



**Convention on the Rights  
of Persons with Disabilities**

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**Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

**Consideration of reports submitted by States  
parties under article 35 of the Convention**

**Initial reports of States parties due in 2015**

**Greece\***

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



## I. Preamble

1. The Greek Government submits to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities its initial Report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which it has ratified and incorporated into its national law by Law 4074/2012 (Government Gazette 88/A'). The obligation to submit this Report is provided for by article 35 of the Convention.
2. The Directorate of International Relations of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, which has been designated as a focal point by the Prime Minister's decision No. Y426/28.02.2014 (Government Gazette 523 B'), in accordance with article 33 of the Convention and the law that ratified it, has ensured the drafting, elaboration and submission of this Report.
3. The report was prepared on the basis of the guidelines issued by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in cooperation with the jointly competent Ministries and other Authorities and Agencies and the National Confederation of Disabled People (ESAMEA).
4. We believe that the submission of this Report will signal the beginning of a sincere, constructive and fruitful cooperation with the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

## Articles 1-4

### Definitions

5. As regards the definition of "disability", we would like to mention that according to the *Control Methodology of Accessibility to Public Services and Infrastructures*:
6. Persons with disabilities are persons with motor and/or sensory (visual and/or hearing impairment) and/or intellectual and/or mental disability and/or chronic disease (thalassaemia, nephropathy, etc.).
7. People with Impairments, according to the International Classification of the World Health Organization (WHO), are, in addition to the persons with disabilities, older people, young children under the age of five (5) years, women in the later stages of pregnancy, people who suffer from arthritis, asthma or a heart condition, people who are addicted to alcohol or narcotic drugs, people who suffer any partial or complete loss of language related abilities, people who experience a panic attack in an emergency, people exposed to high temperatures, poisonous or toxic substances, contaminated environments, etc.
8. On the other hand, we would like to point out that both Directive 78/2000/EC "combating discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation" and Law 3304/2005 "Implementation of the principle of equal treatment regardless of racial or ethnic origin, religious or other beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation" do not contain a definition of disability.
9. However, the purpose of both the community and national legislators remains the consolidation of a social model approach concerning the fight against discrimination on the grounds of disability. According to that model, disability is not treated as a medical problem through the assignment to it of a specific percentage of disability, but as a result of the interaction between people with disabilities and behavioural disorders and obstacles, which derive from their physical environment and from existing social prejudices and can prevent their equal access to and participation in society. For this reason, we should not adopt definitions used in the implementation of social welfare or social security legislation, where the target is different from the prohibition of discrimination.

10. Law 2643/1998 “Ensuring the employment of persons belonging to special categories and other provisions” also does not include a definition of disability but specifies, in paragraph 1 of article 1, the categories of persons falling within its scope: “(b) Individuals with disability percentage of at least 50%, who have limited opportunities for employment due to any chronic physical or mental or psychological disease or disorder (persons with disabilities), provided that they are recorded in the register of unemployed persons with disabilities of the Manpower Employment Organization (OAED). Moreover, those who have a child, sibling or spouse with a disability percentage of at least sixty-seven percent (67%) due to severe mental or physical diseases, as identified by the competent medical committees described by this law, shall be protected as well. Exceptionally, when individuals suffer from mental retardation or autism, such protection shall require a disability percentage of at least fifty percent (50%)”.

11. The means of understanding the concepts of articles 1 and 2 of the Convention are the laws, while such means of understanding shall be stipulated by the provisions / regulations / explanatory circulars, etc.

12. To explain the concept of “reasonable accommodation” and requirement of a “disproportionate or undue burden” regarding the built and unbuilt environment, we are presenting some parameters which were taken into account in assessing disproportionate burden in the drafting of the regulations, as follows:

- The natural contours of the ground (the differences in height, stable final surface, etc.)
- The size of the intervention in relation to the size of the entire construction
- For existing structures, the cost of creating access to the existing structure in comparison with the cost of construction anew and the expected time of maintenance thereof
- The provisions on classification of buildings and settlements (e.g. monuments, listed buildings, traditional settlements), where intervention is difficult because of the legal framework in force
- The sole use, within the settlement, of a building for citizens’ service

13. In general, the regulations on accessibility by people with disabilities and impairments apply to all buildings where the use therein requires it. No cost shall be considered disproportionate or undue if it enables people with disabilities and impairments to participate on equal terms with the other citizens in everyday activities, however, our legislation provides for reasonable accommodations for accessibility to buildings and communal spaces or even exemptions from the accessibility requirement.

14. In the field of labour relations, in accordance with article 10 of Law 3304/2005 on compliance with the principle of equal treatment with respect to persons with disabilities, the employer shall take all appropriate measures where necessary, in order for such persons to have access to a job, to perform such job and develop, as well as to participate in vocational training, provided that such measures do not impose a disproportionate burden on the employer.

15. Hence, the obligation for reasonable accommodation leads to the adoption of individualized intervention measures, yet such measures should be appropriate to ensure equal access for people with disabilities to work, the opportunity to perform the job and develop as well as to participate in vocational training.

16. The law does not contain a list of possible reasonable accommodations, because they are unlimited and depend on each individual case.

17. According to the annual report of the Greek Ombudsman, reports on cases of discrimination submitted by workers with disabilities to the said body mainly concern requests for the adoption of reasonable accommodation measures such as reallocations, transfers, reduction of working hours or change of duties.

18. Pursuant to article 10 of Law 3304/2005 “Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities” the employer’s obligation for reasonable accommodations shall be limited if they result in a disproportionate burden. The disproportionate burden of reasonable accommodations is not specified by the law, because it is assessed on a case-by-case basis. However, in order to identify the disproportionate burden, one should consider several factors such as the nature and the costs required for the accommodations, the effect of the accommodations on the operation of the enterprise including the impact on other employees in respect of the discharge of duties, the financial means of the enterprise, the kind and size thereof, and the total number of employees.

19. More specifically, according to Law 2643/1998, the Manpower Employment Organization may pay to enterprises or undertakings or bodies of the public sector that employ persons with disabilities a part of the costs for the ergonomic arrangement of the workplace of such people (para. 2, art. 8). At this point, it should be noted that a burden may not be considered disproportionate when it is offset by protective measures taken within the framework of implementation of a policy in favour of people with disabilities.

20. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that paragraph 4, article 8, Law 3304/2005 explicitly introduces an exemption from the prohibition of discrimination based on disability in employment and occupation, “in the armed forces and security forces, since it concerns a different treatment based on age or disability related to the Service”.

#### **Implementation of Articles 3-4 of the Convention with active involvement of people with disabilities**

21. The Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework 2014-2020 is the strategic instrument which reflects the design and the main development needs and options of the country, as developed by Thematic Objective and in relation to the development priorities of the new Regulations. The new Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework has been officially approved by the competent European Commission Services.

22. The principles of respect for and protection of the rights of people with disabilities run through both the actual text of the new Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework, on the one hand, and the design and preparation of the new operational programmes, whether sectoral or regional, on the other hand.

23. The adoption of the principle of Gender Equality, Non-Discrimination and Accessibility, which clearly includes the group of people with disabilities, stipulates that the Member States and the European Commission should take the appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, *disability*, age or sexual orientation during the preparation and implementation of operational programmes of the Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework 2014-2020.

24. The goals of prevention of discrimination and of enhancement of accessibility are formulated in this context covering mainly the following:

- Equal access to the labour market
- Equal access to education, training and lifelong learning
- Promotion of social inclusion and fight against poverty
- Fight against any kind of discrimination

25. The measures stipulated include, inter alia:
- The active involvement of relevant social organizations in public consultation, in regional/sectoral development workshops, in national conferences and in the programmes planning process
  - The participation of representative bodies of people with disabilities in the Monitoring Committees
  - The inclusion in the annual reports of the measures taken to provide equal opportunities while assessing their effectiveness
  - The use of specific criteria for the compliance with the principle of non-discrimination and enhancement of accessibility in the co-financed actions selection, implementation and evaluation procedures
26. The most important Thematic Objective in terms of social inclusion of people with disabilities is Thematic Objective 9 “Promotion of social inclusion and combating of poverty and any discrimination”, which provides for a grid of integrated social inclusion policies aiming at the protection and revitalization of the social fabric.
27. The following investment priorities of Thematic Objective 9 have been adopted, with a clear reference to social inclusion and the fight against poverty and discrimination on grounds of disability, after a long cooperation as well as continuous and broad consultation between the Ministry of Economy, Infrastructure, Shipping and Tourism, the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, and the Ministry of Health as well as individual organizations and representative bodies of the target group:
- Active inclusion policies aiming at the improvement of employment opportunities
  - Integration of marginalized communities
  - Combating discrimination on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, **disability**, age or sexual orientation
  - Improving access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, including health care and social services of general interest (Health Safety Net)
  - Promoting social economy and social enterprises
28. It is particularly important that a large part of the resources of the Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework, in the total amount of 1,303,336,729.60 euro, has been allocated to the provisions of Thematic Objective 9 for the Programmatic Period 2014-2020.
29. In this context and in relation to article 9 “Accessibility” of the Convention, we would like to mention the existence of the General Ex Ante Conditionality 3 “Disability” which, in addition to issues relating to the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol, provides for “the training of the personnel of the authorities involved in the audit of ESI funds in the fields of the applicable Community and international legislation and policy on disability, including **accessibility** and practical application of the UNCRPD, as reflected in the EU and national legislation”, as well as “ensuring of the monitoring of the implementation of Article 9 of the UNCRPD in relation to ESI funds during the preparation and implementation of the Programmes”.
30. Especially, with a view to the fulfilment of this criterion of Conditionality 3, a detailed Educational Intervention Plan has been drafted in order to create a common understanding and language on disability and accessibility among the officers of the Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework (including, at the second stage, the beneficiaries), thus ensuring the most appropriate terms for the effective planning of the

Operational Programmes as well as for the implementation and monitoring of their implementation, while a “Two-day Information and Education Seminar for the officers of the Special Agencies in disability and accessibility issues” (8 & 9 October 2014, Athens) has taken place for the planning officers. This two-day Seminar included information presentations, experiential workshops and four other workshops.

31. Further to the above, it should be taken into consideration that the interventions in the Thematic Objective 9 result from national strategies, such as the National Strategy for Social Integration and the Initiative “Health in Action”; whose common aspect is the targeted implementation based on the needs of the individual target groups, which include the Persons with Disabilities.

32. Regarding the participation of civil society and, in particular, of Persons with Disabilities and their representative organizations in the design of the new development model of the country, as reflected in the text of the new Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework, “we wish to mention the active participation of the National Confederation of Disabled People (ESAMEA) in the consultation processes that took place during the design of the new Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework, its participation in the education and training of the staff of the authorities in charge of the management of the European Structural and Investment Funds within the framework of the General Ex Ante Conditionality 3 ‘Disability’”, as well as in the planning, preparation and drafting actions for the new Operational Programmes for the Programmatic Period 2014-2020.

33. Through this participatory process, all Operational Programmes, whether sectoral or regional, following their first official submission to the competent European Commission Services (17.07.2014), were forwarded to the National Confederation of Disabled People, which submitted observations, comments and recommendations to the appropriate Special Agencies and Planning Groups. Within the context of the consultation, recommendations by the National Confederation of Disabled People were taken into account in the resubmission of the programmes on 28.11.2014.

34. The National Confederation of Disabled People, on the basis of the practice of the National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013, is to participate in the Monitoring Committees of the new Operational Programmes and in the formulation of specialized action selection criteria relating to accessibility and non-discrimination.

35. Finally, it is noted that, by virtue of the Ministerial Decision as of 24.03.2014 and with a view to enhancing and supporting the aforementioned initiatives and projects, the “Working Group on mainstreaming disability and non-discrimination in the Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework 2014-2020” has been established and has the following objectives:

(a) Formulation of proposals to meet the requirements of article 7, Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013 according to which “The Member States and the Commission shall take appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination based on ... disability ... during the preparation and implementation of programmes. In particular, accessibility for persons with disabilities shall be taken into account throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes”;

(b) Formulation of proposals for mainstreaming disability in the management and control system of the Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework 2014-2020;

(c) Elaboration and formulation of proposals for the inclusion criteria of actions relating to accessibility in the operational programmes for the period 2014-2020;

(d) Formulation of proposals for the issuance of directives on the incorporation of the specification of criteria in the invitations of the operational programmes of the Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework and monitoring of their implementation.

36. We would like to emphasize that in the development, implementation and evaluation of the legislative measures and policies relating to the Convention, the Greek Government takes every care to ensure constant, continuous and intensive cooperation with the National Confederation of Disabled People, which has been the only officially recognized Social Partner of the Greek State in all disability issues since 1985.

37. We wish to mention the Working Group (1986-1990), which drafted the planning guidelines of the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change and in which people with disabilities with various specialties and kinds of disability participated actively; the Accessibility Committee of the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change; the institutional representation of the National Confederation of Disabled People in the Board of Directors of the National Centre for Social Solidarity through its President, who is a member thereof; the participation — as a member — of a representative of the National Confederation of Disabled People in the Social Inspection Council of the Labour Inspectorate (SKEEE), the annual body in charge of expressing an opinion on the annual report, planning and general operation of the Labour Inspectorate (SEPE); the participation of representatives of the National Confederation of Disabled People in the “Working Group on the accessibility of Disabled People to sites of tourist interest”; and the Working Group “Tourism and related services”. We also refer to those mentioned below about individual articles regarding the cooperation and taking into account of the views of the National Confederation of Disabled People in a number of actions and initiatives.

## **Article 5 – Equality and non-discrimination**

38. According to paragraph 6, article 21 of the Greek Constitution: “People with disabilities have the right to benefit from measures ensuring their autonomy, professional integration and participation in the social, economic and political life of the Country”. This paragraph aims at strengthening the welfare state, while people with disabilities were granted a special constitutional right to enjoy measures that ensure their autonomy, vocational integration and participation in the social, economic and political life of the country. This provision, in conjunction with the principle of proportional equality (art. 4 of the Constitution) and the provision of paragraph 2, article 116 of the Constitution, which enables the adoption of positive measures (positive discrimination) in favour of groups which are experiencing actual inequality, enables the legislator to take all measures necessary to protect or facilitate persons with disabilities.

39. In the field of legislative activity, we would like to mention that Law 4285/2014 was recently passed amending Law 927/1979, so that its provisions be in line with the Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 “on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law”. In particular, according to the provisions of this Law “Whoever intentionally, publicly, orally or through the press and the internet or through any other means or manner, incites, causes, induces or instigates acts or actions that may lead to discrimination, hatred or violence against a person or a group of persons that are defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability, so as to endanger the public order or pose a threat to life, freedom or physical integrity of the above-mentioned persons, shall be punished with imprisonment of three (3) months to three (3) years and a pecuniary penalty of five thousand (5,000) to twenty thousand (20,000) euro”.

40. Furthermore, Law 3304/2005 incorporated into national legislation Council Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC on the prohibition of discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin, on the one hand, and on the prohibition of discrimination based on religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation in the field of employment and occupation, on the other hand. In particular, by article 16 of Law 3304/2005 the national legislator ensured the criminalization of all forms of discrimination, which takes place during the supply of goods or the provision of services to the public. This prohibition applies to any discriminatory conduct on grounds of ethnic or racial origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

41. The Labour Inspectorate (SEPE) as the body promoting the principle of equal treatment, receives complaints from victims of discrimination for violation of the principle of equal treatment in the field of employment and occupation by natural or legal entities in the private sector. Moreover, it is also in charge of controlling the application of the principle of equal treatment irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, including HIV positive persons, age or sexual orientation, taking into account multiple discrimination cases.

42. Pursuant to article 10 of Law 3304/2005, the Labour Inspectorate shall advise employers and workers on the conditions of equal treatment and inspect whether employers have ensured all reasonable accommodations, namely, that they have taken all appropriate measures, as the case may be, to ensure, in particular, that people with disabilities have access to and remain in work as well as participate in vocational training (Law 3996/2011).

43. In line with Law 3304/2005, paragraph 2, article 42 of Presidential Decree 113/2014 “By-law of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare” states that the powers and duties of the Special Labour Inspectors of the Labour Inspectorate shall be, inter alia, “to monitor the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women at work and equal treatment irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, as well as the compliance with the provisions on protection of maternity and reconciliation of work, family and private life, and the national general collective labour agreements in force from time to time”.

44. In addition, paragraph 3, article 46, Presidential Decree 113/2014 provides that the powers of the Labour Relations Inspection Department of the Labour Inspectorate shall be, inter alia, to monitor the compliance with the provisions of the labour legislation in force, including “the legislation on the promotion and implementation of the principle of equal treatment of workers in the workplace”.

45. We wish to note also that, according to paragraphs 5 and 6, article 23, Law 4144/2013 “Combating delinquency in Social Security and the labour market and other provisions falling within the competence of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare”, when the Labour Inspectorate deals with a labour dispute, a sign language interpreter from the Hellenic Federation of the Deaf can be present in order to assist the deaf or hard of hearing person. In case the minutes of the labour dispute are requested, they shall be issued also in Braille or other formats that are accessible by persons with disabilities.

46. Due to the difficulty in proving discrimination, paragraph 1, article 14, Law 3304/2005 “Burden of proof” stipulates that: “When an injured person claims that the principle of equal treatment has not been complied with and establishes, before a court or a competent administrative authority, true facts from which it can be concluded that there has been direct or indirect discrimination, the respondent shall bear the burden to prove in court, or the administrative authority shall have to establish, that there have been no circumstances constituting violation of this principle”. This means that the victim of discrimination should present the facts that indicate the existence of discrimination and that



the burden of proof that there has been no direct or indirect discrimination shall shift to the defendant.

47. For the effective implementation of the principle of equal treatment for workers with disabilities, the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity supported the National Confederation of Disabled People in the implementation of a project, within the framework of a Community programme, as well as in the development of a manual on discrimination and reasonable accommodations for workers with disabilities. The purpose of this manual is, on the one hand, to inform the Officers of the Labour Inspectorate on discriminations and reasonable accommodations and, on the other hand, to provide a specialized tool to the Labour Inspectors for the identification of obstacles by disability category. The handbook aims at the intervention at three levels: (a) level of knowledge; (b) level of skills; and (c) level of attitude.

48. As regards the first level, the handbook presents, on the one hand, the institutional framework concerning the principle of equal treatment in terms of disability, by presenting examples and clarifying the key concepts (e.g. direct and indirect discrimination, reasonable accommodations, accessibility, etc.) and, on the other hand, barriers and difficulties faced by disabled workers, in order to enable the officers of the Labour Inspectorate to deal more effectively with situations of unequal treatment of disabled workers.

49. Regarding the second level, the handbook specifies the requirements of accessibility and reasonable accommodations by type of disability, so as to enable the officers of the Labour Inspectorate to be more effective both in identifying barriers and submitting proposals for the removal thereof. In this light, a questionnaire has been drafted, which can be used by the officers of the Labour Inspectorate either in their capacity of officers who monitor the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for workers with disabilities as well as identify and prosecute offenders, or in their capacity of officers who advise disabled workers and employers.

