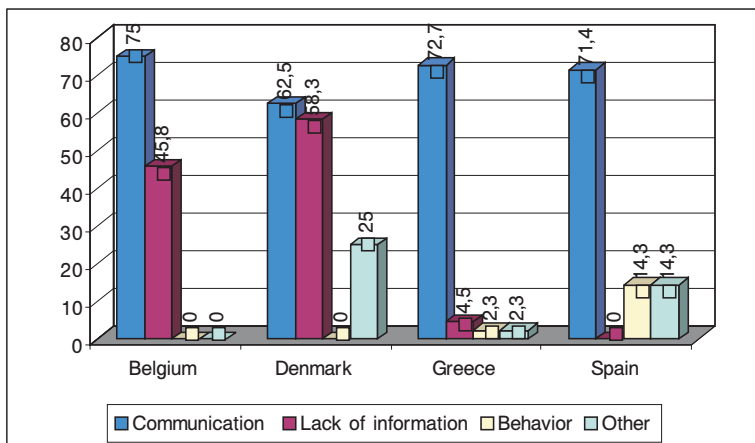


Chart 36

It is evident that in private establishments with lower importance of services there is less negative behaviour expressed. Lack of information is evidently an important issue for Denmark and Belgium, in contrast to Spain and Greece.

Interpreters have been called the bridge between Deaf and hearing. It is one of the most important issues that the two communities are faced with and the findings in table 37 are of extreme importance.

Table 37. Use of an interpreter % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
As needed	6.7*	96.3*	14.3*	35.0	34.5
Rarely	46.7*	3.7*	42.9	25.0	31.9
Never	23.3	0.0*	23.8	25.0	18.5
As often as I can	23.3	0.0*	19.0	15.0	15.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* $p < .001$

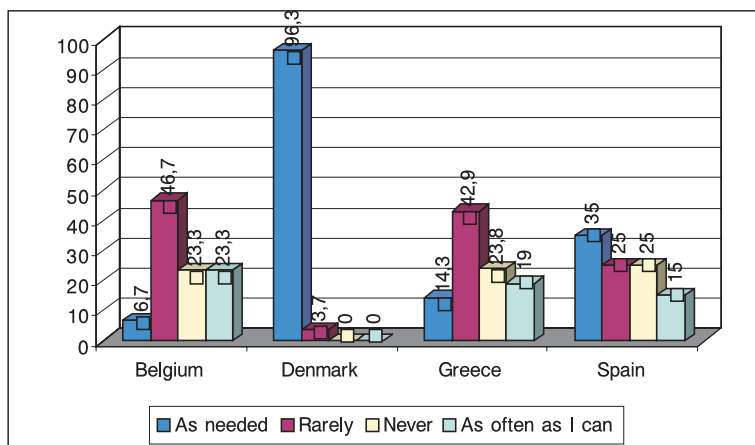


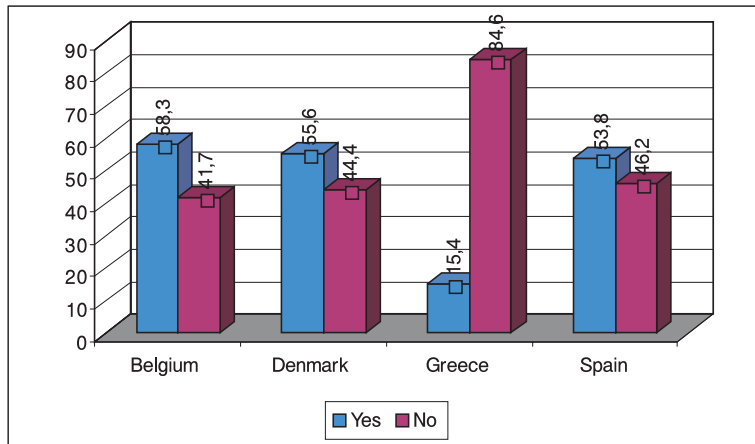
Chart 37

Overall, the results show that the use of an interpreter by a Deaf person is not clearly defined. The differences among the countries are significant and vary drastically ($X^2(9) = 64.62, p < 0.001$). Denmark demonstrates the best practice of all countries studied, which is consistent with previous findings. Belgium and Greece show the worst practice with a tremendous lack of interpreter use when needed. Spain seems to be developing its services but is still lacking in acceptable usage of interpreters.

