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AN ERASMUS PROJECT

# Dyslexia@work.EU

Progetto Erasmus+

Phase 2 – Action Research

Dyslexia@Work - Erasmus+ KA2 project (no. 2019-1-IT01-KA202-007433)





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## Erasmus+ Project

### Dyslexia@work.EU – Action Research

#### INTRODUCTION

European citizens with learning difficulties such as dyslexia represent between 3 and 12% of the population with sometimes significant differences between countries (European Dyslexia Association - EDA - <https://eda-info.eu/what-is-dyslexia/>). Dyslexia, which is the most frequent profile, is included among specific learning disorders (SLD), together with dysorthography, dyscalculia and dysgraphia. These profiles have long been considered purely educational challenges. However, the reality is that these SLD's persist throughout a person's life and can lead to obstacles and difficulties even in adulthood and one's professional life. Nevertheless, dyslexia in adults, and even more so in the workforce, remains little recognized or analysed. On a European and international level, there is a lack of shared procedures, where workers with SLDs do not benefit from any specific protection. Those working in the job placement sector often demonstrate a complete lack of familiarity with the profiles of people with SLDs .

Furthermore, even within the scientific world there have been few studies which have investigated this phenomenon within the workforce. Studies have focused particularly on exploring the reasons behind professional failure, and as a result, the negative impacts of being dyslexic in the workforce (De Beer et al., 2104). Few studies have delved into the factors and good practices that would favour professional success for those with SLDs. In general, we can easily identify individual difficulties directly linked to the disorder, as well as environmental obstacles and barriers. In terms of individual difficulties, there are numerous studies which confirm the impact the disorder has in the various stages of one's professional life (from the transitional period of school to work and job choice, to one's professional development and growth), precisely with regard to specific work activities and work sectors (McLoughlin, 2018; Taylor, 2017; Amanda Kirby, 2014; de Beer et al., 2014; McLoughlin & Leather, 2013; Hyland & Rutigliano, 2013; Macdonald , 2009; Sylvia Moody, 2009;



Bartlett, Moody & Kindersley, 2010; Ghidoni, 2011; Alexander-Passe, 2006; Morris & Turnbull, 2006; Reid, 2001; Kortering & Braziel, 2000; Hitchings & Retish 2000; Michaels, 1997; Ohler, Levinson & Barker 1996; Rojewski, 1996).

Research carried out on environmental obstacles and barriers is virtually non-existent. In fact, a recent English study highlighted the lack of knowledge and awareness on the subject in the workplace. It revealed the use of discriminatory and disabling selection procedures and methodologies as they are based on a neurotypical model (Hewlett, Cooper & Jameson, 2018).

From a legal standpoint, a common frame of reference is lacking, and even the definition of the profile itself is not clear-cut. A substantial difference involves the mere inclusion of dyslexia as a disability. In fact, dyslexia is considered a disability in all countries that participated in the study, with the exception of Italy. With regard to the workplace, the assessment carried out in Phase 1 of the project Dyslexia@work.EU, revealed variation in their legislation and policy in all participating countries (France, Italy, Malta, Ireland, the United Kingdom) in relation specifically to dyslexia (see comparative report, Erasmus, 2021).

SLDs are characterised by specific difficulties in reading, writing and calculation skills. These difficulties can mask the multiple strengths and positive unique features that those with an SLD often possess, such as the ability to think in images, their sense of creativity, their ability to see things from different and unconventional perspective (divergent thinking), and their strong sense of determination, motivation and commitment.

Therefore, in the current situation, the risk lies in applying discriminatory practices and methodologies, which are inadequate in guiding one towards appropriate professional goal setting. Furthermore, these practices and methodologies could result in unsuitable applications for assessing a worker's real skills and potential, thus failing to offer effective adjustments.

The European Erasmus project + Dyslexia@work.EU brings together associations and researchers from five countries (France, Italy, Malta, Ireland, the United Kingdom). Its main objective is the facilitation of access to employment for people with dyslexia, and in particular to improve the skills and professional development of those responsible for managing the human resources on the subject of dyslexia and inclusion in the world of work.



This report is part of the second phase of the project called Action Research. The aim is to bring to light knowledge, skills and good practices in terms of dyslexia and SLDs by workers and professionals who work in various capacities within companies and employment agencies in the five participating countries.

For this purpose, a group of researchers belonging to different partners of the project, developed a structured interview (Appendices A and B) aimed at a total of 106 participating companies and employment agencies in the various participating countries.

This survey allowed us to identify:

- the level of knowledge and skills on dyslexia and SLDs
- any practices and methodologies adopted in the orientation process, selection, management and development of personnel

The results of this study, together with what emerged in the first phase of the project, represent the starting point in defining guidelines and operational indications to implement orientation methodologies, selection, management and development of personnel that are *dyslexia friendly*.

## METHOD

### Study Design

This was a mixed method, quantitative and qualitative (QN + QL), study design conducted to identify a set of good practices, methodologies and tools used among companies, recruiters, public and private employment services, in the phases of job search and selection of persons with dyslexia and the awareness of Specific Learning Disorder in the workplace.

### Setting and Sample

The research involved 106 institutions of which 75 (70,8%) were companies and 31 (29,2%) agencies. The participants were from five countries: France (22,6%), Italy (25,5%), Ireland (21,7%), Malta (7,5%) and United Kingdom (22,6%). Medium and large companies and agencies were involved in the survey. This study used convenience sampling, including all respondents who gave their consent to be included in the survey.



## Measurements

### *Quantitative questions (QN)*

There were two versions of the questionnaire (Appendices A and B) used, one for companies and the other for agencies. Both questionnaires included nine General questions (e.g., *Do you know of anyone in your immediate circle with dyslexia? Do you have an estimate of how many employees in your organization have formally disclosed they have dyslexia?*); Questions addressing good practice (e.g., *Are applicants asked to declare if they have any neuro-diverse profiles or disability or a condition that requires additional supports? What types of supports / accommodations do you put in place for recruitment and selection processes? What types of supports do you put in place for the job?* ); questions exploring awareness of dyslexia in the organization (e.g., *Do you provide information on support available for dyslexia in any of the following places? What kind of training or awareness raising do you provide around dyslexia?*); and questions addressing Views on legislative environment (e.g., *Is there in your country a law related to dyslexia? Has your organization had legal or HR issues related to an employee with dyslexia?*)

### *Qualitative open questions (QL)*

To complete the survey, participants had to respond to three open questions:

- 1) *If the government could change one thing to make it easier to employ someone with dyslexia what would it be?*
- 2) *What is the one piece of advice you would give to an organization looking to improve the way it supports employees with dyslexia?*
- 3) *Do you have any final thoughts you feel we should reflect in the findings of this research project?*



### **Data Collection**

Data were collected between September and December 2020. The MSH Lyon St-Etienne, the University of Lyon and The French Federation of Dyslexia (DFDys-) handled the data collection phase for this project. The researchers in each of the participating countries carried out the telephone interviews by entering the answers directly into a platform created specifically for this survey.

Respondents received a copy of the questionnaire by e-mail a few days before the telephone appointment. In the introduction to the questionnaire, the purpose of the study was explained. Before answering the questionnaire, everyone was informed about the purpose and confidentiality obligations as per the General Data Protection Regulation for EU Member States ('GDPR' Regulation (EU) 2016/679). All participants declared informed consent. The whole process of the survey was conducted anonymously and all socio-demographic information were kept confidential.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis was carried out using both a quantitative and a qualitative approach. In the first study, the statistical data were analyzed using Gnu PSPP for Windows. The participants' general characteristics were analyzed with descriptive statistics. In order to provide a basic picture of the interrelation between studied variables, contingency tables tests were used. In the second study, a qualitative approach was assumed, related to the Grounded theory (GT) (Strauss & Corbin, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1998); or more correctly to the Grounded theory methodology (GTM) (Charmaz, 2006). This methodology was considered most appropriate since the answers to the open questions required a qualitative approach. The answers to the open questions were analyzed with MAXQDA software for qualitative data analysis (VERBI Software, 2019), according to the CAQDA (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis) approach (Lee & Fielding, 2004). The qualitative database reported the following elements:

- 8592 words in 106 documents;
- 73 Maxqda Codes;
- 1324 coded segments;
- 30 Conceptual maps (Maxmaps).

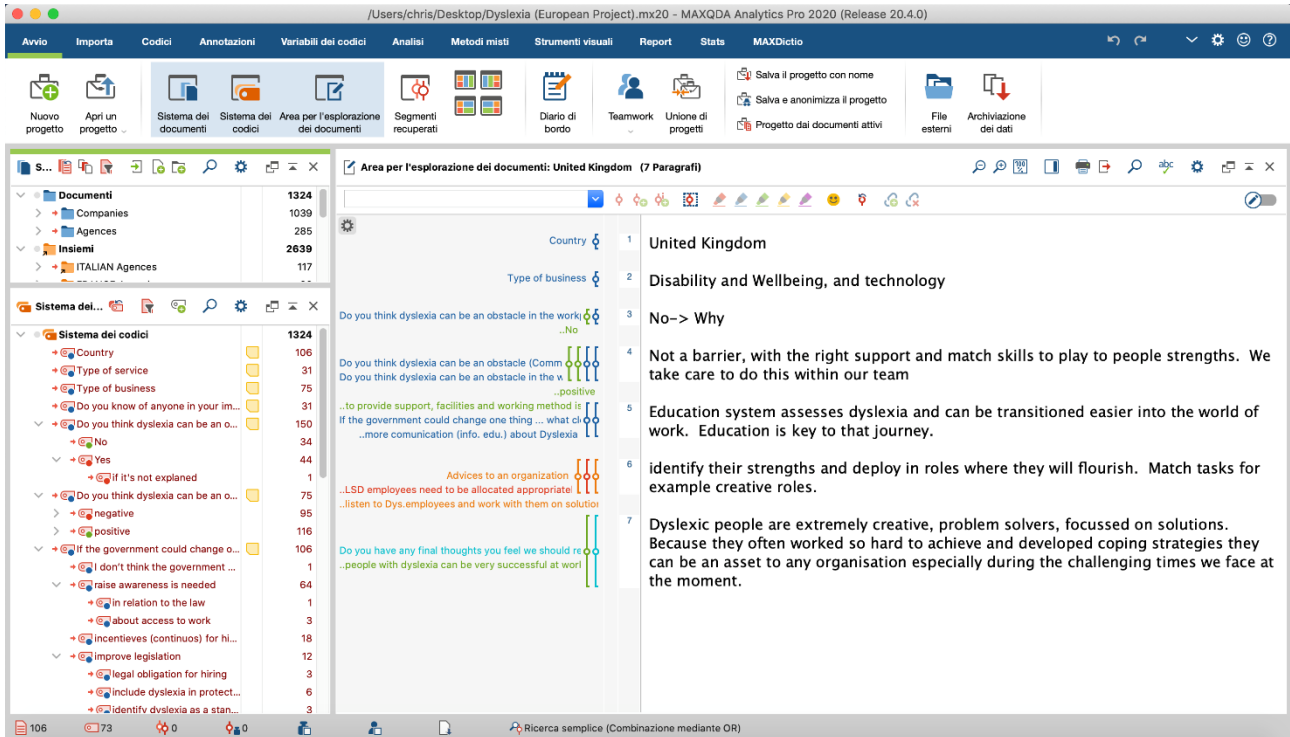


Fig. 1 – Maxqda screenshot with the part of the coded text

The decision to use this software in qualitative data processing was made on the basis of the need to make the researchers' work more objective, as MAXQDA allows for systematic and rigorous data management.





## RESULTS

The presentation of the results below has been organised, first and foremost, according to the institution to which the respondents belong, i.e. companies and agencies, then according to the specific section of the questionnaire, specifically: General Questions, Good Practices, Awareness of Specific Learning Disorders in the Company/Agency, Considerations on a Legislative Scope, Final Considerations.

### Companies

As regards the sample of companies, Figure 2 in Appendix C shows the distribution of contributions from the various participating countries.

The total number of companies involved in the study is 75: 22 English companies (29.3% of the sample), 20 French (26.7% of the sample), 17 Irish (22.7% of the sample), 11 Italian (14.7% of the sample) and 5 Maltese (6.7% of the sample). When viewing the spread across countries of the number of participants, one also needs to take into consideration the population size of each country and that this distribution reflects this reality.

From the findings obtained, taking into consideration the first section of the questionnaire entitled **General Questions**, the data indicate that 72% of the respondents know someone, such as a relative or acquaintance, who has a specific learning disorder (SLD), for instance dyslexia.

Among the companies interviewed, only 24% had an estimate of dyslexic workers who have formally declared the disorder in the workplace; 48% stated that they do not have this estimate, while the remaining 28% asserted that no employee has formally declared to have the disorder (fig. 3 in Appendix C)

Figure 4 in Appendix C shows that it appears that only companies from the United Kingdom (8 companies out of 22), France (6 companies out of 20) and Ireland (4 companies out of 17) are aware of employees with dyslexia in their organisation.

With regard to **Good Practices**, the first data obtained concern the candidate's opportunity to declare the presence of a disability, neurodiversity or a condition that requires additional support. Figure 5 (Appendix C) presents the differences between countries. Unlike Italy, France and Malta, the United Kingdom and Ireland have both implemented this practice in more than half of the companies surveyed.



Most companies (80%) do not provide for personnel recruitment or selection procedures that take into account the possible presence of candidates with SLDs. If we take individual countries into consideration, none of the Maltese companies interviewed have specific procedures; on the other hand, 1 out of 11 Italian companies, 1 out of 20 French companies, 4 out of 17 Irish companies and 7 out of 22 English companies made such provisions (Fig. 6, Appendix C).

With regard to recruitment and selection processes, 65.3% of the total cases include reading and writing tasks, or timed tests. However, upon closer inspection of the situation in individual countries, only Italy opposes this trend, with 8 out of 11 companies declaring that they do not require reading or writing tasks, or timed tests as part of the recruitment and selection process (Fig. 7, Appendix C).

With regard to the possibility of declaring the disorder during selection interviews, the situation appears varied (Fig. 8, Appendix C). In general, with the exception of France, companies are willing to offer this opportunity during selection interviews.

As for the type of support and adjustments in the selection phase, a variety of differences between countries emerge. The question *What types of support/adjustments are made available to the candidate in the selection process?* provided for different answer options as well as an item entitled 'other', in which respondents could write in their own answer:

- possible additional time for written tests
- use of a computer
- flexibility in spelling errors in written work
- use of assistive technologies
- providing the questions in advance that will be asked during the interview/selection interview
- providing a written copy of the interview questions for the candidate to refer to during the interview
- designing recruitment and selection procedures suitable to candidates with specific learning disorders
- I don't know
- none



Twelve out of 22 UK companies affirmed that they do grant additional time; 13 stated that they do grant the use of a computer; 10 asserted that they are flexible with spelling errors in written work; 13 affirmed that they allow the use of assistive technologies; 11 companies provided candidates with the planned questions prior to the selection interview, also in written copy; 6 companies stated that they design recruitment and selection procedures suitable to candidates with SLDs. Finally, 3 out of the 22 UK companies interviewed declared that they did not provide any support during the selection phase.

Nine out of 17 Irish companies affirmed that they do grant additional time; 9 stated that they do grant the use of a computer; 6 asserted that they are flexible with spelling errors in written work; 9 affirmed that they allow the use of assistive technologies; 4 companies provided candidates with the planned questions prior to the selection interview, also in written copy; 5 companies stated that they design recruitment and selection procedures suitable to candidates with SLDs. Finally, only 1 out of the 17 Irish companies interviewed declared that they did not provide any support during the selection phase.

