Country Profile on Disability
Republic of Serbia

August 2026

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

International Development Center of Japan Inc.

Koei Research & Consulting Inc.

HM
JR
26-073

This study was commissioned by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (hereinafter referred to as "JICA") and conducted by the International Development Center of Japan, Inc. and Koei Research & Consulting Inc. This report is based on an analysis of literature and online surveys conducted in Japan from December 2025 to August 2026, as well as online questionnaires completed by relevant organizations of the target country.

Country Profile on Disability
Republic of Serbia
Table of Contents

1. Basic Profile 1
1-1. Basic Indicators 1
1-2. Definition of Disability and Indicators on Disability 2
2. Administration and Policy on Disability 6
2-1. Administration on Disability 6
2-2. Laws, Regulations and Policies on Disability 9
2-3. Measures on Disability 15
3. International Treaties and International Cooperation 24
3-1. Status of Implementation Following the Ratification of the CRPD 24
3-2. Status of Implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty 24
3-3. Initiatives on Disability Issues within SDG-related Policies 25
3-4. Ratification of and Initiatives regarding Other International Treaties related to Disabilities and Development 25
4. Disability-related Organizations and Activities 30
4-1. Organizations of Persons with Disabilities 30
4-2. Disability Support Organizations 31
5. Barriers and Needs Faced by Persons with Disabilities 32
5-1. Barriers to and Needs regarding Healthcare Services 32
5-2. Barriers to and Needs regarding Education 32
5-3. Barriers to and Needs regarding Employment 33
5-4. Barriers to and Needs regarding Transportation 33
5-5. Barriers to and Needs regarding Information Access 34
5-6. Barriers and Needs regarding Gender 34
6. References 36

List of Figures

Figure 1 Percentage of Functional Limitation (ages 2 and above)(2022) 4
Figure 2 Percentage of Persons with Disabilities by Age Group (ages 2 and above) (2022) 4
Figure 3 Percentage of Persons with Disabilities by Residential Area (ages 2 and older) (2022) 5

List of Tables

Table 1 Entities Responsible for Disability Issues in Serbia.....6

Abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health	
IEP	Individualized Education Plan	
ILO	International Labour Organization	
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency	
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations	
NOOIS	Nacionalna organizacija osoba sa invaliditetom Srbije	National Organization of Persons with Disabilities of Serbia
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	
OPD	Organization of Persons with Disabilities	
RSD	Serbian Dinars	
RZS	Republički zavod za statistiku	Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals	
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme	
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund	
UNPRPD	United Nations Partnership for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund	
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization	

1. Basic Profile

1-1. Basic Indicators[1]

Gross Domestic Product[2] per capita	USD 13,679.2	2024

Expenditures by Sector

Healthcare (% of GDP)	9.7 %	2022
Education (% of GDP)	3.4 %	2023
Social protection (% of GDP)[3]	13.5 %	2023

Population

Total population	6,586,476	2024
Male (% of total population)	47.4 %	
Female (% of total population)	52.6 %	
Urban population (% of total population)	62.4 %	
Rural population (% of total population)	37.6 %	
Life expectancy at birth (total)	76.2 years	2023
Male	73.9 years	
Female	78.7 years	

Health

Prevalence of undernourishment (% of population)	2.5 %	2023
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	4.5	2023

Education

Education System[4]		
Primary Education	8 years	
Compulsory education	8 years	
Literacy rate (total)	99.3 %	2022
Adult male	99.6 %	
Adult female	99.1 %	

[1] Based on the World Bank Database (https://data.worldbank.org/indicator (Accessed: 20 January 2026))

[2] Hereinafter referred to as "GDP."

[3] Excluding healthcare. Based on ILO (2024) World Social Protection Report, https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/WSPR_2024_EN_WEB_1.pdf (Accessed: 20 January 2026).

[4] The Serbian education system consists of primary school (8 years: 4 years in the first cycle and 4 years in the second cycle), secondary school (4 years), and university (3-4 years). Children begin school at age 6. Based on information from the European Commission (https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/eurypedia/serbia/overview (Accessed: 20 January 2026)).

School enrollment		
Primary (% gross) (total)	96.6 %	2022
Male	96.6 %	
Female	96.7 %	
Secondary (% gross) (total)	92.0 %	2022
Male	91.1 %	
Female	92.8 %	
Tertiary (% gross) (total)	73.2 %	2023
Male	59.3 %	
Female	87.7 %	

Employment

Unemployment (total)	7.4 %	2024
Male (% of male labor force)	7.0 %	
Female (% of female labor force)	7.9 %	

1-2. Definition of Disability and Indicators on Disability

1-2-1. Definition of Disability

According to the State Party's Report submitted by the Republic of Serbia (hereinafter referred to as "Serbia") to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter referred to as "CRPD"), the legal system of Serbia does not have a single, comprehensive definition of disability; rather, it is defined individually across various laws, by-laws, and policy documents.

The Law on Prevention of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, enacted in 2006, defines persons with disabilities in Article 3 as "persons with congenital or acquired physical, sensory, intellectual or emotional (psychosocial) impairment who are, due to social or other barriers, unable or have limited opportunities to engage in social activities at the same level as others, regardless of whether they are capable to carry out such activities with the use of assistive devices or support services."[5]

On the other hand, the Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities defines persons with disabilities in Article 3 as "persons having permanent consequences of physical, sensory, mental or psychiatric impairments or disease that cannot be eliminated by any treatment or medical rehabilitation and faced with social and other limitations and barriers affecting their working capacity and possibility to find or retain employment, and who have no possibility or have reduced possibilities to be included in the

[5] https://www.srbija.gov.rs/tekst/en/129950/persons-with-disabilities.php (Accessed: 6 April 2026)

labour market or apply for employment on equal terms with other persons."[6]

1-2-2. Indicators on Disability

Statistics on disabilities are derived from the Census of Population, Households and Dwellings (conducted approximately every 10 years) and the Demographic and Health Survey (conducted approximately every 6 years), both carried out by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (*Republički zavod za statistiku*; hereafter referred to as "RZS"). The Washington Group Short Set on Functioning has been adopted since the 2011 Census.[7]

In the 2022 Census[8], questions were asked regarding six functions: Seeing, Hearing, Walking or climbing up the stairs, Remembering/concentration, Independence with clothing/ feeding/ maintaining personal hygiene, and Communication, with a 5-level scale: "No difficulty", "Some difficulty", "A lot of difficulty", "Completely prevented", and "Do not want to answer". Those who answered "Completely prevented" or "A lot of difficulty" are classified as "persons with disabilities".

Number of Persons with Disabilities (aged 2 and older)	356,404	5.5 % of population (aged 2 and older)	2022
Male	148,104		
Female	208,300		

Source: RZS (2022)

[6] https://natlex.ilo.org/dyn/natlex2/natlex2/files/download/84221/SRB-84221%20(EN).pdf (Accessed: 7 April 2026)
[7] It has been adopted since 2013 for the Population and Health Survey.
[8] RZS (2023) *Population according to disability status and type of problem of persons with disabilities* https://www.stat.gov.rs/en-us/vesti/20231201-invaliditet/?a=0&s=0302 (Accessed: 7 April 2026)

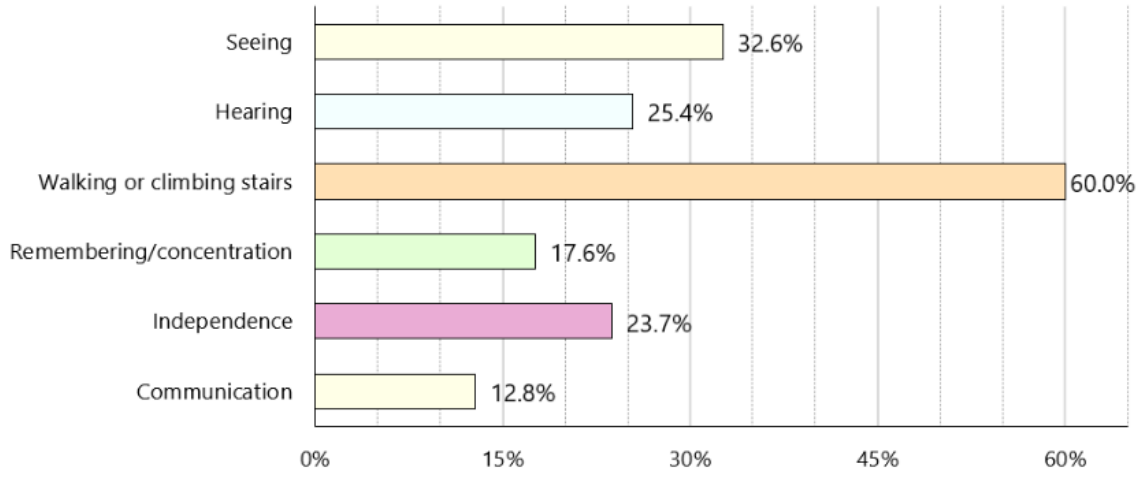


Figure 1 Percentage of Functional Limitation[9] (ages 2 and above)(2022)

By functional limitation, "walking and climbing up the stairs" had the highest rate at 60.0%, followed by "seeing" at 32.6%, "hearing" at 25.4%, "independence" at 23.7%, "remembering/ concentration" at 17.6%, and "communication" at 12.8%.

