***The right of persons with disabilities to social protection***

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***submission***

*1. Please provide information in relation to the existence of legislation and policies concerning mainstream and/or specific social protection programmes with regard to persons with disabilities, including:*

*• Institutional framework in charge of its implementation;*

*• Legislative, administrative, judiciary and/or other measures aiming to ensure access of persons with disabilities to mainstream social protection programmes (e.g., poverty reduction, social insurance, health care, public work, housing);*

*• Creation of disability-specific programmes (such as disability pensions, mobility grants or others);*

*• Fiscal adjustments or other similar measures.*

The policy towards people with disabilities in the Republic of Croatia, who account for about 12% of the total population (on 12 March 2015, there were 508,350 persons with disabilities), has been marked by a prominent regulatory activity in the last 15 years, and several laws and programs have been adopted in which people with disabilities are set as the primary, or one of the important target groups. The ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007 was significant for the development of the regulatory policy. That same year, the Republic of Croatia adopted a new National Strategy for the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities for the period 2007 to 2015. The basis for the adoption of the National Strategy were the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Council of Europe's Action Plan to promote the rights and full participation in society of people with disabilities: improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in Europe 2006-2015.

The task of the National Strategy is to harmonize all action programs in the field of protection of persons with disabilities with the standards achieved on the global level, as well as with all the trends striving to make all areas of life and activities open and accessible to persons with disabilities.

In 2009, in collaboration with the UNDP, the Ministry started the implementation of the project "Support in applying monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the implementation of the National Strategy measures of providing equal opportunities for disabled persons from 2007 to 2015", aiming to improve the implementation of the measures of the National Strategy and to have a better horizontal and vertical coordination, implementation and reporting. Consequently, an analysis of the National Strategy has been made, identifying challenges, making new ones (a Framework for the strategy implementation monitoring), and upgrading the existing instruments for improving implementation and monitoring (Forms for preparing reports on the implementation of the strategy measures); furthermore, consulting-educational workshops have been held, involving proponents and co-proponents of measures at all levels (national, regional and local).

This year we started preparing a new national strategy for people with disabilities, which will be based on the results of the current strategy, on the completed Analysis of gaps in the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Croatia, and on recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, obtained after considering the report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 30 and 31 March 2015. The new strategy will be to modify existing and develop new measures in order to further improve the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into national legislation and strategic documents. It is also planned to include more measurable indicators in the new national strategy, based on which we will get a more realistic view of the implementation of the given measures.

At the national level, there is the Commission of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Disabled Persons, which includes 50% of representatives of national associations of people with disabilities and which also monitors the implementation of commitments stemming from the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, together with the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth. The office of the Ombudsman for Persons with Disabilities also works on promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, and on monitoring and supervising the implementation of the Convention.

Regarding the care for people with disabilities, we emphasize that an adequate level of activities of all institutions dealing with the protection of rights of persons with disabilities is sought to be maintained in spite of the economic crisis and in the context of real, reduced financial possibilities. Thus, neither rights nor services in the social welfare system have been decreased.

In 2014, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Croatia (2014-2020), containing a link to relevant international and European documents. It is a fundamental document that will allow all stakeholders a systematic and common approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion, while ensuring a minimum standard for the most vulnerable part of society, and preventing the emergence of new occurrences of poverty and social exclusion. The Strategy outlines all the most vulnerable groups in society that are exposed to poverty and social exclusion, including people with disabilities.

By signing a contract with the World Bank, the Republic of Croatia has secured a Project of modernization of the social protection system. This project aims to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Croatian social protection systems through a unified administration of social benefits, a uniform and coordinated expertise, reducing errors, fraud and corruption in social benefits, reducing the number of children and adults in social welfare institutions and supporting the work activation of social welfare users of working age.

In June 2014, in order to intensify the process of deinstitutionalization and transformation of social welfare homes, the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth adopted the Operational Plan for Deinstitutionalization and Transformation of social welfare homes and other legal entities providing social welfare services in the Republic of Croatia for the period 2014-2016, which is based on the Deinstitutionalization plan from October 2010.