50. With regard to the third level, the handbook presents the transition from the medical to the social model of disability in terms of applied policy and legislation at the national, European and international levels, so that the officers of the Labour Inspectorate can adopt the rights based approach to the resolution of problems faced by disabled workers.

51. In the same vein, paragraph 3, article 5, Code of Conduct for Police Officers (Presidential Decree 254/2004), stipulates that “avoiding prejudices resulting from ... disability shall be a key parameter of the police officers’ behaviour”. Moreover, paragraph 4 of the same article provides that “the police officers shall take particular care to protect especially people with special needs and disabilities”. We also mention that a manual entitled “Guide of Conduct of Hellenic Police towards religious and vulnerable social groups” has been published and distributed to the entire police personnel. This Guide of Conduct presents concisely the special categories of vulnerable groups and provides clear instructions to the police officers about their behaviour towards them. One of those special categories are people with disabilities, whom a police officer should, inter alia, protect within the context of positive discrimination as well as facilitate, and to whom he/she should provide practical help in the enjoyment and exercise of their rights.

## **Article 8 – Awareness-raising**

52. The Greek broadcasting legislation has been harmonized with the provisions of the EU Audiovisual Media Services (AMS) Directive 2010/13/EU, through the issuance of Presidential Decree 109/2010. Presidential Decree 109/2010 contains provisions, which specifically mention the rights of people with disabilities, such as:

- Article 4 of Presidential Decree 109/2010 (art. 3 of Directive 2010/13/EU) on freedom of reception.
  - Subparagraph (b), paragraph 2 of the said article enables the Greek National Council for Radio and Television to decide to provisionally suspend the retransmission of televised broadcasts, which incite hatred, on grounds, inter alia as provided for by the said article, of disability.
  - Indent (i) of paragraph 5 stipulates that the above prohibition shall also apply to on-demand audiovisual media services.
- Paragraph 1, article 7 (art. 6 of Directive 2010/13/EU), which states that audiovisual media service providers shall take the necessary measures to ensure that the services they provide do not contain any incitement to hatred based on race, sex, religion or belief, nationality, disability, age and sexual orientation;
- Subparagraph (d), paragraph 1, article 10 (art. 9 of Directive 2010/13/EU), which states that the audiovisual commercial communications may not include or promote any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

53. Furthermore, we note that paragraph 1, article 4, Greek Code of Advertising and Communications Practice, as provided for by Law 2863/2000, states that advertisements shall respect human dignity and may not contain or imply any form of discrimination, such as based on race, ethnicity, origin, religion, sex, age, disability or sexual identity.

54. The General Secretariat of Information and Communication has undertaken various initiatives with a view to raising awareness of the public on issues of Persons with Disabilities, including the following:

- 5th International Conference: “Disability and Mass Media, Integration and Crisis in the Digital Era” (March 2014). The aim of the Conference was to raise awareness of the public and of the representatives of the Mass Media to overcome prejudices and stereotypes faced by people with disabilities, as well as to improve accessibility for people with disabilities to communication and information. The Conference was organized within the context of coordinated actions developed by the General Secretariat of Information and Communication since 2006 and aiming at the reflection and dialogue on the issues of people with disabilities.
- One-day Workshop on “The role and contribution of the media to raising awareness of civil society on disability issues” (May 2014). The purpose of the Event-Workshop, organized jointly by the Regional Federation of Disabled People of Peloponnese, the Region of Peloponnese and the Municipality of Tripoli, was, on the one hand, to bring again to the fore the reflection and dialogue on issues concerning the community of people with disabilities and, in particular, the contribution of Mass Media to the presentation of such issues and, on the other hand, to be a springboard for the promotion of activities carried out by organizations of people with disabilities as well as a field of social interaction.
- In collaboration with the Greek Film Centre, the General Secretariat of Information and Communication established for three consecutive years (2007-2008-2009) the “EMOTION PICTURES Documentary and Disability” annual international festival, which is the first festival held in Greece with this subject. The aim of this Festival was, through documentaries, to highlight the concerns of artists from all over the world about disability and to encourage the development of a fruitful social dialogue in our country starting with the arts.

55. Furthermore, the General Secretariat of Information and Communication has undertaken the initiative to publish Guidebooks and Questionnaires for Journalists on Disability and Mass Media, which, inter alia, would deal with technology issues related to accessibility, the combating of long-lasting stereotypes and prejudices, the participation of the mass media in shaping the social image of the people with disabilities, the terminology or appropriate presentation of people with disabilities in the media, etc.

56. Finally, we would like to point out that the text of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is now available in various accessible formats, including in Greek Sign Language and Greek Braille writing, which were developed by the Institute of Educational Policy in cooperation with deaf native speakers of Greek sign language, the National Federation of the Blind, students and teachers with disabilities and professionals who work with disabled students.

## Article 9 – Accessibility

57. Within the context of the obligation undertaken by each state party to the Convention for adoption of positive measure aiming at eliminating obstacles and barriers to accessibility for people with disabilities, we would like to inform you as follows:

### Regarding accessibility to the built and natural environment:

58. The basic accessibility requirements provided for by our national institutional framework are as follows:

- Law 4030/2011 (para. 6, art. 9) established the obligation of drafting an Accessibility Design for people with disabilities and inclusion thereof in the architectural design, as a compulsory design in the New Way of Issuing Building Permits.
- By Law 4067/2012, the New Building Regulation contained regulations concerning the accessibility by people with disabilities to the built environment, including:
  - **Article 4:** The issuance of a building permit will not be necessary any longer for structures required for the movement of, or any form of services for, people with disabilities or people with impairments.
  - **Article 11:** In new buildings where the law does not require the construction of a lift, if the construction includes a lift, the surface (1,60m X 1,90m) required for a lift for people with disabilities or people with impairments may not be added to the permitted building surface (bonus).
  - **Articles 16, 17:** Structures (such as ramps, elevators, etc.) to facilitate the movement of people with disabilities or people with impairments may be built inside the open spaces and parterres of plots/fields.
  - **Article 26 (for new buildings – after 2012):** In the spaces of all new buildings, excluding buildings intended for residential use, whose license is issued after the publication of the New Building Regulation, there must be horizontal and vertical autonomous and safe access for people with disabilities or people with impairments and their servicing in all internal and external areas of the buildings, as well as provision of accessible sanitary facilities at a rate of 5% for public use or in any case at least one per group of sanitary facilities as well as parking areas suitable for wheelchairs. Especially in respect of buildings intended for residential use, the new Regulation requires ensuring easy convertibility conditions of the residences into residences of future users with disabilities or impairments.

- **Article 26 (for existing buildings – before 2012):** In the buildings which house State agencies, public law entities, private law entities of the broader public sector, public utility organizations, primary and secondary local government organizations, or which are used for the following purposes: public assemblies, temporary stay, education, health, social welfare, justice and correction, offices and trade, industries and small craft industries, as well as car parking areas and petrol stations, the necessary arrangements must be made, so that their functional spaces be accessible by people with disabilities and people with impairments. Such arrangements must have been completed by 2020, unless the use changes and the new use requires ensuring accessibility.

59. Moreover, the lawfully existing buildings, which at the time of their erection were not required by the law then in force to have a lift, may exceptionally include a lift or other mechanical means to overcome differences in height and a space for access to them, upon issuance of a small scale permit, constructed inside the open spaces and parterres of plots/fields.

60. Finally, in case any further opinion on special accessibility issues is necessary, the appropriate consultative /inspection bodies and ordinary citizens can apply to the Accessibility Committee of the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, (now Ministry of Reconstruction of Production, Environment and Energy) which shall recommend specific arrangements on accessibility to the Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Change.

61. Moreover, Design Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Reconstruction of Production, Environment and Energy can be used as design standards covering the entire range of access to buildings, houses, communal areas and pavements.

62. In addition, according to Ministerial Decision 52907/2009 and its explanatory circulars, every design/project in communal urban spaces intended for pedestrians, shall ensure accessibility for people with disabilities and people with impairments, which shall include routes for disabled persons, ramps, signs, landscaping of open spaces by planting, flooring, etc., and shall connect embarkation and transfer stations for public transportation means, car parking spaces, seating areas, facilities, building entrances, services, etc.

63. The Ministry of Administrative Reform and e-Government (now Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction) was in charge of the implementation of the two-year (2009-2010) “Accessibility Program in the Municipalities” for the creation of chains of access in order to improve traffic accessibility. More specifically, we inform you that during the years 2009-2010 the “Accessibility Program in the Municipalities” was implemented in order to create chains of access that connect through accessible pavements and crossings along a particular route, the accessible facilities and the infrastructure of high-traffic areas, which house activities involving the public and including:

(a) The buildings of Public Agencies (particularly those that are visited by a large number of people); and

(b) All high-traffic areas such as the commercial, education, sports, archaeological-tourist (tourist accessibility), cultural and recreation centre but also urban green spaces, beaches and natural landscapes.

64. As regards, in particular, access for disabled people to the Hellenic Post Offices, we would like to mention that the competent company Hellenic Post SA (ELTA) adopted design practices that ensure accessibility and services for those people, as it was required to do as a Public Utility Organization in accordance with the Decisions of the Ministry for the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works 52487 and 52488/2002 “Special

regulations on serving persons with disabilities in existing buildings” and “Special arrangements on serving persons with disabilities in communal areas intended for pedestrians” respectively, the General Building Regulation — Law 2831/2000 as replaced by the New Building Regulation — Law 4067/2012, and the “Code of basic town-planning legislation” — Presidential Decree 27/1999.

65. In this context, when allowed by the conditions of the transaction area and within the framework of the regulations of the Corporation, Hellenic Post ensure the best possible access and services for people with disabilities, who are given priority to the transaction counters of the Hellenic Post Offices. In particular, a sign should be placed at a prominent point of the transaction area, which should indicate: “Persons with Disabilities shall be given priority”.

66. The program of reorganization and upgrading of the Hellenic Post Offices since 2003 (New Brand Name ELTA) in most cases improved the physical facilities, so that the services are provided in a modern and pleasant environment, including, in the study and/or construction of the projects, aspects of the Design Guidelines “Design for all” of the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, which address special customer needs. Such design and implementation practices consist in the laying out of ramps at the entrance of Offices, installation of elevators, installation of counters for people with disabilities and/or placement of packages at an appropriate height to serve the public, bearing the International Symbol of Access at the counter, as well as placement on the floor of a “pathway for the blind” from the entrance to the closest counter. Furthermore, in the Post Offices where the local government organizations have reserved a stopping/parking zone for official vehicles, this can be used by people with disabilities.

67. Where there are security portals and doors, the dimensions, the way the doors open and the button panels for use by the public are legible through the use of (red — green) lamps and have an ergonomic design in order to facilitate and ensure access directly, while at the same time being suitable for use by people with disabilities. The exterior doors have an alert button for people with disabilities, placed at a suitable height. Moreover, the portals are equipped with an automatic voice message system and a full system of intercommunication between the incoming person and the console operator (microphones, speakers, necessary buttons, etc.).

#### **Regarding accessibility to Public Transportation Means:**

68. The Ministry of Economy, Infrastructure, Shipping and Tourism has ensured that the majority of public transportation means are accessible to people with disabilities.

69. Inter alia, the Athens Metro has facilities in all stations and trains for optimal services for Persons with Disabilities. The same holds for the other new public transportation infrastructures, i.e. the tram and the suburban railway. Moreover, the Attica Urban Transport Organization has established standards A8, A12 and A18 for urban transport buses accessible to people with motor disabilities. Fully accessible are also the airports of Athens, Thessaloniki, Rhodes, Mytilene and Santorini, while there are special ramps at the airports of Heraklion, Chania, Ioannina, Kos, Kefalonia, Zakynthos, Corfu, Preveza and Chios.

70. A Joint Ministerial Decision issued by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity specifies the criteria for the granting of the Transport Card for People with Disabilities. It is issued by the competent agencies of the Regions and the Citizens’ Service Centres (KEP) of the country to Persons with Disabilities with a disability percentage of at least 67%, whose individual income does not exceed 23,000 euro or whose family income does not exceed 29,000 euro. The Transport Card is

also issued to the individual accompanying a totally blind person or a person with severe mental retardation and an intelligence quotient of 30 or less.

71. As regards accessibility for people with disabilities to urban or semi-urban buses as well as the platforms of the new coach stations, we would like to mention the Ministerial Decision 53495/2475/2002/B116/2013 laying down the requirements for technical systems that facilitate access by persons with reduced mobility to coaches, and the Presidential Decree 79/2004 (arts. 3 and 4) on access to walkways, buildings, toilets and canteens of the new coach arrival and departure stations. Furthermore, there is a charter of obligations towards consumers, as amended on the basis of EU Regulation 181/2011 concerning the rights of passengers (para. 4, art. 3, and art. 5), in respect of the compensation in case of damage to or loss of wheelchairs and the training of the personnel of the transport operators including awareness raising on disability issues and provision of their direct assistance to persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility. Finally, people with a disability percentage greater than 67%, regardless of income, are entitled to get a Card that provides 50% discount on the tickets of coaches.

72. As regards the transportation of the passengers in Athens, the competent company, Athens Road Transport SA (OSY), being aware of the difficulties (boarding — movement) of people with impairments, has adopted procedures and means so as to safely provide the necessary resources for easy and independent movement of persons with disabilities and other passengers needing help (people with motor difficulties, the elderly, pregnant women, young children in wheelchairs, etc.).

73. More specifically, all 2,194 vehicles of the company are now low-floor kneeling vehicles. Furthermore, 1,232 of them have additional equipment, that is, a special extending ramp that makes boarding easier even for wheelchairs. Moreover, there are special pictograms on all scheduled vehicles which indicate clearly both on their outer front surface that the specific vehicle enables access to people with impairments and, inside the passenger compartment, that there are seats intended for persons needing help.

74. The actions undertaken by Athens Road Transport SA concerning services provided to people with disabilities are not only limited to vehicles having the necessary equipment but also include ongoing information and training of the staff (drivers) through regular circulars, seminars on the operation of the vehicle equipment and generally provision of instructions, so that all employees understand the importance of facilitating boarding and safe movement of those people.

75. In addition, the central offices of the company house a special Agency offering exclusive and free of charge transportation for people with motor problems and other persons with disabilities. This Agency has three specially equipped vehicles that serve people with disabilities from 07.30 to 22.00 every working day (Monday to Friday) throughout the year.

76. The said Agency daily serves a growing number of individuals and their accompanying persons, thus enabling them to go to their destination, which may be their place of work or a social outing. Moreover, it serves, on an extraordinary basis even outside business hours and days, people with disabilities in order to participate in various events, upon consultation with Bodies, Associations, Unions, Federations (e.g. National Confederation of Disabled People, Hellenic Sports Federation for Persons with Disabilities, etc.). In addition, the specially equipped vehicles of the agency, including the 12-meter buses, are often used to allow people with motor problems to participate in events such as festivals, championships, exhibitions, general meetings, etc.

77. In addition, Athens Road Transport SA assists in the promotion of events and activities for people with disabilities, usually through posters put inside its vehicles.

78. Furthermore, as regards the Bus Line 911 (Kallithea Stop — Foundation for the Blind), which primarily serves visually impaired persons, Athens Road Transport SA runs a special program entitled “Listen to the Stop” [Stop-announcement System], through which the destination that the bus approaches is announced to the passengers of the bus and those waiting at the stops.

79. Finally, as regards information, the website of Athens Road Transport SA includes a section with information on the services provided to people with disabilities. This section and the entire website are accessible to people with impairments through a special point of entry, whose content has fewer colours as well as no images or material that could make a text difficult to read.

80. Concerning specifically the accessibility by people with disabilities to port infrastructures and ships, we wish to mention:

81. Within the context of the key priority set for the upgrading of the quality level of the services provided to passengers and within the broader EU policy for the enhancement of the rights of passengers in the European Union, the improvement of the passengers’ position in the overall transportation system and the encouragement of mobility, a legal framework has been established to enhance and protect the rights of passengers in sea transport, while Law 3709/2008 “Rights and obligations of passengers and carriers in ordinary maritime transports and other provisions” was passed by the Greek Parliament.

82. The provisions of the above Law introduced, both at the national and Community levels, the legal framework for the protection of the users of shipping services, while it established special measures for people with disabilities for the improvement of their accessibility to ships and their participation in shipping services on equal terms. More specifically, the following have been adopted for people with disabilities:

(a) A discount of 50% on the fare for all seats of the ships on ordinary domestic lines, given to persons with reduced mobility and a disability percentage of at least 80%, and an equal discount on private passenger vehicles for disabled people used for their transportation, this being a public service obligation deriving from social policy purposes;

(b) Free of charge transportation of extra hand luggage and any care equipment or aids required for their autonomous movement; and

(c) The obligation of the carrier to have at the reception area of the ship a notice board presenting the passengers’ rights in Braille.

83. “Regulation (EU) No. 1177/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010 concerning the rights of passengers when travelling by sea and inland waterway” was published on 17.12.2010 in the Official Journal of the European Union, L 334. Compared with Law 3709/2008, Regulation (EU) No. 1177/2010 requires additionally the provision of free of charge assistance to persons with reduced mobility, both by the carriers and by the port terminal operators. The assistance shall be provided by appropriately trained staff based on quality standards stipulated by Regulation (EU) 1177/2010. Furthermore, according to this Regulation, the person accompanying a disabled passenger shall be carried free of charge, if required by the carrier. It is noted that this Regulation (EU) applies, in addition to maritime cabotage (scope of application of Law 3709/2008), also to maritime passenger transport services, when a) the port of embarkation is situated in the territory of a Member State or when b) the port of embarkation is situated outside the territory of a Member State and the port of disembarkation is situated in the territory of a Member State, provided that the service is operated by a Union carrier.

84. By article 35 of Law 4150/2013, which amended Law 3709/2008, national legislation was fully harmonized with the EU institutional framework of Regulation (EU) 1177/2010. This strengthened national legal framework ensures the prevention of

discrimination against people with disabilities, enhances their rights as passengers and provides for maritime transport services for them similar to those of the other citizens.

85. Moreover, as regards the complaints management system employed by our country within the context of its obligations for the implementation of Regulation (EU) 1177/2010, it should be noted that since the entry into force of Regulation (EU) 1177/2010, namely since 18.12.2012, there has been only one (1) complaint for failure to provide assistance to people with disabilities for access to a ship.

86. Further, on 27.06.2013 the Ministry of Shipping and the Aegean (now Ministry of Economy, Infrastructure, Shipping and Tourism) and the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE) of the European Commission organized in the Port of Piraeus an one-day conference on the rights of passengers in maritime transport, highlighting their interest in informing passengers on the enhanced rights of passengers with disabilities. It should be pointed out that the enhanced rights of people with disabilities have also been included in the latest version of the information leaflet issued by the Ministry of Shipping and the Aegean and by the Consumer Association of Greece on passenger rights in maritime transport.