Table 38. Is the amount of interpreting hours sufficient? % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Yes	58.3	55.6	15.4*	53.8	49.4
No	41.7	44.4	84.6	46.2	50.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* p<.05

**Chart 38**

The amount of interpreting hours is not sufficient for half of the Deaf population studied as shown in Table 38. Even the participants that receive interpreting services as needed, like the Danish, believe that the hours are not sufficient. There is a significant difference observed between the countries ($X^2(3) = 7.296$, $p < 0.05$) due to the Greeks who believe more than anyone else, that the amount of interpreting hours is not sufficient. The results here are not consistent with the amount of interpreting used and are probably due to the lack of information the Deaf community has about the need, use and availability of interpreters.

Table 39. Problems working with interpreters % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Not sticking to the appointments	0.0	8.0	4.5	5.0	4.38
Bad interpreting	50.0	38.5	29.5	53.3	42.83
Incorrect deontology	9.1	7.7	29.5	6.7	13.25
Bad signing	31.8	38.5	6.8	13.3	22.60
Lack of a general education	31.8	19.2	9.1	13.3	18.35
Bad national language	11.1	11.5	0.0	13.3	3.33
Not enough interpreters	72.7	88.5	9.1	40.0	52.58
Are too expensive	9.1	30.8	9.1	26.7	18.93

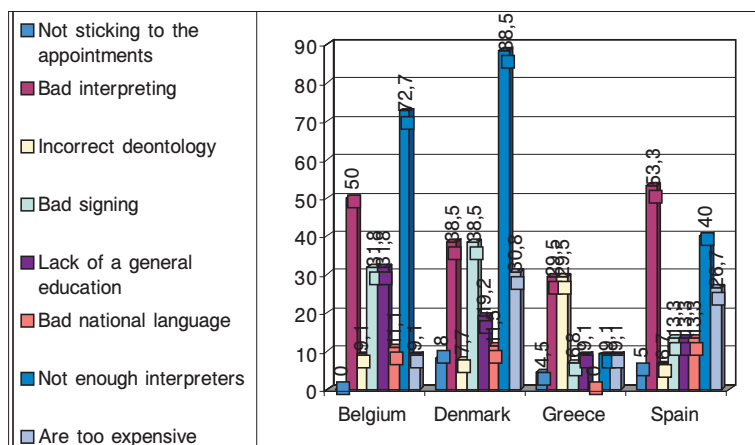
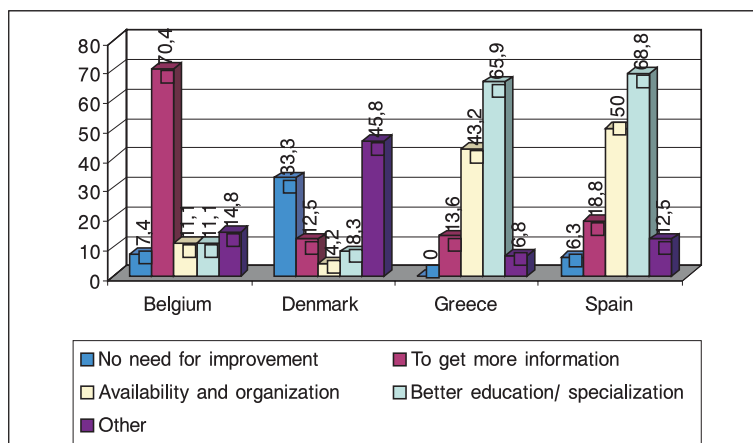
**Chart 39**

Table 39 shows that the Deaf communities studied face major and important problems with interpreters. The communities that use interpreters the most, Denmark and Belgium, are also the ones that realize the need for more. All communities report problems with bad interpreting. Interpreters demonstrate bad signing but better command of their national language. Their general education is reported as lacking especially in Belgium. Denmark and Spain note interpreters being too expensive. Sticking to appointments is not an important problem for the communities.