Deinstitutionalization involves the replacement of institutional forms of accommodation by a form of support within the community, which will enable specific categories of persons to return to their biological families, to be accommodated in foster families and to get support in using all available services in the community, in accordance with the individual needs of users who are part of the program of organized housing.

In April 2014, an agreement on cooperation was signed by the UNICEF Office for Croatia and the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth. Within the framework of this cooperation, they agreed upon the technical assistance of UNICEF in establishing a model of early diagnostics and early intervention, in order to help children with disabilities and their parents to receive appropriate support.

In the area of healthcare, people with disabilities, who are insured under the compulsory health insurance of the Republic of Croatia, exercise the same rights from the compulsory health insurance, and in the same range, quality and standard, as other insured persons, without discrimination on any grounds. Furthermore, insured persons with particular types of disabilities are also entitled to free supplementary health insurance.

The equality of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Croatia has been further strengthened by the Anti-discrimination Act, summarizing the provisions on discrimination that were contained in various laws up to its enactment. The central body responsible for combating discrimination is the Ombudsman, and some activities are performed by special ombudsmen, when it is regulated by a special law.

People with disabilities are recognized as a vulnerable group in the National Programme of Protection and Promotion of Human Rights for the Period 2013-2016.

The Pension Insurance Act (2013) improves the position of family members of policyholders/beneficiaries – children with the status of a disabled person, whose remaining work capacity is established in line with the Law on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities (2013); it entitles them to the right to family pension after their parent's death, regardless of whether the policyholder or beneficiary supported them until his or her death. This means that if the user of the right to family pension becomes employed or begins doing business as a disabled person with remaining work capacity that is the basis for the obligatory pension insurance, then the payment of the family pension is suspended. However, after the termination of the compulsory insurance, the payment of the family pension is re-established. If such a person, on the basis of his or her work, does not fulfill the conditions for a personal pension, or if this pension would be lower than the family pension, then the person is allowed to receive a family pension after the parent's death, regardless of whether the parent had supported him or not.

*2. Please provide information on how persons with disabilities are consulted and actively involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of social protection programmes.*

When creating policies, adopting new laws and amending existing ones, the role of civil society organizations of persons with disabilities is extremely important, as they are recognized as very effective and valuable partners and active stakeholders in creating policies. The adoption of the Code of Practice on Consultation with the Interested Public in Procedures of Adopting Laws, Other Regulations and Acts, of the Act on Regulatory Impact Assessment, and the enactment of the Act on the Right of Access to Information have made a significant step forward in improving the legislative framework for consultation with the interested public in the Republic of Croatia. In order to enable as many citizens as possible, and especially people with disabilities, to participate in consultations, network systems of communication with the interested public are intensively being developed.

The Office for NGOs of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, which is the central state body for improving cooperation with civil society organizations, is continuously working on improving the legal framework related to cooperation with civil society organizations, on ensuring an enabling environment for their work, and on designing programs, standards and recommendations for financing the activities of civil society organizations, whereby it actively cooperates with their representatives, including representatives of associations of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities participate in the continuous monitoring and analysis of public policies concerning the development of civil society in the Republic of Croatia through their representative in the Council for Development of Civil Society, which is an advisory body of the Croatian Government.

Among other things, the Committee for Persons with Disabilities of the Croatian Government monitors the implementation of the national strategy documents relating to persons with disabilities and suggests effective execution of the planned measures and activities; it monitors the implementation of existing regulations relating to people with disabilities and proposes to the Croatian Government measures for improving the work of bodies dealing with, and/or competent for, tasks related to the protection of persons with disabilities and to exercising their rights; it discusses and gives opinions on draft laws and other regulations that are of interest in improving the quality of life of people with disabilities and their families; and it proposes changes in laws and in other regulations from the area related to people with disabilities to the Croatian Government and to state administration bodies. During 2014, the Committee sent a recommendation on the inclusion of representatives of persons with disabilities into working groups for drafting regulations, as well as into earlier stages of adopting regulations, to state administration bodies as expert proponents of regulation drafting.

