

**Government Board for Persons with Disabilities**

# **National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2021–2025**

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**National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities  
2021–2025**

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# 1 Introduction

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The National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities for the period 2021–2025 (hereinafter the "National Plan") was drawn up on the basis of Czech Government Resolution No. 385 of 25 May, which ordered that this document be drafted and submitted to the Czech government. It is a basic strategic document that determines the direction of the Czech government's policy in terms of creating equal opportunities for persons with disabilities.

A basic principle of democratic society is respect for the dignity of all persons and upholding of their human rights, which are enshrined in both national regulations and international obligations. The National Plan providing an aegis for fulfilling the rights of disabled persons is the initial step for establishing the Czech Republic's further strategic direction in this area and a foundation for systematic steps in the process of integrating this group of people into society. Given the interdisciplinarity of the given topic, it is also necessary for this document to arise under a supra-ministerial body – an advisory body to the Czech government, this being the Government Board for Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter the "GBPD").

Despite the fact that the Czech Republic has implemented many measures into its legal code from international commitments supporting the equal rights of disabled persons, and Czech legislation is of a high standard in this area comparable to that of developed European countries, in specific cases these rights are not being fully lived up to.

Since its formation, the Czech Republic has systematically worked to remove barriers preventing persons with disabilities from fully participating in life and integrating into society. To this end, six national plans have already been implemented that formulate and calibrate the state's policy in relation to persons with disabilities, setting out specific priority measures for individual periods. Every year the government has reviewed implementation of the national plans and made adjustments to them as needed. Although all these plans have helped improve the living conditions of persons with disabilities, there remain a number of unresolved issues and areas where equal access must be ensured.

The National Plan is broken down into five parts. The first, introductory part contains basic information concerning this strategic document, as well as the purpose and context of the National Plan's creation and a definition of its users and the basic terms used, and also draws attention to the most important relevant national and international documents related to this topic.

The second, analytical part contains a definition of the issue being addressed, a review of the existing measures, i.e. an evaluation of implementation of the National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities for the period 2015–2020 (hereinafter the "2015–2020 National Plan"), statistics concerning persons with disabilities, and a summary of expected developments in the area if this material were not to be adopted.

The third, most extensive part comprises a list of the strategic areas of support for persons with disabilities on which the National Plan focuses. The content of these areas follows the individual articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>1</sup> (hereinafter the "Convention"). The introduction to each strategic area includes the article or articles of the Convention to which this area applies, and a brief description of the current situation in the Czech Republic. Each area contains targets that are to be met in the following period, the set of dated and ongoing measures including the ministries responsible for implementation thereof, and the indicators for monitoring their fulfilment. For some measures, other entities

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<sup>1</sup> UN General Assembly. 2006. *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Available at: <http://www.vlada.cz/cz/ppov/vvzpo/dokumenty/umluva-o-pravech-osob-se-zdravotnim-postizenim--70247/>

have also agreed to collaborate on their implementation, e.g. the Czech Statistical Office (hereinafter the "CSO").

The fourth, implementation part presents the entities that will take part in the process of implementing the National Plan and the manner in which implementation will be arranged. Also listed is the timetable for National Plan implementation and its sources of funding.

The fifth part of the material describes the process by which it was produced.

Adoption and implementation of the National Plan as the main medium-term conceptual document also contributes to fulfilling the basic horizontal conditions<sup>2</sup> "Implementation and application of the Convention in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC"<sup>3</sup>. Fulfilment of this enabling condition will allow for funding from EU funds in the 2021–2027 programming period to be drawn.

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<sup>2</sup> What are known as "enabling conditions" (ENC) are specified in the draft Regulation COM(2018)375, Art. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Wording based on the compromise version discussed by the Committee of Permanent Representatives II (COREPER II) on 18 December 2019. Working translation from English to Czech. In order to meet this condition a Member State is obliged to adopt a national framework for implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities that includes objectives with measurable goals, data collection and monitoring mechanisms and arrangements to ensure that the accessibility policy, legislation and standards are properly reflected in the preparation and implementation of the programmes.

## 1.1 Basic Information on the National Plan

<b>BASIC INFORMATION</b>	
<b>Title</b>	National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2025
<b>Category</b>	National, medium-term, with society-wide impact
<b>Contracting Authority</b>	Government of the Czech Republic
<b>Lead Manager</b>	Government Board for Persons with disabilities and the Government Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>Coordinator</b>	Secretariat of the Government Board for Persons with Disabilities
<b>Year of Creation</b>	2020
<b>Approver</b>	Government of the Czech Republic
<b>Date of Approval</b>	20 July 2020
<b>Form of Approval</b>	Government hearing
<b>Latest Revision</b>	
<b>Previous Document</b>	National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities of Persons with disabilities 2015–2020
<b>Related Legislation</b>	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>Implementation Period</b>	2021–2025
<b>Responsibility for Implementation</b>	Ministries and institutions to which measures are assigned
<b>Context of Creation</b>	This document follows up on the previous National Plans. Ensuring equal rights for persons with disabilities is a long-term process. There is still a range of issues that need to be addressed in order to fully integrate this group of people, thus another plan has been drafted.
<b>Brief Description of the Issue and Content of the Strategy</b>	The issue of living conditions of persons with disabilities is a complex topic that concerns all areas of life, which must be dealt with not only within the managing activity of the relevant ministries, but also interdepartmentally.