With regard to France, only 3 out of 20 companies affirmed that they do grant additional time; 1 stated that they do grant the use of a computer; 4 asserted that they are flexible with spelling errors in written work; none affirmed that they allow the use of assistive technologies; 6 companies provided candidates with the planned questions prior to the selection interview, also in written copy; no companies stated that they design recruitment and selection procedures suitable to candidates with SLDs. Finally, 6 companies declared that they did not know if specific support or adjustments are provided during the selection phase.

Most Italian companies (9 out of 11) affirmed that they do not provide any support or adjustments in the recruitment and selection phase. Only one company declared that it did allow additional time for written tests and in one other case the company stated that it was flexible with spelling errors in written work.

Less Maltese companies (2 out of 5) affirmed that they do not provide any support or adjustments in the selection phase. One company declared that it does not know if support and adjustments are provided; whilst one company noted additional time granted for written tests; two companies declared that they allow the use of a computer; one company affirmed that it is flexible in terms of spelling errors and two



stated that they allow the use of assistive technologies.

Finally, an analysis of the answers under the item "other" yielded an interesting fact from Irish companies. Compared to other countries, Irish companies indicate multiple types of support and adjustments granted in the selection phase to candidates with SLDs (Fig. 9, Appendix C)

68% of the companies interviewed stated that they promote inclusion policies (Fig. 10, Appendix C). This trend prevails in the UK, France and Ireland (Fig. 11, Appendix C), while Italy and Malta show an opposite trend.

Furthermore, with the exception of Malta and Italy, companies provide for a specific structure or person who is responsible for diversity, disability and neurodiversity (Fig. 12, Appendix C).

For the section of the questionnaire entitled ***Awareness of Specific Learning Disorders in the Company***, this reports focuses on the answers provided for three questions concerning respectively, the availability of information on the support provided for workers with SLDs; training or awareness-raising activities on the subject carried out within the company; and finally the perception of SLDs as an obstacle in the workplace.

The question "*Is information provided on the types of support available to workers with specific learning disorders at the following levels?*" several response options were available:

- as part of the application process
- before selection interviews
- as part of the information contained in the onboarding plan
- on the corporate intranet or equivalent
- upon request to a line manager
- upon request to the Human Resources Department
- we do not provide any information or support
- I don't know

UK Companies reported providing information upon request to a line manager in 14 out of 22 cases; upon request to the human resources department in 12 out of 22 cases; as part of the information contained in the onboarding plan in 10 cases; on the corporate intranet in 10 cases; as part of the application process in 6 cases and before the



selection interviews in 8 cases. Only 1 of the companies interviewed declared that it does not provide any type of information.

Companies interviewed in Ireland reported providing information upon request to a line manager in 15 out of 17 cases; upon request to the human resources department in 14 cases; as part of the information contained in the onboarding plan in 6 cases; on the corporate intranet in 4 cases; as part of the application process in 4 cases and before the selection interviews in 4 cases. Also in this case, only 1 of the companies interviewed declared that it does not provide any type of information.

Five French companies declared that they do not provide information. In 9 out of the 20 cases, companies declared providing information upon request to the human resources department; 7 upon request to a line manager; 7 on the corporate intranet; as part of the information contained in the onboarding process in 7 cases; as part of the application process in 4 cases and before the selection interviews in 4 cases.

As for Italy, only 2 out of 11 companies declared that they provide information upon request to the human resources department, while in 1 case it is provided on the company intranet.

Companies interviewed in Malta revealed that 2 out of the 5 companies provide information upon request to the human resources department.

The second question concerned training or awareness-raising activities on the subject carried out within the company ("*What type of training or awareness-raising activities are provided on the subject of dyslexia and specific learning disorders?*"). The response options were:

- none
- an awareness-raising session is held at least once a year, which is open to all staff
- training courses, open to all staff, are held at least once a year
- all line managers receive training on dyslexia and specific learning disorders
- all human resources staff receive training on dyslexia and specific learning disorders

Taking into consideration only the "none" answer option (Fig. 13, Appendix C), it can be seen that, unlike Italy and Malta, more than half of the French, English and Irish companies carry out training or awareness-raising activities on the issue.

In response to the question "*Do you think that dyslexia can be an obstacle in the workplace?*", figure 14 in Appendix C shows the total and singular distribution for each country.



The same question attempted to clarify the answer by specifying why it was considered an obstacle or, conversely, why it was not considered such.

The qualitative analysis of these answers (Fig. 15, Appendix C), reveals how many times a certain reason was given (Figure in brackets for each label) and the level of saturation (more intense label colour).

Figure 15 illustrates that those who consider SLDs an obstacle in the workplace (28 out of 75 respondents) declared that in most cases this depends on a lack of awareness and understanding of the topic. Those who do not consider SLDs an obstacle (44 out of 75 respondents) declared in 15 cases that this depends on a lack of awareness due to the non-declaration of the disorder by the worker.

As for the section of the questionnaire entitled **Considerations on a Legislative Scope**, the analysis of the answers to the question "*Is there a law on dyslexia and specific learning disorders in your country?*", ascertained that 53.3% of the interviewees were familiar with the existence of a law related to SLDs (Fig. 16, Appendix C).

However, it is important to consider that the question did not specify whether there was a law

specifically for workplace protection. Therefore, the answers collected are not particularly useful to the objectives of this discussion.

Regarding the section of the questionnaire entitled **Final Considerations**, a qualitative analysis of the answers was carried out, since the questions allowed exclusively for open answers.

Qualitative analysis offers information which attempts to describe, rather than measure the topic, with the goal being that of collecting reasons, opinions and points of view regarding the research questions.

The Concept Map in Figure 17 (Appendix C) reports the answers collected from the Italian companies to the question "*If the government could change one thing in order to facilitate hiring people with specific learning disorders, such as dyslexia, what would it be?*" reveals three prevalent responses:

- the need for specific training on specific learning disorders in companies (answer provided 17 times)
- to improve the existing legislation so that mandatory hiring occurs just as for those within protected categories (answer provided 6 times)
- to guarantee companies with hiring incentives (answer provided 6 times)



Companies from the United Kingdom answered “the need for greater awareness on the issue” 19 times (Fig. 18, Appendix C). As for France (Fig. 19, Appendix C), the answers most often given were:

- the need for greater awareness on the issue (answer given 13 times)
- finding solutions (answer given 7 times) in terms of more information on the subject, personalised support and early diagnosis
- the need for specific training on specific learning disorders in companies (answer provided 5 times).

In the case of Ireland (Fig. 20, Appendix C), the following answers prevailed:

- the need for greater awareness on the issue (answer given 18 times)
- the need for specific training on specific learning disorders in companies (answer provided 9 times)
- to guarantee companies with hiring incentives (answer provided 8 times)

Maltese companies noted "the need for greater awareness on the issue" in 10 cases (Fig. 21, Appendix C).

Finally, if we consider the aggregate data, the answer “the need for greater awareness on the issue” clearly prevails, which was given a total of 51 instances (Fig. 22, Appendix C).

### **Agencies**

Figure 23 in Appendix D presents the distribution of contributions from the various agencies from participating countries. The total number of companies involved in the study is 31: 13 Italian (41.9%), 7 French (22.6%), 6 Irish (19.4%), 3 Maltese (9.7%) and 2 English (6.5%).

Considering the limited sample and differences, in terms of the source of the contributions, which imply a poor representation of the sample, this report focuses on the analysis of the aspects considered most relevant for the purposes of this discussion.

The first data analysed concern the type of service offered, namely public or private.

Figure 24 in Appendix D presents the distribution of responses for each country.

Figure 25 in Appendix D reports the distribution of the answers regarding the number of people who use job placement services offered in a year, with regard to the section of the questionnaire entitled **General Questions**.



Only 1 UK agency answered affirmatively to the question *"Are there employers who specifically request candidates with a specific learning disorder (SLD), such as dyslexia?"* (Fig. 26, Appendix D).

As regards the section of the questionnaire entitled **Good Practices**, responses to the question *"Are users asked to declare whether they have a neurodiverse profile, disability or a condition that requires additional support?"* are as follows: 18 agencies answered affirmatively, 12 answered "no" and 1 did not answer (Fig. 27, Appendix D). Considering solely the Italian situation, which represents the largest subgroup (tot = 13), there are only 4 agencies that confirmed asking people to declare any condition that may require support.

In terms of the possible application of specific procedures for those with SLDs, as emerged in the company interviews, most agencies surveyed also stated that they do not have such procedures in place (Fig. 28, Appendix D). The English agencies proved to be the one exception. Although the sample is by no means representative, both English agencies interviewed stated that they do put into practice specific procedures for those with SLDs.

In the section of the questionnaire that examined the **Awareness of Specific Learning Disorders in the Agency**, respondents were asked if they had received training on SLDs. Figure 29 in Appendix D presents the distribution of responses for each country. In general, an almost total absence of training is identified: out of the 31 agencies interviewed, only 8 affirmed that they had received training on the subject. If we consider Italian agencies, which represent the largest subgroup (13), there is a total absence of training on the subject.

Responses to the question *"Do you think that specific learning disorders, such as dyslexia can be an obstacle in searching for a job?"* are as follows: 19 agencies considered SLDs to be an obstacle in finding a job; 9 agencies did not consider SLDs to be an obstacle and 3 stated that they did not know (Fig. 30, Appendix D).

Finally, for the last section of the questionnaire on **Final Considerations**, this report analyses the question *"If the government could change one thing to facilitate the hiring of people with a specific learning disorders, such as dyslexia, what would it be? "*





From the qualitative analysis of the data obtained, we will focus on the following dimensions (Fig. 31, Appendix D):

- the need for specific training on dyslexia that could raise awareness
- improving legislation by possibly including dyslexia as part of a protected category, yet as a distinct category from disability
- solutions could be summarized with more information on dyslexia in order to implement a standardised process and approach in the company's recruitment phase by proposing customised processes and procedures for dyslexic workers

## **DISCUSSION**

The results present a picture of the current knowledge and management situation of workers with SLDs in the workplace in the various participating countries: the United Kingdom, Ireland, France, Italy and Malta. Although differences between the countries have emerged amongst some of the aspects analysed, the results nevertheless show a rather homogenous trend.

Considering the sample of companies, the first common aspect to all these countries concerns the fact that the companies interviewed do not have an estimate of employees with SLDs, nor do they provide specific actions or moments for disclosing such during the recruitment and selection phase. In general, it is up to the candidate/worker to decide if and when to disclose their profile. Respondents identified the interview phase as the most appropriate time for such a declaration. Another common aspect is the absence of recruitment and selection procedures specifically aimed at candidates with SLDs, despite the fact that in more than half of the cases selection involves written and timed tests.

Some substantial differences concern providing support and adjustments to the recruitment and selection phase. In particular, the United Kingdom and Ireland demonstrate

greater willingness and flexibility to identify this need and provide different types of support and adjustments. Similarly, both the countries mentioned, provide information-based actions. By contacting the line manager or the human resources department, the employee can obtain information on the support and adjustments granted to workers with SLDs.



These aspects can partly be explained by the regulations in these countries, which require employers to provide reasonable adjustments in order to ensure disabled people are not disadvantaged.

Another difference concerns the use of internal training courses on learning disabilities. In this case, only France, the United Kingdom and Ireland provide training aimed at increasing awareness on dyslexia and SLDs.

As for the interviewees' considerations in terms of legislation, it is difficult to generalize the results as the starting situation of the individual countries is varied. Furthermore, the wording of the question did not specify "legislation in the workplace". From the total answers given from the companies interviewed, more than half of the sample affirmed that they are aware of a law protecting people with SLDs.

More than half of the sample perceive dyslexia as a barrier in the workplace. However, it is interesting to note that despite the answer, the reason for perceiving it as an obstacle or not, is attributed to a lack of awareness and understanding.

These data are in line with the final considerations provided by the interviewees regarding the need to:

- increase awareness and knowledge on the subject
- receive specific training
- find solutions
- improve legislation
- provide for hiring incentives or tax relief
- define practical guidelines

The limited number of participating agencies in the sample does not permit one to consider a broad representation of the participating countries. The data that was obtained, however, highlights a lack of procedures specifically for those with SLDs as well as a lack of training courses on the subject.

An opposing trend emerges in terms of opportunities dedicated to disclosure. More than half of the agencies interviewed affirmed asking people to present any disadvantaged conditions they may have. Nevertheless, it is important to take into consideration that the question did not exclusively regard SLDs, but also other conditions that may be considered disabilities.



Therefore, it is not possible to distinguish which condition interviewees were specifically referring to and to then be able to extrapolate only the data relative to neurodiverse conditions, such as dyslexia.

In terms of perception of dyslexia, just as was the case with companies, most agencies interviewed also felt that dyslexia was an obstacle in finding employment. By investigating the reasons provided by the interviewees, once again the need for specific training capable of raising awareness emerged, along with the need to improve laws, find solutions so any gaps in information may be filled, and to put appropriate processes and methodologies into place for those with SLDs. In accordance with this data, agencies indicated that in order to facilitate hiring those with SLDs there was a need to raise awareness on the subject through specific training, improve laws, and find solutions to optimally manage these candidates/workers.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study showed some examples of good practice in the workplace and this will be further developed in the next phase of the dyslexia@work project. However, the interview data revealed a general lack of knowledge and awareness of SLD issues for those involved in job placement, both within companies and employment agencies. With the limited representation of companies and agencies in each of the five countries, the situation appeared to be less favourable in Italy and France, while a more structured and overall more inclusive approach emerged in the English-speaking countries of the study. Most companies and agencies interviewed, except for some English and Irish ones, do not provide internal training courses on this topic nor do they apply methodologies or procedures specifically for dyslexia. Although in most cases, general inclusion policies are declared, it is however up to the dyslexic worker to disclose whether they have the disorder and then to explicitly request reasonable adjustments. The fact that the United Kingdom and Ireland both exhibit a greater willingness in terms of providing support and training courses on the subject, confirms the lack of shared and systematically applied practices. The absence of legislation specifically in relation to dyslexia in the workplace, together with a lack of guidelines and operational indications, is probably the main cause for these gaps and irregularities between and within these countries.



In light of this, there is a clear need to intervene in terms of favouring a debate involving institutions to expand and clarify current regulations, as well as in defining common

practices aimed at favouring job placement and professional success for those with SLDs, thus eliminating potential discrimination and furthermore, ensuring equal opportunities in the workplace.

As this European project was a pilot study in relation to dyslexia in the workplace it is necessary to expand and extend the study to all European countries in order to obtain more comprehensive and representative data. Phase 3 of this European project will make recommendations for good practice based on the data received and starting from the comparative study analysis. The recommendations will have the aim to improve practice within companies and employment agencies in facilitating employees with dyslexia to overcome barriers and achieve their potential in the workplace.



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## APPENDIX A Companies Interview

### Consent

Would you like the name of your company to be explicitly mentioned in the reports and results of the project?

\*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes  
 No

### General Data

#### Country

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Italy  
 France  
 Ireland  
 Belgium  
 Malta  
 United Kingdom

#### Type of business

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Agriculture, Forestry and fishing  
 Mining and quarrying  
 Manufacturing  
 Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply  
 Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities  
 Construction  
 wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles  
 transportation and storage  
 accommodation and food service activities  
 information and communication  
 financial and insurance activities  
 real estate activities  
 professional, scientific and technical activities  
 administrative and support service activities  
 public administration and defence; compulsory social security  
 education  
 human health and social work activities  
 arts, entertainment and recreation  
 other service activities  
 Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use  
 activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies  
 Other



**Who answers the questionnaire (HR, boss, executive secretary, etc.):**

*Please choose **only one** of the following:*

- General manager
- Human resources manager
- Manager
- Executive secretary
- Person responsible for diversity and disability
- Other

**Anonymization code [exemple Fa\_Ent01]**

*Please write your answer here:*



## General Questions

**Do you know of anyone in your immediate circle with dyslexia?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes  
 No

**If yes, can you specify ?**

*Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:*

*Answer was 'yes' at question '6 [Q5]' ( Do you know of anyone in your immediate circle with dyslexia? )*

Please choose **all that apply**:

- My children  
 My parents / brothers or sisters

Other:

**How many people do you employ?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Less than 20 people  
 20 to 49 people  
 50 to 199 people  
 200 to 500 people  
 More than 500 people

**Do you have an estimate of how many employees in your organisation have formally disclosed they have dyslexia?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- We do not have an estimate  
 None have formally disclosed his/her dyslexia  
 We have an estimate

**What is this estimate (in number):**

*Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:*

*Answer was 'We have an estimate' at question '9 [Q7]' ( Do you have an estimate of how many employees in your organisation have formally disclosed they have dyslexia? )*

Seuls des nombres peuvent être entrés dans ce champ.