Table 40. Suggestions to improve the Interpreting Service % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
No need for improvement	7.4	33.3	0.0	6.3	11.8
To get more information	70.4	12.5	13.6	18.8	28.83
Availability and organization	11.1	4.2	43.2	50.0	27.13
Better education/ specialization	11.1	8.3	65.9	68.8	38.53
Other	14.8	45.8	6.8	12.5	19.98

**Chart 40**

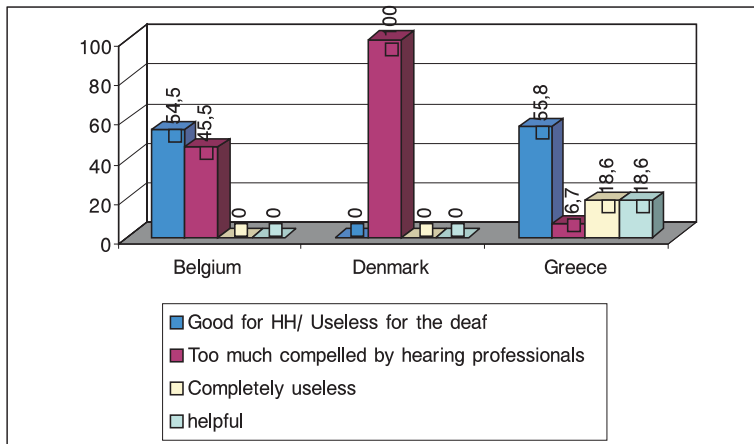
The Deaf communities that expressed their problems with interpreters have valuable suggestions for improving the interpreting service as described in Table 40. The focus of the suggestions is on better education and specialization of the interpreters especially in Spain and Greece. The Belgians want more informed interpreters whereas the Danes show a significant satisfaction and report no need for improvement. In Spain and Greece, there is a great need for improvement on availability and organization of interpreters and provision of their services. The suggestions for improvement are more than those mentioned and the Danes report them in detail, but we were not able to categorize them fully in this study.

Services in the category of technical aids are related to hearing and telecommunications. Two devices, hearing aids and bionic ear or cochlear implants, are corrective and two devices, cellular phones and TTY's, are alternative to voice communicative instruments.

Table 41. Opinion about Hearing aids % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Total
Good for HH/ Useless for the deaf	54.5	0.0	55.8	52.6
Too much compelled by hearing professionals	45.5*	100*	6.7*	19.3
Completely useless	0.0	0.0	18.6	14.0
helpful	0.0	0.0	18.6	14.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* p<.001

**Chart 41**

In Table 41 the Spanish participants did not respond to this question due to a translation problem in the questionnaire. The general opinion is that hearing aids are good for the Hard of Hearing but are useless for the Deaf. There is a significant difference observed between the countries ($X^2(6) = 24.286$, $p < 0.001$). Hearing aids are compelled too much by hearing professionals for the Danes. This opinion is partly shared by the Belgians. Some of the Greeks find them completely useless (18.6%), while the same percentage stands for those who find them helpful.