Source: Prepared by the study team based on RZS (2022)

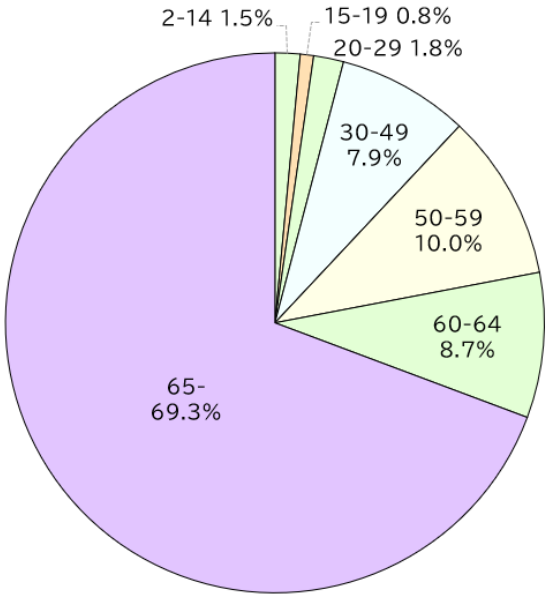


Figure 2 Percentage of Persons with Disabilities by Age Group (ages 2 and above) (2022)

The percentage of persons with disabilities by age group is highest among those aged 65 and older, at 69.3%, accounting for approximately 70% of the total. This is followed by those aged 50–59 at 10.0%, those aged 60–64 at 8.7%, and those aged 30–49 at 7.9%, indicating that middle-aged and older adults also account for a significant proportion. On the other hand, the proportion of younger people is low, with those aged 20–29 at 1.8%, those aged 2–14 at 1.5%, and those aged 15–19 at just 0.8%.

Source: Prepared by the study team based on RZS (2022)

[9] The percentage of persons with limitations in each area of daily living. While the total number of persons with disabilities is 356,404, the total number of respondents who reported having limitations in daily living activities is 512,215.

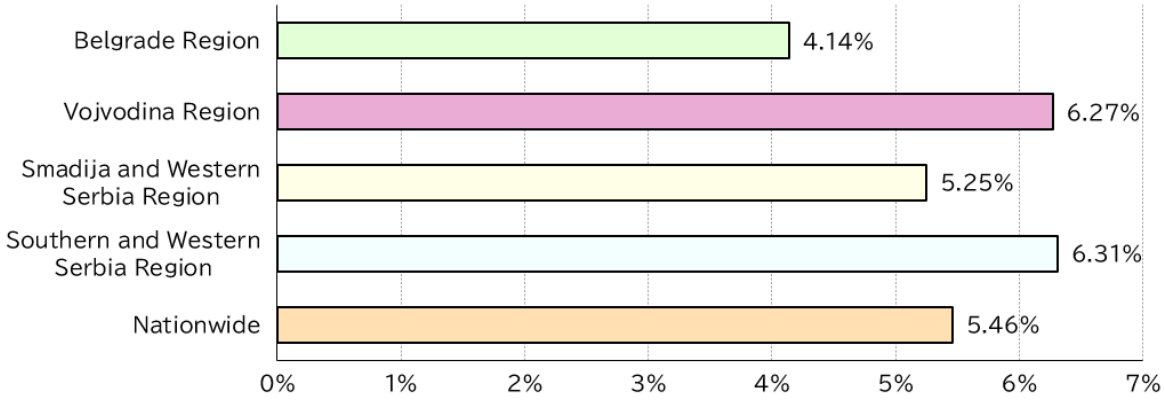


Figure 3 Percentage of Persons with Disabilities by Residential Area (ages 2 and older) (2022)

While the national average for the percentage of persons with disabilities is 5.46%, the Belgrade Region has the lowest rate at 4.14%, and the Šumadija and Western Serbia region is slightly below the average at 5.25%. In contrast, the Vojvodina region stands at 6.27% and the South and East Serbia region at 6.31%, both exceeding the average, indicating significant regional variations.

Source: Prepared by the study team based on RZS (2022)

2. Administration and Policy on Disability

2-1. Administration on Disability[10]

To steadily fulfill the domestic implementation and monitoring under Article 33 of the CRPD, the Government of Serbia has established the Council for Persons with Disabilities and designated the Protector of Citizens (Ombudsman). While the Council for Persons with Disabilities is responsible for practical coordination with other government sectors and the private sector, the Protector of Citizens monitors the implementation of rights from an independent standpoint.

<Central government>

Entities responsible for disability issues

Table 1 Entities Responsible for Disability Issues in Serbia

No.	Name	Overview
1	Protector of Citizens - Ombudsman	Since 2021, the Protector of Citizens has served as the independent monitoring mechanism under the CRPD. It holds the authority to investigate administrative inaction or discriminatory practices based on complaints from persons with disabilities and to issue recommendations for corrective measures. Within the institution, a Deputy Ombudsman responsible for the fields of persons with disabilities and the elderly, as well as an advisory committee consisting of experts and activists, have been established.
2	Commissioner for Protection of Equality	An independent body responsible for the elimination of all forms of discrimination under the Anti-Discrimination Law in 2009. This Commissioner has the authority to investigate discrimination in employment and the use of services by private enterprises, and issue recommendations for corrective measures. Defining physical and institutional barriers as forms of discrimination, it monitors and promotes the provision of reasonable accommodation, and, in cases of significant public interest, files anti-discrimination lawsuits on its own initiative, leading the way in effectively restoring rights through the judicial system.
3	Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs	This Ministry is responsible for promoting the protection of rights and social participation of persons with disabilities. Its mandate includes the development of legislation such as the Law on Prevention of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, the formulation of national strategies based on the CRPD, the provision of grants to organizations of persons with disabilities (hereinafter referred to as "OPD"), the promotion of accessibility, employment support through professional rehabilitation, and the administration

[10] Based on State Party's Report (2012), Replies to List of Issues (hereinafter referred to as the "Replies to LOI") (2016) and United Nations Partnership for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (hereafter referred to as "UNPRPD") (2023) *Situational Analysis of the rights of persons with disabilities in Serbia. Country Report.* For information gathered from other sources, its source is indicated.

		of social benefits.
4	Ministry for Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue	This Ministry is responsible for guaranteeing the rights of marginalized individuals in society, including persons with disabilities. Its mandate includes monitoring situations and preparing reports based on international human rights standards, providing platforms for social dialogue where OPDs can directly debate with the government, and conducting awareness-raising activities to reflect the perspectives of the individuals concerned in all societal decision-making processes.
5	Ministry of Education	This Ministry is responsible for promoting and ensuring the quality of inclusive education. Specifically, it supports the formulation of Individualized Education Plan (hereinafter referred to as "IEP") for students with disabilities to learn alongside their peers in mainstream schools, coordinates the deployment of pedagogical assistants to support learning, promotes school building accessibility, and enhances teachers' professional development. Additionally, it is responsible for providing textbooks in accessible formats and coordinating with Inter-sectoral Commissions.

Status of Coordination Mechanism

As the domestic coordination mechanism, the Council for Persons with Disabilities, established in 2005, is responsible for coordinating state authorities regarding the adoption and implementation of laws and policies related to persons with disabilities, and for promoting cooperation with domestic and international organizations. The Council has a four-year term of office, and it is chaired by the Head of the Department for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities within the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs.

Name of the mechanism	Council for Persons with Disabilities
Members (26)	Chairperson: Head of the Department for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities, the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs Members: ・ 7 representatives of OPDs affiliated with the National Organization of Persons with Disabilities of Serbia (hereafter referred to as "NOOIS"); ・ 3 representatives of professional rehabilitation and employment enterprises; ・ 11 state secretaries/assistant ministers and experts from relevant ministries; ・ A representative of the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit; ・ A representative of Republic Fund for Pension and Disability Insurance; ・ A representative of the National Employment Service; and ・ A professor from the Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation,

	University of Belgrade
Roles and status of operation	The roles of the Council are as follows: 1) Formulating and coordinating national policies; 2) Reflecting the needs of persons with disabilities; 3) Evaluating and recommending disability-related legislation; 4) Promoting accessibility; and 5) Monitoring measures and their dissemination to local levels In cooperation with independent bodies, including the Protector of Citizens, the Council leads the Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities in alignment with the CRPD. It focuses on implementing the "Serbia without Barriers" campaign to promote public infrastructure accessibility, improving the subsidy system for enterprises employing persons with disabilities, and enhancing the quality of IEPs.

<Local government>

Entities responsible for disability issues

Name	Overview
Local Councils for Persons with Disabilities	An advisory body established in each municipality, modeled after the central government's Council. Composed of representatives from OPDs, local government officials and experts, it formulates disability support plans tailored to local conditions and promotes accessibility. It serves as a hub for the local community, making recommendations on municipal budget allocations and monitoring the implementation of measures.
Inter-Sectoral Commission[11]	A body at the municipal level where experts from the education, health, and social support sectors collaborate to assess and determine additional support for children with disabilities. Based on individual needs, it recommends the deployment of pedagogical assistants and the utilization of social welfare services, playing a key role in coordinating cross-sectoral, comprehensive support.
Center for Social Work	A public agency to handle social welfare services, established in each municipality. With a team of professionals including social workers and psychologists, it serves as the primary point of contact for individualized support and case management in the community, handling tasks such as reviewing eligibility for social benefits, arranging personal assistance services, and selecting and coordinating residential facilities for persons with disabilities.
National Employment Service	Responsible for employment support and job matching for persons with disabilities. Specialized counselors conduct professional rehabilitation and capacity assessments, promoting the integration of persons with disabilities into the labor market through the administration of subsidies for employers and the monitoring of

[11] https://www.european-agency.org/country-information/serbia/overview-inclusive-education-system (Accessed: 8 April 2026)

	compliance with the employment quota system.