Please write your answer here:



## Good Practice

**Are applicants asked to declare if they have any neuro-diverse profiles or disability or a condition that requires additional supports?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**Do procedures for recruitment and the selection of personnel refer to dyslexia?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**Do the recruitment procedures involve any reading and writing skills or timed tasks?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**Do you offer individuals the opportunity to disclose dyslexia at interview level?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**What types of supports / accommodations do you put in place for recruitment and selection processes?**

Please choose **all that apply**:

- Additional times for the written test
- Provision of a computer
- Flexibility with regard to errors in written productions
- Use of Assistive Technology
- Interview questions provided before interview
- Written copy of interview questions available during the interview
- Dyslexia proofing recruitment and selection processes (Universal Design)
- I don't know
- None
- Other:



**What types of supports/accommodations do you put in place for the workplace?**

*Please choose all that apply:*

- Provision of quiet work areas/ spaces for certain tasks,
- Workstation layout (a larger computer screen, desk divider etc.)
- Other:

**What types of supports do you put in place for the job?**

*Please choose all that apply:*

- Additional time for induction time if needed
- Provision of a computer,
- Provision of assistive technology
- Provision of assistance with proofreading documents,
- Flexibility / understanding with regard to errors in internal written productions (in e-mails, reports, etc.),
- Processes or supports in place to assist with errors or proofreading for external written production
- I don't know
- None
- Other:

**What kind of support or flexibility do you provide regarding the organization of tasks?**

*Please choose all that apply:*

- Assistive Technology/Apps that can support the dyslexic individual to plan their working day/week/month
- Movement and attention breaks encouraged
- Flexibility of work hours/ schedule where possible
- Flexibility to remote work if appropriate
- I don't know
- None
- Other:

**Is there ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the supports provided? If yes, how is this assessed?**

*Please choose only one of the following:*

- Yes
- No
- I don't know



**If yes, how are they evaluated ?**

*Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:*

*Answer was 'Yes' at question '19 [Q16]' ( Is there ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the supports provided? If yes, how is this assessed? )*

*Please write your answer here:*

**Does your company provide either formal or informal mentoring and coaching?**

*Please choose only one of the following:*

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- Other

**How does your company support employees if they have difficulties with certain tasks?**

*Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:*

*Answer was 'Yes' at question '21 [Q17]' ( Does your company provide either formal or informal mentoring and coaching? )*

*Please write your answer here:*

**Does your company have an inclusion policy?**

*Please choose only one of the following:*

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- Other



If yes, how do you implement it?

*Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:*

*Answer was 'Yes' at question '23 [Q19]' ( Does your company have an inclusion policy? )*

*Please write your answer here:*

Does your company have a specific department or individual that is responsible for diversity, disability and neurodiversity?

*Please choose only one of the following:*

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- Other

Do your company invest in technological support as an inclusive strategy?

*Please choose only one of the following:*

- Yes
- No
- I don't know



### Awareness of dyslexia in the organisation

Do you provide information on support available for dyslexia in any of the following places?

Commenter vos réponses.  
Veuillez sélectionner 9 réponses maximum

Please choose all that apply and provide a comment:

- As part of the job application process (please provide examples)
- Ahead of interviews for roles (please provide examples)
- As part of onboarding information (please provide examples)
- On the organisation intranet or equivalent
- Upon request to a line manager
- Upon request to the HR department
- We do not provide any information or support
- I don't know

What kind of training or awareness-raising do you provide around dyslexia?

Please choose all that apply:

- None
- We run an awareness session open to all staff of at least once a year
- We run awareness training open to all staff of at least once a year
- All line managers receive training on dyslexia
- All HR staff receive training on dyslexia
- Other:

Who provides training to raise awareness of dyslexia in your organisation?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:  
Answer was NOT at question '28 [Q22]' ( What kind of training or awareness-raising do you provide around dyslexia? )

Please choose all that apply:

- Occupational Psychologist or Therapist
- Social worker
- Manager
- Associations specializing in dyslexia
- Other:





**What is the focus of that training?**

*Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:*

*Answer was NOT at question '28 [C22]' ( What kind of training or awareness-raising do you provide around dyslexia? )*

*Please choose all that apply:*

Broad awareness

Supports strategies

Both

Other:

**Do you think dyslexia can be an obstacle in the workplace?**

*Please choose only one of the following:*

Yes -> Why ?

No -> Why ?

**Make a comment on your choice here:**



## Views on legislative environment

### Is there in your country a law related to dyslexia?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

### If yes, what is your organisation's understanding of the laws related to dyslexia and disability?

**Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:**

Answer was 'Yes' at question '32 [Q26]' (Is there in your country a law related to dyslexia?)

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- We have almost no awareness of laws related to dyslexia and disability
- We have some awareness of the laws related to dyslexia and disability but do not have a full understanding
- We fully understand the laws related to dyslexia and disability

### If yes, how does your organisation view the laws related to dyslexia and disability?

**Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:**

Answer was 'Yes' at question '32 [Q26]' (Is there in your country a law related to dyslexia?)

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- We feel that the laws related to dyslexia and disability are excessively burdensome and should be made less arduous
- We feel that the laws related to dyslexia and disability are appropriate and should not be changed
- We feel that the laws related to dyslexia and disability are not stringent enough and should be made stronger

### Has your organisation had legal or HR issues related to an employee with dyslexia?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- We have had no legal or HR issues relating to an employee's dyslexia
- We have had some legal or HR issues relating to an employee's dyslexia but this have been resolved without a tribunal or court hearing
- We have had some legal or HR issues relating to an employee's dyslexia and this gone to a tribunal or court hearing



**If an employee has great difficulties with reading or writing, do you try to propose some help?**

*Please choose only one of the following:*

- Yes -> what help  
 No -> Why ?

Make a comment on your choice here:

**If an employee has great difficulties with reading or writing, and s/he asks you for a computer or assistive technology to help, what do you do?**

*Please choose all that apply:*

- We offer computer aids that we already have in the company  
 We offer training  
 We bring in a professional to assess the employee's needs and set up the support  
 Other:



## Final thoughts

**If the government could change one thing to make it easier to employ someone with dyslexia what would it be?**

*Please write your answer here:*

**What is the one piece of advice you would give to an organization looking to improve the way it supports employees with dyslexia?**

*Please write your answer here:*

**Do you have any final thoughts you feel we should reflect in the findings of this research project?**

*Please write your answer here:*



## APPENDIX B

### Agencies Interview

#### Consent

Would you like the name of your company to be explicitly mentioned in the reports and results of the project?

\*

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes  
 No

#### General data

##### Country

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Italy  
 France  
 Ireland  
 Belgium  
 Malta  
 United Kingdom

##### Type of service

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Private  
 Public  
 Other

##### Who answers the questionnaire ?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- General manager  
 Responsable des ressources humaines  
 Manager  
 Executive secretary  
 Personne responsable de la diversité et du handicap  
 Other



**Anonymization code [for example : Fa\_Ent01]**

Please write your answer here:

**General Questions**

**Do you know of anyone in your immediate circle with dyslexia ?**

Please choose *only one* of the following:

- Yes  
 No

**If yes, can you specify ?**

*Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:*

*Answer was 'Yes' at question '6 [Q5]' ( Do you know of anyone in your immediate circle with dyslexia ? )*

Please choose *all that apply*:

- My children  
 My parents / brothers or sisters  
 Other:

**How many jobseekers avail of your recruitment/placement service in one year?**

Please choose *only one* of the following:

- Fewer than 20 people  
 20 to 49 people  
 50 to 199 people  
 200 to 500 people  
 More than 500 people



**In what percentage are they hired?**

*Please choose **only one** of the following:*

- Less than 20%
- 20 to 50%
- More than 50%
- More than 75%

**What are the roles/careers they consider? (maximum 3 answers)**

*Please write your answer(s) here:*

Choice 1

Choice 2

Choice 3

**In which professional sectors do they find work? (maximum 3 answers)**

*Please write your answer(s) here:*

Choice 1

Choice 2

Choice 3

**Are there employers who specifically request candidates with Dyslexia?**

*Please choose **only one** of the following:*

- Yes
- No
- I don't know



## Good practice

**Are users asked to declare if they have any neuro-diverse characteristics or a disability or a condition that requires additional supports?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**Do you have specific practices for dyslexic individuals ?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**If so, what are they?**

**Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:**

Answer was 'Yes' at question '14 [Q.12]' ( Do you have specific practices for dyslexic individuals ? )

Please write your answer here:

**What types of services do you provide?**

Please choose **all that apply**:

- Resume/CV Development
- Job Application Training and Support
- Interview Training and Preparation
- Pre-Employment Evaluation Training and Preparation
- Job Coaching
- Job Skills Training
- Job Search Training and Support
- Disclosure Advice
- Reasonable adjustments, Training and Support
- On the Job Training
- Other:





Which services are mostly requested by dyslexic individuals? (maximum 3 answers)

Toutes les réponses doivent être différentes.

Please number each box in order of preference from 1 to 11

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <input type="text"/> | Resume/CV Development                              |
| <input type="text"/> | Job Application Training and Support               |
| <input type="text"/> | Interview Training and Preparation                 |
| <input type="text"/> | Pre-Employment Evaluation Training and Preparation |
| <input type="text"/> | Job Coaching                                       |
| <input type="text"/> | Job Skills Training                                |
| <input type="text"/> | Job Search Training and Support                    |
| <input type="text"/> | Disclosure Advice                                  |
| <input type="text"/> | Accommodations Training and Support                |
| <input type="text"/> | On the Job Training                                |
| <input type="text"/> | Other [ specified previous question]               |

Do dyslexic individuals need to provide evidence of their dyslexia to access services ?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- Other



## Awareness of dyslexia in the organisation

Have you received training on dyslexia?

Please choose *only one* of the following:

- Yes  
 No

If yes, what kind of training?

*Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:*

Answer was 'Yes' at question '19 [Q16]' ( Have you received training on dyslexia? )

Please write your answer here:

If yes, what topics did the training cover?

*Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:*

Answer was 'Yes' at question '19 [Q16]' ( Have you received training on dyslexia? )

Please write your answer here:

Do you think dyslexia can be a disadvantage in finding a job ?

Please choose *only one* of the following:

- Yes  
 No  
 I don't know

If yes or no, why ?

*Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:*

Answer was NOT 'I don't know' at question '22 [Q17]' ( Do you think dyslexia can be a disadvantage in finding a job ? )

Please write your answer here:



## Views on legislative environment

Is there in your country a law related to dyslexia?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

If yes, what is your agency's understanding of the laws related to dyslexia and disability?

**Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:**

Answer was 'Yes' at question '24 [Q18]' ( Is there in your country a law related to dyslexia? )

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- We have almost no awareness of laws related to dyslexia and disability
- We have some awareness of the laws related to dyslexia and disability but do not have a full understanding
- We fully understand the laws related to dyslexia and disability

If yes, how does your agency view the laws related to dyslexia and disability?

**Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:**

Answer was 'Yes' at question '24 [Q18]' ( Is there in your country a law related to dyslexia? )

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- We feel that the laws related to dyslexia and disability are excessively burdensome and should be made less arduous
- We feel that the laws related to dyslexia and disability are appropriate and should not be changed
- We feel that the laws related to dyslexia and disability are not stringent enough and should be made stronger



## Final thoughts

If the government could change one thing to make it easier to support dyslexic job seekers, what would it be?

*Please write your answer here:*

What is the one piece of advice you would give to an agency looking to improve the way it supports dyslexic job seekers?

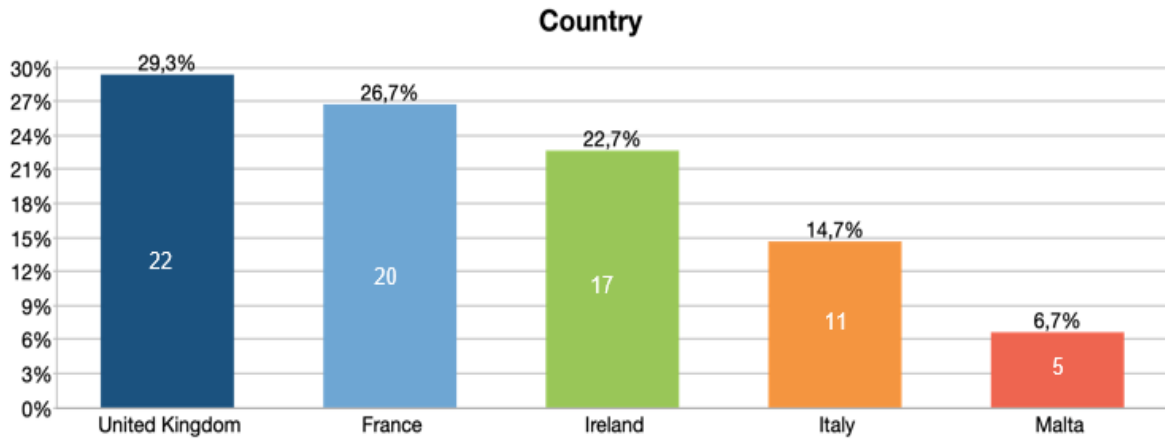
*Please write your answer here:*

Do you have any final thoughts you feel we should reflect in the findings of this research project?