*3. Please provide information in relation to difficulties and good practices on the design, implementation and monitoring of mainstream and/or specific social protection programmes with regard to persons with disabilities, including:*

*• Conditions of accessibility and the provision of reasonable accommodation;*

*• Consideration of the specific needs of persons with disabilities within the services and/or benefits of existing programmes;*

*• Difficulties experienced by persons with disabilities and their families in fulfilling requirements and/or conditions for accessing social protection programmes;*

*• Consideration to age, gender and race or ethnic-based differences and possible barriers;*

*• Conflicts between the requirements and/or benefits of existing programmes, and the exercise by persons with disabilities of rights such as the enjoyment of legal capacity, living independently and being included in the community, or work;*

*• Allocation of grants to personal budgets;*

*• Disability-sensitive training and awareness-raising for civil servants and/or external partners;*

*• Existence of complaint or appeal mechanisms.*

The need to ensure reasonable adjustment is defined in the Anti-discrimination Act where, in addition to the basics relating to the whole population, discrimination against persons with disabilities is defined as a failure to make reasonable adjustments, i.e. failure to provide people with disabilities, according to their specific needs, with the possibilities of: using publicly available resources; participating in public and social life; accessing the workplace and having appropriate working conditions, through adapting the infrastructure and space, using equipment and in other ways that do not constitute an unreasonable burden for those obliged to provide it.

As for reasonable adjustment of buildings, their adjustment is regulated by the Law on Spatial Planning and Construction and by the Rulebook on ensuring accessibility of buildings to persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility, according to which the occupancy permit cannot be obtained unless the building satisfies all the necessary conditions, one of which pertains to its being accessible to all citizens, including persons with disabilities.

In order to include persons with disabilities in the world of work and to ensure that they can perform their tasks in an equal position as other employees, the Law on vocational rehabilitation and employment of people with disabilities regulates the ways of ensuring reasonable adjustments of workplaces: adjustment of the workplace, architectural adjustment of the workplace, technical adjustment of working conditions, remuneration of differences for the sake of reduced efficiency, co-financing the cost of a personal assistant (work assistant), co-financing interest rates for credit funds, co-financing the costs of an occupational therapist.

Accessibility in the social welfare system is ensured through technical standards prescribed by the Ordinance laying down minimum conditions for providing social services, which prescribes not only minimum conditions for providing social services, but also working methods of the committee that examines their fulfillment.

In recent years, and particularly within the process of reform, there have been significant changes in the development of social services, especially in the approach to the users of the services and to the methods used in modern social work. The new conceptualization of work in social welfare centers, which is based on an integrating approach, as well as the development of standards for the quality of social services, are a significant step towards an active system that suppresses and prevents social exclusion, promotes life in an environment that provides support, protection and care, encourages the development of each individual's potential and ensures the protection of human rights of socially vulnerable groups. The improvement of the regulatory and strategic framework has created the prerequisites for a further development of rights and services within the social welfare system for persons with disabilities, and a legal framework for the transformation and deinstitutionalization of social care homes has been established.

We emphasize that the procedure of recognizing the rights within the social welfare system is urgent. In extremely urgent cases, when it is necessary to take measures in order to eliminate an immediate threat to life and health of people, especially children, or to ensure public order and safety, a social welfare center can make a verbal decision and order the execution of the verbal decision without delay.

According to the Social Welfare Act, a user is primarily entitled by a social welfare center to the right to social services within his or her family and the local community, and in exceptional cases, if these services cannot meet all the user's needs, and if the local community has not developed a network of non-institutional services, the user is entitled to the right of getting care outside his or her own family, in the form of accommodation.

All rights and services from the Social Welfare Act are recognized by a decision of the competent social welfare center, to which an injured party may file a complaint to the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth.

An administrative dispute can be initiated against the second instance decision, thereby exercising the protection of the rights of the party. All administrative procedures in the Republic of Croatia are based on the principle of assisting the party, which means that if, during a procedure, an authorized official finds out or assesses that the party has a basis for exercising some right, then they are obliged to warn the party about it, as well as about the consequences of the party's actions or failures to act within the procedure. The Free Legal Aid Act has established a comprehensive system of providing free legal aid to underprivileged persons in solving their existential problems.