87. A significant contribution to the protection of the rights of people with disabilities in maritime transport services has resulted from the close cooperation between the Ministry and the National Confederation of Disabled People in accessibility and mobility issues. A member of the National Confederation of Disabled People participates in the proceedings of the Sea Transport Council whenever it discusses a matter concerning passengers with disabilities.

88. The same law (4153/2013), relating to the licensing of projects in zones falling within the competence of the Port Authorities SA, provides for the accessibility by people with disabilities to port infrastructures. In particular, paragraph 4, article 46, Law 4150/2013, as amended by paragraph 4, article 41, Law 4256/2014, states: “The port infrastructure and superstructure projects are divided into: a) main port projects, which are projects carried out within the maritime zone and land zone aiming solely at accommodating the port services provided by a specific port, such as projects of expansion / improvement / protection, alluvia, installation of machinery and any superstructure directly serving the port operations, including fish unloading and trading activities; b) ancillary port projects, which are designed to serve the port users and are indirectly connected with the port operations, such as car parking areas, recreation areas and restaurants, hotels, passenger stations, passenger transport facilities, offices, shops. In case of construction of new projects or maintenance, repair and improvement of existing projects as provided for in (b) above, accessibility for people with disabilities shall be ensured”.

89. Considering the above, the relevant Directorate of Port and Building Infrastructures of the Ministry of Shipping and the Aegean issued the following guidelines to the port management and operation bodies (Port Organizations — Port Funds — Municipal Port Funds), and to the Port Authorities:

(a) The management, use and operation bodies of the country’s ports should take all necessary steps within the framework of the existing legislation to ensure the improvement of accessibility by people with disabilities to the areas falling within their competence. To this end, a text of the National Confederation of Disabled People, which contained standards and instructions for the required interventions, was sent with a view to the adaptation of the port infrastructures;

(b) The Port Authorities should assist, if requested, in the placement of appropriate facilities (e.g. wooden paths, ramps) on beaches. If the Port Authorities have any doubts about the nature and type of construction and implementation of the legislation on the protection of seashores and beaches, they should contact the relevant Real Estate



Agencies for instructions, without, however, obstructing access by people with disabilities to such places;

(c) The personnel of the management, use and operation bodies of ports and the personnel of the Port Authorities should be appropriately trained in the provision of assistance to, and ensuring facilitation of, persons with disabilities, in collaboration with the official bodies and associations of persons with disabilities.

90. In addition to the above, we would like to inform you that the Merchant Ships Inspection General Directorate of the Ministry of Shipping and the Aegean in collaboration with stakeholders (Union of Coastal Ship-owners, National Confederation of Persons with Disabilities, etc.), prepared a National Action Plan for the application of Directive 2003/24/EC on “Safety requirements for persons with disabilities on scheduled ships” to the following scheduled ships: classes A, B, C, D as described in the European Directive 98/18/EC, high-speed crafts of HSC CODE and dynamically supported crafts of DSC CODE.

91. The National Action Plan provides that access to the relevant ships must be achieved safely and easily either through stand-alone facilities (e.g. escalators, lifts, elevators) or autonomously if the provisions on construction allow it. Where this is not feasible, two (2) members of the crew shall be appointed by the master of the ship in order to provide all necessary assistance to people with disabilities both during embarkation and disembarkation. Regarding access by people with disabilities to information, the National Action Plan contemplates that the relevant ships should announce messages concerning safety requirements through a television system, so that they can be understood by all persons with reduced sensory abilities, while there should be printed material relating to their safety at sea in Braille for the visually impaired people. In addition, the National Action Plan also provides that there shall be a posted movement plan for people with disabilities, which shall show all areas where people with disabilities can move, any booths for them, communal toilets as well as muster stations in case of abandonment of the ship. Furthermore, there should be positions for people with disabilities indicated by appropriate signs.

92. Presidential Decree 44/2011 “Regulation on accommodation and determination of the number of passengers on passenger ships” provided for requirements for passenger ships plying scheduled routes of over thirty (30) nautical miles in total, in addition to those stipulated by the National Action Plan, which, inter alia, concern the existence of booths, communal sanitary spaces, access from the entrance of the ship to the accommodation areas of persons with disabilities, etc.

93. In particular, article 10 of the said Presidential Decree provides, in respect of access by persons with disabilities to scheduled ships (recognized after 11-11-1996), for the existence of an appropriate lift or special elevator or controlled traffic flow escalator from the vehicle deck to their residence areas, provided that they ply scheduled routes of over thirty (30) nautical miles and the total length of the ship is over one hundred (100) meters. Moreover, if the scheduled ships with a total length of over one hundred (100) meters, recognized before 11-11-1996, do not have a lift, they must have means of safe embarkation and disembarkation in an autonomous way, provided that the placement of such means is technically and practically feasible.

#### **e-Accessibility**

94. Paragraph 2, article 5A of the Greek Constitution explicitly stipulates that “All persons have the right to participate in the Information Society”. According to the same article, facilitation of access to electronically transmitted information, as well as of the production, exchange and diffusion thereof shall constitute an obligation of the State.

95. Given the above, in the context of e-Accessibility, the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction explores and examines the access options for people with disabilities to the products and services related to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), this being currently a priority in Europe.

96. In accordance with paragraph 8, article 4, Law 3979/2011 “on e-Government and other provisions”, the design and implementation of e-Government services and the development and procurement of the respective information and communication systems and services shall be made in a way that ensures e-accessibility for people with disabilities and potential use of such services by them.

97. The new website of the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction ([www.ydmed.gov.gr](http://www.ydmed.gov.gr)) has been designed in such a way as to allow the maximum possible accessibility for all users, regardless of the access device (desktop computer, mobile phone or tablet) or options available to the user (high contrast option, large font size, detailed map/sitemap, etc.) in accordance with the guidelines of the international organization World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), which has established the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI), so as to provide the appropriate standards, which will enable every interested citizen to have access to the World Wide Web.

98. Furthermore, the Ministry of Administrative Reform and e-Government (now Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction) as the funding body, in collaboration with Information Society (IS SA) as the implementation body and the Institute for Social Protection and Solidarity (IKPA) as the operation body<sup>1</sup>, within the framework of the project “Access for Persons with Disabilities to e-Government Services”, created the first specialized portal ([www.amea.gov.gr](http://www.amea.gov.gr)) for citizens with disabilities, their associations, the social welfare agencies and enterprises operating in the sector. The project is an e-Government tool specifically tailored to the needs of people with disabilities. Its purpose is to utilize Information and Communication Technologies for the social inclusion of people with disabilities and in particular to facilitate access by persons with disabilities to the World Wide Web, public administration, services of the welfare state and assistive technology products. The project offers services such as a portal for people with disabilities, which is adjusted to each type of disability, an Electronic Citizens’ Service Centre for people with disabilities, a Voice Portal and Presentation of bodies of people with disabilities.

99. This project operated until 2013, but the rapid development of e-Government tools in Public Administration necessitated its upgrading and interconnection with modern electronic systems and databases. Thus, the operation of the system has been temporarily suspended, so that the necessary adjustments and synergies be made for its best possible utilization, while the needs it served are being covered by the corresponding applications of the System of Collection, Production, Enrichment and Exploitation of Multimedia Content (SYSPEAP).

100. In order to contribute to the growing needs of people with disabilities for participation in society, the National Centre for Social Solidarity undertook the implementation of a European co-funded project on the design, implementation and productive operation of a high technology ICT system, with a view to adapting information and training content so as to be accessible by people with any type of disability.

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<sup>1</sup> The Institute for Social Protection and Solidarity (IKPA), which was the initial beneficiary, completed the project in 2008. Since then, it has been run by the competent operation body, which is currently the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA).

101. The System of Collection, Production, Enrichment and Exploitation of Multimedia Content (SYSPEAP) is a project that provides communication and information services intended for people with disabilities. The System of Collection, Production, Enrichment and Exploitation of Multimedia Content is based on a multimedia technological infrastructure for editing text, voice and video, capable of converting audiovisual content (news, educational broadcasting) into digital material, so as to retransmit it in an accessible format through the internet portal [www.prosvasi-amea.gov.gr](http://www.prosvasi-amea.gov.gr).

102. The system is highly automated in order to make the audiovisual material accessible, by using cutting-edge technologies for editing text, voice and video, and it is also an innovative electronic accessibility service at the European level. It was designed and implemented in collaboration with the National Confederation of Disabled People, which is a subcontractor of the project.

103. Through the portal [www.prosvasi-amea.gov.gr](http://www.prosvasi-amea.gov.gr) users can have access to useful videos related to daily news, news items and announcements updated on a daily basis, online communities, and in teleconferencing services.

104. Moreover, within the context of the project, five (5) electronic workstations for persons with disabilities have been established and have all technical aids required for all forms of disability. The stations have been placed in the Open Welfare Information Centres of the National Centre for Social Solidarity in Athens and Thessaloniki as well as in the premises of the National Confederation of Disabled People, the National Institute for the Deaf People, and the Centre for Education and Rehabilitation for the Blind.

105. The purpose of establishment of the Stations, which provide specialized software for speak screen and printing in Braille for blind users, as well as numerous peripheral devices-aids for people with motor disabilities, was to familiarize people with disabilities with their use.

106. The stations have been withdrawn from the National Confederation of Disabled People and the National Institute for the Deaf People and are to be integrated into the Apprenticeship School of the Manpower Employment Organization, while the Station for persons with disabilities located in Thessaloniki is to be transferred to the Centre for Education and Rehabilitation for the Blind of the same city.

107. The project started its pilot operation on 23/09/2013. During the pilot operation the content of the Portal was enriched with useful links, 14 categories of News Items and Announcements were posted, and the content search process related to people with disabilities was systematized.

108. At the same time, the Online Communities were organized and started operating, while the appropriate actions were taken for the licensing of recording and processing informative content through the inclusion of the National Centre for Social Solidarity in the list of the Hellenic Copyright Organization, which contains the bodies that are responsible for the reproduction of broadcasting content (audiovisual works) in a format accessible by people with disabilities.

109. Moreover, following appropriate actions, content sourcing from the most important news agencies of printed and electronic information was licensed.

110. In 2013 about 500 News Items and Announcements totally, which were accessible also through a voice portal, were posted on the Portal. About 2 News Items and Announcements per day on average were posted on the online communities, while newsletters were sent weekly to registered users.

111. As regards the interactive content of the Portal, 15 new videos from the daily news were posted in 2013, which had been properly processed and subtitled. Finally, in order to

approach young people through social media, a project page has been created on Facebook, which is enriched with daily News Items and Announcements that are interesting for young people with disabilities.

112. From the official commencement of its productive operation on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October 2013 to the end of 2013 the Portal had had 6,891 visits from 4,163 unique visitors, who visited 42,942 pages in total.

113. In 2014 the productive operation of the project continued and was developed, while numerous project and project services promotional activities were carried out, such as cooperation meetings with the Athens-Macedonian News Agency concerning news content sourcing as well as the participation in the 5th International Conference: “Disability and Mass Media, Integration and Crisis in the Digital Era”, organized by the General Secretariat of Mass Media on 13 and 14 March 2014, with presentations by the President of the National Centre for Social Solidarity in the section: “Media and Disability: There are Good Practices”, as well as by officers from the Computer Technology Department in the section: “New Media: From Stereotypes to New Online Communities”.

114. Finally, in April 2014 the sponsorship programme «Art and Therapy» of the National Centre for Social Solidarity was interconnected with the productive operation of the System of Collection, Production, Enrichment and Exploitation of Multimedia Content, with a view to encouraging the participation of people with disabilities in the cultural life of the Onassis Cultural Centre, through the provision of free tickets to disabled users of the portal.

115. In addition, in the field of access and participation of Persons with Disabilities in the media and new communication technologies, the General Secretariat of Mass Media has undertaken the following initiatives:

- Presentation of the project “Development of Operational and Technological Infrastructures as well as Telematics and Teleconference Services for the enhancement of the know-how and rehabilitation programmes of the Hellenic Society for Disabled Children (ELEPAP)” (11/01/2013). The Hellenic Society for Disabled Children (ELEPAP), with the support of the General Secretariat of Mass Media, presented in the Conference Room of the General Secretariat of Mass Media — General Secretariat for Information and Communication the new telematics portal for citizens’ and collaborating welfare bodies’ service. The project aims at ensuring equal access to rehabilitation services for children and families across Greece with no geographical exclusion.
- Two-day Conference on the “Protection of minors in the digital era” (April 2014) within the context of the Greek Presidency of the Council of the European Union during the first half of 2014. Among the thematic units of the Conference there was a special presentation on “Encouraging innovation for accessibility (to new media) by minors with disabilities”.

**Regarding the technical standards and guidelines for accessibility, as well as inspection of fulfilment, the sanctions for non-compliance and the use of funds deriving from the collection of monetary sanctions, we would like to mention the following:**

116. The inspection is compulsory for every project executed upon issuance of a building permit. The inspections are conducted by a different Building Inspector each time through an onsite inspection and implementation inspection of the designs, based on which the building permit was issued. Those inspections that concern the facility infrastructure, the final levels, landscaping, etc., are carried out immediately after the completion of the load bearing structure and masonry and also after the project completion.

117. In respect of the submitted designs not drafted and the construction works not carried out pursuant to the pertinent town-planning regulations or the approved details of the survey plan and construction plan, the following sanctions shall be imposed on the designing engineer: prohibition of drafting and signing designs for issuance of building approvals and building permits; and prohibition of supervision of building works from 3 to 12 months, depending on the gravity of the infringement.

118. In respect of minor infringements related to constructions, a fine of 1,000 to 20,000 euro in favour of the State shall be imposed on the supervising engineer, depending on the gravity of the minor infringement. A decision of the Minister of Environment Energy and Climate Change specifies the infringements considered minor.

119. We would also like to mention that the inspection mechanisms of the State (General Inspector of Public Administration / Inspectors-Controllers Body for Public Administration) carry out inspections with regard to the interventions that have to be made to ensure an autonomous accessibility by people with disabilities to buildings housing Public Agencies and Agencies of the local government organizations. In order to support the work of the inspection bodies, the inter-ministerial cooperation involving the participation of the National Confederation of Disabled People resulted in the drafting of the “Control Methodology of Accessibility to Public Services and Infrastructures”. It is a manual/practical tool, which presents a common process methodology for inspections and drafting of relevant questionnaires, so that the inspections be carried out in a uniform and systematic manner with a view to enhancing and ensuring the completeness and effectiveness of the process as well as the reliability and validity of the relevant findings.

**As regards the use of provisions on public contracts and other measures, which establish requirements concerning accessibility:**

120. The implementation of accessibility requirements is a prerequisite as an actions selection criterion for funding from national and European programmes.

121. Inter alia, we mention that according to the Guidebook of the Action “Green Tourism”, the submitted investment plans should be accompanied by a statutory declaration of the entrepreneur confirming that he/she had completed the appropriate arrangements in the premises and facilities of his/her enterprise, so that they can be used by people with disabilities, or that he/she will carry out the necessary constructions to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities. There was also a special provision stipulating that the relevant expenditure would be eligible up to the amount of 15,000 euro, while there were similar provisions on the possibility of inclusion of investment proposals in the other state aid actions of the National Strategic Reference Framework, such as the Actions “Alternative Tourism” and “Modernize in Tourism”. In addition, again within the framework of the State Aid Actions of the National Strategic Reference Framework, eligible expenditure shall be that related to the production of information material in accessible formats, such as the expenditure for the production of printed material with large fonts, printing in Braille, easy-to-read forms and other information and promotional material that contributes to the targeted promotion of tourism for people with disabilities in the corresponding public.

122. Regarding the accessibility to tenders for projects and procurements of bodies supervised by the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction and of the local government organizations, the relevant provisions of Directive 2004/18/EC (art. 23 “Technical Specifications”) and the corresponding paragraph 1, article 53, Presidential Decree 60/2007 provide that whenever possible, the technical specifications should ensure accessibility for people with disabilities or a design covering all users. According to these provisions, persons with disabilities are entitled to have access to all public works carried out (roads, pavements, public buildings, etc.) and all the supplies and goods for the public sector and the services provided by the broader public sector.

123. In addition, public agencies, public law entities and local government organizations, in order to lease buildings which will house their agencies, shall take all necessary measures to ensure accessibility and other facilities for people with disabilities in their premises.

### **Article 10 – Right to life**

124. According to paragraph 2, article 5 of the Greek Constitution, all persons living within the Greek territory shall enjoy full protection of their life. As a result, the right to life for the persons with disabilities is protected without discrimination. Euthanasia is prohibited for everybody, including persons with disabilities. Euthanasia is not explicitly regulated in the national legislation, yet, it is defined in articles 300 and 301 of the Penal Code on “Crimes against life”. Death penalty has been abolished.

### **Article 11 – Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies**

125. First of all, we would like to mention that the assistance by the Armed Forces in the protection and security of people in general, whether it concerns Civil Defence in wartime or Civil Protection in peacetime, is provided in accordance with the legislation in force (Legislative Order 17/197 “on Emergency Planning” and Law 3013/2002 “Upgrading of Civil Protection and other provisions”), regulations and guidelines, as they derive, on the one hand, from the planning-implementation of the Emergency Planning Policy Plans of the Ministries and, on the other hand, from the General Civil Protection Plan “Xenokratis” (as ratified by Ministerial Decision 1299/2003 and supplemented by the “Special Casualty Management Plan” by Ministerial Decision 3384/2006) and the Special-General Plans and Circulars of the Civil Protection Authority dealing with disaster response. Assistance in humanitarian relief operations within the country is given upon coordination by the competent Directorate of the Hellenic National Defence General Staff, while abroad upon order issued by the competent government body/Ministry and coordination by the above General Staff.

126. Further, the Armed Forces apply the Geneva Convention (1949) Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, which was ratified by Law 3481/1956, according to which people with disabilities taking no active part in the hostilities, shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction, as with the rest of the civilian population (art. 3).

127. In particular, as regards situations of risk in the shipping field, we note that the aforementioned National Action Plan (see above, art. 9 – Accessibility to port infrastructures and ships) for the implementation of Directive 2003/24/EC on “Safety requirements for people with disabilities on scheduled ships” provides that the ship’s certificate of seaworthiness shall indicate an order to the master in respect of appointment of crew members to provide all necessary assistance to people with disabilities. The ship’s muster list shall specify the crew members designated by the master, who shall be entrusted to provide all necessary assistance to people with disabilities.

128. The National Centre for Social Solidarity also includes an Agency that intervenes in case of humanitarian emergencies, by sending personnel to the place where the problem has appeared, as well as rapid response teams to help in case of major natural or man-made disasters, including assistance to People with Disabilities.