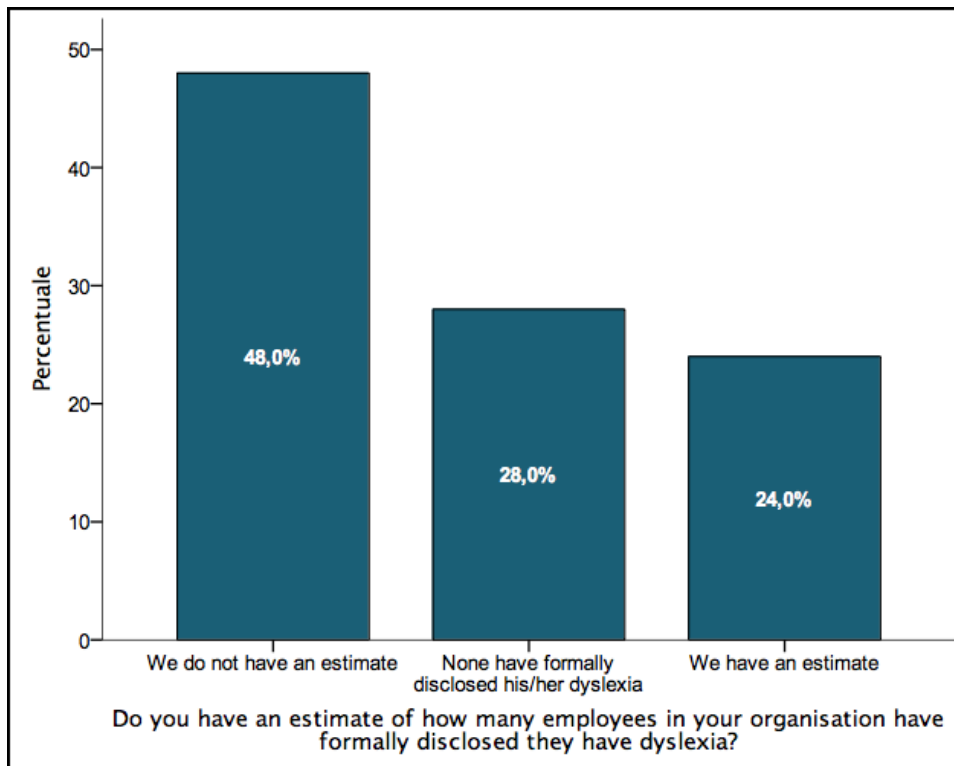
*Please write your answer here:*



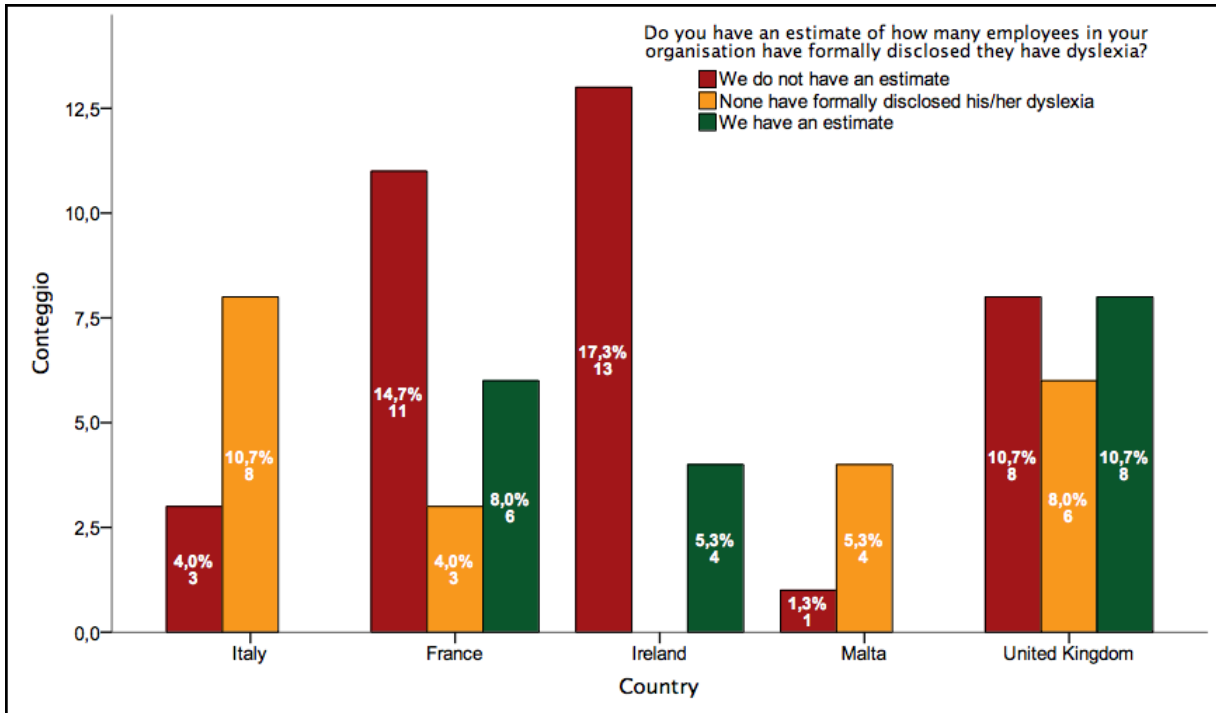
## APPENDIX C Company Survey Results



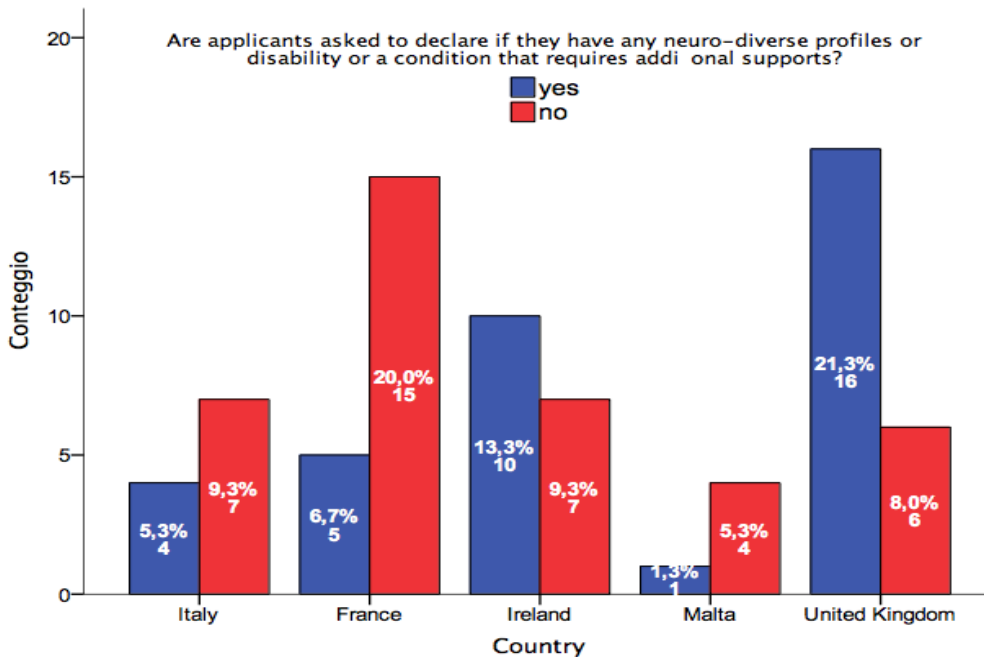
**Figure 2:** distribution of the contributions from the various participating countries for the sample of companies.



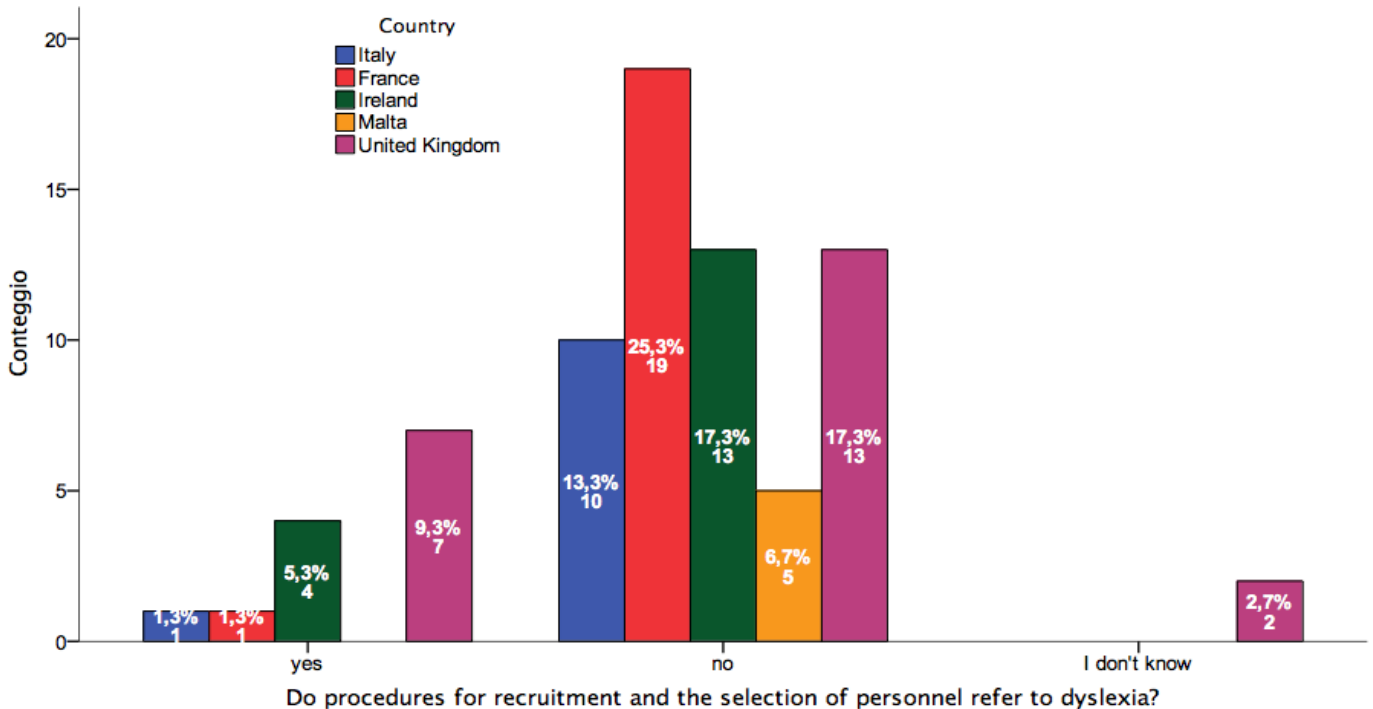
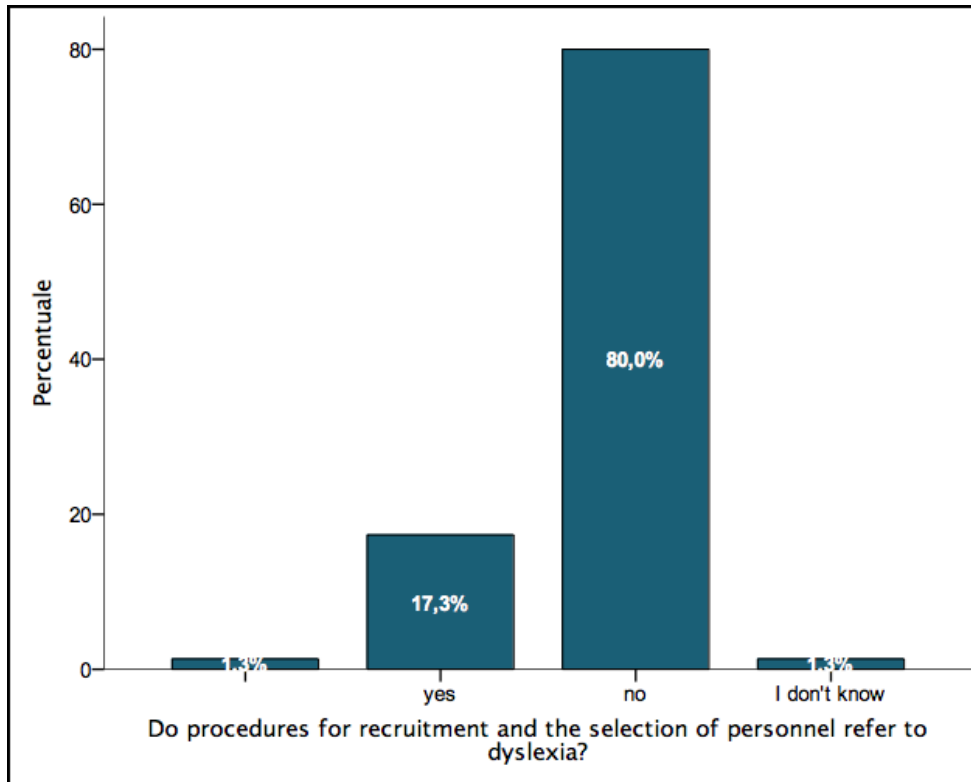
**Figure 3:** total data of the responses to the question "Do you have an estimate of how many employees in your company have formally declared to have a specific learning disorder (SLD), such as dyslexia?".



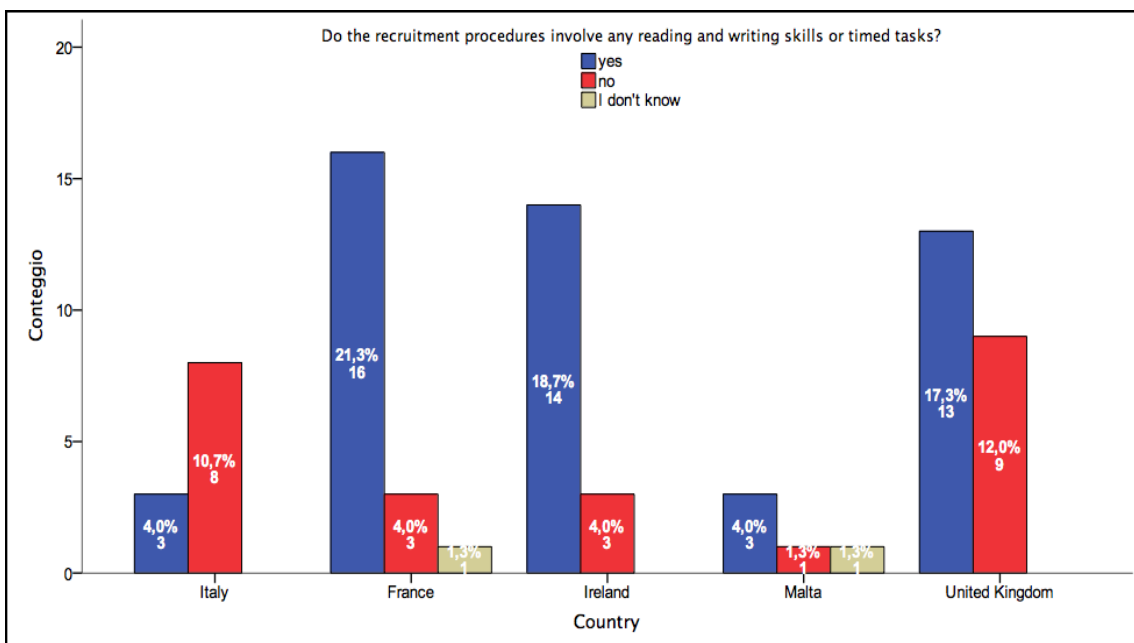
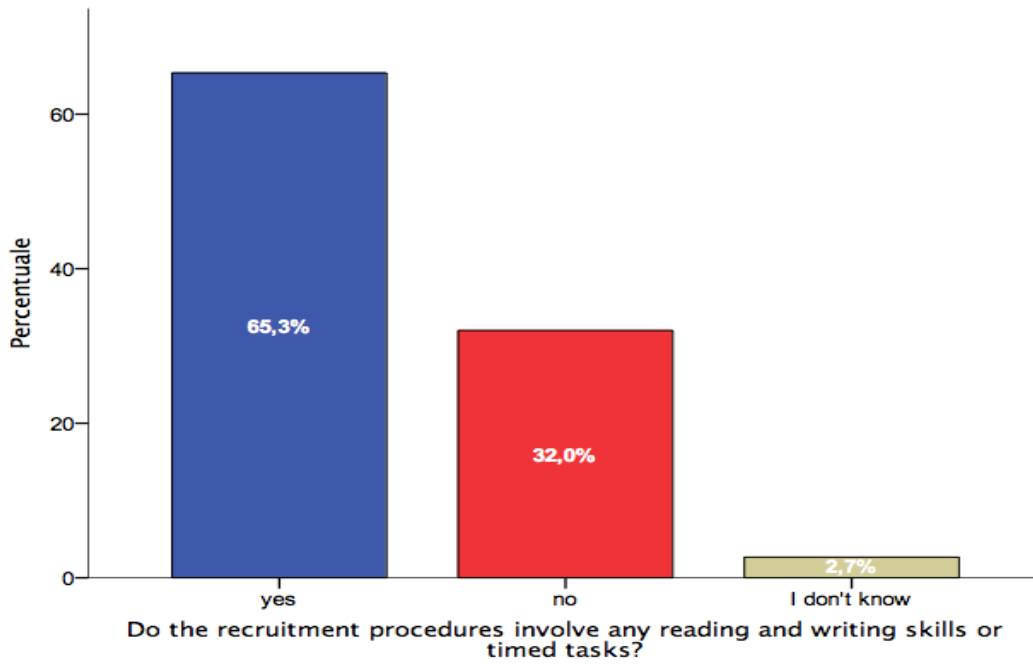
**Figure 4:** distribution of the data obtained from the companies from the various countries in response to the question "Do you have an estimate of how many employees in your company have formally declared to have a specific learning disorder (SLD,) such as dyslexia?".