The Ombudsman for persons with disabilities has the right of accessing premises and of getting an insight into the way that care is provided to persons with disabilities who live, work or are temporarily or permanently accommodated with natural and legal persons and other legal entities based on special regulations. Within 30 days upon the performed inspection, a report is submitted about it to the body that supervises the work of the persons, and this body is obliged to inform the Ombudsman for persons with disabilities about the actions taken within 30 days upon the receipt of the report, and in urgent cases without delay. If the body in charge of monitoring does not submit a report within the deadline, the Ombudsman for persons with disabilities will, within 30 days, notify the Croatian Government and the media. Furthermore, if the Ombudsman for persons with disabilities, while performing their duties, finds that a person with disability has been subjected to discrimination, violence, sexual abuse, abuse, exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, they shall immediately file a complaint to the competent State Attorney's Office and notify the competent state administration body, suggesting measures for the protection of the rights and interests of persons with disabilities.

The Ministry of Social Policy and Youth comprises a Service for administrative and inspectional Supervision. The inspectional supervision supervises the application and implementation of laws and other regulations, of general and individual acts, as well as the professional work of social welfare homes, centers for assistance and care, family homes, associations, and other legal and natural persons providing social services to all user groups; it submits accusatory motions and criminal charges related to situations established through inspection.

For the purpose of a more intensive inclusion of children with developmental disabilities and adults with disabilities in community life, a continuous financial support is provided to a number of civil society organizations' programs and projects providing a variety of services in the community. In 2013, total funds spent for this purpose on the national level were:

a) A total of HRK 106,241,215.00 has been allocated to the program area *Support to people with disabilities, people with special needs and socially vulnerable groups*

b) As a direct beneficiary group, persons with disabilities are mentioned in 265 projects/programs, which are funded in the amount of 60,020,903.51 HRK. As an indirect beneficiary group, persons with disabilities are mentioned in additional 209 projects / programs, funded in the amount of 58,148,289.61 HRK.

The Office for NGOs of the Croatian Government brings together those data on an annual basis and publishes them on their official website.

As a very important project aiming to ensure independent living, we emphasize the provision of personal assistance, which the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth started to implement in 2006 in cooperation with associations of persons with disabilities. Personal Assistant users are people with physical disabilities, deaf-blind, deaf and blind people with additional disabilities who need practical assistance in self-care (for example, help with personal care, dressing and undressing, performing physiological needs, feeding and drinking; help with physical needs (transport bed - wheelchair, help with telephone calls, etc.), help with administrative work - going to the doctor (referrals, remittances, prescriptions), help with establishing and facilitating communication, and accompaniment and help in different social activities). The project is based on the *independent living movement*, which implies that people with disabilities enjoy equal opportunities to participate in the community as other citizens, without being dependent on their families or friends. This service is currently provided to 631 persons with the most severe type and degree of disability, the funds being provided by the state budget and by part of the revenue from games of chance.

In order to increase the number of users and to ensure the availability of this service to persons with intellectual and mental disabilities, this service will also be provided by the European Social Fund, under the Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013, so that a call for proposals was published at the beginning of 2015.

The Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, again in cooperation with organizations of persons with disabilities, provides a sign language interpreter service (52 employed interpreters), and the service of a seeing-eye companion for blind people (16 employed).

The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports provides the service of teaching assistant and it has ensured 1,620 teaching assistants for 1,697 children with developmental disabilities for the school year 2014/2015.

Since the availability of appropriate data on disability is a prerequisite for planning appropriate measures and programs for people with disabilities, the Republic of Croatia in 2001 adopted the Law on Croatian Register of Persons with Disabilities, which is kept in the Croatian Institute for Public Health, the Department for the Prevention of Disability. The Register became operational in mid-2002. Data for the Register are collected by competent bodies whose jurisdiction comprises people with disabilities. The Register consists of a general section that includes general information about a person, and of a special section that includes information on the types of physical and mental impairments. A registry information system that satisfies all functional requirements and provides flexibility in making required reports has also been made.

In this way, the Register provides access to accurate and updated information about persons with disabilities in the Republic of Croatia, in coordination with other data collection systems and in accordance with defined guidelines for data collection and the adopted classification of disabilities. In this regard, staff of the Department for the Prevention of Disability are able to create a variety of reports based on certain parameters, including age and sex.