## Article 12 – Equal recognition before the law

129. Regarding the legal and contractual capacity and applicable limitations due to physical or mental disability, we cite the relevant provisions of the Greek Civil Code and the Code of Civil Procedure:

- Article 5, Civil Code: The legal capacity of a natural person shall be governed by the law of nationality of such person
- Article 7, Civil Code: The contractual capacity shall be governed by the law of nationality
- Article 8, Civil Code: Deprivation and any other limitation of the contractual capacity by a court decision shall be governed by the law of nationality of the person affected by such measures
- Article 34, Civil Code: Every human being shall be able to have rights and obligations
- Article 128, Civil Code: Persons lacking contractual capacity shall be those who ... (2) have been placed under full privative judicial assistance
- Article 129, Civil Code: Persons having limited contractual capacity shall be those who: .... (2) have been placed under partial privative judicial assistance; (3) have been placed under concurrent judicial assistance”
- Article 133, Civil Code: Persons with limited capacity may carry out a legal transaction only in the cases stipulated by the law or only under the conditions provided for by the law
- Subparagraph 1, article 62, Code of Civil Procedure: Whoever is entitled to have rights and obligations shall be entitled to be a litigant party
- Article 63, Code of Civil Procedure: (1) Whoever has contractual capacity for any transaction may appear in court with his/her name. Whoever has limited contractual capacity or is, at the time he/she states his/her own will, in a state that does not allow this to be valid, may appear in court with his/her own name only where, according to the substantive law, he/she has contractual capacity or where the law allows his/her personal appearance”. (2) In case of injunctive measures in order to prevent an imminent danger due to adjournment, persons lacking contractual capacity may attend too

### **Limitations: Articles 1666 et seqq., Civil Code (Judicial Assistance)**

- Article 1666, Civil Code: An adult shall be placed under judicial assistance: (1) where by reason of mental or intellectual disorder or physical disability they cannot, in whole or in part, take care of their personal affairs; (2) where by reason of debauchery, drug addiction or alcoholism they expose themselves, their spouses, descendants or ascendants to the risk of poverty and destitution. A minor, who is under parental care or guardianship, may be placed under judicial assistance, if the relevant conditions are met in the last year of their majority. The effects of placement under judicial assistance shall commence after the minor has attained the age of majority”

130. As regards, in particular, the right of people with disabilities to acquire or inherit property, we refer to those stated herein below in Article 28 concerning the taxation of capital.

131. Furthermore, we would like to make reference to the Project: “Enhancement of the Collective Expression and Advocacy of People with Mental Disability”, of the Operational Programme “Human Resources Development 2007-2013”, which the National Confederation of Disabled People has implemented as beneficiary for the implementation period 01/2011-06/2014. The project included the following Subprojects:

- **Subproject 1:** Empowerment of the Self-Advocacy Movement and Consultation with organizations of persons with mental disabilities and their families concerning the **contractual capacity**
- **Subproject 2:** Education on issues of self-advocacy and on changes in the mental disability field deriving from the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- **Subproject 3:** Study about Article 12, Article 13 and other provisions of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The study (a) identifies and analyzes the international experience with respect to supported decision-making and access to justice; (b) records the current situation and the institutional framework in Greece; and (c) formulates a proposal for review of the existing judicial assistance system
- **Subproject 4:** Publicity and Dissemination of the Project outcome
- **Subproject 5:** Research on the development and the role of the self-advocacy movement in other countries
- **Subproject 6:** External Project Evaluation

### **Article 13 – Access to justice**

132. Regarding the legislative framework governing the right of access to justice for people with disabilities, we would like, first of all, to refer to Directive 2013/48/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the right of access to a lawyer and other provisions, which, in the Preamble (para. 52), provides for the social integration of people with disabilities and, also in article 13, for arrangements for vulnerable people. The elaboration of the relevant bill for transposition of this Directive has been completed by the appropriate special legislative drafting committee, while the final inspection of the delivered bill by the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights is pending.

133. We also wish to note that Directive 2011/99/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European protection order, states, in paragraph 15 of the preamble, that “in the procedures for the issuing and recognition of a European protection order, competent authorities should give appropriate consideration to the needs of victims, including particularly vulnerable persons, such as minors or persons with disabilities”. The elaboration of the relevant bill for transposition of this Directive has been completed by the appropriate special legislative drafting committee, the final inspection of the delivered bill by the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights has been completed as well, while the bill has been forwarded to the Central Legislative Drafting Committee for its remarks.

134. Law 4236/2014 incorporated into Greek law Directive 2012/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on the right to information in criminal proceedings. More specifically, paragraph 2, article 10 of the said Law (right to information), incorporates article 3 of the Directive (the corresponding requirement derives from paragraph 26 of the Preamble to the Directive, which states that “when providing suspects or accused persons with information in accordance with this Directive, competent authorities should pay particular attention to suspects or accused persons who cannot understand the content or



meaning of the information, for example because of their youth or their mental or physical condition”) and states that “(1) suspects or accused persons shall be provided promptly with information concerning at least the following procedural rights... a) right of representation by a lawyer ... b) entitlement to free legal advice... c) right to be informed of the accusation ... d) right to interpretation, etc. (2) The information provided for in paragraph 1 shall be given orally or in writing in simple and accessible language, taking into account any particular needs of vulnerable suspects or vulnerable accused persons”.

135. In order to eliminate obstacles and barriers to accessibility for people with disabilities, including to facilities and services open or provided to the public, with the ultimate aim of ensuring equal access to all bodies by such persons, the Circular Order of the Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection (now Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction) No. 7011/10/27 as of 29/6/2012 on individual actions to be taken by the police personnel for the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, was issued. According to this Circular, the Agencies should exercise special care for people with disabilities and generally people with impairments, as well as provide all possible assistance in their transactions. In particular:

- People with disabilities shall be given absolute priority: priority service shall be ensured both in police stations and the premises of other agencies or organizations or facilities by the police officers who are in such premises in order to ensure public order. In this context, it is compulsory to place, inside the police stations, information signs including the symbol for disabled people and the phrase “People with disabilities shall be given priority”.
- They shall ensure access to and stay for people with disabilities in the premises of Police Agencies.
- They shall facilitate the parking of their vehicles near the police stations and have seats for them for as long as they stay in such stations.
- They shall seek qualified people to facilitate communication between the people with disabilities and the Agency, including readers and interpreters of sign language.
- They shall prepare their applications when such people are unable to write.
- In cases where disabled people visit an Agency and are required to move to different offices (e.g. secretary’s office) in order to deal with their cases, they shall make every possible effort to ensure that the internal handling of their case shall be carried out by the Agency and not by the disabled people themselves.
- They shall deliver any requested documents to their own homes, if this is necessary.
- They shall issue identity cards, authenticate signatures or perform preliminary investigation acts in the houses of disabled people if they are unable to move or their movement is very difficult or may risk worsening their condition.

136. The Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights has made technical arrangements to facilitate and promote, as much as possible, the unhindered access by disabled people to the building of the Headquarters. More specifically, the following have been installed: an elevator for wheelchairs at the entrance of the building, a lift with a car operating panel in Braille as well as toilets for disabled people on the ground floor of the building. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights has taken similar steps to facilitate people with disabilities in its other buildings, such as court buildings, detention facilities, forensic services and mortgage registries.

137. According to Law 3304/2005, in case of failure to comply with the principle of equal treatment in the context of administrative action, the injured person shall be provided,

in addition to judicial protection, with protection under articles 24<sup>2</sup> to 27<sup>3</sup> of the Administrative Procedure Code (Law 2690/1999).

138. It is worth noting that the protection under Law 3304/2005 shall be also provided after the termination of the relationship within the framework of which it occurred, including dismissal or unfavourable, in general, treatment of a person, in retaliation for a complaint or request for legal protection, in order to ensure compliance with the principle of equal treatment (para. 2, art. 13).

139. Legal persons aiming at ensuring compliance with the principle of equal treatment for persons with disabilities, can represent an injured person in courts or before any administrative authority or body, upon the injured person's consent.

140. Finally, pursuant to article 12 of Law 2643/1998 fines, as provided for in paragraphs 1 and 2 of the same article, shall be imposed on the employer who violates the provisions of this law. The fines shall be imposed by a reasoned decision of the competent Labour Inspector. This decision shall be communicated, along with an acknowledgement of receipt, to the liable employer.

### **Article 14 – Liberty and security of the person**

141. We would like to point out that Circular Order No. 7011/10/27 dated 29/6/2012 of the Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection (now Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction) places particular emphasis on the State's obligation to ensure that people with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, enjoy the right to liberty and security of person, since the mere existence of a disability may in no case justify the deprivation of liberty.

142. According to the same circular, in case of detention of a person with disabilities the appropriate Agencies shall take special care to ensure that the person with disabilities exercises his/her rights as provided for by the Code of Criminal Procedure, but also that his/her basic needs are satisfied. Particular emphasis should be placed on ensuring and facilitating the communication of the disabled detainee with his/her lawyer and relatives.

### **Article 15 – Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment**

143. First of all, we would like to mention that according to paragraph 2, article 7 of the Constitution "Torture, any bodily ill-treatment, impairment of health or the use of psychological violence, as well as any other offence against human dignity shall be prohibited and punished as provided for by the law."

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<sup>2</sup> According to paragraph 1, article 24, Law 2690/1999, "If the relevant provisions do not provide for the possibility of filing of ..... special administrative or action-like petition, the person concerned, for the restoration of material or moral damage to his/her legitimate interests caused by an individual administrative act, may, for any reason, request either the authority which issued the deed to revoke or amend it (application for appeal), or the authority under which the authority that issued the deed comes to annul it (application for review)".

<sup>3</sup> According to article 27 of Law 2690/1999, "if an administrative appeal cannot be filed, in accordance with articles 24 to 26, the person concerned, for the restoration of material or moral damage to his/her legitimate interests caused by an administrative authority's act or failure to carry out an act may request that authority to restore or reverse the damage caused ...".

144. As regards cases of ill-treatment involving — or allegedly involving — police officers in the performance of their duties, the Office for Dealing with Abuse Incidents, which falls directly under the Minister of Public Order and Citizen Protection, has been established by Law 3938/2011 as an independent mechanism to investigate complaints against officers of the security forces. In particular, the recent Law 4249/2014 includes, *inter alia*, a provision (art. 10), which expands the powers of the Office for Dealing with Abuse Incidents, by including unlawful conduct, where there are indications that it had a racial motive or involved other discrimination on grounds of ethnic or racial origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, or gender identity, as well as any other behaviour insulting to personality against a person who is in the Greek Territory, and related acts, provided that they were carried out by the same person at the same place and time. Moreover, it expands the circle of persons who can be appointed members of the Three-member Committee of the Office for Dealing with Abuse Incidents, it provides that the Greek Ombudsman may be present through a representative without a voting right and submit recommendations or express his/her opinion, while the Office is to be further staffed.

145. By Order No. 1016/23/37-a' as of 07-04-2010 of the Chief of Staff / Hellenic Police Headquarters, the Circular 1/10 of the Public Prosecutor at the Supreme Court was forwarded to all the Agencies of the Hellenic Police, which sets out the procedure to be followed for the investigation, from a penal point of view, of complaints filed by detainees at police agencies against police officers regarding ill-treatment within the framework of police preliminary investigation or arrest, in violation of the duties of police officers. In particular, according to the above Circular, these complaints may not be investigated by police officers working at the same police station, in order to ensure compliance with the principle of impartiality, and at the same time the Public Prosecutor at the First Instance Court shall be immediately informed thereof, who shall ensure that such complaints be investigated according to their severity either by himself/herself or by a Deputy Prosecutor at the First Instance Court or by other judicial investigating authorities.

### **Article 16 – Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse**

146. As regards the legislative framework for the protection of people with disabilities from all forms of exploitation and violence, we would like to mention the following:

147. In pursuance of Directive 2011/93/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children, a draft law has already been tabled in Parliament and is to be discussed by its plenary session. More specifically, by article 8 of the draft law, the Greek legal system complies with the provisions of the Directive on children with special needs and expressly stipulates that “the acts provided for in paragraphs 1 and 2 shall be punished with imprisonment of up to ten (10) years and a pecuniary penalty of one hundred thousand (100,000) to five hundred thousand (500,000) euro: ... (b) if the production of child pornography is linked with the exploitation of a need, mental or intellectual disease or physical disability of a minor ...”.

148. Article 2 of Law 4198/13 for the transposition of Directive 2011/36/EU on combating trafficking in human beings and other provisions amended the Criminal Code. In particular, Article 323A was replaced as follows: “The offender, as provided for in the preceding paragraphs, shall be punished with imprisonment of at least ten (10) years and a pecuniary penalty of fifty thousand (50,000) to one hundred thousand (100,000) euro if the act: a) was committed against a minor or a physically or mentally disabled person ...”.

149. In terms of practice, we would like to mention that the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA) protects people with disabilities who are subject to violence or ill-treatment as well as women and children who are victims of domestic violence, by

providing counselling support and emergency accommodation when this is deemed necessary. The Agency which deals with requests for accommodation of asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors gives priority, because of their vulnerability, to persons (minors and adults) with disabilities.

### **Article 18 – Liberty of movement and nationality**

150. According to the legislation on the issuance and renewal of residence permits for humanitarian reasons (paras. (e) and (f), art. 44, Law 3386/2005, as currently in force), a residence permit may be issued for humanitarian reasons to third country nationals, who are:

- **Victims of labour accidents and other accidents** provided for by the Greek legislation, for the duration of their treatment or for as long as they are pensioners for this reason. A prerequisite for the submission of the application for issuance of a residence permit to such persons is the possession by the applicant of a valid residence permit. The duration of the initial residence permit is two (2) years and may be renewed each time for up to two (2) years, provided that the same conditions are met (by decision of the General Secretary of the Decentralized Administration in the place of residence of the interested third country national).
- **Persons suffering from serious health problems.** The existence of serious health problems as well as the duration of treatment shall be confirmed by a recent medical certificate. If this health problem is an infectious disease, the issuance of the above decision shall require the agreement of the Minister of Health that there is no danger for public health. A condition for the issuance of the residence permit to persons suffering from serious health problems shall be the possession by the applicant of a valid residence permit. The duration of the initial residence permit is two (2) years and may be renewed each time for up to two (2) years, provided that the same conditions are met (by decision of the Minister of Interior).

151. Moreover, according to article 16 of Law 4251/2014 on the “Issuance and renewal of residence permits for investment activities”, “third country nationals who are licensed as strategic investors may be accompanied by their family members, who shall be granted a residence permit for family reunification purposes expiring at the same time as the residence permit of the sponsors, as well as by support staff, in case of people with disabilities”.

152. Article 1 of Law 4018/2011 provides for the issuance of residence permits in the form of a separate document, whose issuance shall require the collection of biometric data including fingerprints. To this end, and particularly to cater for people with permanent physical disabilities or long-term disease, mobile units may be established to take such biometric data.

153. As regards particularly the issue of registration, immediately after birth, of children with disabilities, we would like to mention that according to the legislation currently in force (Law 344/1976), registration certificates are drawn up in the registry offices of the Municipalities across the country, which certify births, marriages, deaths, etc. relating to Greek nationals and foreign nationals.

154. The ultimate aim of the drafting of the registration certificates relating to the Greeks is to ensure both the registration of vital events and the registration of the persons concerned in the municipal rolls, so that the municipal rolls of the Municipalities can reflect fully their new civil and municipal status, which is also indicated in the certificates requested by the citizens, therefore, the registration of all vital events is compulsory.

155. In particular, as regards people with disabilities who were born in our country, they are an integral part of the Greek population, are subject to the Constitution and laws of the Greek State and enjoy all civil and political rights provided to the Greek citizens.

156. According to article 11 of the legislation currently in force (Law 344/1976) on the Registration of vital events by disabled, blind and deaf people:

(a) If the declarant of the vital event is disabled or blind and cannot sign the registration certificate, a relevant reference shall be included at the end of the certificate about the reason why the declarant could not sign;

(b) If the declarant is deaf but he/she can read, the registration certificate shall be drawn up based on his/her declaration, and any questions addressed to him/her shall be in writing;

(c) If the declarant is deaf and cannot read or is dumb or deaf and dumb, then the appropriate persons shall compulsorily make the declaration in the prescribed order, by type of vital event.

157. With regard to a marriage between persons who both belong to the category provided for in the preceding subparagraph, the officiant of the marriage shall have to make the declaration, that is: the mayor who conducted the marriage ceremony in case of a civil marriage or the religious functionary in case of a religious marriage.

## **Article 19 – Living independently and being included in the community**

158. Within the framework of the Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework and in line with the requirements of social inclusion, promotion of independent living for people with disabilities and support of the families of people with disabilities, the creation of Supported Living Houses has been a priority. The target of such intervention is to develop in our country an alternative type of living in the community for people with mental retardation who are at risk of institutionalization and social exclusion because they do not have a family or their family cannot support them.

159. To this end, in the context of Axis 4 of the Operational Programme “Human Resources Development” (2007-2013) of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, an action has been included, which aims at the organization and operation of Supported Living Houses (SYD) through the category of actions “Prevention of institutionalization and stigmatization of people with disabilities”.

160. The Supported Living Houses are permanent accommodation places mainly for people with mental retardation, minor physical, sensory or mental diseases, who can live independently with the appropriate support (Boarding Houses and Apartments). The Supported Living Houses aim at ensuring a healthy, comfortable and safe accommodation for people with disabilities, specialized medical care, and their recreation and participation in social events. This intervention is governed by an institutional framework — Joint Ministerial Decision, Government Gazette 74, Series B/27.01.2007. 26.5 million euro have been allocated to support the operation of forty-one (41) Supported Living Houses for a period of up to thirty-six (36) months, subject to ensuring the continuation of their operation by using their own or national resources. Such structures benefit two hundred and fifty-two (252) people. To ensure the sustainability of those structures after the end of their funding from the Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework, article 46 of Law 3918/2011 provided for the possibility of payment to the structures of special hospital charges / subsistence expenses by social security institutions. In order to prevent any problem in the operation of the Supported Living Houses until the completion of the procedures that will enable the payment of such special hospital charges by the social

security institutions, the Special Management Service for the Operational Programme “Human Resources Development” (EYD EPANAD) requested the EU Agencies to extend the financing of the operation costs of the Supported Living Houses for one more year. EU agreed on such extension and, then, in the last revision of the Operational Programme, the appropriate resources were ensured for this Operational Programme.

161. Furthermore, in the context of the Regional Operational Programmes of the National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013, proposals for the erection of Supported Living Houses have been included and financed.