**Figure 5:** distribution of the data obtained by the companies of the different countries in response to the question "Are candidates asked to declare if they have a disability, a neurodiversity or a condition that requires additional support?".

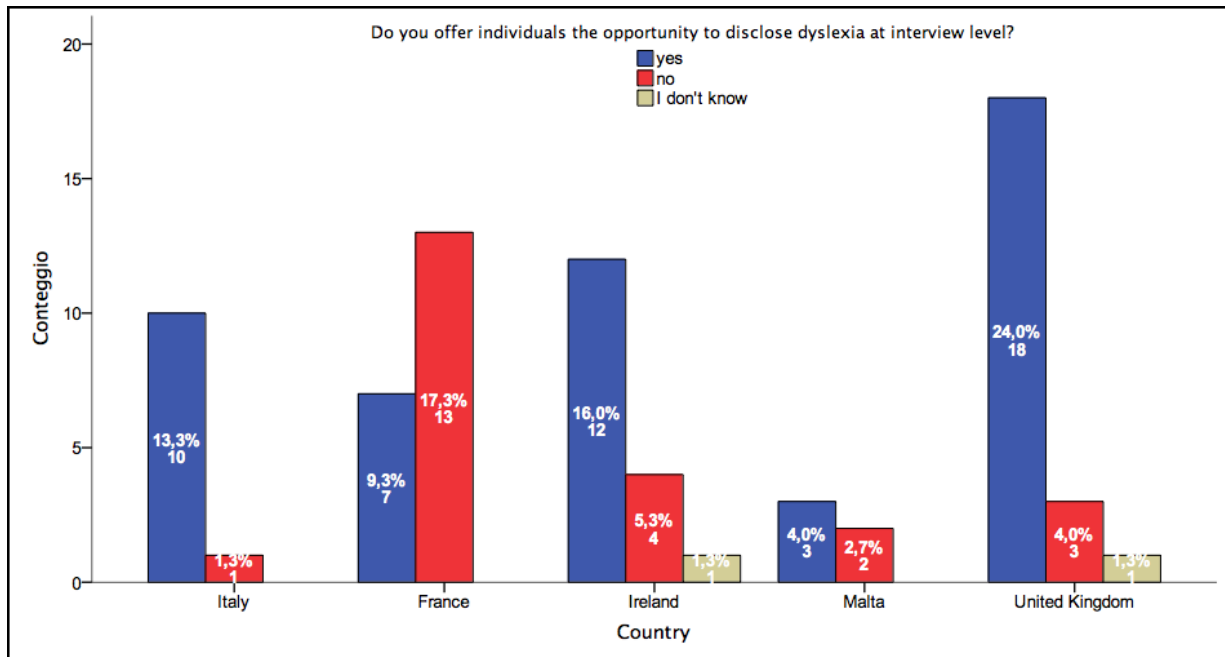


**Figure 6:** total and singular distribution of each country of the data obtained by the companies in response to the question "Do the procedures for recruiting and selecting personnel take into account the possible presence of candidates with specific learning disorders such as dyslexia?".

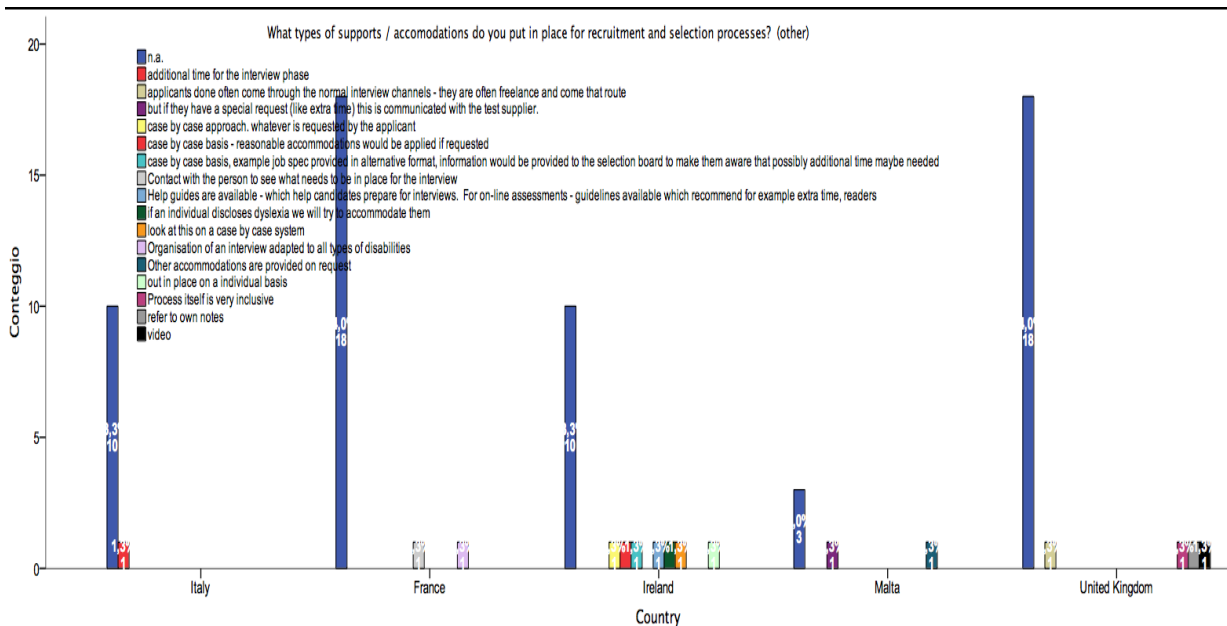


**Figure 7:** total and singular country distribution of the data obtained by the companies in response to the question "Does the process for recruiting and selecting personnel include reading and writing tasks or timed tests?".

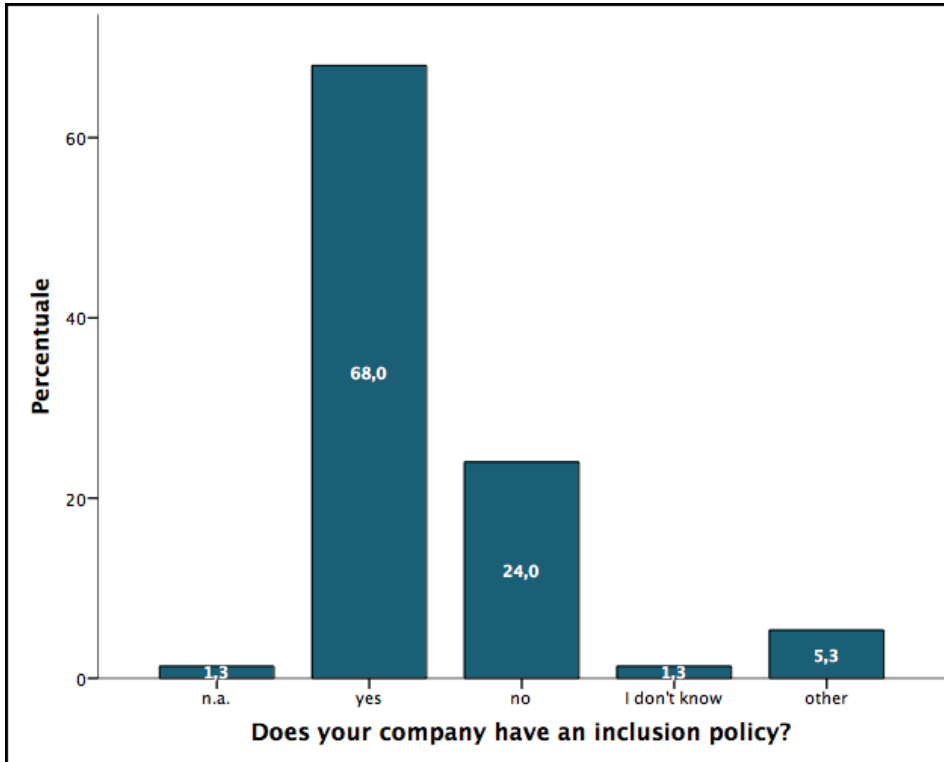




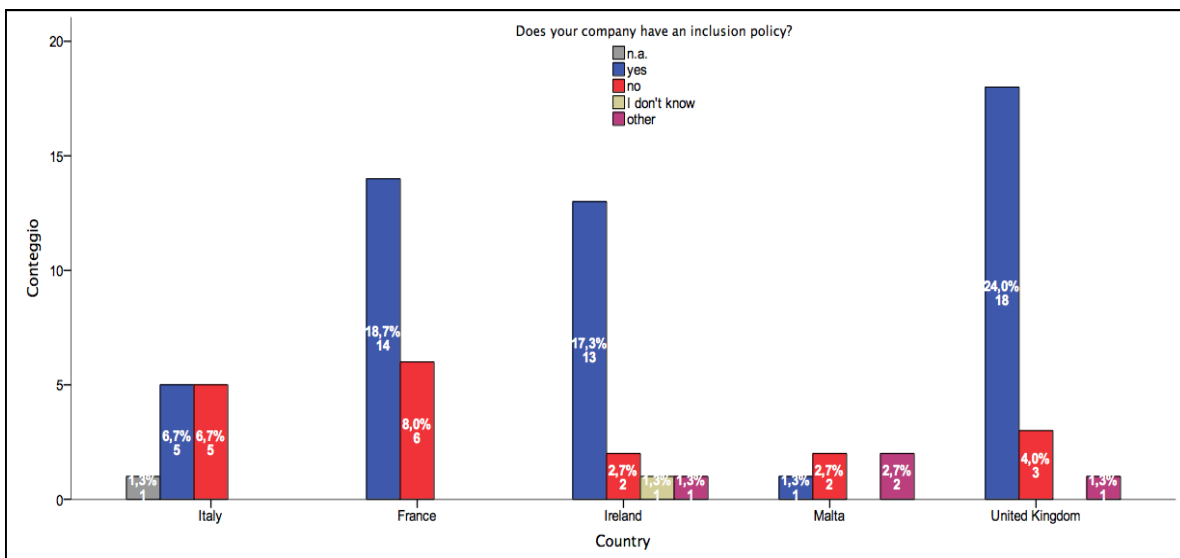
**Figure 8:** distribution of the data obtained by the companies of each country in response to the question "Does the candidate have the opportunity to declare his specific learning disorder during selection interviews?".



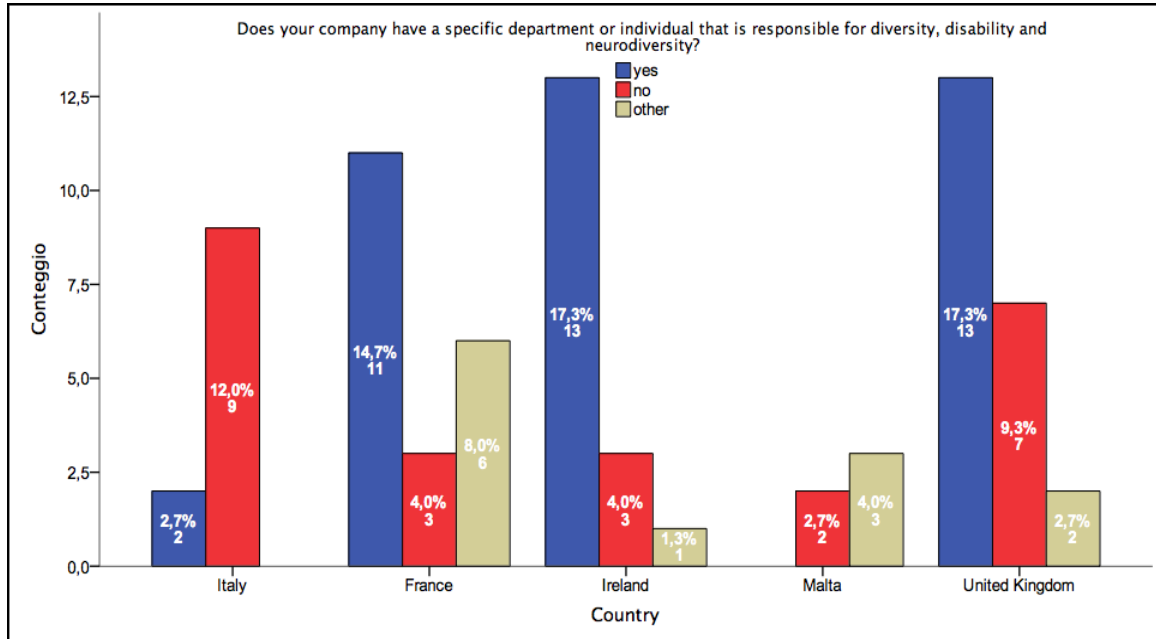
**Figure 9:** types of support and adjustments granted to candidates with SLDs in the selection phase indicated in the item "other".



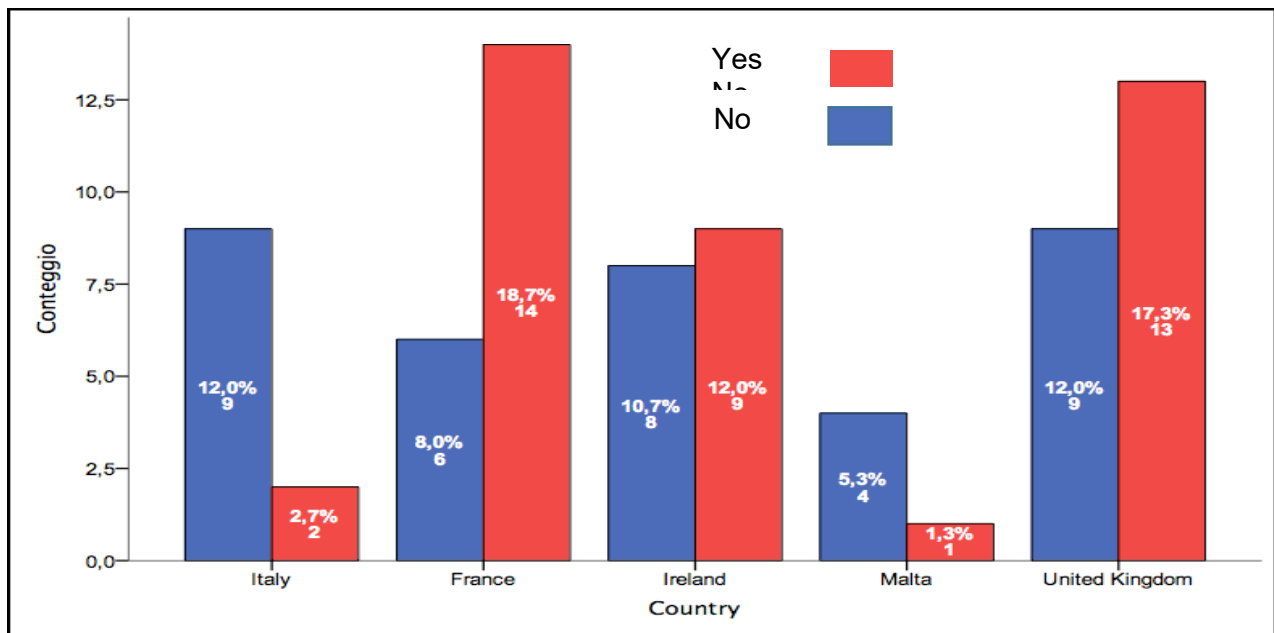
**Figure 10:** distribution of the data obtained from the total number of companies in response to the question "Does your company promote an inclusion policy?".