As for the enjoyment of legal capacity, the adoption of the new Family Law is pending. Under the draft new law, and in terms of guardianship and legal capacity, the existing institute of parental care after the age of majority and the institute of a complete deprivation of legal capacity are completely abandoned, and a revision of existing solutions is expected. The content of guardianship is more precisely specified and it is determined that it must be appropriate, individualized and consistent with the well-being of the ward; in addition, provisions were added about protecting the dignity of the ward and about the right to protection from violence and from any kind of degrading treatment. The draft law specifies: a) which decisions about personal status are to be made exclusively by the ward, b) in which cases a prior approval by the social welfare center is necessary, c) which important decisions on health are to be made by the court, and d) the management of and the representation in the ward’s property matters. The draft law stipulates introducing the institute of anticipated orders, i.e. of the legal obligation to respect the ward‘s desires, and, at times of existing legal capacity, each person is allowed to appoint the person they would like to have as their guardian.

With regard to raising awareness, we emphasize the last campaign of the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, which was conducted with the purpose of familiarizing the public with the process of de-institutionalization and encouraging the public to support people with intellectual and mental disabilities in their efforts to exercise the right to life in the community. The Open Society Institute provided funds for the campaign in the amount of $ 10,000, and the national television screened promotional videos from15 February to 15 March 2015.

An important aspect in achieving the greatest possible autonomy and independence of people with disabilities is the provision of orthopedic and other aids, based on the Ordinance on conditions and means of exercising the right to orthopedic and other aids. The Ordinance includes orthopedic, visual, auditory, typhlo-technical, hearing and dental aids designed to improve damaged functions, to remedy or eliminate a bodily injury or a lack of organs and organ systems, and to supplement anatomical or physiological functions after damage caused by disease or injury. In the Croatian Institute for Health Insurance, there are two Commissions for orthopedic aids giving their opinions and suggestions regarding the inclusion of new orthopedic aids into the Ordinance, based on suggestions of experts and of civil society organizations.

In order to ensure access to information for deaf persons and other people with communication difficulties for whom the sign language is the primary form of communication, the Law on Croatian Sign Language and other systems of communication of deaf and deafblind people in the Republic of Croatia has been prepared and is in the process of adoption.

Implementing the above-mentioned Operational Plan for Deinstitutionalization and Transformation of social welfare homes and other legal entities providing social welfare services in the Republic of Croatia for the period 2014-2016 will reduce the entry of users into institutions and increase the level of leaving institutions for new forms of care, especially through stimulating a family reintegration (with the guarantee of one or more services for family support being provided in the local community) and the development of various services in the community, taking into account regional uniformity. The process of planning the deinstitutionalization and transformation is being adjusted and implemented at all levels (the national and local level).

During 2014, 243 persons have been deinstitutionalized, of which 4 children with developmental disabilities, 95 adults with mental disabilities, and 144 adults with intellectual disabilities. On 15 February 2015, the Republic of Croatia has a total of 827 users located in 230 residential communities.

In order to ensure a more independent life for people with disabilities, community services for people with disabilities are constantly being developed and their number is increasing, taking into account regional uniformity, which is what the new Network of social services aims to achieve. In November 2014, the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth adopted the Decision on the network of social services, which determines the required number and types of social services in the area of the Republic of Croatia, in accordance with the actual needs of users who are entitled to social services by, as we have already mentioned above, a decision of a social welfare center.

*4. Please provide any information or data available, disaggregated by impairment, sex, age or ethnic origin if possible, in relation to:*

*• Coverage of social protection programmes by persons with disabilities;*

*• Rates of poverty among persons with disabilities;*

*• Additional costs or expenses related to disability.*

In the social security system, social welfare represents the last social safety net for providing for the socially most disadvantaged or socially vulnerable groups and of their inclusion into society. Social welfare is conducted through a relatively wide territorial network of social services (social welfare centers), institutions and homes.

In the exercising of social welfare rights, principles of equality and equity are applied to all citizens of the Republic of Croatia. Taking into account the fact that there is two-way relationship between disability and poverty, the welfare system, in the part relating to people with disabilities, is arranged so that these people, in order to overcome difficulties, may realize some of the rights to material support or the right to specific services.