## **1.2 Reasons for and Purpose of the National Plan**

The basic purpose of the National Plan is to ensure equal rights and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities through the availability of a dignified and independent life for this group and to create an environment that is minimally restrictive/barrier-ridden. Given that in many cases the current environment and perception of society still impedes access of disabled persons to their rights, the goal of the National Plan and the state policy in general is to establish and shore up such conditions and provide support that allows persons with disabilities to live as independent a life as possible and to develop their abilities and skills.

As part of the strategic direction of the Czech Republic, the intention of drafting a National Plan is to follow up on the state policy realised thus far in this area. Another reason is living up to international commitments, in particular implementing the individual articles of the Convention, but also other strategic documents at the level of the EU and Council of Europe.

Ensuring equal access and non-discrimination for persons with disabilities covers all important areas of human life in society. Despite this, the issue of living conditions for disabled persons is still very frequently perceived as a topic that belongs solely in the areas of social affairs, employment and health care. A typical example is the situation at regional authorities, where responsibility for the regional plan for equalising opportunities for persons with disabilities is usually entrusted to social affairs departments. Disabilities are, however, an interdepartmental problem in terms of jurisdiction. For this reason, interdepartmental cooperation is essential in providing for the needs and development of living conditions for persons with disabilities, and the National Plan creates the conditions for this and helps in its realisation.

Despite the fact that integration of persons with disabilities carries certain financial costs, it is an important condition for sustainable economic development. The return on implemented measures is demonstrable, even without taking into account incalculable values such as self-sufficiency, independence and a sense of self-realisation. The purpose of the National Plan is to set up functioning systems of education, social and medical services and an accessible environment in the broadest sense. If a system of effective prevention and treatment is established, expenditures for the services, support and care associated with disabilities could be much lower. The same is true in the case of expenses for removing barriers in buildings, transport and infrastructure. If a barrier-free environment is created, persons with disabilities can lead more independent lives and participate more in public life.

## **1.3 Context of Creation and Existence of the National Plan**

The social and political emancipation after 1989 laid the groundwork for rapid advancement in protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. Legislation governing areas with a direct bearing on persons with disabilities, such as social security, education, construction and transport, was adopted or amended. Obligations for conducting public governance and local governance were defined, including for example obligations in the field of social policy and territorial development, which significantly impacted responsibility for the situation in specific areas.

An important milestone in protecting against discrimination and ensuring equal treatment was hit with the adoption of Act No. 198/2009 Coll., on Equal Treatment and Legal Means of Protection against Discrimination and on Amendment to Certain Acts (the Anti-Discrimination Act), which entered into force on 1 September 2009. The Anti-Discrimination Act incorporates the relevant regulations of the European Communities, by which the Czech Republic is bound, and in connection with international agreements that are part of the Czech legal code it defines in more detail the right to equal opportunity and prohibition of discrimination in the areas laid down in this law.

A significant event that fundamentally strengthened the fulfilment of rights of persons with disabilities was the approval of the Convention, which the Czech Republic ratified in September 2009.

The economic crisis and the adoption of "austerity packages" led to a certain slowing of the process of integrating persons with disabilities. Support was particularly reduced in terms of subsidies, but construction focused on removing barriers in public buildings was also limited, with state support for procuring low-floor and barrier-free public transport vehicles being ceased as well. Restrictive measures in social areas implemented as part of the "social reform" in 2012 also had a negative impact on persons with disabilities and their families.

Another milestone in ensuring the equal rights of persons with disabilities was the adoption of a new Civil Code<sup>4</sup>, which entered into force on 1 January 2014 and which enshrined fundamental changes concerning the legal capacity of people, also realigning the rules for potential restrictions thereto.

During the period when the previous 2015–2020 National Plan was in effect no systemic changes took place with the exception of the field of education. During this time, certain restrictive measures realised during the economic crisis were gradually scaled back. The conditions for the right to certain specific benefits, the care allowance, special aid contribution and mobility contribution, were adjusted to be more favourable for persons with disabilities. It should also be mentioned that implementation of psychiatric care reform was commenced, with support and field services gradually being arranged by Mental Health Centre multidisciplinary teams, and a transformation of psychiatric hospitals is underway.