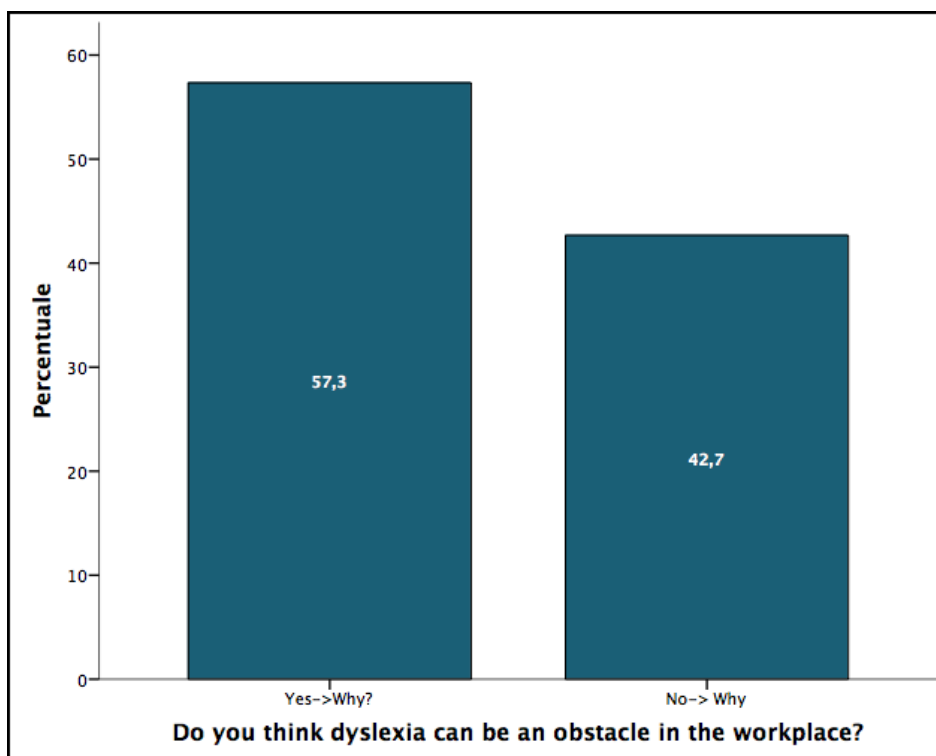
**Figure 11:** distribution of the data obtained from each company in response to the question "Does your company promote an inclusion policy?".

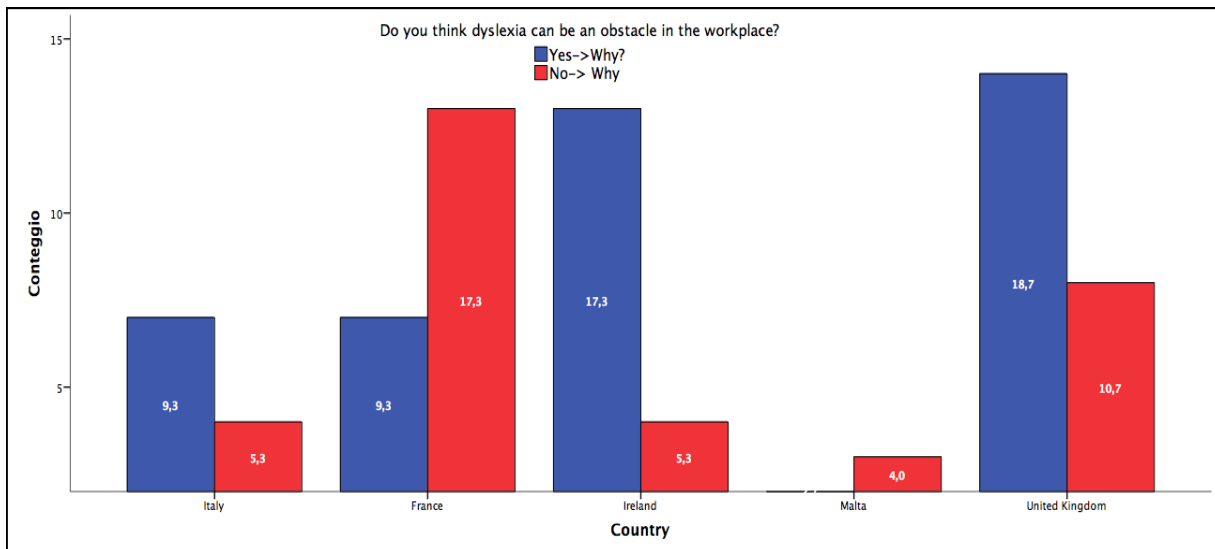


**Figure 12:** distribution of the data obtained from each company in response to the question "Does your company have a specific structure or person responsible for diversity, disability and neurodiversity?".

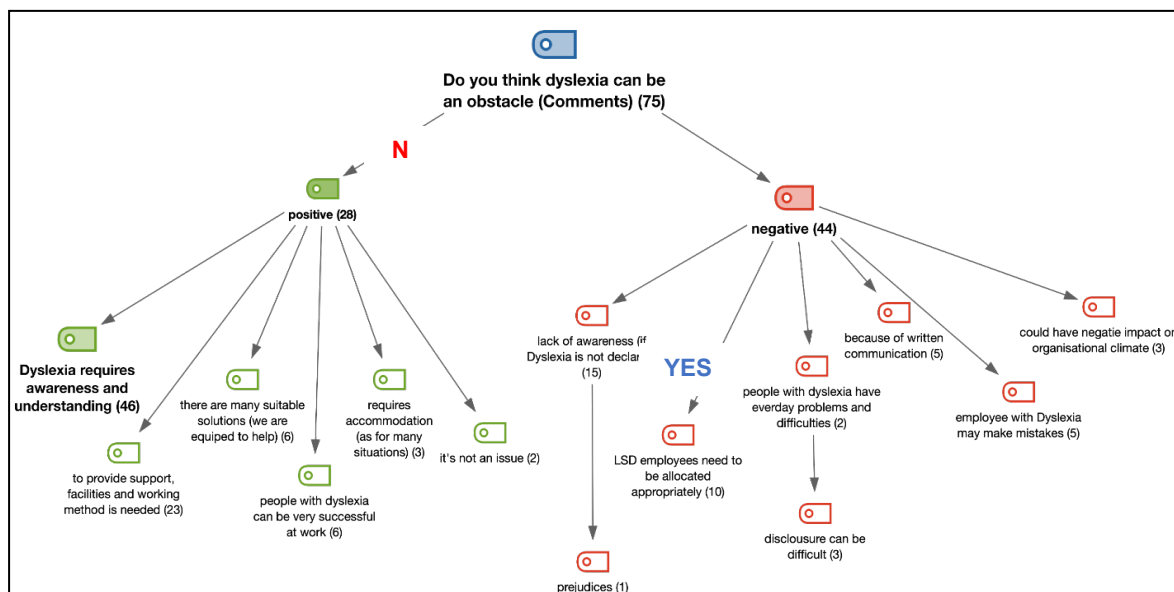


**Figure 13:** distribution of the data obtained from companies from each country in response to the question "Does your company have a specific structure or person responsible for diversity, disability and neurodiversity?". Companies that stated that they provide training or awareness-raising activities are in red; companies that stated that they do not provide any of the specified activities are in blue.

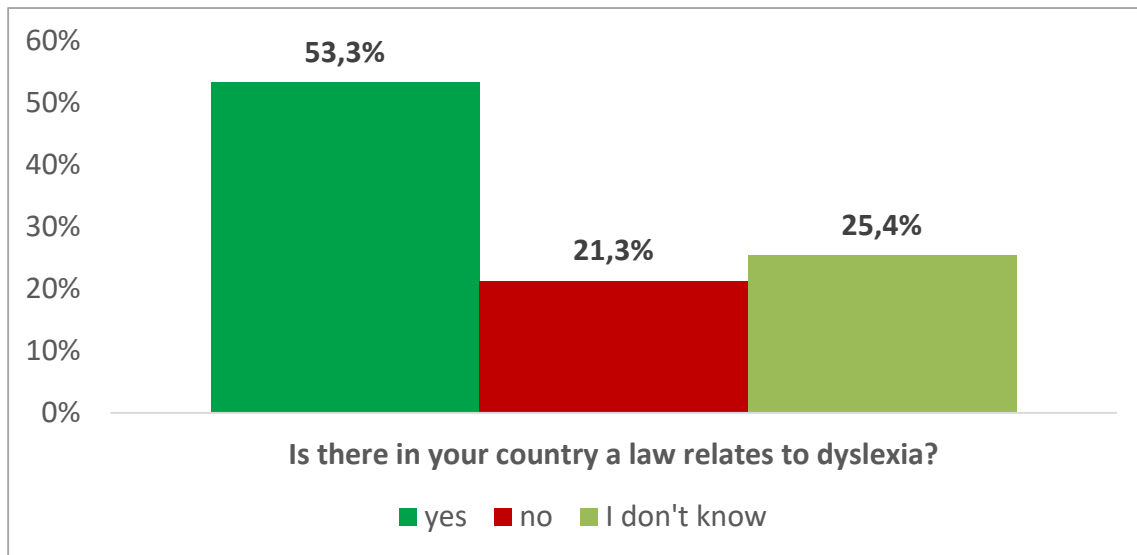




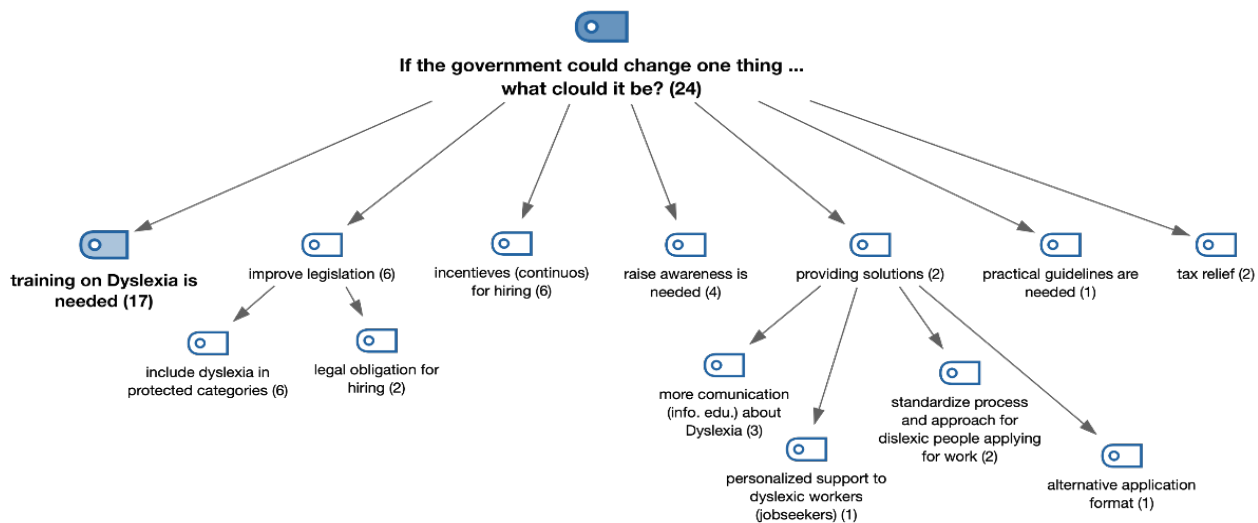
**Figure 14:** total and singular country distribution of the data obtained by the companies in response to the question "Do you think that dyslexia can be an obstacle in the workplace?".



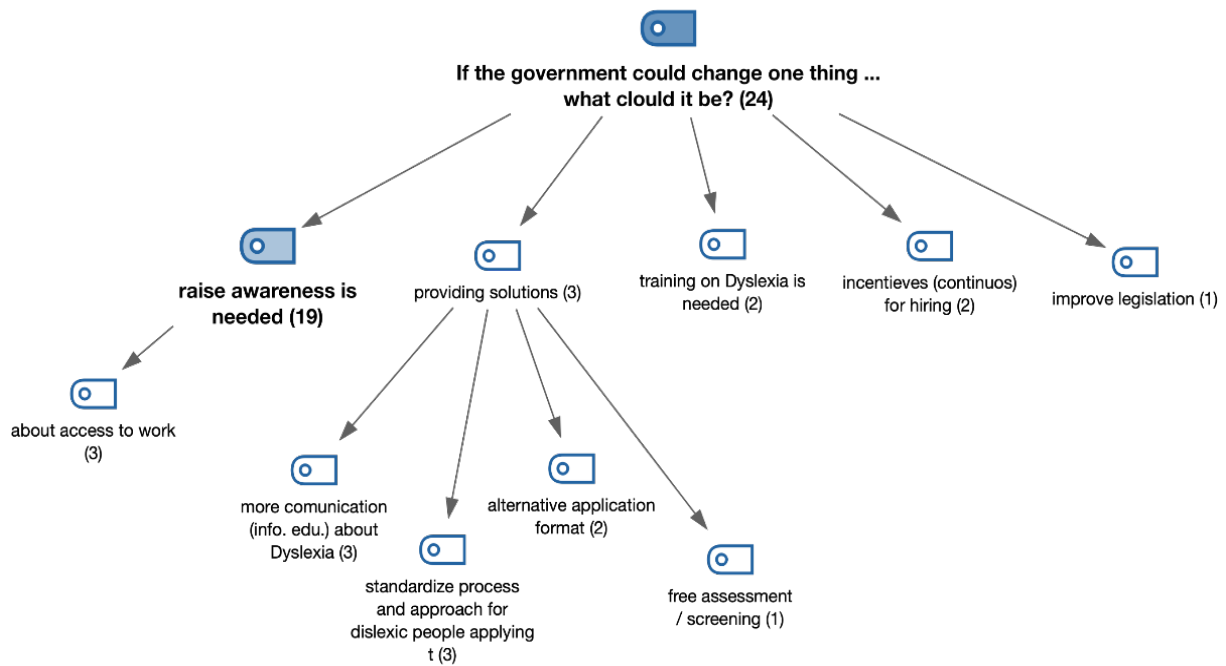
**Figure 15:** qualitative analysis results in response to the question "Do you think that dyslexia can be an obstacle in the workplace? Why?".



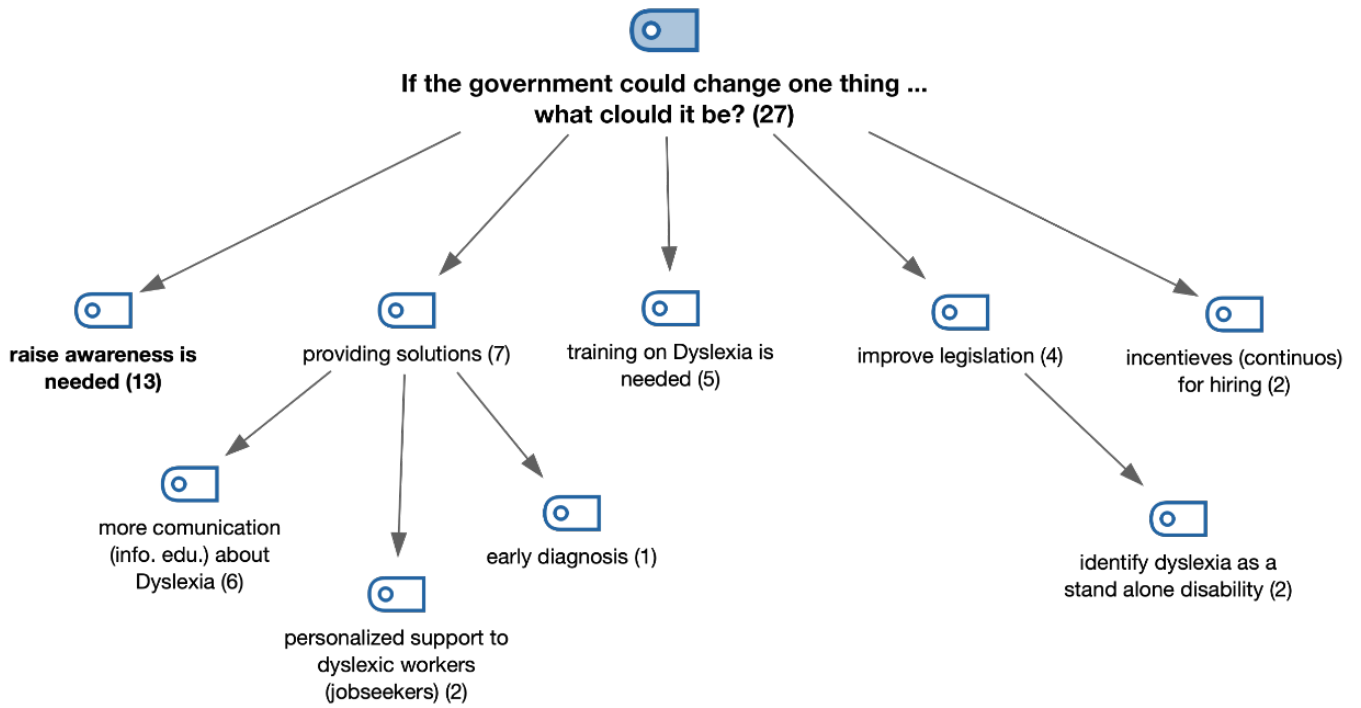
**Figure 16:** total distribution of the data obtained from the companies to the question "Is there a law on dyslexia and specific learning disorders in your country".