162. The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Solidarity has approved and recommended for inclusion in the respective Operational Programmes, the following actions:

(a) In the Operational Programme “Human Resources Development”, the organization and operation of:

- Thirty-four (34) Boarding Houses that will host two hundred and seventy-two (272) people in total
- Sixteen (16) Apartments that will host fifty-eight (58) people in total

(b) In the Regional Operational Programme of the National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013, the construction or purchase of:

- Nineteen (19) Boarding Houses that will host one hundred and fifty (150) people in total
- Twenty-two (22) Apartments that will host forty-four (44) people in total

163. We would also like to mention the Day Care Centres for the Elderly and the Day Care Centres for People with Disabilities. This intervention concerns actions to support individuals who need help, through the operation of the said Centres. Two cycles of implementation have been completed so far. The first cycle was implemented in 2010 and involved only the provision of day care services to elderly people who could not perform on their own all the tasks of everyday life (motor difficulties, dementia, etc.). The second cycle was implemented during the period 2011-2012 with the Beneficiary being the Hellenic Society for Local Development and Government (EETAA), and involved the provision of day care services to elderly people who could not perform on their own all the tasks of everyday life, as well as the provision of care services to people with motor disabilities, sensory disabilities, mental retardation, multiple disabilities or other kind of disability, through the Day Care Centres for People with Disabilities. Such services benefited 1,125 persons with disabilities (direct beneficiaries).

164. In order to continue the action, the Special Management Service for the Operational Programme “Human Resources Development” issued an invitation in the amount of 21 million euro and included the relevant actions for all Regions of the country, with a total budget of 20,992,580.00 euro and with Beneficiary being the Hellenic Society for Local Development and Government SA; such actions are expected to benefit three thousand and sixty (3,060) people. The Beneficiary Body (Hellenic Society for Local Development and Government SA) held an open public tender for the selection of the contractors for the implementation of the Action “Actions to support the elderly and other people needing help for the enhancement of employability of the indirectly benefited persons”, and the implementation of this Action by the Contractors has already started.

165. About the provision of services at home, we would like to inform you that for old-age, disability and survivor’s pensioners of the main insurance social security funds, who are facing temporary or permanent health or disability problems and have attained at least the age of 78 or have been declared disabled with a disability percentage of at least 67%,

regardless of age, paragraph 2, article 138, Law 4052/2012 provided for the establishment of the home care programme for pensioners.

166. The purpose of the program is to ensure independent living conditions for elderly and disabled pensioners at their homes, with a view to eliminating their dependence, through the organization and systematic provision of social work services, psychosocial support, nursing care, physiotherapy, ergotherapy and home help as well as facilitation of their participation in cultural, recreational, social and religious activities. For the implementation of the programme, the Directorate for Home Care for Pensioners was established within the General Directorate for Social Security Services of the Social Insurance Institute (IKA) — Unified Social Insurance Fund for Employees (ETAM).

167. In addition, we wish to mention that the Operational Programme “Human Resources Development” has included the action “Harmonization of family and professional life through the provision of home care services to dependants of families of unemployed persons or workers recognized as threatened with unemployment who benefit from active employment policies” (“Home Help”). This action aims at safeguarding independent living conditions for elderly and disabled people at their homes, in order to ensure their stay in a familiar physical and social environment, avoid referral to closed care structures and prevent social exclusion.

168. The project had as expenditure eligibility deadline the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2011, when it stopped being co-financed. Based on the agreement between the Minister of Labour and the European Commission, the program “Home Help” entered a new phase of implementation, with a view to ensuring sustainability and self-financing (independent of public funds).

169. Hence, as regards the operational aspect, the Social Insurance Institute (IKA) — Unified Social Insurance Fund for Employees (ETAM) and, more specifically, the Directorate for Home Care for Pensioners is the body that will implement the program. This will ensure continuity of the “Home Help” programme and hence an unhindered coverage of the beneficiaries (para. 5, art. 137, Law 4052/2012). However, the extension of the “Home Help” programme until 30.09.2014 (art. 5 of Law 4147/2013) was decided in order to ensure a smooth transition to the new successor program and especially in order not to interrupt the provision of services to the citizens, so that they continue to live decently with support at home.

170. In addition to the above, we would like to mention that on 13/09/2013 a Joint Ministerial Decision of the Minister of Interior and the Minister of Labour, Social Security and Welfare was issued, with a six-month deadline for submission of applications, that is until 21/03/2014, for the issuance of residence permits to third country nationals who have been employed for at least one (1) year as accompanying persons of people suffering from tetraplegia, mental retardation or disability with a disability percentage of eighty percent (80%). Residence permits provided for in the decision were issued for one (1) year and could be renewed for two (2) more years.

## **Article 20 – Personal mobility**

171. As regards the adoption of measures to ensure mobility with the greatest possible independence for persons with disabilities, given the sensitivity with which the Hellenic Police addresses issues concerning disabled people, since they have been identified as the most vulnerable citizens and the citizens particularly threatened due to the hazards arising from the behaviour on the road, special efforts are made for the systematic rather than piecemeal policing, consistently and continuously, so that they can move freely and with the greatest possible independence. In particular, the basic actions of the competent

Agencies of the Hellenic Police, for the purpose of facilitating the mobility of persons with disabilities in order to move freely and with the greatest possible independence, focus, inter alia, on:

- Systematic policing with priority given to the special ramps serving people with disabilities
- Strict and systematic policing of the pedestrian areas — pavements, squares and other spaces mainly in large cities
- Policing based on a **priority plan for people with disabilities** (respect for their movement when their vehicles move, etc.)
- Policing of stations and stops of the public transportation means, as well as of the vehicle parking spots
- Inspections of the existing **vertical / horizontal road traffic signs**, while at the same time informing the Agencies that are competent for their restoration
- Information campaigns for students and other population groups about the priority that should be given to people with disabilities, in accordance with the provisions of the Highway Code
- Strict application of the provisions of the Highway Code

172. In the context of facilitating mobility, we would also like to point out that the transportation of students with disabilities enjoys special consideration by the institutional framework currently in force, since it is differentiated in four essential points from what is generally provided for the students of other schools.

173. More specifically:

(a) According to paragraph 4, article 1 of the Joint Ministerial Decision No. 35415/28-07-2011, the transportation of students of the special education schools (SMEA) shall be without the restrictions relating to the minimum distance in kilometres between the residence and the school;

(b) According to the same paragraph, the transportation of students of the special education schools shall be carried out either by the transportation means of the Municipalities, provided that they are appropriate, or in accordance with a public services contract which involves the hiring of private carriers, thus excluding public transportation;

(c) According to the first paragraph of the Annex of the aforementioned Joint Ministerial Decision, in case of use of specially equipped vehicles for the transportation of students of the special education schools, the maximum cost of such vehicles may be increased up to 50% compared to the conventional vehicles of similar size, in case of leasing of private vehicles under a public services contract;

(d) Finally, where the students of the special education schools are subsidized, because transportation is not carried out, they shall receive the corresponding amount without the limitation of the maximum amount of 1,500 euro per school year (para. 1.II, art. 3 of the above Joint Ministerial Decision), which applies to the other students.

174. Finally, we would like to mention that the Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework 2014-2020 and more specifically the Thematic Objective 7 “Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures” stresses “the necessity of adjustment of the Transport sector to the requirements of the new European Regulations on the rights of passengers with disabilities and reduced mobility in respect of accessibility”, while the Thematic Ex-ante Conditionality 7.1 “Transport”



provides horizontally for the “meeting of special standards ensuring accessibility for all users, including people with reduced mobility and disabled people”.

## **Article 21 – Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information**

175. In order to ensure that the information intended for the general public is provided to people with disabilities and encourage the mass media to make their services accessible to them, article 8 of Presidential Decree 109/2010, whereby the Greek broadcasting legislation was harmonized with the provisions of the Audiovisual Media Services (AMS) Directive 2010/13/EU, provides that:

- Paragraph 1 of the said article stipulates that audiovisual media service providers shall gradually make their services accessible to people with a visual or hearing disability
- Paragraph 3 provides that broadcasters designated as media shall broadcast television programmes in a way that ensures access for people with disabilities, by at least 3% of the weekly programme schedule
- Paragraph 4 of the same article stipulates that providers of non-linear audiovisual media services shall broadcast content with subtitles in Greek by at least 20% of their catalogue

176. In this regard, it is noted that for the purpose of implementing paragraph 3, article 8 of Presidential Decree 109/2010, the Greek National Council for Radio and Television (ESR) has issued and addressed to the non-informational television stations of the country the Directive No. 1/10.02.2014 stipulating that: (a) at least 3% of the weekly programme shall be broadcast in the Greek language and (b) at least 3% of the foreign-language weekly programme shall include subtitles in Greek.

177. Moreover, for the purpose of implementing paragraph 2, article 8 of Presidential Decree 109/2010, the Greek National Council for Radio and Television (ESR) has issued and forwarded to the informational television stations of the country the Recommendation No. 2/05.02.2013 that they broadcast at least four (4) hours per week of their programmes, in particular, information, light entertainment (quiz shows, other shows, events) Greek series, children’s programmes, documentaries, sports programmes, etc. with subtitles in Greek, with the exception of news programme broadcast in sign language.

178. In addition, we would like to mention that paragraph 12, article 9 of Law 2644/1998 on the provision of subscriber radio and television services stipulates that license holders shall ensure at least a five-minute daily news bulletin in sign language for deaf people, provided that their programmes include information programmes. Further, we note that license holders shall ensure a half-hour entertaining programme per fortnight for deaf and blind people.

179. Moreover, paragraph 21, article 3 of Law 2328/1995 on the legal status of private television and local radio, regulation of broadcasting market issues and other provisions, states that television stations shall broadcast free three-minute messages with social content daily, especially on health, welfare and care issues for persons with disabilities (...).

180. Subparagraph (a), paragraph 1, article 17 of Law 3592/2007 on the Concentration and Licensing of Media Enterprises stipulates that the objective of providing the services and programmes through digital terrestrial broadcasting shall be the contribution of the company (subsidiary of the public radio and television broadcaster ERT SA) to information, education, culture, recreation, tourist promotion of the country, coverage of

international and national events, as well as production and broadcasting of programmes for people with disabilities.

181. Furthermore, Law 4173/2013 establishing the New Greek Radio, Internet & Television (NERIT SA) provides that the content generated and the provision of its programmes should have appropriate broadcasting and/or interaction formats, where offered, for people with disabilities. To this end, the production and provision of digital content by NERIT adopts internationally accepted technical standards to ensure e-Accessibility for people with disabilities (para. 5, art. 2).

182. In addition, with a view to the more comprehensive information of people with disabilities, the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction has issued, in printed and electronic format, a user-friendly and functional manual, i.e. the “Guide for the Disabled Citizen”, which includes useful information material about all the benefits provided by the State to people with disabilities and their families and is distributed to Public Agencies and interested citizens.

183. We also note that, within the context of the Annual Programme 2010 of the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals 2007-2013, the Action 1.7/10 entitled “Drafting, publishing and distributing an Information Guide for third-country nationals with disabilities legally residing in Greece”, with a total budget of 19,377.77 euro has been implemented. In the framework of this action, an Information Guide for Migrants with Disabilities has been prepared covering the following topics: (1) Health / Social Security / Welfare, (2) Education / Training / Employment and (3) Daily Life. 2,000 Guides in total were produced and distributed (1,000 Guides in Greek and 1,000 Guides in Albanian), while the Guide has also been posted on the internet.

184. We also wish to point out that within the context of the Annual Programme 2013 of the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals, Action 1.3.b/13 for vulnerable groups of migrants, including people with disabilities, has been prescribed and bears the title “Greek language, history and culture lessons for unemployed immigrants, mothers, disabled people and illiterate people”, with a total budget of 150.0000,00 €.

## **Article 22 – Respect for privacy**

185. Respect for private and family life of individuals, including persons with disabilities, as well as the right to respect for the home, is enshrined in article 9 of the Constitution. Moreover, article 9A stipulates that everybody has the right to protection from collection, processing and use, especially by electronic means, of their personal data. The protection of personal data is safeguarded by an independent authority, the Hellenic Data Protection Authority.

## **Article 23 – Respect for home and the family**

186. We wish to note that according to article 21 of the Greek Constitution, “The family, being the cornerstone of preservation and advancement of the Nation, as well as marriage, motherhood and childhood shall be under the protection of the State”.

## **Article 24 – Education**

187. The Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs carries out actions and activities, within the context of its policy, in order to ensure an educational system based on

the *School for All*. Especially, in the field of Special Education and Training, efforts are made on the basis of approaching educational issues in terms of human rights.

188. Therefore, the education of children with disabilities may, where appropriate, take place in the following educational structures:

- (a) General schools;
- (b) General schools with a parallel support from special education teachers;
- (c) Specially organized and appropriately staffed integration classes that operate within the framework of the general and vocational education;
- (d) Special Education Schools, depending on the type of disability and the students' educational needs.

189. The ratification in 2012 of the CRPD and of the Optional Protocol is an essential and significant development for the institutional framework of special education and generally for the reference legislation with a view to implementing the Operational Programme "Education and Lifelong Learning", within the context of the National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013, which attaches particular importance to the enhancement of access and participation of all in the educational system with emphasis on people with disabilities and vulnerable social groups.

190. Hence, during the school year 2013-2014, the implementation of the project of the National Strategic Reference Framework "Specialized Educational Support Program for the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities and/or Special Educational Needs" continued, while its operation has been ensured until 2014, with a view to:

- (a) Addressing the identified mixed schooling problems of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs and the shortage of qualified Special Education and Training teachers, and enhancing mere accompanying and guarding through the provision of education in the context of the general schools;
- (b) The systematic organization of mixed schooling for students with disabilities and/or special educational needs;
- (c) Accumulating experience in differentiated instruction and infrastructure development for the effective support thereof, so that differentiated instruction becomes real and substantial. At the same time, based on past experience, a programme is being prepared and planned for further training of all teachers in general schools in special education issues.

191. Furthermore, the implementation of the following actions continued: upgrading of the educational work and provision of special tools and resources; adaptation of the General Education books to the needs of amblyopic students and production of General Education books in Braille for blind students; and provision of hearing aids to hard of hearing students. Moreover, the program "Development of Accessible Educational and Instructional Materials for Students with Disabilities" continued, thus addressing the needs of students who have visual impairments (blind and amblyopic persons), hearing impairments, motor impairments of the upper extremities, moderate and minor mental retardation, and autism.

192. With regard to the appointment of Special Assisting Personnel in 2014, its implementation was included in the Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework in order to cover the maximum possible number of cases of students who cannot perform on their own the tasks of everyday life, thus, all of the 350 approved applications nationwide were covered, and this programme will continue in the next school year. Moreover, educational units have been staffed with teachers to provide Parallel Support and Mixed Schooling services to 2,175 students with special educational needs

through the programme of the Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework. In addition, through the Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework, training programmes were held again this year for General and Special Education primary school and nursery school teachers who provide Parallel Support services.

193. Moreover, with respect to ensuring adequate education on disability for professionals in the education system as well as the integration of people with disabilities in the educational community, the following measures have been taken:

(a) Teacher Training for 2,000 Teachers and Special Education Advisors (2012-2014);

(b) Training of 3,550 Special Education Professionals in Evaluation and Support Services (2013-2014);

(c) The professionals with disabilities working in the education system are included on equal terms in training programmes.

194. We would also like to note that the National Consideration of Disabled People, as beneficiary of the project “Lifelong Education Programmes on Disability – Priority Axes 7, 8, 9” of the Operational Programme “Education and Lifelong Learning 2007-2013” has implemented the following educational programmes:

(a) Training Programme for Elected Officers and Workers of the Disability Movement in Policy Planning on disability issues (25 classes x 200 hours) — completed in 2014;

(b) Specialization Programme for Elected Officers and Workers of the Disability Movement in Policy Planning on disability issues (30 classes x 50 hours) — currently in progress;

(c) Lifelong Learning Programme for Persons with Disabilities in New Technologies (25 classes x 250 hours) — completed in 2012;

(d) Lifelong Learning Programme for Persons with Severe Disabilities and Multiple Dependency Needs in Social Skills (56 classes x 250 hours) — currently in progress.

195. It also includes the following supportive actions: 1) Educational material for trainees and trainers, 2) Training of trainers in: (a) the target group (i.e. what disability is, theoretical approaches to disability, needs per type of disability, etc.); (b) the educational material; (c) adult education techniques, 3) Publicity of the project, 4) Project Evaluation, 5) Preparation of four (4) studies: (a) preparation of a comparative study on vocational rehabilitation of graduates and higher education graduates with disabilities; (b) new technologies and people with disabilities: identification of opportunities and threats for people with disabilities deriving from the rapid developments in technology; (c) identification of lifelong learning needs of people with disabilities who live in institutions or who have been deinstitutionalized; d) exclusion and discrimination of people with disabilities in the education system: identification and substantiation of unequal treatment of persons with disabilities in the education system at all levels. Suggestions for policy measures to address them.

196. Moreover, the management preparations for the implementation of the programme of the Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework “Design and development of an electronic data register for all students with disability and/or special educational needs aged 4-25 years” in the first phase and for those aged 0-25 years in the next phase, and utilization thereof in the educational process, continued. Further, cooperation actions with the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) have also taken place for the identification of

students with disabilities and/or special educational needs pursuant to the CRPD and the current trends in the definition of disabilities.

197. Regarding educational issues, we note that the current and proposed legislation requires professionals working with deaf students to be competent users of the Greek Sign Language. This measure, *inter alia*, enhances the promotion of the linguistic identity of deaf people.

198. We are herewith attaching statistical data for the school year 2012-2013 relating to the students and structures of Special Education and Training, as shown in the following tables:

(a) Number of students per school year and type of disability or special educational need; and

(b) Special education school units.

## **Article 25 – Health**

199. Law 4238/2014 “Primary National Health Network (PEDY), change of the object of the Greek National Organization for Health Care Provision (EOPYY) and other provisions” (Government Gazette 38/A’) and, more specifically, article 1 provides that: “1. The State shall ensure and safeguard the provision of health services through Primary Health Care to all citizens, which (services) are necessary and sufficient to protect their health as well as promote social welfare ... 3. Primary Health Care services shall be equally available to every citizen, regardless of their economic, social, professional or social security status and place of residence, through a universal, single and decentralized Primary National Health Network established and operating in accordance with the provisions hereof”.

200. Following those mentioned above, among other categories of vulnerable population groups, people with disabilities have equal access and receive equal services in the structures of the Primary National Health Network and, accordingly, as uninsured citizens they receive equivalent medical and pharmaceutical care services at the level of Primary Health Care.

201. Regarding the persons with disabilities who are insured with social security institutions, we would like to inform you that the Greek National Organization for Health Care Provision (EOPYY), within the framework of the Integrated Health Care Regulation (EKPY), provides medical, pharmaceutical and hospital care, as well as any kind of prostheses and therapeutic aids to people with disabilities, in order to ensure restoration of their health or relief from the already unhealthy situation.

202. At a local government level, the Code of Municipalities and Communities (Law 3463/2006) and Law 3852/2010 “Kallikratis Programme” ensure the protection of persons with disabilities. In particular, article 75 of the Code of Municipalities and Communities in respect of the field of Social Protection and Solidarity provides, *inter alia*, that the powers of the municipalities include the implementation of policies and participation in actions and programmes that aim at the provision of care and support to vulnerable social groups through the provision of health services and promotion of mental health, such as the establishment of municipal medical centres, health education centres, and centres for the support and rehabilitation of people with disabilities (indent (e), para. 2, art. 75). Moreover, article 94 of Law 3852/2010 “Kallikratis Programme” provided, *inter alia*, that the powers of the municipalities include the payment of allowances to people with disabilities, such as blind as well as deaf and dumb people (indent 17, art. 94B).