Although it can objectively be stated that the process of integrating persons with disabilities into society is gradually being successfully implemented, there are still a number of open and unresolved issues that directly affect the life of this group of people. An unfavourable situation persists in the field of employing persons with disabilities, particularly in terms of employment in the open labour market. The removal of barriers must continue at public buildings and transport structures that were built before the Building Act (requiring barrier-free construction) came into effect. Compliance with the valid regulations concerning structures being barrier-free must also be thoroughly monitored. Another urgent task is finding a transparent, just and effective manner of funding social services. The legislative treatment of coordinating rehabilitation has been tackled for decades now, and this is the initial step for establishing the conditions to ensure the continuity of individual components of rehabilitation and making sure rehabilitative care is comprehensive.

### 1.3.1 Institutional Context

In order to coordinate the state policy to benefit persons with disabilities, a Government Board for Persons with disabilities was established by way of Government Resolution No. 151 of 8 May 1991, becoming the coordinating, initiative and advisory body of the Czech government for the issue of supporting persons with disabilities. Through its activities the GBPD endeavours to create equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in all areas of society.

In 1992, the GBPD submitted and the Czech government approved the first strategic document focused on supporting equal rights for persons with disabilities – the National Plan for Assisting Persons with disabilities. Aside from members representing the central government authorities, members representing civil society, the professional public and the academic community dealing with the issue of persons with disabilities also participate in the activities of the GBPD.

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<sup>4</sup> Act No. 89/2012 Coll., the Civil Code, as amended.

The function of the GBPD secretariat is fulfilled by the Secretariat Department of the GBPD of the Czech Office of the Government.

The GBPD has six expert groups that work on topics to which the GBPD pays increased attention. These are as follows:

- Expert Group for Accessibility of Public Administration and Public Services
- Expert Group for Conceptual Solutions to the Issues of Living with Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Expert Group for Regional Development
- Expert Group for Employing Persons with disabilities
- Expert Group for Social Policy
- Expert Group for Education

At the Czech Chamber of Deputies, the area of disabled persons' rights is dealt with primarily by the Committee for Social Policy (in particular its Subcommittee for Social Services and Disabled Persons) and the Committee for Health Care. In the Senate it is the Committee for Health Care and Social Policy that deals with this area.

Significantly contributing to promoting the rights of persons with disabilities is the Public Defender of Rights, which is the monitoring body of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities.

Under the jurisdiction of the regions, the area of support for persons with disabilities is addressed through regional equal opportunity plans. Institutional support for this agenda is not, however, systemically provided for in the regions. Only certain regions have formed a competent commission or similar body for coordinating activity in this area.

Other public institutions also devote themselves to the topic of rights of persons with disabilities, for example the CSO, the Czech Labour Office and labour inspectorates, and representatives of both employers and employees.

### **1.3.2 Civil Society and Protecting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

The situation after 1989 also created new conditions for the development of civic initiatives, which were most strongly manifested in the creation and building of organisations defending the interests of persons with disabilities.

Associations were founded bringing together persons with disabilities on the basis of the specific type of disability not just at the national level, but also regionally and locally. At the same time, large associations operating nationwide were created that aimed above all to formulate and defend specific needs based on the individual types of disability and lobby for ways to satisfy these needs.

The activities of newly emerging associations of persons with disabilities focused primarily on two basic areas – defending the rights and interests of these persons and providing services that were needed but currently lacking. The activities of these organisations began to hone in on lobbying for what for them were essential legislative and organisational measures, spreading public awareness on the issue of disabilities, spreading awareness on treatment, rehabilitation, reconditioning and psychological care for persons with disabilities, publishing activities for its members and the lay and professional public, working together with similar organisations abroad, and (no less important) also the active use of free time (cultural and sporting events, trips, recreational sojourns for families with children, integrated camps for children, etc.). In order to make up for lacking or poorly functioning services, many associations became the founders or operators of various facilities providing services to persons with disabilities such as schools, educational facilities, care centres, counselling facilities, education

and social rehabilitation and outreach social-service facilities (personal assistance, care service).

Organisations for persons with disabilities are associated under an umbrella organisation – the Czech National Disability Council (hereinafter the "CNDC"), which was founded in 2000 and currently brings together more than 90 organisations for persons with disabilities. The members of the CNDC are organisations for persons with disabilities in which disabled persons or their legal representatives form an absolute majority of the individual members. The primary objective of the CNDC is to defend, lobby for and fulfil the interests and needs of persons with disabilities in cooperation with state authorities and local governments in the Czech Republic and international institutions.

The equality and independence of individual member organisations is ensured by the fact that membership in the CNDC allows all the organisations to participate in addressing all problems concerning living with a disability in coordination with the other member organisations, but it does not deny them the right to be a member of other groups at a national or international level, nor to act independently as part of its activities laid down by its own statutes.

The focal point of the CNDC's activities is primarily legislation, providing services and counselling for creating equal opportunities for the disabled in all areas of life, public awareness, and working with other organisations for persons with disabilities at the international level.