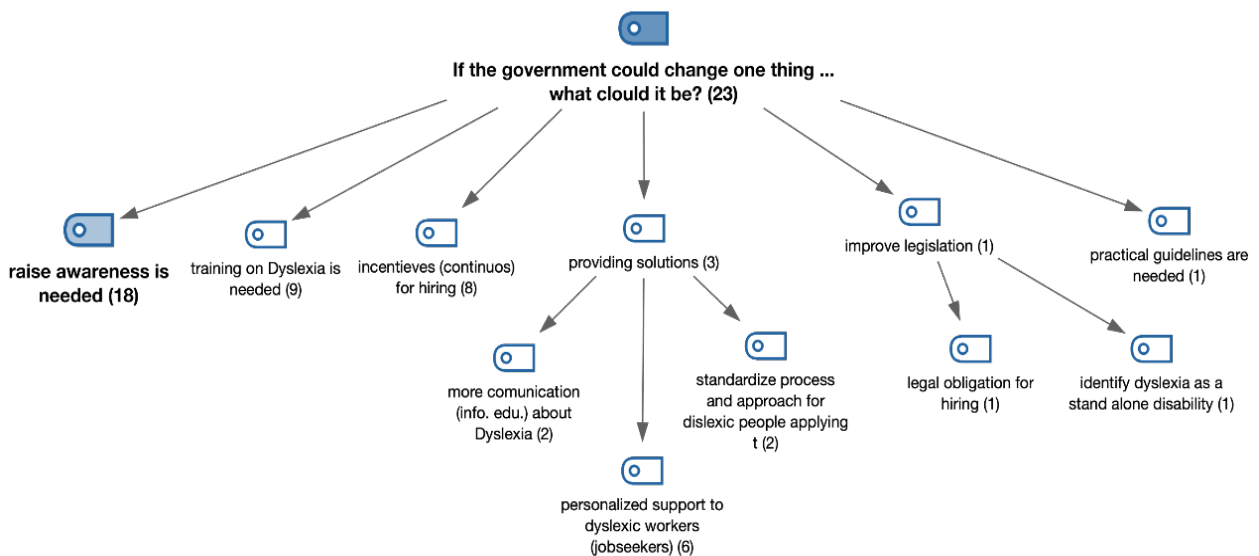
**Figure 17:** qualitative analysis results of the answers collected from the Italian companies in response to the question "If the government could change one thing in order to facilitate hiring people with specific learning disorders, such as dyslexia, what would it be?"



**Figure 18:** qualitative analysis results of the answers collected from the English companies in response to the question "If the government could change one thing in order to facilitate hiring people with specific learning disorders, such as dyslexia, what would it be?"

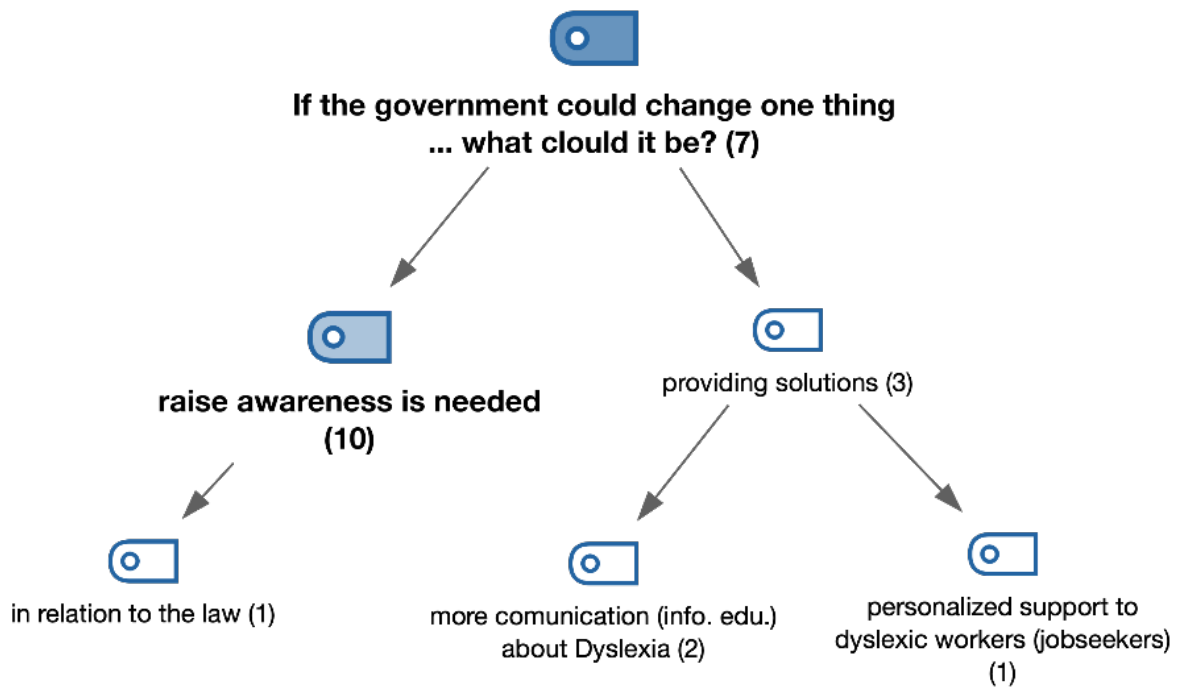


**Figure 19:** qualitative analysis results of the answers collected from the French companies in response to the question "If the government could change one thing in order to facilitate hiring people with specific learning disorders, such as dyslexia, what would it be?"

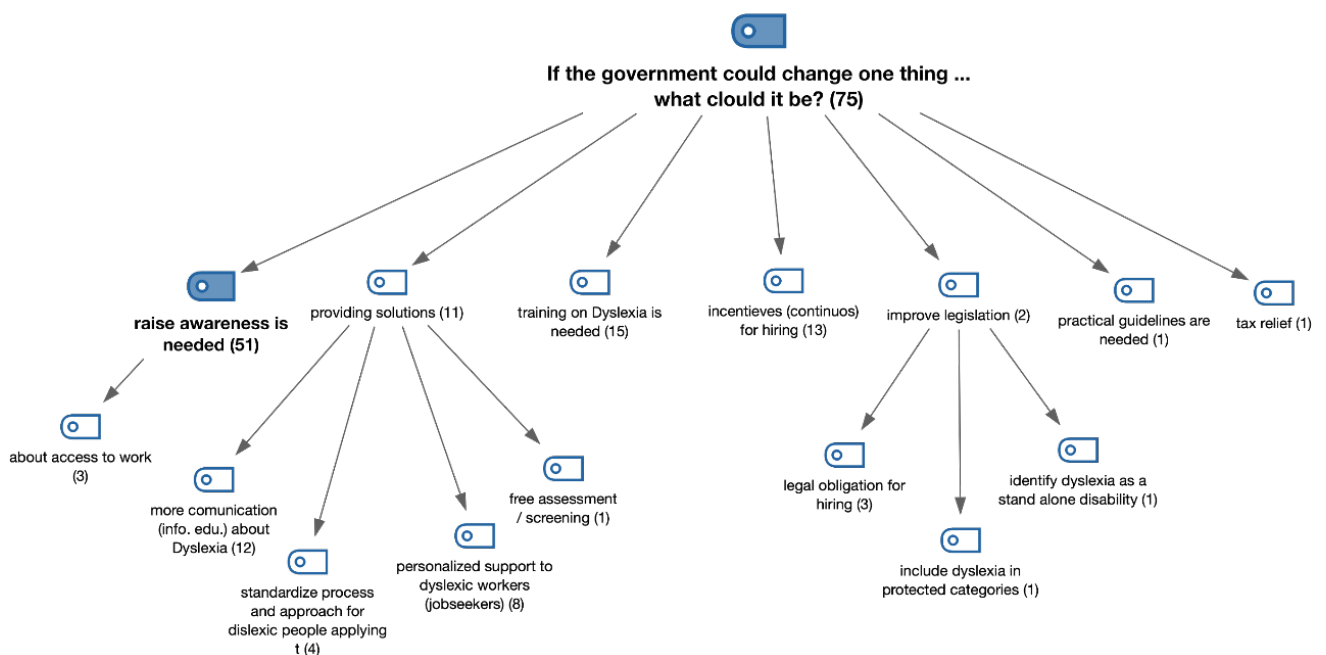


**Figure 20:** qualitative analysis results of the answers collected from the Irish companies in response to the question "If the government could change one thing in order to facilitate hiring people with specific learning disorders, such as dyslexia, what would it be?"





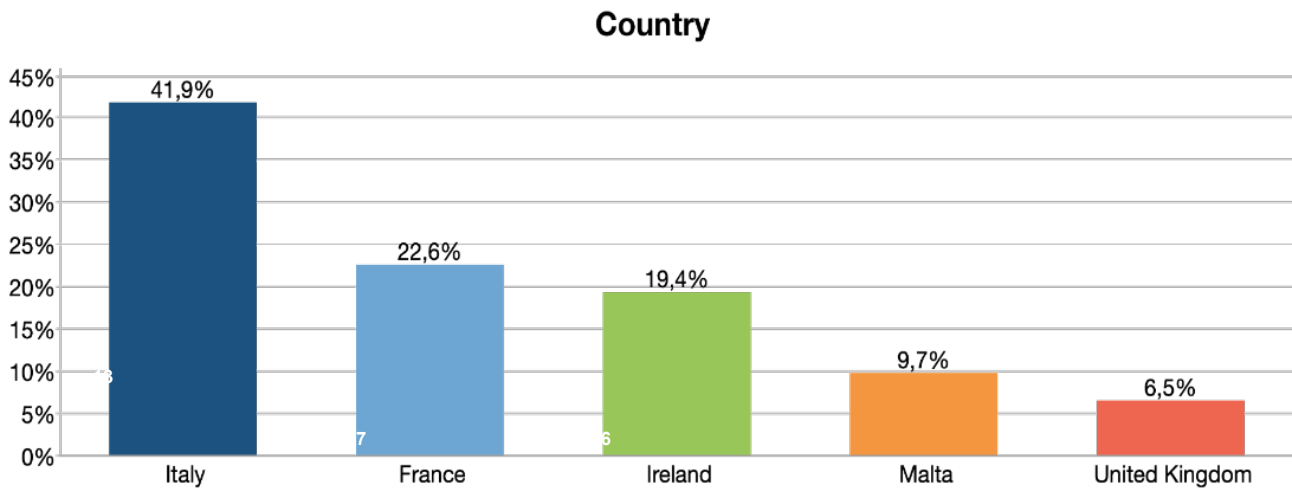
**Figure 21:** qualitative analysis results of the answers collected from the Maltese companies in response to the question "If the government could change one thing in order to facilitate hiring people with specific learning disorders, such as dyslexia, what would it be?"



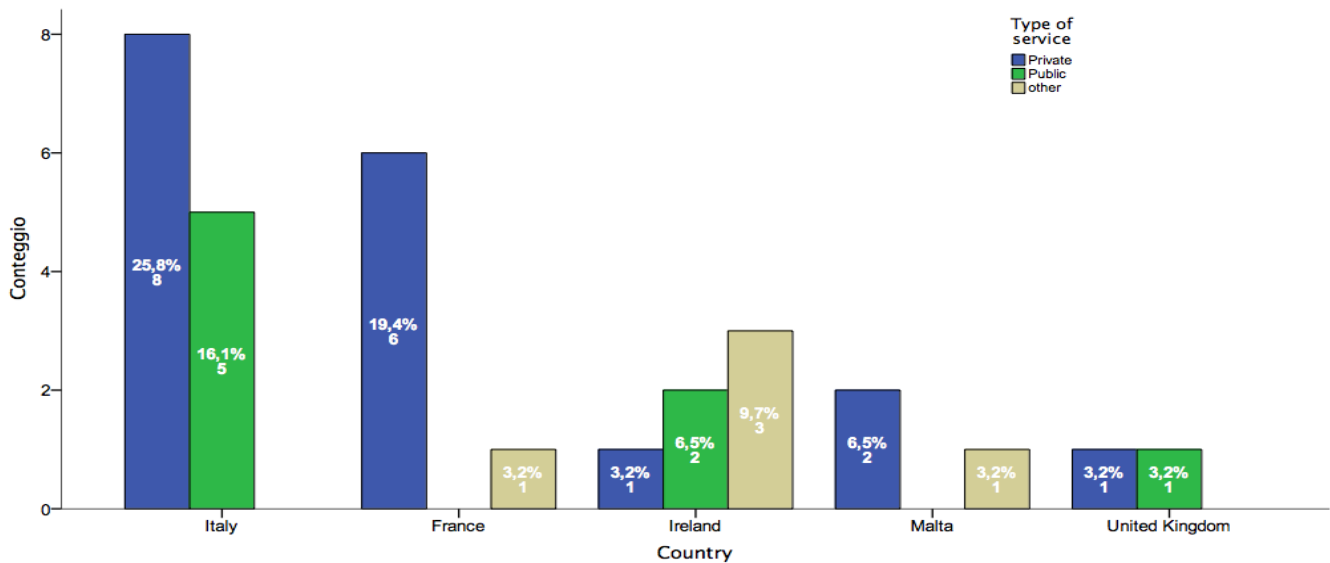
**Figure 22:** qualitative analysis results of the answers provided by all the companies interviewed on the question "If the government could change one thing in order to facilitate hiring people with specific learning disorders, such as dyslexia, what would it be?"