The basic law establishing the rights within social welfare is the Social Welfare Act, based on which all citizens of the Republic of Croatia may, under prescribed conditions, realize social welfare rights:

* guaranteed minimum remuneration,
* remuneration for housing costs,
* the costs of heating fuel,
* remuneration for personal needs of users of accommodation,
* one-time remuneration,
* personal disability allowance,
* allowance for assistance and care,
* parent caregiver status or caregiver status,
* remuneration until employment.

Certain rights from the Social Welfare Act are not in conflict and can be exercised cumulatively. For example, when determining the right to a guaranteed minimum remuneration (the amount of money ensuring the fulfillment of basic needs to a single person or household without sufficient resources to meet their basic needs), the personal disability allowance and the allowance for assistance and care are not taken into account when calculating their income.

Pursuant to the Social Welfare Act, large cities and county seats are required, in accordance with their financial possibilities, to encourage and to provide citizens in their areas with other forms of material aid and support, such as food in soup kitchens, social housing for persons who receive a guaranteed minimum remuneration, subsidies for paying certain social and other services; to encourage the work of associations and volunteer work in social welfare, and to develop other forms of social welfare in their areas.

Furthermore, local and regional governments can provide funds for monetary remunerations and social services to residents of their areas to a greater extent than stipulated by the Social Welfare Act.

In collecting data on the applicable social welfare rights and in protecting persons with disabilities, The Ministry of Social Policy and Youth does not collect data on ethnicity.

The Croatian Bureau of Statistics calculates poverty indicators for Croatia from the data collected by the Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC). It is an annual survey that is carried out on the random sample of private households. According to the methodology, institutional households (such as homes, prisons, hospitals for the permanent accommodation of patients etc.) are not covered. The survey collects data on gross and net income of households and all household members, data on demographic characteristics and education status of persons, activity status and employment, health care and childcare, data on financial and material status of households and data on other aspects of living standards of households. The annual reports are available on the website of the Croatian Bureau of Statistics.

As of 1 January 2015, the Croatian Institute for Health Insurance is separated from the State Treasury, which is why the future activities of the Croatian Institute for Health Insurance, as an extra-budgetary fund, will contribute to achieving a higher level of service for persons insured in the compulsory health insurance, and to the harmonization of financing the domestic health care system with the best EU practices. This means that the real needs of the system are recognized, since earmarked collected funds will be directed to the payment of costs incurred by using the rights from the compulsory health insurance.

5*. Please provide information in relation to the eligibility criteria used for accessing mainstream and/or specific social protection programmes with regard to persons with disabilities, including:Definition of disability and disability assessments used for eligibility determination;*

*• Consistency of the eligibility criteria among different social protection programmes;*

*• Use of income and/or poverty thresholds;*

*• Consideration of disability-related extra costs in means-tested thresholds.*

The harmonization of the definition of disability with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the establishment of standardized criteria in the expertise by introducing a single list and single expertise body, will improve the quality of data collection in the Croatian Register of Persons with Disabilities. This helps customers to exercise their rights based on disability. The Law on the Unique Body of Expertise was passed in 2014, and on 1 January 2015, the Unique Body of Expertise became operational at the Department of expertise, vocational rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities. This will make the process expertise become faster, more transparent and more effective. So far, expertise has been carried out in 6 systems, according to different laws and criteria, for the purpose of exercising the rights in these systems. The new system of expertise includes the determination of physical, intellectual, sensory and mental impairment, of disability, of functional ability, of the level of support and of the working capacity of a person.

The Social Welfare Act defines persons with disabilities in line with the definition in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: a person with disabilities *is a person having long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with persons without disabilities*. A child with developmental disabilities is a child who, due to physical, sensory, communication, speech and language, or intellectual disabilities, should receive more support in learning and development, so as to achieve the best possible developmental outcome and social inclusion.The same definition of a person with disabilities is used in the Law on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities.

According to the Social Welfare Act, a person who is unable to ensure subsistence through their work, through the rights arising from work or insurance, through income from property, from other sources, from individuals obliged to support them under the regulations governing family relations or otherwise, has rights within the social welfare system, under the conditions stipulated in the Act. Users exercise their rights in the social welfare system on the principle of free choice, and have the right to participate in the assessment of the situation, needs and decision-making on the use of services, to and timely receive information and support for decision-making.