### 1.3.3 International Context

Plans for supporting inclusion of persons with disabilities are adopted and regularly updated in the majority of states of Europe and in many countries outside of Europe. In some countries, such a plan has been adopted in connection with ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities; in most parties to the Convention, however, these documents implement the Convention, which serves as the foundation for their creation (a strategic document of this type has been adopted by nearly 75% of all parties to the Convention).

Plans are generally adopted for a period of five to ten years and tend to be divided up into areas concerning implementation of individual articles of the Convention. Plans and strategies created at the national or federal level are also frequently accompanied by similar documents produced at lower administrative levels (in provinces, Länder or self-governing units).

## 1.4 Users of the National Plan

The main users of the National Plan are the **ministries, other public authorities and institutions** that are responsible for implementing individual measures. Through the National Plan, the basic mission of public administration is realised, this being the creation of conditions for the rights of citizens to be fulfilled, including persons with disabilities, and also the provision and guaranteeing of public services.

Although it is not possible for non-legislative material to assign tasks to territorial authorities, many areas that concern the life of persons with disabilities fall under the jurisdiction of regions and municipalities. Thus, **regions** are also key entities, which create networks of social and medical services, arrange transport services and hold important powers in terms of schools and in many other areas in their territory. The National Plan should thus be an inspiration for these authorities in creating regional plans to level out opportunities in relation to persons with disabilities.

The primary users of the National Plan, or rather the results of its measures being implemented, are **persons with disabilities**, as it is them and their incorporation into society upon which these measures are focused. Disabilities significantly impact not only the lives of persons with disabilities but also their families, especially if family members care for the disabled person directly. The provision of a barrier-free and accessible environment and public services has an impact on all of society. Many tasks thus affect a much greater segment of society than just the disabled. For example, the demand for a barrier-free environment also concerns those whose movement is restricted by an environment with barriers (people with a temporary health impediment, parents with strollers, pregnant women, seniors). The creation of easy-to-understand texts also helps better inform seniors or people with a different mother tongue. In such cases, fulfilling the tasks contained in the National Plan will have a positive impact on nearly half the population of the Czech Republic.

To a lesser extent, further users of the National Plan are **non-profit non-governmental organisations for persons with disabilities** of national, regional and local purview, which are the target primarily of measures concerning their participation in managing public affairs and financial contributions in the form of subsidies for realising National Plan objectives.

The other users who can work with the National Plan and take part in its implementation include employee representatives, employer representatives, the private sector, the media, experts, research workers, the academic sector and political representatives.

## 1.5 Basic Terms Used

### ***Persons with disabilities***

The term "persons with disabilities" used by the National Plan stems from the definition under Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities: *"Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."*

In general, it can be said that a person with a disability is one who, due to their state of health or long-term or permanent health disadvantage, has certain specific needs or requires an individual approach. Despite the fact that the group of persons with disabilities is not homogenous and there are many types and combinations of disabilities, disabilities are frequently perceived as solely physical disabilities.

The basis for the use of terms in connection with persons with disabilities is the principle of *people first*, i.e. use of the terms "persons with disabilities", "people with handicaps", etc., not "the disabled", "the handicapped", where the disability is seen as the primary and very often sole characteristic of the person.

### ***Disability***

The definition of the term "disability" is influenced by how society treats persons with disabilities. In modern times such persons were first fully reliant on charity and thus completely dependent on assistance from their surroundings. Although this attitude still applies to some extent, it must be realised that this essentially does not allow a person with a disability to take on full legal personality and make decisions for themselves.

The goal of a more modern, medicinal or medical approach is to examine the differences of persons with disabilities, attempt to define the disability with a description of the component limitations and diagnoses, and return them to society with the help of treatment and rehabilitation.

The newest approach is a social approach that especially supports autonomous decision-making and equal rights for persons with disabilities. This approach thus places greater demands on society, which must be active and adopt measures to remove obstacles preventing persons with disabilities from exercising their rights. This approach is promoted by international documents in the field of human rights.

Disabilities are defined differently in the various legal regulations of the Czech Republic depending on the specific focus and purpose of the given norm. Thus, a medicinal model is used (e.g. when assessing the state of health under the social security system) in combination with a social model (e.g. the Education Act).

### ***Accessibility***

The term "accessibility" permeates nearly all areas of living with a disability. It can be defined as the level to which a product, facility, service or environment is accessible to as large a number of people as possible. Thus, accessibility can generally be considered as the ability of a given product, service or environment to ensure access to all people without distinction. In order to ensure equal access, it is therefore imperative that the greatest level of accessibility be supported in all areas.

### ***Universal design***

Tied closely to the term "accessibility" is the term "universal design", which means designing products, equipment, programmes and services so they can be used to the greatest extent possible by all people without the need for further modification, i.e. so that they are fully accessible. The group of users of goods and services should be extended to all of society so that no group is forgotten and no goods or service is completely inaccessible. Subsequent modification and production of special products or creating specific approaches is not only discriminatory, but also often financially demanding.