203. With regard to the protection of patients’ rights, we inform you that article 1 of Law 2519/1997 provides for the establishment, within the Ministry of Health, of Bodies for the

protection of the citizens' rights to health services, as stipulated in article 47 of Law 2071/1992 on hospital patients, but also of the basic rights of all citizens as they derive from article 1 of Law 1397/1983. The Independent Agency for the Protection of Patients' Rights, which was provided for by the law, was integrated by Presidential Decree No. 106/2014 "By-law of the Ministry of Health" into the Directorate for Health Units Development as a Department, thus discharging the same statutory tasks. The Audit Committee for the Protection of the Rights of Patients is, according to the law, another Body for the protection of patients' rights.

204. In addition, we wish to inform you that in accordance with Law 3868/2010 a Citizens' Support Office was established in every hospital of the Greek National Health System (ESY), thus replacing the Office for Communication with Citizens (Law 2519/1997) and the Special Office for Reception of Patients (Law 2889/2001), while in pursuance of the law, Decision no Y4a/oik.106298/30-08-2010 laid out the organization and operation framework of the Office, which is in charge of the reception, information, monitoring of handling, administrative support, collection of and dealing with complaints and, in general, the protection of the rights of all health service users.

205. The Directorate for Mental Health, in collaboration with the Support Mechanism for Mental Health Units, in furtherance of the protection of the rights of people with mental disorders, has posted, on the official website that has been created to monitor the progress of the psychiatric reform (<http://www.psychargos.gov.gr>), a special field for the rights of recipients of mental health services.

206. This field includes:

(a) Supporting material (tools — handbooks) for information on and protection of the human rights of the mentally ill:

(i) Information Handbook on the rights of people with mental disorders, which is intended for mental health professionals;

(ii) Handbook on the protection of the rights of elderly people;

(b) Circular ref. No. Y5a/GP/oik.69556/07-08-2014, which makes recommendations concerning the rights of recipients of Mental Health Services;

(c) Circular ref. No. Y5a/GP/oik.94028/27-10-2014 concerning the rights of mentally ill persons related to criminal matters.

207. It is noted that the implementation of the above and generally the protection of the rights of mentally ill persons is the primary purpose of the Special Audit Committee for the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Mental Disorders, which was established in pursuance of article 2 of Law 2716/1999. Its tasks and powers include inter alia:

- To receive complaints and reports from citizens, organizations, authorities
- To visit the mental health agencies of both the public and private sectors ordinarily or extraordinarily upon complaints or on its own initiative
- To inform the citizens about the rights of persons with mental disorders
- To receive and examine the annual mandatory reports submitted by the officers of the mental health agencies, as well as from the Citizens' Support Offices in Hospitals (art. 9 of Law 3868/2010)
- To intervene whenever it identifies a violation of the rights, make recommendations and send a report to the authority that is competent for criminal or disciplinary proceedings

## Article 26 – Habilitation and Rehabilitation

### a) Closed Care

#### *Public Law Entities*

208. Law 4109/2013 provided for the merger of Social Care Units (MKF) in Public Law Entities established in the Regions. The Social Care Units now, as decentralized agencies, fall under twelve (12) Public Law Entities called Social Welfare Centres. The New Social Welfare Centres (Public Law Entities), which were established in accordance with the above law and are under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, are basically located in the corresponding seat of each Region.

209. Inter alia, they aim at the provision of closed care services to people with disabilities, provision of functional, social, prevocational, vocational training and rehabilitation services to people with disabilities, provision of long-term hospitalization services to individuals who cannot perform on their own the tasks of everyday life and whose rehabilitation is not possible, as well as the design and implementation of research and counselling programmes on issues related to persons with disabilities. Thus, in addition to saving resources (reduction in the number of boards of directors, etc.) for their better operation, they aim at providing improved services to their guests, while their powers may be expanded.

210. The financing of the Public Law Entities derives from the hospital charges paid to a Public Law Entity for the services it provides to the insured person who is hosted and enjoys the services of the Public Law Entity, from the state subsidy as provided for by the state budget, from donations as well as from the Public Law Entities' own resources (utilization of property).

#### *National Institute for the Deaf People (EIK)*

211. The National Institute for the Deaf People falls under the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity (Law 4052/2012) and aims at the **early diagnosis** of deafness and hearing loss, **provision of special education and care**, provision of any kind of assistance to such persons and their families, as well as **training** of the deaf for their occupational rehabilitation.

#### *Centre for Education and Rehabilitation for the Blind (KEAT)*

212. The Centre for Education and Rehabilitation for the Blind falls under the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity (Law 4052/2012), and its object and operation terms are defined by Presidential Decree 265/17-04-1979. The main objectives of the Centre for Education and Rehabilitation for the Blind are the **education and training** of blind children in all areas of development, their integration since the pre-nursery age in society through the implementation of special programmes, with a view to the integration of their personality and social education as well as ensuring their independence. In the Centre for Education and Rehabilitation for the Blind, visually impaired people can receive education at various levels and with a variety of objectives. Basically, it offers education to pre-school age children and tutorial education to school age children (Secondary Education). In addition, the Centre has a Special Primary School for Blind Children, a Special Primary School for Deaf Blind Students and a Special Nursery School under the supervision of the Ministry of Education.

**b) Recovery and Rehabilitation Centres (KAA) (Private Law Entities)**

213. The Recovery and Rehabilitation Centres, whose terms and conditions of operation have been defined by Presidential Decree 395/93, are established and run by individuals or private law entities. The Recovery and Rehabilitation Centres provide health and hospitalization services to patients, either inpatients or outpatients, who suffer from diseases of the muscular, nervous, circulatory, skeletal, respiratory systems, or mental retardation, by using modern means and medical rehabilitation methods. The Recovery and Rehabilitation Centres are divided into the following categories:

- Closed Hospitalization Recovery and Rehabilitation Centres whose patients stay overnight in their premises
- Day Hospitalization Recovery and Rehabilitation Centres which do not offer the possibility of overnight stay
- Minimum Medical Rehabilitation Unit, which is an independent Unit that provides medical and other care services to patients who need physical rehabilitation to complete their recovery
- Day Care Centre for People with Disabilities, which provide day care and hospitalization services, with a maximum daily operation of 16 hours depending on the needs of the persons with disabilities

214. In addition, we mention that special education is provided to insured persons having children with special needs at schools, boarding houses, shelters, institutions or infirmaries of any type. Depending on the disease, physiotherapy, speech therapy, ergotherapy, special education, group and individual psychotherapy, behavioural therapy, learning difficulties support, logopaedic exercises, parent counselling and psychological support are also provided.

**Article 27 – Work and employment**

215. First of all, we would like to mention that according to subparagraph (b), paragraph 1, article 22 of the Greek Constitution “All workers, irrespective of gender or other distinctions, shall be entitled to equal pay for work of equal value”.

216. Further, according to Law 3304/2005 on the “Implementation of the principle of equal treatment regardless of racial or ethnic origin, religious or other beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation” (art. 8), direct or indirect discrimination as well as harassment, including on the grounds of disability, shall be prohibited for all persons in the public and private sectors in relation to:

- (a) The conditions for access to employment and to occupation, including selection criteria and recruitment conditions as well as career development;
- (b) Access to all types and to all levels of vocational guidance, vocational training, advanced vocational training and retraining, including practical work experience;
- (c) Employment terms and working conditions, including those concerning dismissals and pay;
- (d) Membership and involvement in an organisation of workers or employers, or any professional organisation, including the benefits deriving from such participation.

217. The bodies that promote the principle of equal treatment (art. 19) shall be:

- The Greek Ombudsman in cases where the principle is violated by the public agencies



- The Labour Inspectorate (SEPE) in cases where it is violated in the fields of employment and occupation in the private sector
- The Equal Treatment Committee of the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights in cases where it is violated by natural or legal entities in the provision of services and sale of goods

218. According to Law 3304/2005, adopting or maintaining existing positive measures in favour of people with disabilities will not constitute discrimination against people without disabilities. More specifically, according to paragraph 2 of article 12 “adopting or maintaining provisions on the protection of health and safety at work or measures aimed at creating or maintaining provisions or facilities for safeguarding or encouraging their integration in employment and occupation will not constitute discrimination in relation to people with disabilities”.

219. Article 2 of Law 2643/1998 “Ensuring employment for persons of special categories and other provisions”, as replaced by article 1, paragraph 4, Law 3454/2006, provides for the percentage of compulsory placements, among others, for people with disabilities in jobs in enterprises. In enterprises employing more than fifty (50) persons, 8% of their staff should be people belonging to protected social groups, including people with disabilities and relatives of people with disabilities. Article 3, as replaced by paragraph 1, article 11 of Law 3051/2002, stipulates that 5% of the total job vacancies to be announced by any public enterprise, public law entity and local government organization shall be reserved for persons protected by the provisions of Law 2643/1998 (including people with disabilities and relatives of people with disabilities).

220. Law 2643/1998 introduces a special protection against dismissal of people with disabilities who meet the conditions thereof (regardless of whether they have been employed following a job announcement that took place under this law), as well as protection against dismissal (strict requirements for employer’s authorization to dismiss them) of protected persons belonging to any protection category (persons with disabilities, close relatives of persons with disabilities, etc.) placed through a job announcement under this law.

221. Since the entry into force of Law 2643/1998, about 6,500 jobs in total have been announced for all categories of protected persons. About 2,500 persons with disabilities and about 800 relatives of persons with disabilities have been placed in jobs in accordance with this Law.

222. At the same time, the Occupational Health and Safety Inspectors carry out inspections daily in all workplaces of the private and public sectors, in order to monitor enforcement of the provisions on workers’ health and safety, including specific provisions on people with disabilities. More specifically, we mention article 10 of Presidential Decree 16/96 “Minimum safety and health requirements for the workplace in compliance with Directive 89/654/EEC”, which contains paragraphs 21 and 22 of Annexes I and II respectively, entitled “Workers with disabilities”:

“1. The design of buildings shall be made in a way that will enable workers with disabilities to move and work without any hindrance.

2. Workplaces must be organized to take account of the particular characteristics of workers with disabilities, if necessary. Particular attention should be given to the appropriate design in accordance with the instructions of the Ministry for the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works (Design office for people with disabilities). This provision shall apply in particular to the doors, passageways, staircases, mounting points of artificial lighting switches and emergency equipment,

showers, washbasins, lavatories, furniture, facilities, technical equipment and workstations used or occupied by workers with disabilities.”

223. Such inspections in workplaces are carried out within the context of the annual action planning of the Agencies of the Workers’ Health and Safety Committee (EAYE), including targeted inspection programmes for specific categories of jobs or workers.

224. At this point, we wish to note that the annual action planning is implemented upon opinion given by the Social Inspection Council of the Labour Inspectorate (SKEEE). The Social Inspection Council of the Labour Inspectorate is a body that gives opinions on operation issues of the Labour Inspectorate. Representatives of the employer organizations [Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV), Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises (SETE), Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants (GSEVEE), National Confederation of Hellenic Commerce (ESEE)], trade unions [Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE), Supreme Administration of Greek Civil Servants Trade Unions (ADEDY)], officials and representatives of the employees of the Labour Inspectorate participate in the Social Inspection Council of the Labour Inspectorate, while the recently revised legislative framework of establishment and operation of the Labour Inspectorate (para. (f), art. 21, Law 3996/2011) provides for the participation of a representative of the National Confederation of Disabled People.

225. In addition to the inspections within the context of the annual action planning of the Agencies of the Workers’ Health and Safety Committee, inspections are also conducted in the workplace following complaints by employees or their collective bodies or upon notification of occupational accidents.

226. In the context of the aforementioned programmes of targeted inspections of the Agencies of the Workers’ Health and Safety Committee for 2015 and taking into account a letter from the National Confederation of Disabled People submitted within the framework of the Social Inspection Council of the Labour Inspectorate and addressed to the Executive Secretary of the Labour Inspectorate, which indicated accessibility problems faced by people with disabilities in the workplace, an inspection programme was developed and designed with the title: “Campaign for information and monitoring of implementation of the labour legislation on issues concerning people with disabilities”. This programme which will last six (6) months, aims at monitoring implementation of the labour legislation concerning people with disabilities. During the inspections to be conducted within the context of this campaign, the Occupational Health and Safety Inspectors will check whether the workplaces meet the requirements of the labour legislation on people with disabilities, taking into account the provisions of the aforementioned Presidential Decree 16/96, and at the same time they will inform the appropriate persons in charge about their obligations. Upon completion of the programme, the results of the inspections shall be sent to the Directorate for Planning and Coordination of Safety and Health Inspection at Work, Headquarters of the Labour Inspectorate.

227. The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity implements a number of interventions and activities that aim at the halting of unemployment, maintenance of existing jobs, creation of new jobs, integration of young people and vulnerable social groups in the labour market, and support to the sectors adversely affected by the impact of the economic crisis. We note that all unemployed people are entitled to participate in the active employment policies implemented through the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity.

228. Active employment policies currently being implemented and intended for people with disabilities are divided inter alia, into: (a) subsidy programmes for job creation; (b) programmes for subsidy of social security contributions with a view to the creation of jobs; (c) programmes for the enhancement of entrepreneurship; (d) programmes that combine

training and acquisition of work experience in enterprises through the labour market entry voucher; e) community service programmes.

229. More specifically, the Manpower Employment Organization (OAED) implements programmes for the subsidy of enterprises that hire people belonging to vulnerable social groups, including persons with disabilities. The purpose of those programmes is to create New Jobs by subsidizing the labour costs for the benefited persons for a specific period. The relevant ministerial decisions also provide for a period of non co-financing, during which the enterprises shall employ such workers. These programmes aim at the acquisition of work experience with an ultimate view to maintaining employment.

230. As regards New Jobs programmes, paragraph 1, article 11 of Law 3227/2004 contemplates that: "... People with disabilities employed at the time of publication hereof and henceforth by enterprises or bodies, as provided for in paragraph 8, article 2 of Law 2643/1998, in pursuance of a subsidy program of the Manpower Employment Organization for New Jobs for Persons with Disabilities, whose employer wishes to continue to employ them after the completion of the programme, shall be considered in respect of all effects, as placed by virtue of Law 2643/1998". In this regard, we mention that the Minister of Interior accepted the Opinion No. 413/2010 of the 5<sup>th</sup> Chamber of the Legal Council of the State, which enables the continuation of employment of people with disabilities in enterprises of primary and secondary local government organizations, following their employment for a certain period through a programme of the Manpower Employment Organization if requested by the employer, towards the quasi-automatic conversion of their contracts into open-ended contracts, pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 1, article 11 of Law 3227/2004 as currently in force, thereby expanding the scope of protection of Law 2643/1998 in order to cover such individuals.

231. Furthermore, article 56 of Law 4186/2013 provides that "Persons with disabilities who worked in the year preceding the publication hereof in enterprises or undertakings or bodies as provided for in paragraph 8, article 2 of Law 2643/1998 under any employment relationship or pursuant to an injunction judgment or restraining order, shall be considered in respect of all effects as placed and continuing working under Law 2643/1998, if the employer has declared that he/she wishes to continue to employ them".

232. According to paragraph 4, article 8 of Law 2643/1998, "The annual paid ordinary leave for employees, as provided for by the legislation in force, shall be increased by six (6) working days for persons with disabilities, as stipulated in the first subparagraph, indent (b), paragraph 1, article 1, as well as for disabled persons, permanent civil servants, employees of local government organizations and other public law entities, provided that they meet the essential requirements of the above provision". All persons with disabilities shall be entitled to such increase, regardless of the manner and time of their appointment.

233. Law 2643/1998 also contains special provisions on visually impaired persons. More specifically, according to paragraph 5, article 2 of this Law, "The public utility organizations, banks and public sector bodies referred to in paragraph 8<sup>4</sup> shall, in addition to

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<sup>4</sup> (a) Public enterprises and public organizations; (b) private law entities belonging to the State or subsidized regularly, pursuant to the provision in force, by State resources by at least 50% of their annual budget, or in which the State owns at least 51% of the share capital; (c) legal entities either belonging to the legal entities referred to in the preceding cases (a) and (b) or to public law entities or to local government organizations of any level or to the Central Union of Municipalities and Communities of Greece (KEDKE) or to local unions of municipalities and communities, or subsidized by such bodies regularly by at least 50% of their annual budget, pursuant to the provisions in force or the respective memoranda and articles of association, or in which the above bodies own at least 51% of the share capital.

the protected persons employed by such bodies in accordance with paragraph 1, also hire in 80% of the vacancies for operators of domestic call centres, blind graduates of the Schools for Blind Telephone Operators. Moreover, according to paragraph 6, article 3 of the same Law, "Public agencies, public law entities and local government organizations of any level, shall, in addition to the protected persons employed in the posts provided for in paragraph 1, also appoint or hire in 80% of the vacancies for operators of domestic call centres, blind graduates of the Schools for Blind Telephone Operators.

234. Other programmes finance a part of the costs of business activity commencement for persons belonging to vulnerable social groups, including persons with disabilities who wish to practise a liberal profession (programmes for New Self-employed Professionals).

235. Moreover, the Manpower Employment Organization implements business subsidy programmes for the ergonomic arrangement of the workplace in order to make it accessible to people with disabilities.

236. The above programmes and support measures are implemented and promoted by:

- The Employment Agencies of the Manpower Employment Organization excluding areas where there are Special Social Groups Labour Offices. Such offices are six (6) and operate in the following cities: Athens, Thessaloniki, Larissa, Volos, Patras and Heraklion, Crete.
- For people with mental retardation and learning difficulties in Lakkia, Thessaloniki, a Pilot Industrial Unit has been operating since 1985. The operating costs of this programme, which is attended by one hundred (100) people on average per year, are covered by funds of the Manpower Employment Organization.

237. The following programmes are currently being implemented:

- Four-year support for employers with a subsidy that corresponds to the amount of the total social security contributions with a view to hiring 2,080 unemployed persons with disabilities and Subsidy of 50 posts of ergonomic arrangement of the workplace for people with disabilities. This programme may include the Primary and Secondary Local Government enterprises in pursuance of Law 2738/1999.
- Subsidy of 600 New Self-Employed Professionals who are unemployed persons with disabilities, and Subsidy of 50 posts of ergonomic arrangement of the workplace for people with disabilities.

238. In addition, the Manpower Employment Organization, as the central management structure of active employment policies, pursues the best possible effectiveness of the measures, maximum cooperation with social bodies, such as the National Confederation of Disabled People, with which it has already conducted consultations regarding the development of an integrated relevant strategy.

239. With regard to actions to raise awareness and inform people with disabilities, specifications have been planned for digital accessibility to the information from the Manpower Employment Organization by people with disabilities, within the context of the upgrading of the Portal and the development of a new web application for the electronic matching of labour supply and demand.