Table 42. Opinion about Bionic ear % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Opponent	87.5	70.4	90.9*	38.9*	77.0
Supporter	12.5	3.7	0.0*	16.7	6.2
Not sure	0.0*	25.9	9.1	44.4*	16.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* p<.001

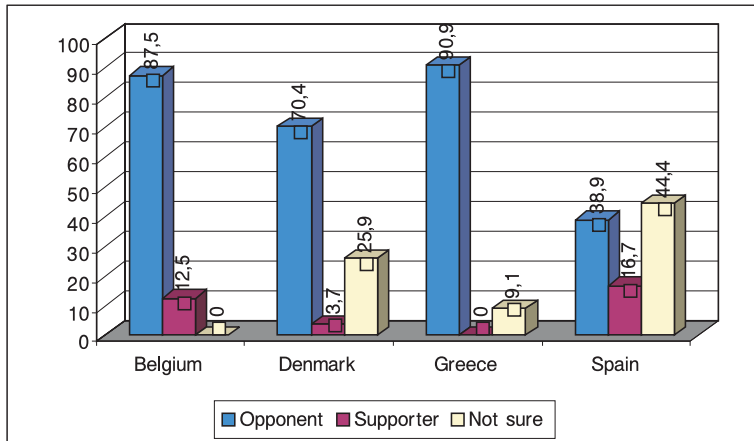


Chart 42

In Table 42 there is a strong opinion against bionic ear or cochlear implant by all Deaf communities: People strongly oppose it. There is however a significant difference observed between the countries ($X^2(6) = 27.82, p < 0.001$) because Greece and Belgium express their opposition clearly and Spain seems to be uncertain. For both corrective devices, the Deaf communities have negative opinions.

Table 43. Opinion about Ordinary cellular phone % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Extremely helpful	69.6	95.6*	88.6	63.2*	81.7
Helpful but very expensive	0.0	4.3	6.8	31.6*	9.2
Not necessary/ not wanted	30.4*	0.0	4.5	5.3	9.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* p<.001

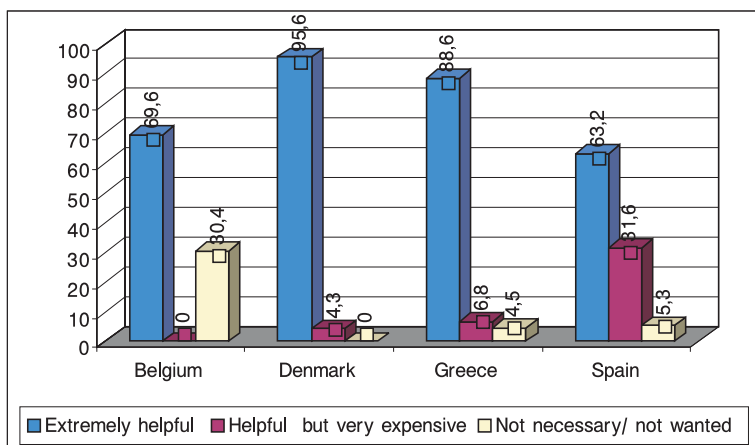
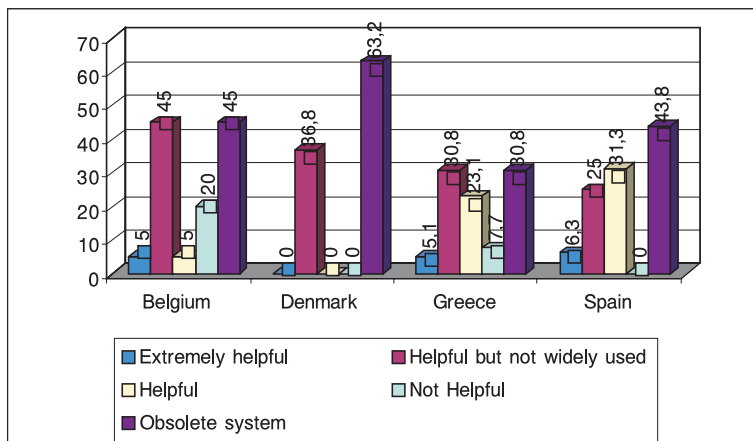
**Chart 43**

Table 43 shows that cellular phones seem to gain the support of Deaf communities in Europe. The Deaf participants in the countries studied find them extremely helpful. There is a significant difference observed between the countries ($X^2(6) = 30.165$, $p < 0.001$) because their usefulness is recognized by the Danes to a large degree whereas they are considered helpful but also very expensive in Spain. Belgians, more than any one else, do not find them necessary.