Universal design does not however rule out the existence of support aids for certain groups of persons with disabilities if their use is pragmatic.

### ***Governance accessibility***

The term "governance accessibility" does not yet have an appropriate equivalent in Czech that adequately captures the expression, and this is therefore translated as "accessibility of public administration and public services".

Governance accessibility is mechanisms that make public administration, its services and other public services accessible to all citizens with specific regard for persons with disabilities. It is a set of principles that must be observed in order for public services to be already accessible when they are established.

In formulating the rules for carrying out public administration and providing public services, the accessibility requirements must be respected and taken into account at all levels. Public services performed by an entity other than a public authority must also be useable on an equal basis. The basic principle is not to exclude persons with disabilities, but to integrate them. In the case of services and performance of public administration, the proper approach is thus not to create special services for these clients, but on the contrary to adapt standard services so that they are usable and accessible to all.

## 1.6 Relevant Strategic Documents

### 1.6.1 History of national plans

Since 1992 the Czech Republic has been regularly adopting and updating its national plans for persons with disabilities, the goal of which is to improve conditions and quality of life for persons with disabilities and integrate them into society. Organisations representing the interests of persons with disabilities have always also taken part in preparing and monitoring national plans.

#### **National plans and concepts concerning the rights of persons with disabilities:**

- National Plan for Assisting Disabled Citizens (approved in 1992 by way of Czech Government Resolution No. 466)
- National Plan of Measures for Reducing the Negative Consequences of Disabilities (approved in 1993 by way of Czech Government Resolution No. 493)
- National Plan for Equalling Opportunities for Citizens with Disabilities (approved in 1998 by way of Czech Government Resolution No. 256)
- Medium-Term Concept for State Policy on Citizens with Disabilities (approved in 2004 by way of Czech Government Resolution No. 605)
- National Plan for Support and Integration of Citizens with Disabilities for the Period 2006–2009 (approved in 2005 by way of Czech Government Resolution No. 1004)
- National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with disabilities 2010–2014 (approved in 2010 by way of Czech Government Resolution No. 253)
- National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with disabilities 2015–2020 (approved in 2015 by way of Czech Government Resolution No. 385)

The form of the fifth plan, which was the National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with disabilities 2010–2014, was fundamentally influenced by the pivotal UN document, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities. The following national plan also draws on the individual articles of the Convention, implementing them.

Implementation of the individual plans and concepts has led to an improvement in the state's approach to persons with disabilities and ensures a more dignified and higher quality of life for this group. Among the most significant positive changes is a greater emphasis on equal access and non-discrimination in the education of children and students with disabilities, gradually improved access to individual types of public transport (the number of barrier-free stations and stops and barrier-free vehicles is increasing), improved accessibility of public administration information systems, a gradual rise in the number of museums and galleries that are barrier-free, and improved accessibility of public library and information services.

### 1.6.2 Strategic documents in the Czech Republic

The National Plan is the main medium-term conceptual document at the government level that deals with ensuring equal rights for persons with disabilities. The issue of persons with disabilities should, however, also be taken into account during the creation and implementation of other strategic documents devoted to the areas contained in the National Plan. Even though these strategies may not explicitly list persons with disabilities as one of their target groups, measures focused on Czech citizens also target these persons as an integral part of society.

A whole range of strategic documents focused on individual topics are issued, also touching closely on the rights and status of persons with disabilities (employment, health care, social services, transport, housing and education). The National Plan differs from these documents

in that the measures contained within it are focused on a narrowly defined group and concern many different areas.

This subchapter mentions the most important strategic documents that apply to the areas of the National Plan. Listing and describing the relevant documents is made more difficult, however, by the fact that these documents are generally produced at the same time as the National Plan and thus their final form is not known.

**The Government Strategy for Equality of Women and Men in the Czech Republic** is a strategy for the area of gender equality. It lays out the Czech government's policy, reflects the actual needs for institutional provision of equality between women and men and defines the issue of equality between women and men as a priority for all of society. It relates to the National Plan primarily in the area of domestic violence, i.e. violence against persons with disabilities. This area is dealt with specifically by the **Action Plan for Preventing Domestic and Gender-Based Violence for 2019–2022**, which focuses primarily on partner, intergenerational and sexual violence. Under the measures that should lead to more thorough prevention and more accessible assistance for victims, the position of persons facing multiple forms of discrimination, including that of persons with disabilities, is taken into account.

**The Social Inclusion Strategy 2021–2030** covers the main areas that are important for social inclusion of socially excluded people or people at risk of social exclusion. The strategy lays out the Czech Republic's priority topics in areas important for social inclusion. The strategy shows the direction that the resolution of social inclusion should take, promotes socially responsible values as they apply to social exclusion, points out the shortcomings in the search for solutions to social exclusion and advocates a spread of the principle of mainstreaming social exclusion at all administrative levels.