240. In particular, as regards access to employment for young people, we note that the Employment Directorate of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, as the competent public authority, drafted and submitted to the European Commission in

late 2013 the national Youth Guarantee<sup>5</sup> plan. The aim of the plan is, upon entry into force, to ensure that all young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) until the age of 25 will receive a good-quality offer of employment, vocational training, apprenticeship or traineeship within a period of four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed.

241. The actions included in the plan are divided into two main categories: (a) early intervention and activation; and (b) integration into the labour market.

242. Within the framework of “Youth Guarantee”, consultations have taken place with the social partners and representatives of youth, where representatives of the National Confederation of Disabled People also participated and submitted comments and observations. The “Youth Guarantee” plan gives emphasis to vulnerable social groups and, in this context, special employment integration actions for young people with disabilities are to be implemented, in order to facilitate the employability of people with special difficulties and at greater risk of social exclusion.

243. We would also like to mention that in the context of establishment in Greece of the area of Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship, Law 4019/2011 “Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship and other provisions” introduces a new form of Social Cooperative Enterprise. Depending on their object, Social Cooperative Enterprises are divided into three categories. Of these the Integration Social Cooperative Enterprises, which involve integration in the economic and social life of persons belonging to Vulnerable Population Groups, shall compulsorily employ, by at least 40%, workers belonging to such groups.

244. Further, we would like to refer to actions co-financed by the European Social Fund through the Operational Programme “Human Resources Development”. This Operational Programme included Actions concerning the implementation of programmes for the provision of integrated pre-training, vocational training and accompanying supportive services to persons with disabilities and/or detoxified persons or drug addicts. Those programmes were intended for unemployed persons belonging to the above target groups regardless of their education level, and were implemented by Specialized Centres for the Social and Vocational Integration of Persons with Disabilities and of detoxified persons or drug addicts. The total budget for the actions amounts to 13,000,000 euro and about 1,319 people belonging to the above target groups benefited.

245. The Operational Programme “Human Resources Development” has included interventions in favour of vulnerable social groups implemented by certified Specialized Centres for the Social and Vocational Integration of Persons with Disabilities and of detoxified persons or drug addicts as well as by Vocational Training Centres (KEK). The object of such actions is to provide pre-training and training services to 7,713 people belonging to vulnerable social groups, including People with Disabilities. The beneficiary body is the European Social Fund Actions Implementation Authority, Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, while the implementation of those programmes has been assigned, following an open public tender, to contractors, i.e. Specialized Centres for the Social and Vocational Integration of Persons with Disabilities and of detoxified persons or drug addicts, and Vocational Training Centres. The total budget amounts to 79,560,000,00 euro and the contractors have already started implementing this action.

246. We would also like to make reference to the Project “Access to Tourism – Boost towards Employment: Local social inclusion actions for unemployed persons with

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<sup>5</sup> In line with Recommendation 2013/C 120/01 issued by the Council to EU Member States on 22 April 2013.

disabilities in the tourism industry in the Region of Attica” (period of implementation: 09/2012-06/2015) of the Operational Programme “Human Resources Development”. The implementation body of the Project is the Development Partnership “PRO-OTHISI”, the Coordinating Partner is the Business and Training Consultants Support Lim. Liab. Co. and the Partners include the National Confederation of Disabled People (NCDP), the Hellenic Federation of Associations of Parents and Guardians of Persons with Disabilities, the Hellenic Association of Tourist & Travel Agencies (HATTA), the Business and Education Studies Institute and the Family and Childcare Centre.

247. The Project aims at the inclusion in employment in the tertiary sector and more specifically in the sector of tourist services, of one hundred (100) unemployed persons with disabilities who reside in the Region of Attica.

248. As regards employment in the public sector, we inform you that according to paragraph 8, article 30 of Law 3731/2008, as amended by article 27 of Law 4385/2014 on regular employees and employees working under a private law open-ended or fixed-term employment relationship in State agencies, public law entities and local government organizations, who have a disability percentage of at least 67% or have disabled children with a disability percentage of at least 67% or have a spouse with a disability percentage of at least 80% whom they support, the working hours may be reduced by one (1) hour per day. Such reduction in working hours also applies to blind or paraplegic-tetraplegic persons or end-stage kidney patients employed by the State, public law entities and local government organizations. Especially, as regards blind telephone operators, the working hours shall be reduced by two (2) hours per day.

249. According to the aforementioned Law 4385/2014, in addition to the employees who have children with intellectual, mental or physical disability with a disability percentage of at least 67%, the said right has been extended in order to cover employees who are parents of children aged up to 15 years suffering from insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (type 1 diabetes) and have a disability percentage of at least 50%. This amendment was deemed necessary, since those dependants need special care on a daily basis, especially blood glucose testing, administration of insulin and a special diet.

250. Furthermore, employees who have been entrusted, by a court judgment, with the custody of a person with disabilities as well as foster parents of a person with disabilities, shall also be entitled to reduced working hours for as long as foster care is provided (art. 8 of Law 2880/2001).

251. The same applies also to every case where the employees have special working hours because of the working conditions. It is noted that the beneficiary employees shall be entitled to reduced working hours, regardless of any other rights they enjoy by virtue of other legislative provision.

252. Moreover, according to paragraphs 2 and 3, article 50 of the Civil Servants Code (Law 3528/2007), employees who suffer from or have a spouse or child who suffers from a disease that requires regular blood transfusions or requires periodic hospitalization, shall be entitled to a special paid leave of up to twenty-two (22) working days per year. This leave shall be also granted to employees who have children suffering from severe mental retardation or Down syndrome.

253. According to paragraph 4, article 50 of the Civil Servants Code, employees with a disability percentage of at least fifty percent (50%) shall be entitled to a paid leave of six (6) working days per calendar year in addition to their ordinary leave.

## Article 28 – Adequate standard of living and social protection

254. The General Welfare Department of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity implements ten (10) financial support programmes for persons with disabilities, regardless of economic and income criteria, which concern solely the meeting of the needs resulting from the disability and relate to the disability type and percentage, the disease, the social security status, etc. Moreover, the readjustment and modernization of the regulatory framework on the financial support programmes for persons with disabilities has moved forward in order to be in line with the certification framework of the Disability Certification Centres (KEPA). Joint Ministerial Decision No. P3a/F.18/G.P.oik.63731 specifies the allowances granted to people with disabilities.

255. Article 46 of Law 4025/2011 stipulates that “the beneficiaries of any disability allowance ... shall be examined by the Medical Committee in order to qualify for the allowance”. In addition, Joint Ministerial Decision No. F.11321/oik. 10219/688/4.5.2012 on “Disability Percentage Determination Integrated Table” differentiated disability percentages by disease.

256. Moreover, we mention that the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity enters into annual contracts with non-profit Hospitals for Chronic Diseases (private law entities), so that the latter provide beds for the care and nursing of financially weak and uninsured persons with disabilities who need emergency care. The relevant expenditure is covered by the expenditure budget of the Ministry through a subsidy to the regions.

257. In the context of introduction of favourable pension arrangements for people with disabilities, we mention, first of all, that articles 1, 15 (para. 6), 16 and 17 of Presidential Decree 169/2007 introduced the following arrangements:

- The completion of a five-year actual pensionable service shall enable an employee to receive a pension, regardless of age, if such employee is dismissed due to a physical or mental disability which is not a result of the Service
- The completion of a five-year pensionable service may not be a requirement for the payment of a pension, if the physical or mental disability resulted from the Service
- The completion of a fifteen-year actual pensionable service shall enable an employee to receive a full pension in case of certain diseases, provided that the employee has a disability percentage of at least 67%

258. In addition to the pension, one shall receive a monthly personal and non-transferable allowance, which is calculated as a percentage of the monthly basic salary of a captain [“lohagos”] and varies depending on the type of disability, on the disability percentage and on whether the disability resulted from the Service or not. In order to protect the disabled pensioners, Law 4151/2013 (para. 5, art. 2) established, as the basis of calculation of the above allowances, the basic monthly salary of a captain as it was before the reductions provided for by Law 4093/2012.

259. We also wish to note that in order to safeguard the income of persons with disabilities, which derives from pensions, due to increased financial needs, such persons were exempted from the total reductions imposed on pensions and from the abolition of Christmas and Easter bonuses and holiday allowances (Laws 3865/2010, 4002/2011, 4024/2011, 4051/2012, 4093/2012, 4111/2013). Those exemptions vary depending on the disability percentage, as the case may be.

260. Moreover, the increase of the age limit for the payment of the Pensioners Social Solidarity Allowance (EKAS), as introduced by Law 4151/2013, may not apply to disabled pensioners of the State.

261. In the field of establishment of favourable tax arrangements for people with disabilities, in particular with regard to income tax, we would like to inform you as follows:

- Totally blind persons and persons suffering from severe motor disabilities with a disability percentage of at least 80% (art. 29 of Law 3986/2011 as amended by article 38 of Law 4024/2011) shall be exempted and their income may not be counted for purposes of imposition of the special solidarity contribution (imposed on the total income exceeding 12,000 euro).
- The following shall be exempted from tax: pension paid to war disabled persons and civilian disabled persons, military officers in general who have been wounded in action; the extra-institutional allowance and any relevant amount paid to special categories of persons with disabilities; wages, pensions and fixed fees paid to persons with a disability percentage of at least 80% (para. 2, art. 14, Law 4172/2013).
- The taxpayer and his/her dependants shall be entitled to an additional tax reduction of 200 euro, if they have a disability percentage of at least 67%, including disabled military commissioned officers and conscripts who have retired and/or commissioned officers who have been wounded or suffer from a disease as a result of hardship in wartime (art. 17 of Law 4172/2013).
- The amount of tax shall be reduced by 10% for hospital care expenses for children with a disability percentage of at least 40% if the annual taxable and exempted income of the children does not exceed 6,000 euro, as well as for tuition fees or subsistence costs paid for those children to special schools for their disease or special institutions or organizations (para. 2, art. 18 of Law 4172/2013).
- The annual objective expenditure for passenger cars may not apply to private passenger cars specially equipped for persons with motor disabilities (art. 31 of Law 4172/2013), while the acquisition cost for such cars may not be taken into consideration (indent (f), art. 33 of Law 4172/2013).
- The objective expenditure shall be exempted for private passenger cars for disabled people, which are also exempted from motor vehicle tax (indent (a), art. 33 of Law 4172/2013).

262. The following favourable regulations have been adopted in the field of capital taxation:

- As regards the tax on inheritances, donations and parental grants, when the heir or legatee or donee or the child has a disability percentage of at least 67%, the tax on inheritance, donation and parental grant corresponding to the value of the transferred property — for any of the above reasons — shall be reduced by 10%, with the exception of donations or parental grants of amounts of money taxed independently (para. 2, art. 1 of Law 3815/2010).
- The legislation on the taxation of real estate transfers complies fully with the CRPD and in particular with article 12 thereof. More specifically, the necessary measures have been taken in favour of people with disabilities in accordance with Law 1078/1980, as currently in force, on the exemption from real estate transfer tax for the purchase of first residential property.
- As from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2014 a unified real estate tax credit by 100% shall be granted to a taxpayer who has a disability percentage of at least 80% (the same person or his/her spouse or dependant), provided that certain conditions are cumulatively met (amount of total taxable family income; total buildings surface; the



taxpayer or his/her spouse and dependent children are tax residents of Greece) [para. 2, art. 7 of Law 4223/2013 and para. 6(c), para. 12, art. 18 of Law 4286/2014].

263. Regarding the obligation deriving from the Convention to ensure access by disabled persons to appropriate and affordable services, devices and other assistance for disability-related needs, we would like to inform you that a reduced VAT rate is imposed on the medical equipment, aids and other appliances intended to alleviate or treat disability, as well as on the repair thereof. A reduced VAT rate is also imposed on the provision of home care services to people with disabilities. (Law 2859/2000, Annex III). The importation of articles intended for the education, work or social advancement of blind and other persons who are physically and mentally disadvantaged (arts. 43-45 of Law 1684/87, which constitutes transposition of Directive 83/181/EEC — currently 2009/132/EC) is exempted from VAT. In addition, we note that exemption from motor vehicle tax is granted for vehicles belonging to disabled Greek citizens or EU citizens of certain categories. Moreover, a relief from import duties is granted for articles specially designed for the educational, scientific or cultural advancement of blind persons as well as education, employment or social advancement of physically or mentally handicapped persons (arts. 66-73 of the EC Regulation 1186/2009). An exemption from the passenger car registration tax is granted to various categories of disabled citizens (art. 1 of Law 490/76, art. 4 of Law 3670/2008, art. 16 of Law 1798/88 as currently in force).

264. In the field of revenue policy, the following measures have been taken:

- Motor vehicles used for the transportation of war disabled persons may not be seized (art. 17 of Legislative Order 356/1974)
- Privileged position of persons with a disability percentage of at least 80% regarding compensation claims in case of compulsory or administrative execution of an expedited auction (indents 1 and 3, art. 975, Code of Civil Procedure)
- Privileged position of persons with a disability percentage of at least 67% regarding compensation claims in case of bankruptcy proceedings in an expedited auction (indents 1 and 3, art. 975, Code of Civil Procedure)
- Maintenance claims as provided for by law as well as disability allowances may not be seized in case of people with disabilities, if the monthly amount is less than 1,500 euro (art. 31 of Legislative Order 356/1974, as amended by Law 4254/2014)
- Limitation of seizure in the possession of a third party against a person with disabilities as an exceptional case where there are special circumstances (art. 30 of Legislative Order 356/1974 and POL 1092/2014)

265. We also inform you that Joint Ministerial Decision No. 39892/GD1.2/07.11.2014 of the Minister of Finance, Minister of Interior and Minister of Labour, Social Security and Welfare (pursuant to subparagraph IA3, art. 1, Law 4093/2012) was issued, which specifies the terms and conditions of implementation of the guaranteed minimum income pilot program entitled “Guaranteed Social Income”. According to that Joint Ministerial Decision, a favourable regulation for people with disabilities is that the calculation of the amount of real income, which is an essential eligibility criterion and determines the final level of the income support provided to the beneficiary, does not include the extra-institutional allowance and welfare disability allowances.

266. Finally, it is worth mentioning that according to subparagraph A1, Law 4254/2014, a part of the primary surplus in the amount of 450 million euro is allocated for the payment of a social dividend to support the citizens and families of the country with a low total annual income and low value real estate. The income eligibility threshold and the amount per beneficiary depend, inter alia, on disability.

## **Article 29 – Participation in political and public life**

267. The Greek state, in order to enable people with disabilities to exercise their voting right, shall take the necessary measures to enable such voters to participate in the electoral process.

268. The electoral legislation and, in particular, paragraph 3, article 83 of Presidential Decree 26/2012 “Codification into a single text of the legislation on the election of Members of Parliament” provides that each voter with physical weakness shall have the right to apply to the representative of the judicial authority or to a member of the Electoral Committee, who shall help him/her to vote. The Directorate for Elections of the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, shall issue a relevant circular, which shall give instructions to facilitate the exercise of the voting right by citizens with disabilities.

269. This circular emphasizes that if the representative of the judicial authority realizes that access by a voter with motor disabilities to the voting room is impossible, then the representative and a member of the electoral committee shall deliver a stamped and initialled envelope to the voter along with a full set of ballot papers, so that the voter can go to a place inside the same building (e.g. ground floor) that is appropriate and accessible to him/her in order to vote. Then, the voter shall hand over the sealed envelope containing his/her vote to the representative of the judicial authority and the latter shall cast it into the ballot box of the polling station, in whose electoral roll the voter that voted is registered.

270. Additionally, we would like to note that special consideration has been given to the fees paid to the elected officers of municipalities and regions who are people with disabilities, such fees being increased by twenty percent (20%) (para. 4, art. 92, and para. 4, art. 181 of Law 3852/2010).

271. Moreover, in order to enable a blind Vice-Mayor to perform his/her duties, paragraph 2, article 44, Law 3979/2011 provides for the hiring of a special assistant secretary for as long as he/she performs his/her duties.

## **Article 30 – Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport**

### **Culture**

272. The cultural buildings and premises — in particular the museums — are increasingly very important in terms of the direct connection to the history, culture and fine arts of a country. Modern demands require that they operate in such a way as to allow equal participation of all individuals. Besides, their operation is closely linked with their public nature. They constitute buildings that should provide full access to the public and are increasingly important in terms of use of the citizens’ free time. People with disabilities are often interested more than anyone else in visiting them and participating in their activities.

273. Since the mid-1980s the Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs has ensured, in the design and construction of new museums or modernization of existing museums, access and services for people with disabilities, in line with the legislation in force.

274. Another important factor is the information and education of the personnel of museums and archaeological sites, especially of those who deal with visitors. In 2003 the Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs, within the context of the Year of People with Disabilities, organized a European Conference held in October 2003 in Thessaloniki on access for people with disabilities to cultural and sports sites. Then, two experiential seminars took place in Athens and Thessaloniki for the training of personnel of museums and archaeological sites. Subsequently, the National Centre for Public

Administration and Decentralization, on the initiative of the Office for People with Disabilities of the Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs, organized seminars in various Greek cities from 2005 to 2011 on access and services for people with disabilities in the field of Culture.

275. We would also like to mention the introduction of the “Culture Card”, which allows free entry to museums and archaeological sites falling within the competence of the Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs. Beneficiaries of the “Culture Card” are persons with disability (at least 67%) and an accompanying individual for each blind person, mentally retarded person or person in wheelchair.

### **Tourism**

276. For the adoption of all necessary measures to ensure access by people with disabilities to tourist facilities and services, in 2011 the Ministry of Economy, Infrastructure, Shipping and Tourism (then called General Secretariat of Tourism) established a special Working Group on the accessibility of Disabled People to sites of tourist interest. The tasks of this Group were, on the one hand, to identify and consider the current situation and the problems arising therefrom, and, on the other hand, to formulate proposals to address them. This Group included representatives of the Ministry, the Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises (SETE), the Greek National Tourism Organization (EOT), and the National Confederation of Disabled People (ESAMEA).

277. The Ministry of Economy, Infrastructure, Shipping and Tourism, in cooperation with the Greek National Tourism Organization (EOT) and the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, has been implementing social tourism programmes. More specifically, for the period 2013-2014 the Greek National Tourism Organization has implemented the programme “Tourism for all”. The program concerns six-day holiday packages, i.e. five-night accommodation packages in tourist accommodation establishments that applied for their participation, while beneficiaries of the programme are, among others, members of large families, persons with a disability percentage of at least 67% who are not eligible for social tourism vouchers issued by the Manpower Employment Organization, and elderly people. The budget for the second phase of the programme implementation amounts to 2,000,000 euro and 28,400 individual cards in total shall be distributed.

278. Also, every year the Camp Program for Persons with Disabilities is designed and implemented successfully during the summer in collaboration with the National Confederation of Disabled People and the Hellenic Federation of Associations of Parents and Guardians of Persons with Disabilities, and takes place in twelve (12) camping sites in municipalities across the country. The objective is for people with severe and multiple disabilities together with their family to stay for 10 days in a recreation and entertainment place with a view to strengthening participants’ relations, thus contributing to their socialization.