Table 44. Opinion about TTY % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Extremely helpful	5.0	0.0	5.1	6.3	2.85
Helpful but not widely used	45.0	36.8	30.8	25.0	34.40
Helpful	5.0	0.0	23.1	31.3	13.60
Not Helpful	20.0	0.0	7.7	0.0	1.93
Obsolete system	45.0	63.2	30.8	43.8	45.70

**Chart 44**

Did new technologies replace the oldest telecommunication device for the Deaf? Table 44 shows that the Deaf communities are split on this issue and find them obsolete and not widely used. They do report that TTYs are helpful, however.

The Deaf communities report a positive opinion about alternative technological aids that make their lives easier without trying to “correct” them.

Conclusion

Access to employment, continuous education and training as well as social life is not available to Deaf people. Deaf people encounter problems of communication and information with the transportation system, public services, shops, courts, and the police. The interpreting services are insufficient in terms of organization, quality and availability. Technological advancements that aid every day life of the Deaf are welcomed, whereas the ones simply aimed at correction of the hearing leave the Deaf indifferent or opposed.

SOCIAL

A set of 11 questions was used for the interviews to gather information about social life, beliefs and preferences of the participants.

Table 45. Feeling for identity % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Member of a minority group	22.6	40.7	72.7	45.0	45.25
Being disabled	19.4	3.7	2.3	20.0	11.35
Neither of these	0.0	0.0	13.6	20.0	8.40
Being different	0.0	0.0	2.3	30.0	8.08
Depends on the situation	61.3	55.6	9.1	10.0	34.00
Total	103.23	100.00	100.00	125.00	107.08

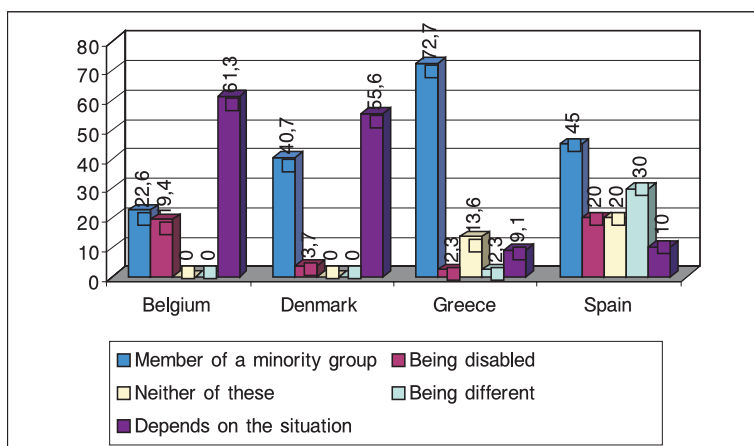


Chart 45

Table 45 indicates that members of the Deaf communities see themselves as members of a minority group especially in Greece. The social situation is an important factor that determines the identity of Deaf people and is expressed mainly by the Danes and the Belgians. Being disabled and different are also important factors especially for the Spanish.

Table 46. Do you consider yourself as bilingual? % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Yes	80.6	84.0	90.5*	40*	78.0
No	19.4	12.0	7.1*	45*	17.8
Not sure	0.0	4.0	2.4	15*	4.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* p<.001

In Table 46 being bilingual is a strong identification of the members of the Deaf community. There is however a significant difference observed between the countries ($X^2(6) = 23.321, p < 0.001$) because the Spaniards are divided on this issue and the Greeks seem to demonstrate the strongest opinion on bilingual identification.