**The National Strategy for the Development of Social Services for 2016–2025** also relates to social areas, laying out social policy targets in terms of conceiving and developing support for persons with disabilities and providing social services. The setting of sub-goals concerning individual providers of social services, the specifics of regional networks, and proposed solutions to social problems that occur at the level of lower self-governing units are in the jurisdiction of regions and municipalities. The vision of this strategy is for a flexible network of social services to exist in the Czech Republic to help address the needs of people in unfavourable social situations, which is financed through a transparent, efficient and just system.

An important document in the field of health and health care is the **Strategic Framework for Development of Health Care in the Czech Republic 2030**, the main goal of which is provision of accessible and quality health care to all inhabitants of the Czech Republic. The **Psychiatric Care Reform Strategy**, which is implemented by the **National Action Plan for Mental Health 2020–2030**, is devoted to reforming psychiatric care. The most marked change in the system of psychiatric care is the expansion of Mental Health Centres on a community basis, support for expanding ambulant care facilities, and also incorporation of psychiatric departments into general hospitals. These activities will be realised along with destigmatisation and awareness campaigns, education of medical and non-medical staff, and also education of those around psychiatric care users – not only their families and loved ones, but also local government employees, the police and the justice and school systems.

There is any number of related strategic documents in this area, but most are undergoing revision (**National Strategy for Protecting and Supporting Health and Disease Prevention, Follow-up Care Concept, National Action Plan for Alzheimer's Disease and Other Similar Illnesses, National Strategy for Rare Diseases**).

The strategic document in the field of education is the **Long-Term Plan for Education and Development of the Education System of the Czech Republic for 2019–2023**, which applies to the whole regional education system, determines the framework for the regions' long-term plans and harmonises the approach of the state and individual regions, particularly

in terms of setting the parameters of the education system and goals of the Czech educational policy. One of its objectives is ensuring equal opportunities in education for children and students with special educational needs, for example by streamlining the system of school counselling facilities; supporting equal access to education at all levels of school, thus allowing every child and student to fully develop their abilities in the company of their peers; and providing for a common approach at the level of school founders, municipalities with extended powers and regions.

Development in the field of culture is governed by the **State Culture Policy for 2015–2020 with an Outlook to 2025**, and the related documents which are primarily the **Integrated Strategy for the Support of Culture** and the **Implementation Plan of the State Cultural Policy**, which is currently also undergoing revision.

The strategic document in the relevant area of transport and passenger rights is the **Transport Policy of the Czech Republic 2014–2020 with an Outlook to 2050**.

### 1.6.3 International documents

The National Plan also follows up on a number of documents adopted at the European and international level. These are primarily human rights conventions and strategic documents of the Council of Europe and European Union, including legal regulations in the field of the rights of persons with disabilities.

#### United Nations

The most important international-law document in terms of the rights of persons with disabilities is the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities and its Optional Protocol**. The Convention was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13 December 2006 and entered into force on 3 May 2008. The Czech Republic ratified the Convention in September of 2009 and it entered into force 28 October 2009. The Convention follows up on seven already existing UN human rights conventions and is the first of them to allow regional economic cooperation organisations, such as the EU, to accede.

The Convention does not establish new rights or entitlements for persons with disabilities, but rather explicitly sets out the rights of such persons in a manner that takes into account their specific situation and needs. It is based on the principles of respecting inherent dignity, personal independence, non-discrimination, full and effective participation and incorporation into society, respecting diversity and accepting persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and nature, equal opportunities, accessibility, equality of men and women and respecting the developing abilities of children with disabilities, including their right to maintain their identity.

The Convention adopts a broad categorisation of persons with disabilities and also identifies areas in which changes should be made for persons with disabilities so they can effectively exercise their rights. It is important to create conditions to ensure an independent way of life and personal mobility, above all by removing barriers in buildings and transport; the accessibility of information, inclusive education, and the availability of appropriate health care and employment, for example, are also essential.

Article 33 of the Convention foresees the creation of an independent monitoring mechanism focused on support, protecting and monitoring implementation of the Convention. Since 1 January 2018, monitoring of the rights of persons with disabilities has been entrusted to the Public Defender of Rights (Ombudsman), which conducts studies, publishes reports and issues recommendations, also proposing measures leading to the protection of rights of

persons with disabilities, and runs an Advisory Body to this end. Every year it issues separate comprehensive reports on its monitoring activity<sup>5</sup>.

Along with the text of the Convention, the UN General Assembly also adopted the text of an Optional Protocol, allowing signatories to recognise the authority of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with disabilities to deal with complaints from individuals or groups of individuals concerning violations of rights under the individual provisions of the Convention. The Optional Protocol has not yet been ratified by the Czech Republic, but the ratification process is underway.