2-2. Laws, Regulations and Policies on Disability

Article 21 of the Constitution[12] explicitly prohibits discrimination based on "mental or physical disability" and establishes equality before the law as a fundamental principle. On that basis, Article 69 explicitly designates persons with disabilities as subjects of "special protection," promising concrete social protection to support their right to life and dignity. Regarding education, Article 71 provides for the establishment of special education schools and classes for children with disabilities. Article 97 prescribes the organization and maintenance of this "system of disabled persons' care" as an inherent jurisdiction and responsibility of the State. Based on these constitutional guarantees of rights, the Law on Prevention of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities was enacted, shifting the paradigm from being objects of welfare to subjects of rights.

Title	Law on the Protector of Citizens[13] (Law No.105/2021)
Year of enactment	2021
Overview	This Law legally codified the status of the Protector of Citizens as the "independent monitoring mechanism" under the CRPD. It mandates the establishment of a Deputy Protector of Citizens for the fields of persons with disabilities and the elderly, alongside the operation of an advisory committee composed of persons with disabilities and experts, thereby institutionalizing the participation of the concerned individuals in the policy-making process. It also strengthens the authority to conduct unannounced on-site inspections of residential facilities for persons with disabilities and similar institutions, and introduces a public disclosure system for cases where they fail to comply with corrective recommendations.

Title	Law on the Prevention of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities[14]
Year of enactment	2006 (Amended in 2016)
Overview	Based on the "social model" that perceives disability in relation to societal barriers, this Law comprehensively prohibits discrimination in all fields, including education, employment, and public services. The 2016 amendment concretized accessibility regulations by defining the denial of access to buildings and information as discrimination. It also enhanced legal efficacy by strengthening

[12] https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/constitution-of-the-republic-of-serbia.html (Accessed: 6 April 2026)

[13]https://www.ombudsman.rs/attachments/article/643/%D0%97%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD%20%D0%BE%20%D0%97%D0%B0%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%BA%D1%83%20%D0%B3%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%92%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B3%D0%BB%D0%B5%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BC%20%D1%98%D0%B5%D0%B7%D0%B8%D0%BA%D1%83.pdf(Accessed: 7 April 2026)

[14] https://www.refworld.org/legal/legislation/natlegbod/2016/123505(Accessed: 6 April 2026)

	penalties, introducing fines of up to 100,000 Serbian Dinars (hereafter referred to as "RSD") for non-compliant legal entities.

Title	Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities[15] (Law No.36/2009)
Year of enactment	2009 (Amended in 2013 and 2019)
Overview	This Law imposes an employment quota, requiring enterprises with 20 or more employees to hire at least one person with a disability, with the required number increasing according to their size. Non-compliant employers must pay a mandatory contribution to the budget fund for each unfilled position, equivalent to 50% of the national average monthly salary. Subsequent amendments introduced alternative compliance methods, such as outsourcing tasks to enterprises specializing in the employment of persons with disabilities, and reduced their burdens by expanding public subsidies for workplace adaptations.

Title	Law on the Use of Sign Language[16]
Year of enactment	2015
Overview	This Law officially recognizes sign language as an independent linguistic system. It guarantees the right of persons with hearing impairments to access free sign language interpretation at public institutions and mandates the provision of sign language interpretation in public broadcasting.

Title	Law on Movement Using Guide-Dogs[17]
Year of enactment	2015
Overview	This Law guarantees the right of persons with visual impairments accompanied by guide dogs to freely access and utilize all public facilities, including public transportation, retail stores, and government offices. It also prescribes fines for any unjustified denial of entry or access.

Other major laws and regulations related to the rights of persons with disabilities include the following.

Title	Law on Gender Equality[18]
Year of enactment	2021
References to disabilities	This Law defines women with disabilities as a vulnerable group exposed to "multiple discrimination" and mandates affirmative

[15] https://natlex.ilo.org/dyn/natlex2/natlex2/files/download/84221/SRB-84221%20(EN).pdf (Accessed: 7 April 2026)
[16] https://eud.eu/what-is-the-serbian-sign-language-law/ (Accessed: 7 April 2026)
[17] https://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/en/law-on-movement-using-guide-dogs-adopted/#:~:text=2015.,Source:%20www.tanjug.rs (Accessed: 7 April 2026)
[18] https://minljmpdd.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Zakon-o-rodnoj-ravnopravnosti-engl.doc (Accessed: 13 April 2026)

	action to improve their status. Specifically, it explicitly prescribes the provision of reasonable accommodation tailored to both disability- and gender-specific needs in the areas of employment, education, healthcare, and protection from violence.

Title	Law on Health Care[19]
Year of enactment	2019
References to disabilities	This Law defines persons with disabilities as a group with high medical risks who require particular social protection. Under this Law, the State bears the obligation to guarantee equal and preferential access to healthcare for persons with disabilities, providing comprehensive services ranging from prevention to treatment. The elimination of physical and financial barriers in healthcare facilities is established as a legal principle.

Title	Law on Textbooks[20]
Year of enactment	2015 (Amended in 2018)
References to disabilities	This Law guarantees the right of students with disabilities to study in formats adapted to their individual needs. Publishers are obligated to issue textbooks in formats such as Braille, audio, digital, and large print, with the State providing financial support for their production costs. Since the 2018 amendment, the accessibility of digital teaching materials utilizing ICT has been further strengthened.

Title	Law on Public Information and Media[21]
Year of enactment	2014 (Amended in 2023)
References to disabilities	While Article 12 of this Law defined the state's obligation to ensure access to information for persons with disabilities, the lack of accessibility in broadcast content remained a challenge. The 2023 amendment imposed a mandatory obligation not only on public broadcasters but on all media enterprises to specifically increase the proportion of content provided using sign language, subtitles, and audio descriptions.

Title	Law on Social Protection[22](Law No.24/2011)
Year of enactment	2011 (Amended in 2019 and 2021)
References to disabilities	This Law serves as the legal foundation for supporting the independent living of persons with disabilities in the community. It provides for the allowance for assistance and care of another person, as well as the increased allowance for persons with severe disabilities. It explicitly establishes community-based support services, such as day care and personal assistants, as legal rights. Subsequent

[19] https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_zdravstvenoj_zastiti.html (Accessed: 27 May 2026)
[20] https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi_download/zakon-o-udzbenicima.pdf (Accessed: 27 May 2026)
[21] http://demo.paragraf.rs/demo/combined/Old/t/t2025_11/EN_010_2025_001.htm (Accessed: 14 April 2026)
[22] https://www.refworld.org/legal/legislation/natlegbod/2011/sr/149899?prevPage=/node/149899 (Accessed: 7 April 2026)

	amendments mandated the stricter enforcement of the licensing system to guarantee the quality of social welfare services, and promoted digitalization to expedite the application process for social benefits including care allowances.

Title	Law on Copyright and Related Rights[23]
Year of enactment	2009 (Amended in 2019)
References to disabilities	Through the 2019 amendment enacted to ratify and implement the Marrakesh Treaty[24], this Law permits authorized entities to reproduce, distribute, and make available to the public copyrighted works in accessible formats—such as Braille and audio—without the authorization of the author or the payment of remuneration. It also introduced new, detailed provisions to enable the international exchange (import and export) of such data between contracting states.

Title	Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System[25]
Year of enactment	2009 (Amended in 2017)
References to disabilities	Serving as the legal basis for inclusive education, this Law made the enrollment of children with disabilities in mainstream schools the general principle. It guarantees non-discriminatory access to education based on disability and mandates that schools develop IEPs. The 2017 amendment enhanced the support system by clarifying the role of pedagogical assistants who directly support learning, and by strengthening the official involvement of Inter-sectoral Commissions.

Title	Law on Road Traffic Safety[26]
Year of enactment	2009
References to disabilities	In alignment with EU standards, this Law mandates the installation of tactile paving and audible traffic signals for persons with visual impairments, thereby improving the safety of the pedestrian environment. It also legally guarantees the issuance of parking cards for persons with disabilities and their right to use reserved parking spaces.

Title	Criminal Code[27]
Year of enactment	2006 (Amended in 2019)
References to disabilities	In addition to providing protection against sexual violence under Article 179, this Law designates violence committed against persons

[23] https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_autorskom_i_srodnim_pravima.html (Accessed: 7 April 2026)
[24] Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled
[25]https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/serbia_law_fundamentals_education_system_eng.pdf (Accessed: 8 April 2026)
[26] https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_bezbednosti_saobracaja_na_putevima.html (Accessed: 27 May 2026)
[27] https://www.refworld.org/legal/legislation/natlegbod/2005/62118 (Accessed: 8 April 2026)

	with disabilities as an aggravated offense under Article 194 (Domestic Violence), and prescribes the crime of abandonment for leaving a helpless person who is unable to care for themselves under Article 202. The 2019 amendment introduced life imprisonment for grave crimes committed against vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, which positions them as "subjects of rights requiring special protection" and strongly guaranteeing their physical safety.