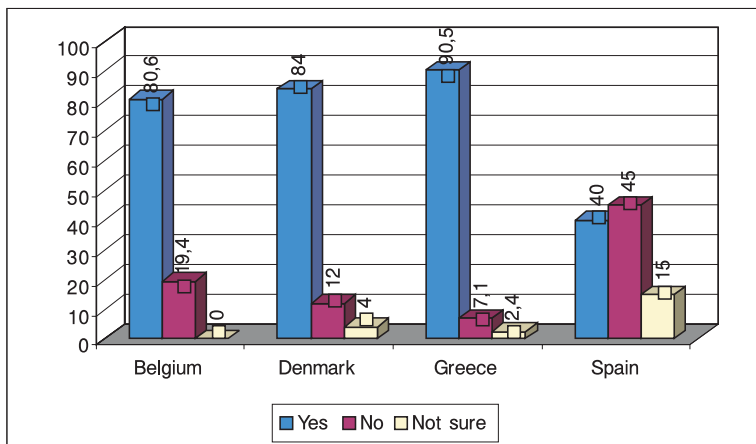
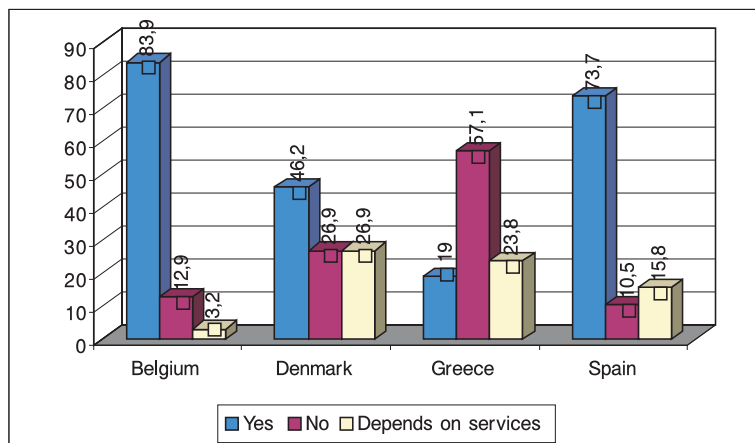


Chart 46

Table 47. Should Deaf people get financial support? % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Yes	83.9*	46.2	19.*	73.7*	50.8
No	12.9*	26.9	57.1*	10.5*	31.4
Depends on services	3.2*	26.9	23.8	15.8	17.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* p<.001

**Chart 47**

In Table 47 the majority of participants believe that Deaf people should receive financial support. However, there is a significant difference of opinion among the countries ($X^2(6) = 37.940, p < 0.001^{***}$). Belgian and Spanish participants are strongly in favor of financial support while Greek participants are opposed. It is also strongly proposed that financial support is not necessary, provided that adequate services are offered. This differentiation of opinion could be owed to policies in each country and/or self-identification.

On the issue of preference of living and socializing with Deaf or hearing people, we asked questions about people that the participants had no choice at all, about socializing with like parents and children, as well as people they can choose to some extent, like spouses and friends.

Table 48. Preference of a deaf or a hearing child % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Hearing	22.6	14.8	22.7	10.0	18.9
Deaf	12.9	7.4	29.5*	10.0	17.2
Doesn't matter	64.5	77.8	47.7*	80.0	63.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* p<.05