## **Council of Europe**

The Council of Europe has been dedicating itself to setting standards and creating policies for persons with disabilities at the international level since 1959. In 1992 a comprehensive Council of Europe policy was adopted for persons with disabilities<sup>6</sup>. This policy laid down the general principles for preventing persecution, active participation in societal life and independence in areas such as health care, education, employment and accessibility. The issued recommendations include issues of universal design, deinstitutionalisation, rehabilitation and more.

The **European Social Charter** which, along with the **European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms** and instruments concerning the protection of minorities forms the European system of human rights protection, deals with disability issues primarily under Articles 9 (right to career guidance), 10 (right to vocational training) and 15 (right of persons with physical or mental disabilities to vocational training, professional and social rehabilitation).

Another important instrument in this area is the Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017–2023<sup>7</sup>. This strategy follows up on the preceding Action Plan 2006–2015 and identifies five cross-sectional areas (equality and non-discrimination, awareness raising, accessibility, equal recognition before the law, and freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse) that must be taken into account in all the activities of the Council of Europe and which member states should reflect in their legal regulations, policies and activities to improve all aspects of the life of persons with disabilities.

## **European Union**

European Union primary law first explicitly regulated the rights of persons with disabilities on 1 May 1999, when the Amsterdam Treaty entered into force. Article 13 thereof allowed the Council of the EU to take appropriate action to combat discrimination, including on the grounds

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<sup>5</sup> Public Defender of Rights. 2019. *Monitoring of the Rights of Persons with disabilities 2018*. Available at: [https://www.ochrance.cz/fileadmin/user\\_upload/CRPD/Vyrocní\\_zpravy/CRPD\\_2018\\_CZ\\_web.pdf](https://www.ochrance.cz/fileadmin/user_upload/CRPD/Vyrocní_zpravy/CRPD_2018_CZ_web.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Recommendation No. R (92) 6 of the Committee of Ministers on a coherent policy for persons with disabilities.

<sup>7</sup> Council of Europe. 2016. *Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017–2023*. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/16806fe7d4>

of disability. The new Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (hereinafter the "TFEU"), which entered into force on 1 December 2009, preserves and strengthens this provision (new Article 19 of the TFEU) and adds a new provision (Article 10 of the TFEU), which stipulates that "in defining and implementing its policies and activities, the Union shall aim to combat discrimination based on gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age". Entering into force along with the TFEU was the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which was adopted in 2000 and which contains a number of references to the area of disabilities.

The document that covers the EU policy in regards to persons with disabilities is the **European Disability Strategy 2010–2020: A Renewed Commitment to a Barrier-Free Europe**<sup>8</sup>, which is currently being evaluated, and it is expected that a strategy will be issued for the next period.

In 2000, the EU Council adopted Directive 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation. The aim of this directive is not to create specific measures for persons with disabilities, but to remove obstacles preventing them from asserting their rights and integrating into society. The directive prohibits all discrimination, direct or indirect, on the basis of religion or faith, disability, age or sexual orientation. With regard to disabilities, the directive also considers insufficient adaptation of the workplace to be discrimination. In addition, refusing or neglecting to adopt the measures necessary in a specific case for a person with a disability to have access to rights under specific legislation is also considered indirect discrimination on grounds of disability, unless such a measure would constitute a disproportionate burden on a natural or legal person. This directive has been integrated into the Czech legal code primarily through Act No. 198/2009 Coll., on Equal Treatment and Legal Means of Protection against Discrimination and on the Amendment of Certain Acts (Anti-Discrimination Act).

In 2016 the European Parliament and EU Council adopted Directive 2016/2102 on the accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public sector entities, according to which the websites and mobile applications of public administration entities must be accessible to their users, i.e. perceivable, operable, understandable and robust, so that they can be effectively used by persons with disabilities using assistive technologies or specialised programmes at their disposal. The directive was implemented into the Czech legal code with Act No. 99/2019 Coll., on the Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications and on Amendment to Act No. 365/2000 Coll., on Public Administration Information Systems and on the Amendment to Certain Other Acts, as amended (hereinafter the "Act on Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications").

June 2019 saw the approval of the long-awaited Directive 2019/882/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the accessibility requirements for products and services, also called the European Accessibility Act (hereinafter the "EAA"), which provides for harmonisation of the accessibility requirements for certain goods and services. The directive thus improves, among other things, the accessibility of computers and operating systems, payment terminals, smart phones and TVs, as well as for instance telephone services, banking, electronic sales and certain elements of services in air, rail and water transport (websites, mobile services, electronic ticketing, information). It also contributes to better and smoother functioning of the EU internal market. The proposed directive is meant to help Member States live up to their national commitments, as well as the accessible commitments they have under the Convention.

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<sup>8</sup>Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. *European Disability Strategy 2010–2020: A Renewed Commitment to a Barrier-Free Europe*. 2010. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0636:FIN:cs:PDF>

The European Union regulates various issues in the field of protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities under many legal instruments, with the majority of them concerning primarily passenger transport and social affairs.