Title	Labor Law[28] (Law No.24/2005)
Year of enactment	2005 (Amended in 2014)
References to disabilities	This Law prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of disability throughout the entire process from recruitment to dismissal. For parents of children with severe disabilities, it guarantees the right to childcare leave and part-time work until the child reaches the age of five, and prohibits overtime and night work without their consent. It obligates employers to provide duties adapted to the remaining working capacity of persons with disabilities, and imposes strict restrictions on dismissal, limited only to cases where no alternative duties are available. In the 2014 amendment, the rights to family support and employment continuity were further concretized in compliance with EU standards, and heavy penalties for non-compliant employers were also established.

Title	Law on Planning and Construction[29]
Year of enactment	2009
References to disabilities	It mandates that public and commercial buildings, as well as public facilities such as roads, plazas, and parks, be designed, constructed, and maintained so that all users—including people with disabilities, children, and the elderly—can access, move through, and use them without difficulty. Furthermore, it requires that residential buildings with 10 or more units and mixed-use residential and commercial buildings be designed and constructed to ensure the same level of accessibility. In 2015, based on this Law, the Rulebook on Technical Standards for Planning, Design, and Construction of Facilities Ensuring Unimpeded Movement and Access for Persons with Disabilities, Children, and the Elderly" was enacted, establishing detailed specifications—such as ramp gradients and passageway widths—and thereby specifying the technical standards necessary to ensure smooth mobility and access for persons with disabilities, children, and the elderly.

[28] https://antislaverylaw.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Serbia-Labour-Law.pdf (Accessed: 7 April 2026)
[29] https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/planning-and-building-act-serbia.html , https://ravnopravnost.gov.rs/rs/02-23-inicijativa-za-izmenu-zakona-o-planiranju-i-izgradnji/ (Accessed: 14 April 2026)

Disability Policies

Title	Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Serbia[30]
Year of enactment	2025-2030
Overview	While inheriting the achievements of the previous period (2020–2024), which steadily advanced the expansion of access to information and the removal of physical barriers in public facilities, this Strategy incorporates innovative initiatives such as support for personal decision-making and family formation, as well as the improvement of cognitive and communication accessibility. It sets forth key priorities, including the utilization of the latest technologies such as AI, the complete transition to independent living in the community, integration into the labour market in compliance with EU standards, and the strengthening of educational support including early intervention.

Title	Strategy for Prevention and Protection from Discrimination[31]
Year of enactment	2022-2030
References to disabilities	Compared to the previous strategy (2013–2018), which positioned persons with disabilities as subjects of protection alongside other vulnerable groups and focused primarily on the development of anti-discrimination legislation, ensuring institutional equality, and raising public awareness, this Strategy clearly aligns itself with the CRPD and expands concrete measures, such as the mandatory provision of reasonable accommodation, ensuring accessibility, deinstitutionalization and community-based support, and the development of inclusive environments in education and employment.

Title	Strategy for the Development of Education 2030[32]
Year of enactment	2021
References to disabilities	Through the thorough implementation of IEPs, the deployment of pedagogical assistants, and the provision of teaching materials in accessible formats, this Strategy aims to provide consistent support from early intervention to the transition period to secondary education, thereby improving the quality of inclusive education nationwide.

Title	Employment Strategy in the Republic of Serbia[33]
Years implemented	2021-2026

[30] https://rsjp.gov.rs/upload/1770629072375_Strategija_OSI_2025_2030.pdf and https://serbia.unfpa.org/en/news/enhancing-inclusion-new-strategy-improving-position-persons-disabilities#:~:text=Latest-,Enhancing%20Inclusion:%20A%20New%20Strategy%20for%20Improving%20the%20Position%20of,%2C%20Veteran%2C%20and%20Social%20Affairs. (Accessed: 7 April 2026)

[31] https://www.refworld.org/policy/strategy/natlegbod/2022/sr/149889 (Accessed: 13 April 2026)

[32] https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/news/new-strategy-development-education-serbia-2030 (Accessed: 7 April 2026)

[33] https://www.refworld.org/policy/strategy/natlegbod/2021/sr/149888(Accessed: 7 April 2026)

References to disabilities	Under Specific Objective 2, this Strategy defines persons with disabilities as a "hard-to-employ group" and prescribes the promotion of their economic independence and sustainable integration into the labour market through active labour market measures, such as improving the quality of professional rehabilitation, reorganizing work centers, and providing wage subsidies and grants for workplace adaptation costs to employers.

Title	National Strategy for Gender Equality[34]
Year of enactment	2021-2030
References to disabilities	Shifting away from the protective approach of the previous strategy (2016–2020), this Strategy introduced the concept of "multiple discrimination" where gender and disability intersect. It redefines women with disabilities from mere recipients of assistance to "subjects of rights," and strengthens specialized support in health and employment, alongside enhancing the accessibility of shelters for protection from violence.

Title	National Disaster Risk Management Program[35]
Year of enactment	2015-2025
References to disabilities	Formulated in response to the great floods of 2014, this Program utilizes donor funding and technical assistance to incorporate persons with disabilities into field rescue procedures as a "vulnerable group requiring special consideration." Concurrently, it plays a key role in strengthening and concretizing the disaster risk management framework at a practical level through initiatives such as establishing the IT infrastructure for accessible early warning systems and ensuring the accessibility of evacuation centers.

2-3. Measures on Disability[36]

1) Healthcare

Through the Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities (2007–2015), the Government of Serbia sought a paradigm shift toward the social model of disability and established guidelines for providing healthcare tailored to the needs of persons with disabilities. Based on this, the 2009 amendment to the former Law on Health Care mandated equitable healthcare for vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, thereby legally guaranteeing their right to medical care. Through the Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities (Law No.36/2009), a concrete framework was

[34] https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/179692/2021-2030-gender-equality-strategy-adopted.php(Accessed: 7 April 2026)
[35] https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/266831614666100180/pdf/Serbian-National-Disaster-Risk-Management-Program.pdf(Accessed: 7 April 2026)
[36] Based on State Party's Report (2012) and Replies to LOI (2016). For information gathered from other sources, its source is indicated.

established to link professional rehabilitation with employment support. In 2015, the Ministry of Health adopted the Rulebook on the Conditions and Manner of Using Public Facilities in the Area of Health Protection by Persons with Guide Dogs, promoting an environment that facilitates medical consultations with guide dogs.

The new Law on Health Care, enacted in 2019, redefined persons with disabilities as "a group with high medical risks in particular need of social protection," explicitly codifying that comprehensive services ranging from prevention to early detection and treatment must be provided on a preferential basis. Moreover, the provisions for safeguarding the dignity of persons with limited decision-making capacity have been reinforced, such as by making involuntary admission subject to judicial review under strict conditions.

The recommendations for healthcare based on the Concluding Observations (2016) are as follows:

- Provide health-care personnel with adequate training and the competencies required and to expedite the implementation of the National Programme for Early Childhood Development;
- Ensure access to health, on an equal basis with others, of all persons with disabilities, including access to sexual and reproductive health; and
- Train health professionals in providing attention to persons with disabilities and to make medical services and health facilities accessible.

2) Education

Since the enactment of the Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System in 2009, the Government of Serbia embarked on reforms to guarantee equal rights and access to education for all children, regardless of disability. In the following year, 2010, the Ministry of Education adopted the Rulebook on Additional Educational, Health and Social Support to Children and Pupils, thereby establishing a legal framework that enables students with disabilities to receive additional support tailored to their individual needs. In 2011, the Ministry introduced the Rulebook on Detailed Instructions for Determining the Right to the Individualized Education Plan, Its Implementation and Evaluation, which serves as the core operational mechanism, prescribing a strict process for the formulation and evaluation of education plans customized to each student's individual needs. Concurrently, the hiring and placement of pedagogical assistants were institutionalized within school settings, establishing a system in which they serve as a bridge between schools and families and provide direct pedagogical support.

The government developed the Law on Textbooks in 2015 (amended in 2018), making it a public obligation for students with disabilities to utilize learning materials adapted to their specific needs, such as Braille, audio, and digital formats. In 2021, the Rulebook on Resource Centers entered into force, which reorganized and strengthened certain special schools into regional resource centers. This established a professional support network to provide technical consultations, alongside the loan of assistive educational technologies and specialized learning materials, to students with disabilities attending mainstream schools, as well as their families and teachers.[37]

In tertiary education as well, affirmative action measures are consistently applied to enrollment selection and the allocation of accommodation in student dormitories, thereby ensuring the continuity of education.

The recommendations for education based on the Concluding Observations (2016) are as follows:

- Identify concrete targets in the Action Plan for Inclusive Education to meet inclusive education standards and requirements;
- Take immediate steps to ensure that all persons with disabilities have access to inclusive and quality education and that reasonable accommodation, in accordance with established individual education plans, is provided in mainstream education; and
- Ensure that teachers and other education professionals receive training on inclusive education and that all secondary and tertiary education facilities are made accessible.

3) Gender

To eliminate the multiple difficulties faced by women with disabilities, the Government of Serbia has promoted strategic legislative development from an early stage. First, in the Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities enacted in 2006, the principle of gender equality was integrated into disability policy for the first time. The Anti-Discrimination Law in 2009 defined discrimination on the grounds of gender and disability as a severe form of "multiple discrimination." The following year, 2010, through the Action Plan for the National Strategy, concrete activities were planned to promote public and political participation by marginalized women, including women with disabilities.