279. The Ministry of Economy, Infrastructure, Shipping and Tourism and the Greek National Tourism Organization promote actions aiming at improving accessibility to tourist facilities and enhancing information about accessibility to specific tourist destinations and specialized services, based on the following pillars:

- Recording of accessible accommodation establishments that provide quality and specialized services, with a view to creating the necessary database for the design of social tourism programmes for people with disabilities
- Identification of areas whose natural contours of the ground and majority of infrastructures and superstructures (i.e. networks, transportation means, museums, monuments of tourist interest and sufficient number of accommodation establishments) are friendly to people with disabilities

- Development of programmes and pilot interstate actions as well as social tourism programmes in selected areas within the context of the European program “Calypso”
- Collaboration with local government in order to improve the accessibility conditions to public and communal areas
- Monitoring of application of the standards of the Greek National Tourism Organization regarding the technical facilities for people with disabilities in the accommodation establishments across the country
- Collaboration with the National Confederation of Disabled People

280. More specifically, Presidential Decree 43/2002 “Classification of main hotel establishments under the system of stars and technical specifications of them”, as amended and currently in force, defined specific standards to be met by hotel establishments to serve people with disabilities, and especially people with reduced mobility.

281. Similar provisions on services for people with disabilities have been included in the current institutional framework concerning the establishment and licensing of organized tourist facilities and furnished rental rooms and apartments.

282. Moreover, several Greek regions have implemented policies related to the accessibility by people with disabilities to tourist activities. Among others, we wish to point out that, through the cross-border programme “No-barrier Tourism”, Corfu and Kefalonia have mapped the accessible areas and installed special access systems on beaches. It is noted that the cross-border programme “No-barrier Tourism” comprises a number of interventions aiming at improving accessibility for people with disabilities to tourist destinations by reducing the physical, cultural and social barriers that exclude them from the tourist product. This project is funded by the European Territorial Cooperation Programme “Greece-Italy (National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013) with the final beneficiary being the Region of Ionian Islands.

283. It has also become evident that ensuring accessibility infrastructure and conditions for different categories of disabled people is a critical factor for the improvement of the competitiveness of the tourist product. In this context, the National Confederation of Disabled People has published the “Guide for Accessible Recreational Activities in Greece”, which presented in detail the accessible tourist and recreational infrastructures in Greece by prefecture, such as hotels, museums, archaeological sites, restaurants, pedestrian areas, parks, beaches, entertainment venues, theatres, sports venues, etc. Inter alia, there are seventeen (17) access devices on beaches in Attica for people with disabilities. More specifically, in 2013 the Municipality of Marathon installed, for the second consecutive year, a special swimming ramp for people with disabilities on Nea Makri beach. Moreover, the Municipality of Marathon was declared as the top Greek tourist destination for the period 2012-2013 within the framework of the “European Destinations of Excellence” (EDEN) on accessible tourism. The Schinias National Park has many footpaths with special signs, appropriately arranged to allow the passage of wheelchairs, a multilingual audio guide system and an accessible panoramic observatory. Furthermore, accessible are also most cultural and archaeological monuments in the area. At the same time, as regards children, the programme “Operation of a pilot beach accessible to people with disabilities” is implemented during the summer in the premises of the Recovery and Rehabilitation Centre for children with disabilities of Attica in collaboration with the Hellenic Paraplegic Association.

284. At the same time, in the context of promoting “Tourism for All” or “Accessible Tourism”, as requested by the disability movement for several years, the National Confederation of Disabled People (NCDP) took the initiative and, along with the Municipality of Rethymno on the part of Greece, and the Municipality of Agia Napa on the

part of Cyprus, designed and are currently implementing jointly the Project “Agia Napa-Rethymno: Universally Accessible Cities”, which is included in the Cross-border Cooperation Programme “Greece – Cyprus 2007-2013”. The project is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and national resources of Greece and Cyprus.

285. Regarding, in particular, the issue of accessibility by disabled people to the beaches, it is noted that Government Gazette 1411 B' as of 30-04-2012 published the Joint Decision No. 1052758/1451/B0010 of the Minister of Interior and Minister of Finance, which supplements the Joint Decision No. 1038460/2439/B0010/15.04.2009 (Government Gazette 792 B'/29-04-2009) of the Minister of Economy and Finance and Minister of Interior. This supplement provides that in at least one (1) beach facility per Municipal Unit from the allocated public seashore areas, beach areas, etc. as well as where there are beach facilities as provided for in the preceding paragraph of the supplemented Joint Ministerial Decision, the local government organizations shall install one (1) pathway perpendicularly to the coastline, which will allow entry into water of wheelchair users and which will be used solely to serve people with disabilities.

286. Moreover, the local government organizations shall ensure the installation of at least one (1) non-permanent sanitary space and one (1) changing room, with dimensions and equipment that would allow their use by people with disabilities, in accordance with the provisions in force. Furthermore, the local government organizations shall ensure, outside the seashore, at least one parking area reserved only for people with disabilities, which would have the appropriate dimensions, as well as special floor and pillar signs in accordance with the provisions in force.

287. In addition, Joint Decision of the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Interior No. D10/B1027032/EX2014/1033/11.02.2014 “Direct concession, for a consideration, of the right to simple use of the sea shore, beach, bank, bankside zone of big lakes and rivers, to the Primary Local Government Organizations” is in force including, in particular, article 7 and Annex “Technical Specifications for Constructions and Arrangements”.

288. At this point, it is also worth mentioning that access by people with disabilities to the tourist product of the country made the National Quality Infrastructure System (ESYP) to submit a cooperation proposal regarding the initiative to promote the special features of Greek hospitality for certain categories of visitors, including people with disabilities. As regards accessibility to tourist services, the Hellenic Organization for Standardization (ELOT), which falls under the National Quality Infrastructure System, has developed the following standards:

- ELOT 1439: “Organization friendly to citizens with disabilities – Requirements and recommendations”
- ELOT 1427: “Tourist Services – Criteria for the initial evaluation of tourist enterprises”
- ELOT 1417: “Agritourism – Guidebook on quality management in agritourist enterprises”

289. Given the strong interest of hotels in their certification regarding accessibility by people with impairments, it has been deemed appropriate to investigate the possibility of extending the standard 1439 to hotels and other tourist enterprises as well as investigate the possibility of issuance of an application guidebook or special standard suitable for medical tourism. For this purpose, the Hellenic Organization for Standardization established the Working Group “Tourism and related services”, whose objective will be to consider the aforementioned standardization issues and which comprises representatives of the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels (XEE), the National Confederation of Disabled People, the Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Tourism.

## Sports

290. As regards the adoption of measures for the participation of people with disabilities in sports, we would like to inform you that Law 2725/1999 “Amateur and professional sports and other provisions” (as amended and currently in force) and, in particular, article 29 “Sports for persons with disabilities”, on the one hand, stipulated that sports for people with disabilities is under the protection of the State and, on the other hand, regulated the operation of sports bodies for people with disabilities. More specifically, in our country there are sports federations and clubs for people with disabilities, which concern athletes with motor disabilities, mental disability, blindness, deafness, and transplanted and dialyzed athletes. The same provisions applying to sports bodies of athletes without disabilities also apply to these sports bodies. Sport bodies for people with disabilities are subsidized on an annual basis by the General Secretariat of Sports (GGA) of the Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs. The benefits granted to athletes with disabilities who have outstanding sports achievements are the same as those to athletes without disabilities and include admission to Higher Educational Institutions, provision of financial reward, appointment to the State, and granting of leave of absence from work in order to participate in competitions. Finally, concerning the collection of statistical data, the General Secretariat of Sports keeps data in the field of sports for people with disabilities.

291. Furthermore, we inform you that the Designs Directorate of the General Secretariat of Sports has included, in the design of sports projects, a design for Accessibility for people with disabilities in all new sports facilities since 2000. Since 2007, the General Secretariat of Sports has ensured the recording of accessibility technical problems to sports facilities supervised by the General Secretariat of Sports, the examination of sports facility designs in terms of accessibility by people with disabilities, the drafting of technical standards for accessibility by people with disabilities to sports venues, the monitoring of legislative and technological developments and international standards, the collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, and other Bodies in Greece and abroad, etc.

292. According to the above, the Department for Accessibility by People with Disabilities of the Designs Directorate:

- Drafted specialized studies on “Accessibility by Persons with Disabilities to the Facilities of the Olympic Athletic Centre of Athens and of the Peace and Friendship Stadium” and “Details about the Institutional Framework on Accessibility by Persons with Disabilities to Sports Facilities”.
- Participated in European Seminars on relevant topics.
- Carries out a (a) “Research on Accessibility by Persons with Disabilities to Sports Facilities in Attica supervised by the General Secretariat of Sports” and **drafts** a (b) “Study on the Framework of Technical Standards for Accessibility by Persons with Disabilities to Sports Facilities”.

## Article 6 – Women with disabilities

293. In the design and implementation of its actions, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality of the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction takes into account the vulnerable groups of women, including women with disabilities who may face multiple discriminations, because the gender discrimination they suffer is intertwined with and exacerbated by discriminations resulting from other forms of social inequality, such as racism and intolerance. Such women are more vulnerable not only as to the effects of the economic crisis but also as to social stereotypes and use of gender-based violence in all its forms. In this context, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality implements, inter alia, the “National Programme on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women”, which

refers to all forms of gender-based violence (domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, trafficking in women for sexual exploitation).

294. Within the framework of the Programme, a network of sixty-one (61) structures was created throughout the Greek territory, all of which are accessible to disabled women who are victims of gender-based violence. In those structures a disabled woman who is a victim of gender-based violence shall receive psychosocial support services, legal advice and hospitality. The purpose of these services is the empowerment of women who are victims of gender-based violence and the restoration of their self-esteem, so that they can take responsibility for their professional, personal and family life and make better decisions themselves about their future.

295. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality, in the context of drafting of the “Green Paper” entitled “Preparing for a Fully Converged Audiovisual World: Growth, Creation and Values – Public Consultation”, seeking to make new technologies of the audiovisual world accessible and friendly to female users with disabilities, has submitted proposals concerning:

- The development and provision of special technical equipment to ensure the enjoyment of services of the New Audiovisual World by women with disabilities
- The provision of incentives to encourage investments in innovative services to the benefit of women with disabilities

296. Finally, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality designed and implemented (in 2012) in eight municipalities of the country the Project “Gender mainstreaming in the municipalities, with emphasis on women belonging to socially vulnerable groups (migrants, refugees, Roma people, elderly people living alone and women with disabilities”) funded by the European Programme “PROGRESS”. The main objective of the Project is to enhance the implementation of gender equality policies in municipalities and particularly in relation to the aforementioned vulnerable population groups. Two (2) tools were created: (a) Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) tool; and (b) Gender Budgeting tool of the Municipalities. Moreover, four (4) Guidebooks, including a Guidebook for Women with Disabilities, which include the pilot application of tools for the specific groups of women, have been prepared. The actions were implemented following cooperation between gender experts of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality and the personnel of the municipalities involved. The Project had a total duration of eighteen (18) months.

## **Article 7 – Children with disabilities**

297. The parental movement, which is fairly well established, mainly in the field of mental retardation, functions complementarily to the public sector, in order to meet major needs regarding the protection and care of persons with disabilities. The purpose of these bodies is, inter alia, to further the interests of people with disabilities, with a view to ensuring their full social integration and vocational rehabilitation, supporting the family environment of persons with disabilities, providing supplementary teaching and scientific assistance by speech therapists, occupational therapists, child psychologists, physiotherapists, etc. Regarding their funding, the Regions are subsidized and then allocate funds to institutions within their territorial jurisdiction. Where required, there are low hospital charges and subsistence expenses paid by the social security body. We note that the purpose of the social welfare institutions is to protect particularly vulnerable population groups (people with disabilities, elderly people and children), thus filling the gaps of the State.

298. In particular, the Creative Activities Centres for Disabled Children (KDAP-MEA) constitute creative activities units for people with disabilities: mental retardation and physical disability.

299. The Creative Activities Centres for Disabled Children operate within the context of new actions-programmes in the field of social welfare and the context of development of a social solidarity network. This action strengthens the institution of the family, safeguards family solidarity, harmonizes family and professional life as well as prepares the integration of children/adolescents with disabilities in the social and economic life.

300. We would also like to mention that the European Social Fund, within the framework of the Action “Harmonization of Professional and Family Life” of the Operational Programme “Human Resources Development”, provides support to people with disabilities, through the provision of care to children with disabilities and/or adolescents and/or persons with mental retardation and/or motor disabilities at the respective Creative Activities Centres for Disabled Children as well as through the provision of care to younger children with disabilities at integrated care day nurseries, which belong to a separate group of structures.

<i>School years</i>	<i>Number of creative activities centres for disabled children</i>	<i>Number of integrated care structures</i>	<i>Number of children benefited from creative activities centres for disabled children</i>	<i>Number of children benefited from integrated care</i>
2010-2011	51	4	1,433	165
2011-2012	69	4	1,765	147
2012-2013	76	6	1,437	172
2013-2014	81	7	1,706	269
2014-2015	85	6	1,835	239

301. The continuation of the Action “Harmonization of Professional and Family Life 2014-2015”, as a front-loading action, of the new Operational Programme with a budget of 160 million euro, has been ensured for the period 2014-2015.

302. Furthermore, an additional funding of the action from national funds has been decided in order to cover all applications.

303. The placement of children in structures is determined by a “placement order” received from the Hellenic Society for Local Development and Government S.A. as provided for in the relevant Call for Expression of Interest.

304. In the framework of the Action, the following have been provided for, inter alia:

- Provision of care places for infants and babies from 2 months to 2.5 years and children from 2.5 to 4 completed years until 30/09/2014
- Provision of care places for infants and preschool age children from 8 months and children with disabilities from 2.5 to 4 completed years until 30/09/2014
- Provision of places in Creative Activities Centres for Children from the age of enrolment in compulsory education to 12 years and children with minor motor or sensory impairments
- Provision of care places for children with disabilities and adolescents with mental retardation and/or motor disability in Creative Activities Centres for Disabled Children (KDAP-MEA)



305. Overall, 74,912 children were placed in Structures (+9.3% as compared to 2013-2014). Valid applications amounted to 79,899 and corresponded to 97,629 children.

306. The beneficiaries of the Programme must meet the following requirements:

(a) Work in Greece as salaried employees or self-employed professionals or self-employed professionals in the primary sector, or

(b) Participate in Active Employment Policies (EPA):

- Subsidy of New Jobs
- Subsidy of New Self-employed Professionals
- Work Experience Acquisition Programmes
- Continuing Vocational Training Programmes

(c) be unemployed and have a valid Unemployment Card as well as a copy of an individualized approach certificate issued by the Agencies of the Manpower Employment Organization; or

(d) be unemployed and receive or have received a regular unemployment allowance from the Manpower Employment Organization at any time during the last 24 months prior to the publication of this Invitation. The applications are assessed and ranked on the basis of a point system that takes into account the following:

- Low declared annual family income
- Employment status, employment relationship and type of employment
- Unemployment registered with the Manpower Employment Organization and
- Marital status

### **Article 31 – Statistics and data collection**

307. Pursuant to article 18 of Law 4025/2011, Joint Ministerial Decision No. P2a/G.P.oik.35099/02.04.2012 entitled “Creation of a National Register of beneficiaries of social and welfare allowances” was published.

308. The National Register includes beneficiaries of disability allowances (for blindness, deafness and dumbness, tetraplegia, paraplegia, amputation in case of persons insured by the State and uninsured persons, severe mental retardation, cerebral palsy, severe disability, congenital haemolytic anaemia, congenital haemorrhagic diathesis, acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), Hansen’s disease), transport allowance, unprotected children allowance, allowance for aliens of Greek origin, housing allowance for pensioners of the Agricultural Insurance Organization, and nutritional allowance for kidney disease sufferers and transplanted persons.

309. The action resulted in the creation of a unique electronic database, which constitutes the National Register kept in the Directorate for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity.

310. Furthermore, since its establishment, the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA) has been posting on its central website annual Activities Report, including a presentation of statistical data of the work performed by social intervention units of the National Centre for Social Solidarity. The recording, processing and presentation of statistical data include data categories that concern people with disabilities, such as the following:

311. Percentage distribution of calls to Line 197, by cause:

- Difficulties of persons with disabilities
- Diagnosed mental illness
- Chronic, incurable diseases

312. Based on the provisions of Law 3304/2005, the Labour Inspectorate requests the Regional Directorates for Labour Relations Inspection across the country to provide monthly statistics on infringements of the principle of equal treatment in employment and work, including cases of people with disabilities. Since the entry into force of the Law, no infringement of the principle of equal treatment in employment and work involving people with disabilities has been reported to the competent Agency of SEPE.

313. We would also like to inform you that the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT), acknowledging the necessity of statistics focused on disability and of development of specific indicators, collaborated with the National Confederation of Disabled People and has included questions focused on people with disabilities in household surveys which it has conducted.

314. More specifically:

(a) It has included, in the National Health Survey for 2014, questions in order to identify:

- The persons with disabilities and details about their employment status – occupation
- The physical and sensory impairments (related to vision, hearing, mobility, lower and upper extremities)
- Whether one can independently perform personal care activities and household needs coverage activities; additional identification of the type of assistance (assistance from relatives, assistance from an individual not paid, assistance from an individual paid, assistance within the context of an organized programme) provided to those having any difficulty in carrying out the above activities
- The problems of accessibility to building infrastructures of health facilities and health services in general

(b) It has included, in the Survey on Income and Living Conditions of Households for 2015, questions in order to identify:

- The persons with disabilities and problems of accessibility to their residence and, in general, to the area where they reside
- The financial means of households with people with disabilities in order to make interventions to restore accessibility to their residences
- The minimum income to meet the needs of people with disabilities
- Problems of accessibility to building infrastructures related to their work
- Deprivation of material goods related to disability

315. The National Health Survey for 2014 is currently at the stage of results processing, while the EU SILC survey 2015 will be conducted in 2015. Thus, there is currently no available information about people with disabilities.

**Article 33 – National implementation and monitoring**

316. As already mentioned in the Introduction, the Directorate for International Relations of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, in the preparation of the present report, has cooperated with all jointly competent Ministries. Moreover, in order to have a more immediate and better communication, the Ministries were asked to designate a specific Directorate or Department as focal point. Thus a network of competent bodies has been created that will serve as a basis for the establishment of a coordination mechanism, within the Government, for the implementation of the Convention under article 33, paragraph 1 of the Convention.

317. In addition, this practice is in line with the relevant proposal made by the National Confederation of Persons with Disabilities, the views of which have been submitted in writing to the Ministry of Labour, following a call made on this issue. These views will be taken into account both for the establishment of the coordination mechanism as well as for the designation of an independent mechanism to monitor its implementation as provided for under article 33, paragraph 2 of the Convention.

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