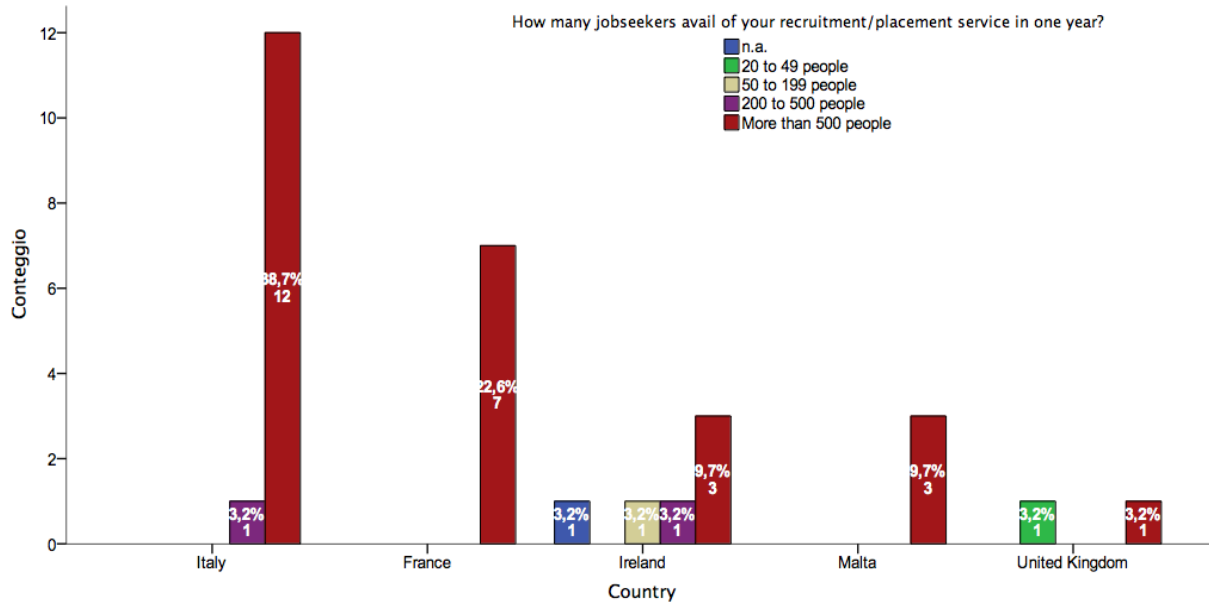
## APPENDIX D Agencies Survey Results



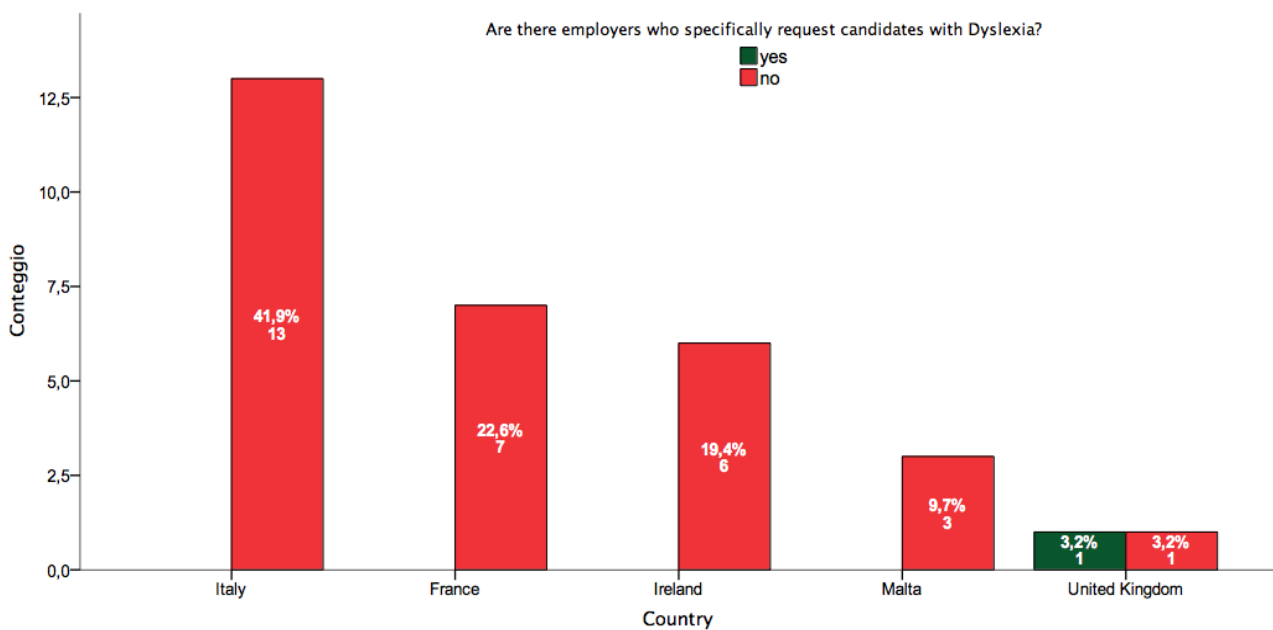
**Figure 23:** distribution of the contributions from the various participating countries for the sample of agencies.



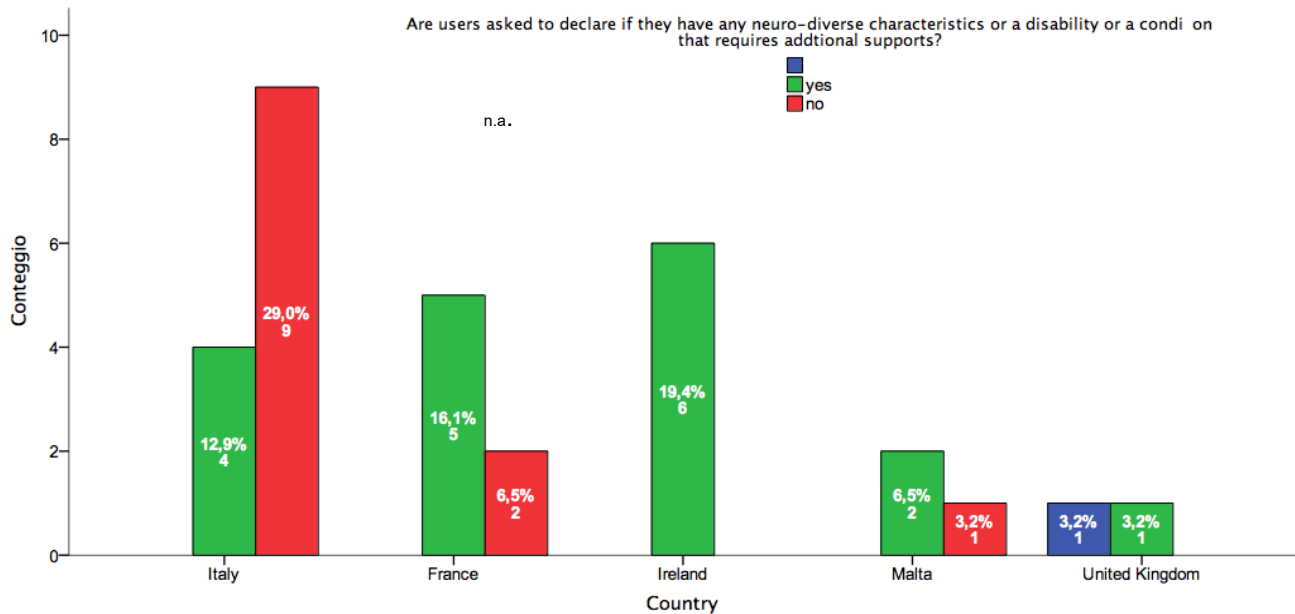
**Figure 24:** different types of agency services for each country (public, private, other).



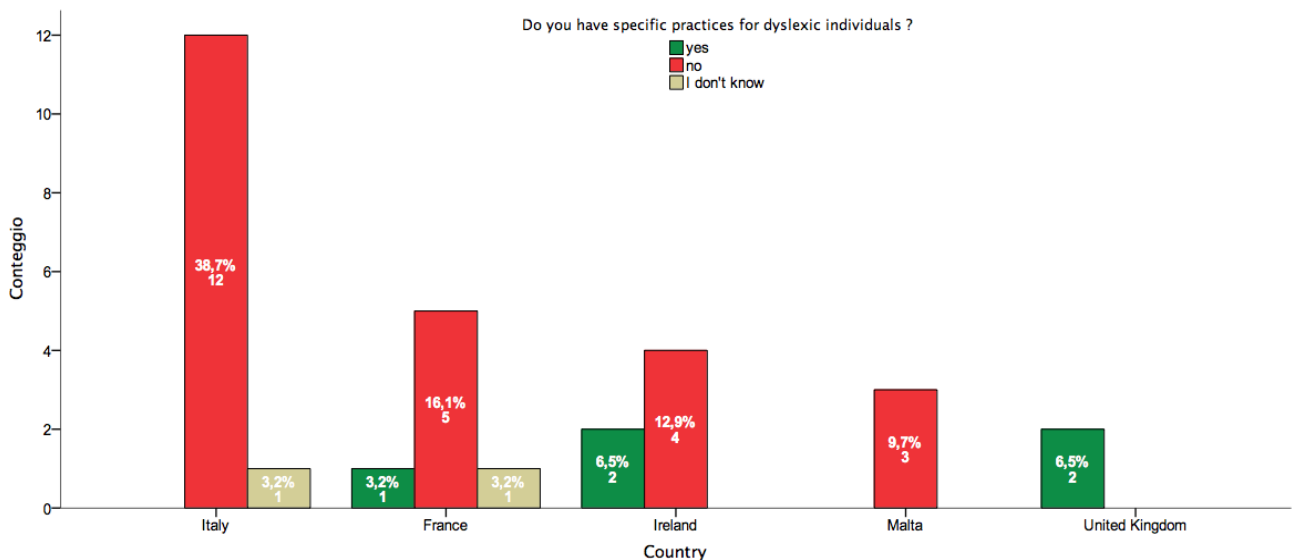
**Figure 25:** distribution of responses from agencies of each country to the question "How many job seekers use your employment placement services in a year?".



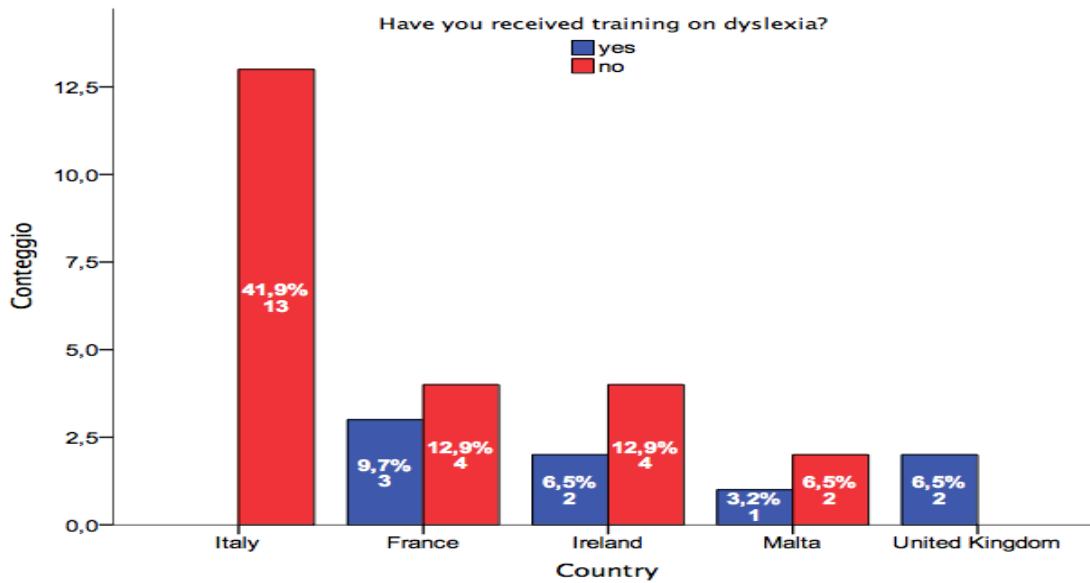
**Figure 26:** distribution of responses from agencies of each country to the question "Are there employers who specifically request candidates with a specific learning disorder (SLD), such as dyslexia?".



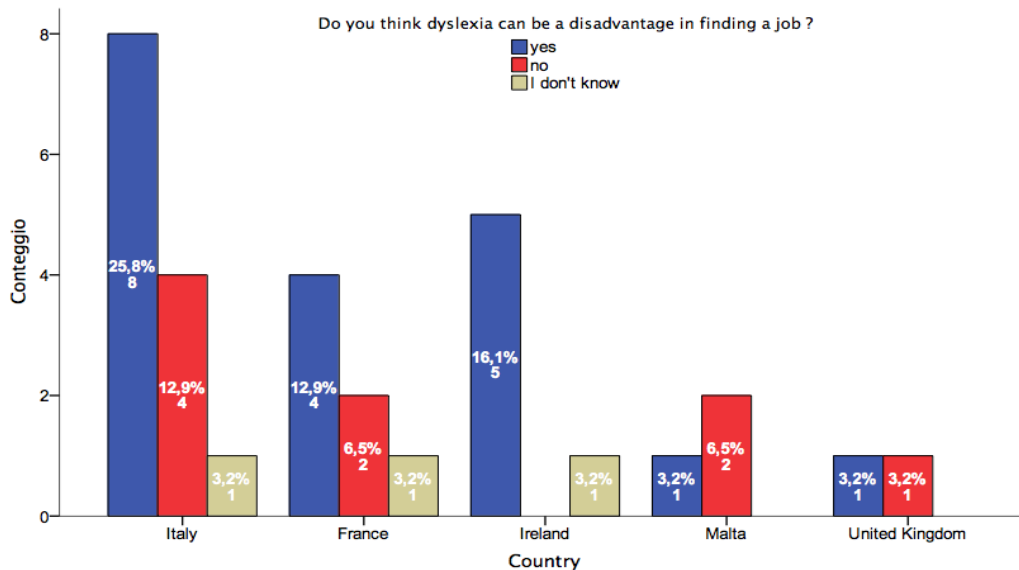
**Figure 27:** distribution of responses from agencies of each country to the question "Are people asked to declare if they have a neurodiverse profile, disability or condition that requires additional support?".



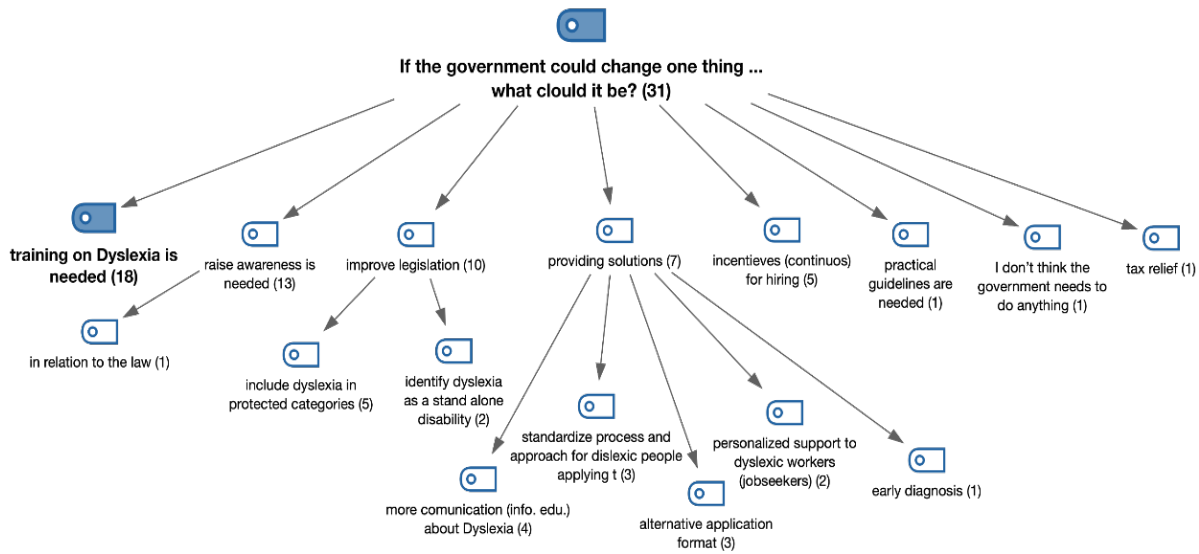
**Figure 28:** distribution of responses from agencies of each country to the question "Are there specific procedures for those with a specific learning disorder (SLD), such as dyslexia?".



**Figure 29:** distribution of responses from agencies of each country to the question "Have you received training in your agency on specific learning disorders, such as dyslexia?".



**Figure 30:** distribution of responses from agencies of each country to the question "Do you think that specific learning disorders, such as dyslexia could be an obstacle in searching for a job?".



**Figure 31:** qualitative analysis results of the answers provided by all the agencies interviewed on the question "If the government could change one thing in order to facilitate hiring people with specific learning disorders, such as dyslexia, what would it be?"