Building on these initiatives, the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2030 explicitly positions women with disabilities as "a group at the highest risk of multiple discrimination,"

[37] UNICEF Serbia (2019) *Serbia's inclusive education reform: A journey of systemic and sustainable change.* https://clearinghouse.unicef.org/sites/ch/files/ch/teams-ECARO-Planning-ECA%20Knowledge%20at%20UNICEF-Serbia%20Case%20Study-2.0.pdf (Accessed: 14 April 2026)

setting the removal of barriers in access to the labour market, protection from violence, and participation in decision-making processes as key priorities. Through its linkage with the new Law on Gender Equality enacted in 2021, public institutions and enterprises are obliged to collect gender-disaggregated data and implement concrete measures that consider disability, thereby more powerfully ensuring the practical efficacy of the system.

In terms of the judiciary, under Article 179 of the Criminal Code, "Intercourse with a Helpless Person," it imposes severe punishments for sexual violence that exploits disabilities, and reinforces legal protection by imposing a prison sentence of up to 15 years if the victim is a minor.

The recommendations for the gender based on the Concluding Observations (2016) are as follows:

- Review the procedures by which women with disabilities are declared "unfit mothers" on the basis of disability and fully restore their rights to have a home and found a family, ensuring that the necessary support is provided to make these rights effective;
- Incorporate the perspective of women and girls with disabilities into its gender equality policies, programmes and strategies, and the gender perspective into its strategies on disability, to eradicate multiple and intersectional discrimination in all areas of life;
- Take appropriate measures to prevent and combat the multiple and intersectional discrimination that women and girls with disabilities face, particularly in access to justice, protection against violence and abuse, education, health and employment;
- Ensure consultation with women and girls with disabilities, through OPDs, on the design, implementation and evaluation of programmes and measures in all matters that affect them directly; and
- Provide sufficient resources to promote programs to improve the status and employment of women with disabilities and advance gender equality.

4) Vocational Training and Employment

Under the Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities enacted in 2009, the Government of Serbia imposes an employment quota on enterprises. In 2010, through the entry into force of the Rulebook on the Detailed Method, Costs, and Criteria for the Assessment of Working Capacity and the Possibility of Employment or Maintaining Employment for Persons with Disabilities, a system was introduced whereby an expert commission of the National Pension and Disability Insurance Fund assesses functional impairments across four levels from medical and social perspectives, identifying required accommodations and suitable occupations. Guided by these assessments, the National

Employment Service provides enterprises with incentives from the Budget Fund—such as subsidies for workplace adaptation and wage assistance—while managing practical employment support and retention through vocational training and coordination with certified enterprises for professional rehabilitation.[38]

With this system taking root, in 2014 an average of approximately 15,280 persons with disabilities were employed each month under the employment quota. Concurrently, the mandatory contributions paid by non-compliant enterprises (averaging approximately 215 million RSD per month) are accumulated in the Budget Fund and reinvested as subsidies to promote employment and enhance workplace accessibility. With regard to vocational training, in 2014 alone, 4,420 persons with disabilities received the specialized support needed to maintain employment. In addition, 50 certified enterprises serve as key employers for persons with severe disabilities and others by providing integrated training and employment services.

In the 2014 amendment to the Labor Law, protection against dismissal on the grounds of health status was strengthened, requiring employers to provide suitable alternative duties for employees who face difficulties performing their previous tasks.

The recommendations for vocational training and employment based on the Concluding Observations (2016) are as follows:

- Examine whether the legal framework disincentivizes persons with disabilities from entering the labour market and to ensure the provision of reasonable accommodation in the workplace;
- Review the methods of assessing work capacity to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the open labour market;
- Ensure that persons with disabilities can effectively exercise their right to form and join trade unions; and
- Promote among employers the right of persons with disabilities to employment on an equal basis with others, and to enhance support for the transition of persons with disabilities from sheltered workshops into the open labour market.

5) Social Security, Social Service for Persons with Disabilities

In 2005, the Government of Serbia adopted the Social Welfare Strategy, deciding on a paradigm shift from the conventional welfare system based on institutionalization in large-

[38] Government of Serbia (2021) *Employment Strategy of the Republic of Serbia 2021–2026*. https://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Strategija_zaposljavanja_u_Republici_Srbiji_2021-2026_engleski.pdf (Accessed: 14 April 2026)

scale residential facilities toward a comprehensive support system centered on community living for persons with disabilities. Serving as the legal foundation for this Strategy, the Law on Social Protection was enacted in 2011, establishing at its core a disbursement system for an allowance for assistance and care for another person, regardless of the recipient's income, with the amount revised twice a year in line with the consumer price index. Under these statutory provisions, the delivery of multi-layered community-based support services tailored to individual needs is prescribed, ranging from personal assistance and daily life support to day care, counselling for independent living, and specialized therapeutic services.

As a concrete achievement, through the Comprehensive Plan for the Transformation of Residential Institutions for Children, which aimed to transition from institutionalization to foster care, the number of institutionalized children was restricted to 642 as of September 2015, while the number of children in foster care was expanded to 6,268. In addition, the number of users of community-based independent living support also increased, with 518 individuals utilizing personal assistance and related services in 2014.[39] The government established a Special Fund to support the development of social welfare services in impoverished areas, thereby working to mitigate regional disparities.

The Concluding Observations (2016) strongly urge the adoption of comprehensive strategies and measures to facilitate the transition to independent living in the community:

- Allocate resources so that all persons with disabilities can live independently and receive support in the community according to their choices and preferences, and to remove barriers to the active participation of OPDs in the development of community-based services, especially at the municipal level;
- Step up efforts for the deinstitutionalization of children, especially those with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, refrain from institutionalizing infants under the age of three, ensure a smooth transition from institutions to a family environment, provide adequate intervention and developmental support services, initiate educational programmes for institutional staff and develop efficient community-based care services;
- Repeal relevant legislation, including the Law on the Protection of Persons with Mental Disabilities, and prohibit deprivation of liberty of children and adults based on disability, including involuntary hospitalization and forced institutionalization; and

[39] According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) & European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) (2024) *Towards dignity and autonomy: A global overview of personal assistance schemes for people with disabilities,* https://enil.eu/new-joint-ilo-enil-report-on-personal-assistance-services-worldwide/ (Accessed: 14 April 2026), as of 2022, personal assistance services were available to only 375 individuals across 26 municipalities (approximately 18% of the total), highlighting challenges in access to services. Among the 317 personal assistants, approximately 70% were women, with service contracts outnumbering employment contracts; the high turnover rate resulting from unstable working conditions negatively impacts the continuity and quality of services.

- Prohibit all forms of coercive practices against adults and children with disabilities, including physical and chemical restraint, excessive antipsychotic therapy, and isolation.

6) Transportation and Urban Development (including accessible urban planning)

Since 2006, the Government of Serbia has promoted staged legislative development aiming to improve the accessibility of the physical environment and transport infrastructure. First, the 2006 amendment to the Law on Spatial Planning and Construction required investors to design and construct newly built public facilities and residential buildings in a way that allows barrier-free access for persons with disabilities, children, and the elderly. To concretize this policy, the Rulebook on Technical Standards of Accessibility entered into force in 2013, establishing detailed technical standards for new construction and renovation.

In terms of transportation, the Law on Road Traffic Safety entered into force in 2010, reinforcing the safety of pedestrian areas by mandating the installation of tactile paving and audible traffic signals for persons with visual impairments. In the same year, the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure adopted the Rulebook on Persons with Disabilities and Persons with Reduced Mobility in Air Transportation, explicitly codifying the protection of their rights when utilizing air travel. In addition, the Law on Movement Using Guide-Dogs was enacted in 2015, legally guaranteeing the right of persons with visual impairments to be accompanied by guide dogs in public transport and workplaces.

Regarding public services, initiatives are also being advanced, such as the introduction of a home-visit service by the Ministry of Internal Affairs for issuing identity cards to persons with severe disabilities, and the adaptation of the Ministry of Culture and Information building to ensure wheelchair accessibility in 2015.

The recommendations for transportation and urban development based on the Concluding Observations (2016) are as follows:

- Develop a comprehensive accessibility plan, efficiently monitor it, and create a roadmap with standards for removing barriers;
- Promote universal design in buildings, public services, and public transport;
- Utilize a national database, allocate sufficient resources to monitor the implementation of accessibility standards, and establish effective sanctions for non-compliance;
- Fully implement the law mandating that 10% of housing be made accessible for persons with disabilities; and
- Uniformly implement training using sign language for persons with hearing impairments and to take measures to ensure that driving licenses are not denied on the basis of disability.

7) Information Accessibility

To bridge the information gap in the digital society, the Government of Serbia set a goal in the E-Government Strategy adopted in 2009 to develop an environment in which all users, particularly persons with disabilities, can easily use electronic public services. To technically concretize this goal, in 2010, the Office for Information Technologies and eGovernment (then the Digital Agenda Directorate) developed the Guidelines for Websites of State Administrative Bodies v3.0, recommending compliance with the international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0). In December 2010, the National eGovernment Portal become WCAG 2.0 compliant, introducing text-to-speech software and screen reader compatibility. This deployment required all state administrative bodies to harmonize their websites with these Guidelines within six months.