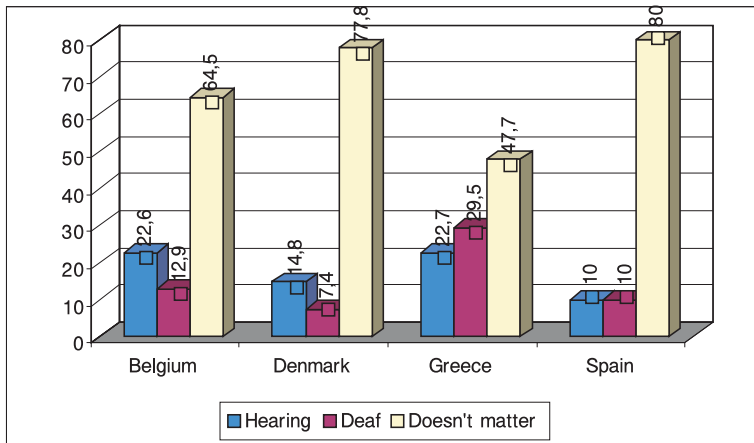
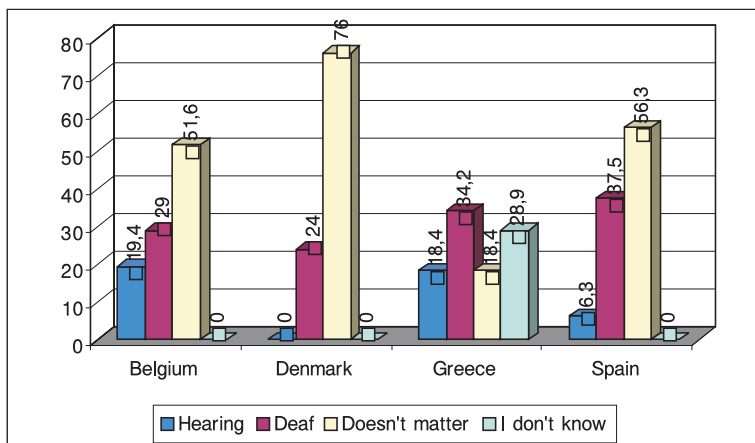


Chart 48

In Table 48 it doesn't matter to the Deaf community if their child is deaf or hearing. They would equally choose a deaf or hearing child. There is a significant difference observed between the countries ($X^2(6) = 11.405, p < 0.05$). Greek participants tend to prefer a deaf to a hearing child more than any one else. The qualitative analysis of the interviews reveals the reasons for the choices they have made. Although this analysis is not complete, we would like to share some of that reasoning. "Hearing, because I don't want her to go through what I went through", "Deaf, just like me. I can help him more, he will be accepted from birth", "It doesn't matter, as long as she is healthy".

Table 49. Preference of Deaf or hearing parents % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Hearing	19.4	0*	18.4	6.3	12.7
Deaf	29.0	24.0	34.2	37.5	30.9
Doesn't matter	51.6	76*	18.4*	56.3	46.4
I don't know	0.0	0.0	28.9*	0.0	10.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* $p < .001$ **Chart 49**

The main trend in Table 49 is that hearing status does not matter. It is followed by the preference for Deaf parents and finally, although 80% of the participants had hearing parents, only a 12,7% preference for hearing parents. There is a significant difference observed between the countries ($X^2(9) = 39.026, p < 0.001$) because this issue matters more to the Greeks and less to the Danes. It is important to mention that there is no significant difference observed on the choice of Deaf parents between all participants.

Table 50. Preference of Deaf or hearing spouse % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Hearing	9.7	16.0	9.1	5.0	10.0
Deaf	58.1	44.0	63.6	55.0	56.7
Doesn't matter	32.3*	36*	2.3*	10.0	18.3
Depends on communication	0*	4.0	25*	30*	15.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* p<.001