In broadcast media as well, based on the Law on Public Information and Media, which entered into force in 2014, the government promoted the acquisition of information by persons with disabilities in their own languages and formats, and in 2015, invested approximately 10.7 million RSD into the production of subtitled broadcasts and programs with sign language interpretation. The Law on the Use of Sign Language, enacted in 2015, established the right to use sign language interpretation at public institutions, leading to the development of 44 sign language interpretation hubs nationwide and the remote interpretation service known as the "Telecentre."

The recommendations for information accessibility based on the Concluding Observations (2016) are as follows:

- Promote accessibility to information and social communication means;
- Expand the use of subtitling and sign language interpretation in the media, and involve OPDs in this process; and
- Establish a national body for Braille and take the necessary measures to develop a standardized Serbian Braille code.

8) Disaster risk management

To protect all citizens from natural and technological disasters, the Government of Serbia enacted the Law on Emergencies in 2009, prescribing the fundamental principles of protection and rescue. To strategically operate this Law, the government adopted the National Strategy for Emergency Situations in 2011, formulating concrete disaster risk management plans that include life-saving and support for citizens. In addition, drawing lessons from the massive flood damages of 2014, the government adopted the National

Disaster Risk Management Program (2015–2025) in December 2014. This Program plays a key role in strengthening and concretizing the disaster risk management system at a practical level through initiatives such as establishing the IT infrastructure for accessible early warning systems and ensuring the accessibility of evacuation centers, while incorporating persons with disabilities into field rescue procedures as a "vulnerable group requiring special consideration." On the other hand, in its 2016 Replies to LOI, the government acknowledged the challenge that many of the existing evacuation centers constructed in the 1970s do not meet the criteria of the Rulebook on Technical Standards of Accessibility

The recommendations for disaster risk management based on the Concluding Observations (2016) are as follows:

- Adopt accessible and inclusive emergency response strategies, procedures, and information services that fully take into account the needs of persons with disabilities;
- Take additional measures to ensure that persons with hearing impairments have access to the necessary information; and
- Fully take into account the needs of persons with disabilities in the formulation and implementation of reconstruction plans, based on accessibility standards and universal design.

3. International Treaties and International Cooperation

3-1. Status of Implementation Following the Ratification of the CRPD[40]

The Government of Serbia ratified the CRPD and its Optional Protocol on July 31, 2009. It submitted the State Party's Report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on July 20, 2012 (submission deadline was August 31, 2011). The Committee presented a List of Issues on September 11, 2015, and the government submitted its Replies to LOI on February 8, 2016. Regarding parallel reports, four reports were submitted by four organizations[41] in 2025, and one report was submitted by one organization[42] in 2026. On April 21, 2016, the Committee adopted its Concluding Observations.

The 2016 Concluding Observations commend the adoption of the following laws and policies aimed at promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities:

- Strategy of Prevention and Protection from Discrimination in 2013 and Action Plan 2014-2018;
- National Strategy for Improving the Position of Women and Promoting Gender Equality 2010-2015, cooperation with the European Institute for Gender Equality, declaration of 2016 as the year for the elimination of violence against women, and introduction of a gender equality index;
- Law on the Use of Sign Language in 2015;
- Guarantee of the right to use personal facsimile stamps to sign legal documents through the amendment to the Law on the Prevention of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities in 2016;
- Law on Movement Using Guide-Dogs in 2015;
- Inclusion of questions on persons with disabilities in the Census form ;
- Decrease in the number of persons deprived of their legal capacity; and
- Efforts to make prisons accessible.

On the other hand, it recommends harmonizing domestic legislation with the CRPD based on the human rights model and developing a more appropriate support system through rights training for stakeholders in consultation with OPDs.

3-2. Status of Implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty

The Government of Serbia ratified the Marrakesh Treaty on June 3, 2020. In preparation for

[40] https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx (Accessed: 7 April 2026)
[41] NOOIS (a joint report with Center for Independent Living of Pwds Serbia (CIL), Center for Society Orientation (COD)), Mental Disability Rights Initiative–Serbia (MDRI-S), Disability Council International, and Protector of Citizens (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Serbia.
[42] MDRI-S

the ratification, the Government amended its Law on Copyright and Related Rights in 2019 to allow authorized entities to reproduce, distribute, and make available copyrighted works in accessible formats, such as Braille and audio, without the author's prior consent or remuneration. The amendment established detailed provisions to enable the international exchange (import and export) of such accessible format copies between contracting parties.

The Intellectual Property Office of the Republic of Serbia[43], established in 2003, is the competent state administration body responsible for copyright and related rights. Currently, no entities from Serbia are listed on the participant list of the ABC Global Book Service[44], which is led and operated by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

3-3. Initiatives on Disability Issues within SDG-related Policies

Regarding progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (hereinafter referred to as "SDGs"), the Government of Serbia released its first Voluntary National Review[45] in July 2019. The review makes no specific mention of measuring disability-related indicators or the participation of OPDs in the Inter-Ministerial Working Group for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

According to the SDGs indicator database of the United Nations Statistics Division,[46] Serbia reports only one of the indicators related to persons with disabilities: "1.3.1 (d), "Proportion of population with severe disabilities receiving disability cash benefit." and reported that this figure reached 100% in 2021.

The Concluding Observations (2016) recommend updating and collecting data and statistics on persons with disabilities disaggregated by age, sex, type of impairment, ethnicity, and geographic location, using a human rights-based approach.

3-4. Ratification of and Initiatives regarding Other International Treaties related to Disabilities and Development[47]

The status of Serbia's ratification of international treaties related to disability and development is as follows:

November 2000: Succession[48] to the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention (International Labour Organization Convention No. 159, 1983)

March 2001: Succession[49] to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

[43] https://www.zis.gov.rs/en/home/ (Accessed: 7 April 2026)
[44] https://www.accessiblebooksconsortium.org/globalbooks/en/ (Accessed: 7 April 2026)
[45] https://serbia.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-08/VNR%2C%20eng.pdf (Accessed: 7 April 2026)
[46] https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/countryprofiles/ (Accessed: 29 March 2026)
[47] https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx (Accessed: 7 April 2026)
[48] The Convention had been ratified by the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on May 27, 1987.
[49] The Convention had been ratified by the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on February 26, 1982. In July 2003,

Discrimination against Women (hereinafter referred to as "CEDAW")

March 2001: Succession[50] to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereinafter referred to as "CRC")

According to a direct request from the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations in 2015,[51] the Government of Serbia has implemented positive measures for the vocational rehabilitation and employment promotion of persons with disabilities, including a national employment strategy, a budget fund, a compulsory quota system, and the opening of centers in major cities. However, due to economic stagnation, employers tend to pay penalties rather than hire persons with disabilities. Consequently, the Committee requests explanations on how training and other measures

consider various types of disabilities and enable the recruitment and retention of employment, alongside updated information on disaggregated labour market statistics by age, sex, and disability type, the status of the national action plan, and the outcomes of consultations with OPDs and other actors.

In its Concluding Observations adopted in March 2017,[52] the CRC Committee recommended that the Government of Serbia strengthen data collection to verify the effectiveness of the CRPD and existing legal frameworks, prevent unnecessary institutionalization, conduct awareness-raising to counter prejudice and discrimination, take legislative and other measures to enable children requiring constant care to live with their families, and prioritize efforts to ensure their full participation in all areas of public life.

3-5. International Cooperation on Disability[53]

- The Government of Japan[54]

<Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects>

・ The Project for Improving Hygienic Conditions in the Accommodation Facility for Persons with Mental Disabilities in Plandište (2024)

Serbia acceded to the Optional Protocol (individual communication procedure).

[50] The Convention had been ratified by the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on December 5, 1990.

[51] https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID,P13100_COUNTRY_ID:3244372,102839 (Accessed: 12 June 2026)

[52] United Nations (2017) *CRC Concluding observations on the combined second and third periodic reports of Serbia* (CRC/C/SRB/CO/2-3) https://tbinternet.ohchr.org (Accessed: 7 April 2026)

[53] Achievements after 2016 are listed. Project names are listed exactly as they appear in the original text. However, this does not apply in cases where there is no English name or the English name is unknown.

[54] Based on Cabinet Office Japan (2016-2025) *Annual Report on Government Measures for Persons with Disabilities (White Paper on Persons with Disabilities*, Japan International Cooperation Agency (2025) *Aiming for a world where all people benefit: Initiatives for "Disability and Development"* [In Japanese] and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2016-2025) List of Exchange of Notes by Country and Fiscal Year,
https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/region/europe/serbia/exchange.html (Accessed: 7 April 2026)

- The Project for Equipping the Institute of Mental Health in Belgrade with Medical Equipment (2023)
- The Project for Providing an Ambulance and Medical Beds to the Special Hospital for Psychiatric Diseases in Kovin (2022)
- The Project for Providing a Specialized Vehicle for Persons with Mental Disabilities in Srbobran (2021)
- The Project for Providing a Specialized Vehicle for Persons with Disabilities in Niš (2021)
- The Project for Providing a Specialized Vehicle to the Institution for Adults with Disabilities in Doljevac (2017)
- The Project for Providing a Specialized Vehicle to the Association for Supporting Persons with Mental Disabilities in Priboj (2016)
- The Project for Equipping the Care Home for Adults with Disabilities in Kulina (2015)

<JICA's Partnership Program>

- Project for Supporting the Independence of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities at the Community Level in Belgrade, Serbia (2019–2023)[55]

• Other development partners

<International organizations>

World Bank

- Social Assistance Modernization Project[56] (2022-2027)
- Inclusive Early Childhood Education and Care Project[57] (2017-2024)

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

- Serbia Rail Infrastructure Urgent Renewals Project[58] (2024-2026)
- Srbijavoz Modernisation of International Rail Services Project[59] (2024-2025)

[55] https://www.jica.go.jp/kansai/enterprise/kusanone/ku57pq000005koyd-att/jjirei-all.pdf (Accessed: 7 April 2026)

[56] A project to digitize the management system for social benefits, including disability allowances. In coordination with the ongoing disability reform, the project promotes data centralization and the efficiency of administrative procedures to establish a framework that prevents fraudulent claims while ensuring the swift delivery of benefits. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099955002242290646/pdf/P12223302bfb37000ba070850dfdf164ae.pdf (Accessed: 14 April 2026)

[57] A project aiming to secure educational opportunities for all young children, including children with disabilities. In addition to constructing and renovating kindergartens, the project implemented inclusive education training for teachers, successfully increasing the enrollment rate of vulnerable groups and establishing an environment that enables social inclusion from an early stage. https://documents.worldbank.org/pt/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/918021487905271830 (Accessed: 14 April 2026)

[58] In upgrading the railway network, EU-standard accessibility requirements were introduced as loan conditions, promoting the installation of ramps at major stations and the introduction of wheelchair-accessible rolling stock. https://www.ebrd.com/home/work-with-us/projects/psd/55104.html (Accessed: 14 April 2026)

[59] A project supporting the introduction of 12 new sleeping cars for Serbian Railways. The project updated aging rolling stock into modern vehicles compliant with EU standards, standardizing equipment such as wheelchair-accessible spaces and accessible toilets. https://www.ebrd.com/home/news-and-events/news/2025/ebrd-supports-modernisation-of-serbia-s-international-rail-servi.html (Accessed: 14 April 2026)

- SME Go Green and Inclusive Programme[60] (2021-2026)

European Investment Bank (EIB)

- Connected Schools and Public Buildings Modernisation[61] (2020-2025)
- Serbia School Modernisation Programme[62] (2010-2023)

UNPRPD

- Roadmap for Disability Assessment Reform in Serbia[63] (2023-2025)
- Autonomy, Voice and Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Serbia[64] (2018-2020)

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

- Scaling up the Early Childhood Intervention model in Serbia[65] (2020-2022)
- Together for Every Child – Strengthening the System for Social Inclusion in Serbia[66] (2018-2023)

<Bilateral aid agencies>

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

- Support to Improve Social Inclusion in the Republic of Serbia (Phase 3) [67] (2018-2021)

[60] A project promoting job creation for persons with disabilities and youth through financing support for SMEs. By providing technical assistance and funding to enterprises that improve employment environments for persons with disabilities, the initiative fosters an inclusive labor market within the private sector and supports their economic independence.
https://www.ebrd.com/home/what-we-do/products-and-services/support-for-start-ups-and-msmes/our-programmes/sme-go-green-in-the-western-balkans.html# (Accessed: 14 April 2026)

[61] A project for the digitalization and renovation of educational facilities. In tandem with the development of high-speed communication networks, the project supported the introduction of assistive technologies and accessible learning platforms for students with disabilities. https://www.eib.org/en/projects/all/20170979 (Accessed: 14 April 2026)

[62] A project supporting the renovation and construction of primary and secondary schools nationwide. By integrating accessibility standards into design criteria and promoting the installation of ramps and lifts, the project established a physical environment that enables children with disabilities to attend local mainstream schools.
https://www.eib.org/en/projects/all/20090284 (Accessed: 14 April 2026)

[63] A joint project by UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA, and the EU. This initiative aims to transition the disability assessment system from a traditional medical diagnosis to a "social model" based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). The project focuses on introducing multi-disciplinary team assessments and centralizing the determination process through a single digital platform.
https://www.undp.org/serbia/news/enhancing-disability-assessment-system-serbia (Accessed: 14 April 2026)

[64] A joint project by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), ILO, UNDP, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and UN Women. Focusing on equality before the law, the rights of women with disabilities, and the expansion of employment opportunities, the project developed disability employment guidelines for employers and training materials on the legal capacity and access to justice of persons with disabilities for judiciary personnel.
https://globaldisabilityfund.org/programme/serbia/ (Accessed: 14 April 2026)

[65] An EU-funded project implemented to expand early intervention for children with disabilities nationwide. By strengthening home-visiting specialized support and multi-disciplinary cooperation, the project established a community-based support framework through direct assistance to approximately 2,000 families and the creation of 13 resource centers.
https://clearinghouse.unicef.org/download-ch-media/4de27fb9-5a75-41fd-ae38-9c5630bb0ac2 (Accessed: 14 April 2026)

[66] An EU-funded project that built a data collection system to monitor the situation of the rights of children with disabilities. By strengthening the participation of OPDs and families, it established a monitoring mechanism to prevent social exclusion and a foundation for rights advocacy.
https://www.unicef.org/serbia/en/together-for-every-child (Accessed: 14 April 2026)

[67] An initiative supporting the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of Serbia to strengthen policy formulation for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities and removing societal barriers. It standardized the introduction of social welfare services, such as personal assistants at the local government level, contributing significantly to bridging regional disparities.
https://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/en/about-us-2/projects/ (Accessed: 14 April 2026)

German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ)

- Inclusion of Roma and Other Marginalised Groups in Serbia[68] (2018-2022)

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

- Together for Accessibility[69] (2020-2024)

<International NGO>

Disability Rights International

- Serbia's Forgotten Children[70] (2021)

Save the Children

- Empowering NGOs and Institutions to Improve Social Inclusion of Children and Youth with Disabilities[71] (2017-2021)

Minority Rights Group

- Voices for Inclusion and Sustainability[72] (2018-2021)

Help-Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe

- Support to Social Inclusion in Serbia[73] (2017-2020)

[68] A project promoting employment support and social integration targeting marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities and Roma populations. Alongside emergency support during the pandemic, the initiative provided vocational training and psychological support, establishing an inclusive service delivery system by municipalities, including the setting up of daycare facilities for children with disabilities.
https://www.giz.de/en/projects/inclusion-roma-and-other-marginalised-groups-serbia (Accessed: 14 April 2026)

[69] A project supporting the improvement of physical and digital accessibility for persons with disabilities. By renovating public administration websites, backing policy advocacy activities by OPDs, and promoting public-private partnerships, the initiative advances the development of social infrastructure where persons with disabilities can equally utilize technology and information.
https://statemag.state.gov/2021/09/0921ib05/#:~:text=Embassy%20Belgrade%20is%20contributing%20$1,support%20worthy%20causes%20in%20Serbia. (Accessed: 14 April 2026)

[70] An initiative that publicized the poor conditions within residential institutions, raising public opinion both domestically and internationally. This served as a catalyst to strongly pressure the Government of Serbia to accelerate deinstitutionalization and implement legal reforms aimed at eradicating abuse within institutions.
https://www.driadvocacy.org/reports/serbias-forgotten-children (Accessed: 14 April 2026)

[71] A project supporting children with disabilities led by Save the Children and deployed across the Western Balkans region. In Serbia, in cooperation with local governments and NGOs, the initiative developed manuals for inclusive education and conducted professional training. https://www.savethechildren.net/country/serbia (Accessed: 14 April 2026)

[72] A project focusing on the intersectionality of marginalized groups facing multiple layers of difficulties, including persons with disabilities, Roma populations, and LGBTQ+ individuals. Deployed across the Western Balkan countries including Serbia, the initiative provided financial grants to OPDs and conducted awareness-raising activities through media utilization.
https://minorityrights.org/country/serbia/ (Accessed: 14 April 2026)

[73] A project supporting the transition to community-based living. By establishing small-scale group homes and conducting vocational training for the independence of persons with disabilities, the initiative directly supported their discharge from large-scale institutions. https://help-serbia.org.rs/en/topics/information/social-inclusion/ (Accessed: 14 April 2026)

4. Disability-related Organizations and Activities

4-1. Organizations of Persons with Disabilities[74]

Name of Organization	Overview of Activities
Nacionalna organizacija osoba sa invaliditetom Srbije (NOOIS)(National Organization of Persons with Disabilities of Serbia) https://noois.rs/	Founded in 2007, NOOIS serves as a network organization representing the rights of approximately 800,000 persons with disabilities. It provides multifaceted support, including participating in the formulation and amendment of domestic legislation in compliance with the CRPD, conducting awareness-raising activities through public institutions and the media, and improving transportation infrastructure and offering psychological support.
Association of the Blind of Serbia https://savezslepih.org.rs	Founded in 1946, the Association operates a large-scale Braille library, ensuring access to education and culture through Braille publishing and audio content. In recent years, it has been making recommendations to the government regarding overall living conditions, including the development of IT environments and mobility with guide dogs.
Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing of Serbia https://sgns.org.rs/	Founded in 1945, the Association led the enactment of the Law on the Use of Sign Language and promotes sign language interpretation and subtitling in public services and the media. In addition to establishing systems to ensure information accessibility in educational and workplace settings, it lays the groundwork for social participation through the training and placement of sign language interpreters.
Savez paraplegičara i kvadriplegičara Srbije (SPIKS)(Serbian Association of Paraplegics and Quadriplegics) https://spiks.org.rs	Founded in 1991, SPIKS serves as a national network for wheelchair users, providing expert advice to the government on accessibility standards for public transportation and buildings, while also promoting rehabilitation support and para-sports.
Out of Circle Network (IzKruga) https://izkruga.org/	Founded in 1997, IzKruga focuses on providing free legal consultations and psychological support for victims of violence, while promoting improved access to reproductive health and participation in policy-making processes. It also monitors human rights violations and conducts awareness-raising activities nationwide.
Center for Independent Living of PWDs Serbia (CIL Serbia) https://www.cilsrbija.org/	Founded in 1996, CIL Serbia promotes the "Independent Living Movement" and engages in establishing personal assistance systems, promoting accessibility, providing peer counselling for persons with disabilities, and conducting

[74] UNPRPD (2023) points out challenges such as the underrepresentation of OPDs for persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, and the low participation of women with disabilities in leadership roles due to gender norms acting as barriers.

	rights advocacy activities.