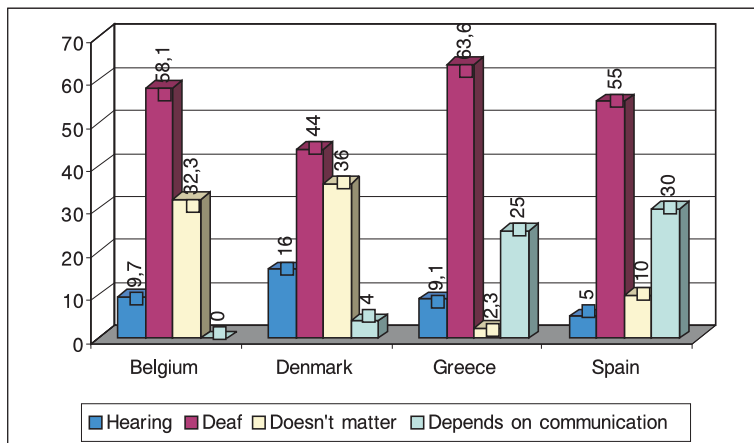
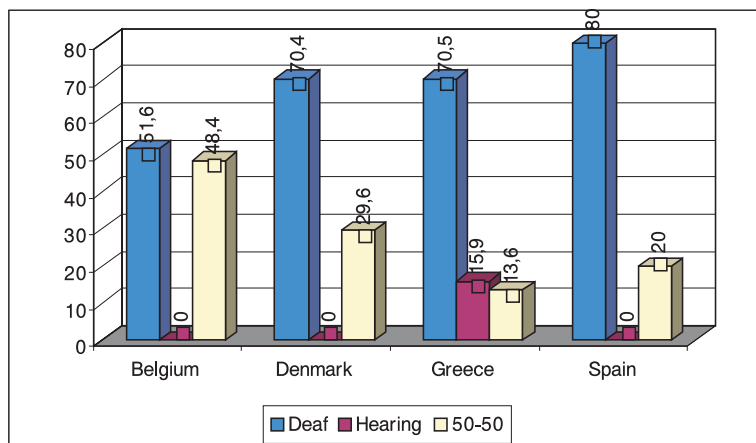


Chart 50

There is a strong preference in Table 50 for a spouse choice. Only 10% of the participants prefer a hearing spouse, whereas 56.7% prefer a Deaf spouse. The difference observed between the countries is significant ($X^2(9) = 29.628, p < 0.001$). This issue is of great significance for the Greek and Spanish participants who report the condition of communication as a factor for their choice.

Table 51. Deaf or hearing friends % within country

	Belgium	Denmark	Greece	Spain	Total
Deaf	51.6*	70.4	70.5	80.0	67.2
Hearing	0.0	0.0	15.9*	0.0	5.7
50-50	48.4*	29.6	13.6*	20.0	27.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* $p < .001$ **Chart 51**

Deaf people have mostly Deaf friends. They also have hearing friends as well. The issue of “social isolation” or a “ghetto” seems not to hold true in the Deaf communities studied. There is a significant difference observed in Table 51 between the countries ($X^2(6) = 22.705, p < 0.001$) on the preference of Deaf or hearing friends. The Belgians associate significantly more with hearing people than any other group, and there is a group of Greek participants that report to have more hearing than Deaf friends.

Conclusion

Deaf people consider themselves members of a linguistic and cultural minority group. They report that their language is oppressed, not recognized and not widely used. As long as their language is not recognized by the hearing establishment the Deaf will continue to face discrimination and remain excluded from basic social rights that the members of the dominant hearing community enjoy as given.

Deaf people need the recognition of their sign languages and every opportunity to use them, teach them in a continuous way, do research on them, and

develop them further. Organizations of the Deaf constitute centers of reference and support for their members. The majority of the hearing community is poorly informed about the Deaf. When Deaf people have a choice, they tend to choose to be with other Deaf people. They are not negative about socializing with hearing people but the level and the effectiveness of that socialization depends on bilateral effective communication where sign language plays the dominant role.

A General Concluding Note

Our approach in this study is to look at the conditions in which Deaf people live not from the outside but rather from within of their communities. The identification of conditions that constitute direct or indirect discrimination was the focus of our study.

The data collected from this study is larger than reported here. We have presented a clear case of the discriminatory barriers Deaf people face in Belgium, Denmark, Greece and Spain. There is no need to repeat them collectively here. They are presented in the study and the Guideline of Good Practices that follows. In this guideline, the present results are used to formulate the good practices the Deaf communities are suggesting.

Improving the social environment for the Deaf and eliminating all forms of discrimination depends on the improvement of accessibility and other factors that are now preventing rather than encouraging social inclusion. Social inclusion will become reality only through the adoption of a full and integrated approach consistent with various aspects of everyday life including education, transportation, structured environment, technical assistance and the Society of Information.

We are thoroughly convicted to the belief that all people involved will pay attention to what the communities are suggesting to create a better tomorrow for both the hearing and the Deaf communities of Europe.

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