4-2. Disability Support Organizations

Name of Organization	Overview of Activities
Savez za cerebralnu i dečiju paralizu Srbije (Savez za CDP)(Serbian Association for Cerebral Palsy and Polio) https://cp-srbija.rs	Founded in 1973, Savez za CDP has more than 55 local branches under its umbrella, serving as one of the largest support networks specializing in physical disabilities. In addition to offering rehabilitation and independent living training at its daycare facilities, it focuses on promoting the distribution of assistive devices, such as wheelchairs.
Serbian Association for Helping Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (Savez MNRO) https://savezmnrosrbije.rs/	Founded in 1960, Savez MNRO has more than 50 local branches, constituting one of the nation's largest networks for children and adults with intellectual disabilities and their families. It operates daycare centers across the country, providing comprehensive services including therapeutic education, life skills training, and family support.
Mental Disability Rights Initiative of Serbia (MDRI-S) https://mdri-s.org	Founded in 2008, MDRI-S focuses on children and adults residing in social welfare and mental health institutions, promoting deinstitutionalization, independent living in local communities, and protection from violence and abuse. It is an affiliate of Disability Rights International.
Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization (ECHO Serbia) https://ehons.org/	Founded in 1993, ECHO Serbia provides nationwide support directly impacting the daily lives of persons with disabilities, the poor, and minorities, including free wheelchair repair services, the provision of assistive devices, and home renovations.

5. Barriers and Needs Faced by Persons with Disabilities[75]

5-1. Barriers to and Needs regarding Healthcare Services

According to NOOIS, 45% of surveyed persons with disabilities experienced difficulties in using health and rehabilitation services due to inaccessibility or restrictive criteria, 28% experienced discrimination, and 43% experienced disrespect for differences. 80% of respondents reported cases in which medical workers spoke to an attendant or personal assistant rather than the patient requesting the service, which violates the principles of confidentiality, independence, and dignity. Additionally, a significant barrier to scheduling specialist examinations exists, as many health centers require patients to do so in person rather than by phone, further undermining their independence.[76]

The report by the Protector of Citizens (Ombudsman) reveals that although the right to use prostheses and assistive devices is recognized under compulsory health insurance, uniform service life and replacement deadlines for parts are set, failing to adequately consider the specific conditions and needs of individual persons with disabilities. Additionally, the applicable Rulebook on the Medical and Technical Aids and Devices fails to reflect the latest technological developments.[77]

MDRI-S points out that there are cases where hospital ethical committees label children with disabilities as "cases for palliative care" and refuse to approve the provision of proper treatment, which can lead to a deterioration in the children's condition.[78]

DisabCouncil highlights that cases of unexpected deaths in institutions have been reported as a result of the improper use of medication or a lack of adequate medical treatment. Furthermore, preventing compulsory medical treatment and scientific experimentation conducted against the will of persons with disabilities remains a critical challenge.[79]

5-2. Barriers to and Needs regarding Education

According to NOOIS, children with disabilities attempting to access mainstream schools face obvious challenges, including the architectural inaccessibility of schools, inaccessible textbooks and teaching equipment, and a lack of training on working with children with disabilities among teachers. While educational institutions are legally prohibited from refusing enrollment of them, mainstream institutions frequently advise parents to choose a school for children with disabilities. It is a serious issue that written IEPs have become mere paperwork for educational counselors and inspectors, failing to facilitate actual educational

[75] Based on the parallel reports. For information gathered from other sources, its source is indicated.
[76] NOOIS (2015) (INT/CRPD/LIT/SRB/21108)
[77] Protector of Citizens (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Serbia (2015) (INT/CRPD/IFL/SRB/21317)
[78] MDRI-S (2015) (INT/CRPD/ICO/SRB/21308)
[79] Disability Council International (2015) (INT/CRPD/ICO/SRB/21334)

progress for the children.[80]

MDRI-S points out that over 70% of children with disabilities are completely excluded from the education system, while the remaining 30% attend schools for children with disabilities. In particular, institutionalized children are frequently denied access to mainstream schools due to assessments by the institutions' expert teams based on their medical diagnosis, which conclude that these children "do not have the potential for education" or are "not educable."[81]

5-3. Barriers to and Needs regarding Employment

The Protector of Citizens (Ombudsman) highlights that, due to the enforcement of the Law on the Maximum Number of Employees in the Public Administration, public sector employers are forced to comply with their obligations to employ persons with disabilities by paying financial penalties to the Budget Fund rather than commencing employment. Because the Law on the Budget System imposes restrictions on fixed-term recruitment and service contracts, local self-governments have temporarily suspended the delivery of specific social welfare services for children and persons with disabilities, causing a severe impact.[82]

According to Lazarević, S. et al. (2022), the assessment of working capacity based on the medical model acts as a barrier, and should be replaced by an assessment of support needs carried out within the actual work environment.[83]

Findings from NOOIS indicate that 89% of civil society organizations advocating for persons with disabilities consider that they do not have equal opportunities to become employed in the open labor market. Among employed individuals, 35% experienced violations of the principles of participation, inclusion, and accessibility, while 30% experienced discrimination. Furthermore, a situation persists in which job seekers with hearing impairments are not provided with a sign language interpreter during interviews, forcing them to arrange one themselves.[84]

5-4. Barriers to and Needs regarding Transportation

NOOIS points out that 90% of regular public transportation is inaccessible for persons with disabilities, and almost no accessible transport options exist, particularly in smaller towns and undeveloped municipalities. While specialized public transportation services for persons with

[80] NOOIS (2015)
[81] MDRI-S (2015)
[82] Protector of Citizens (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Serbia (2015) (INT/CRPD/IFL/SRB/21317)
[83] Lazarevic, S., Ciric Milovanovic, D. et al (2022) *Position of Persons with Disabilities in Serbia – zero report,* https://www.mdri-s.org/public/documents/upload/publications-in-english/Position%20of%20persons%20with%20disabilities%20in%20Serbia.pdf (Accessed: 14 April 2026)
[84] NOOIS (2015)

disabilities are provided in urban areas, they are limited by a small number of vans (about 10 vehicles), which is insufficient for the number of beneficiaries and fails to meet all safety standards. Regarding roads and sidewalks, the poor condition of these surfaces, such as holes, open manholes, and irregularly installed urban mobility, along with high sidewalks and a lack of tactile paths and audible traffic lights, severely hinder mobility. There is a persistent shortage of parking spaces designated for persons with disabilities.[85]

According to the Protector of Citizens (Ombudsman), data collected from local self-governments in 2014 indicated that while most towns and municipalities are undertaking specific actions and measures to provide for an accessible environment, most public buildings still remain physically inaccessible.[86]

Lazarević, S. et al. (2022) highlight that access to high-quality assistive devices and assistive technologies is limited, and the high purchase cost of these devices acts as a barrier to independent living.[87]

5-5. Barriers to and Needs regarding Information Access

The report by the Protector of Citizens (Ombudsman) reveals that current regulations do not clearly define standards for information accessibility, making it difficult for public institutions and service providers to provide information tailored to the needs of persons with disabilities. Therefore, policies are required to clarify accessibility standards for information technology and to promote the adoption of assistive tools that leverage the latest technologies.[88]

NOOIS points out that both radio and television are inaccessible to persons with hearing impairments, as there are insufficient programmes with sign language interpretation or subtitles. The shortage of interpreters is severe; one sign language interpreter works for approximately 1,000 persons with hearing impairments.[89]

5-6. Barriers and Needs regarding Gender

According to NOOIS, problems include the physical inaccessibility of gynecological institutions and a lack of awareness among medical staff regarding the importance of reproductive health for women with disabilities. In addition, the rights of women with disabilities to love, marry, and become mothers are frequently denied.[90]

Findings from MDRI-S indicate that women with disabilities in residential institutions are

[85] NOOIS (2015)
[86] Protector of Citizens (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Serbia (2015)
[87] Lazarevic, S., Ciric Milovanovic, D. et al (2022)
[88] Protector of Citizens (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Serbia (2015)
[89] NOOIS (2015)
[90] *Ibid.*

at increased risk of sexual abuse and violence, and they may be subjected to inhuman treatment such as forced abortions, arbitrary separation from their children, and the administration of contraceptives without informed consent. Furthermore, when mothers with disabilities attempt to raise their children themselves, it is common for them to be imposed with additional conditions, including owning property and marital status.[91]

[91] MDRI-S (2015)

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