On the basis of an EU Council Decision of 26 November 2009 concerning the conclusion, by the European Community, of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities (2010/48/EC), the European Union is also a party to the Convention as of 22 January 2011.

## 2 Analytical Part

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### 2.1 Definition of the Issue

Persons with disabilities are a group that has specific demands and needs compared to majority society, that is to say their demands and needs are the same, but the fulfilment thereof often needs to be realised in a different manner. For this group of people to be fully incorporated into an intact society, it must be ensured that they can exercise their rights to the same extent as others. For this reason, it is necessary to use targeted measures to create conditions to allow for integration and equalling out of opportunities.

### 2.2 Revision of Existing Measures

The National Plan follows up on the above-mentioned **National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with disabilities 2015–2020**. Fulfilment of the measures contained in that document was annually monitored and checked by the Czech government, with an overall evaluation to be conducted once it has ended, i.e. in 2021.

The 2015–2020 National Plan contained a total of 172 measures, either ongoing or with deadlines. It can be stated that the tasks laid down by the individual measures were successfully completed in most cases. For 2018, for example, 15 measures with deadlines were not completed. Fulfilment of deadline-tied measures that dealt with major or even systemic changes was also problematic; unfortunately, these were not met. For these important tasks, the deadline for completion is being shifted again, with some having already been moved forward from the plan for 2010–2014 (an example being the legal treatment of coordinating rehabilitation).

In the area of **Equal Treatment and Protection against Discrimination**, significant progress was made towards creating a monitoring mechanism for the Convention, which is now being carried out by the Public Defender of Rights. Ratification has still not been completed on the Optional Protocol to the Convention, which allows individual complaints to be submitted in cases where the individual articles are not being observed by a State Party.

A precondition for improving the situation in many areas is **Public Education** focused on protecting the rights of persons with disabilities and raising awareness about their situation, about their abilities and benefit for society. These activities are supported primarily through subsidies, in a few cases also being realised through government activities (GBPD, MH, MoA) and also through training of civil servants.

Progress in the field of **Accessibility of Buildings and Transport, Access to Information** has been gradual, helped in part by realisation of the National Development Programme for Mobility for All, under which municipalities present plans for barrier-free routes. The MRD was

tasked with checking the need for formation of a professional organisation of experts on barrier-free use of structures. In the Czech Republic there is already the Czech Chamber of Architects and the Czech Chamber of Authorised Engineers and Technicians in Construction. There was a broad consensus that setting up a third professional organisation was redundant. Some ministries (MH and MJ) began mapping out the accessibility of their own buildings. This mapping is, however, progressing very slowly for the other ministries. In terms of transport, this plan contains several measures focused on gradually making public passenger transport more accessible.

In the field of **Emergencies and Critical Situations**, the 2015–2020 National Plan focused primarily on the awareness of persons with disabilities; these activities take place regularly.

In terms of **Equality before the Law and Access to Justice**, the conflict of jurisdiction between the affected ministries concerning public guardianship was not resolved. However, the MJ continues to monitor and assess the functioning of guardianship when a legal adult's ability to act legally is disputed, comparing the results to the demands of Article 12 of the Convention and informing the lay and professional public about it. No further action has yet been taken.

The key measures in the area of **Independent Living** concern social services. A long-term task is support for transformation of residential social-service facilities, but the transformation itself is not taking place overly quickly, as this process requires the allocation of significant funds. One of the measures was also to draw up material and a technical standard for social services. Though this has been drafted, it has not yet been enshrined in the legislation. No less important is figuring out the method of funding for social services and also legislatively securing the economic balance and stability of the whole system; however, this task also remains to be done. An important measure in the social area is finding a systemic solution for assessing the needs of people who require long-term care and enshrining it legislatively, which has also not yet been realised.

The measures in the field of **Personal Mobility** involve supervising the accessibility of medical devices and special aids for persons with disabilities; and supporting the development and production of compensatory aids, medical devices, assistive technologies and medical device rental agencies. These measures have essentially been fulfilled, but the excessive delay in processing contributions for special aids on the part of the Labour Office and Social Security has been criticised by persons with disabilities.

The central task in the field of **Accessibility of Information and Public Services**, i.e. setting up and implementing a new national public administration information accessibility framework, has been completed. A methodology has been produced for making public administration informative materials and texts accessible in an easy-to-understand form, and the application of this in practice will be a task of the new National Plan. The possibility of applying technical means for automated speech recognition and transcription for communication with persons with hearing impairments was examined, but this technology still has significant shortcomings, thus more suitable services for ensuring communication began to be applied and used (e.g. speech transcription). The Act on Accessibility of Website and Mobile Applications implemented the EU Directive on Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications into the Czech legal code; this charges public sector entities with ensuring this accessibility, but this act contains exemptions which do not guarantee full accessibility (e.g. neither Czech Radio nor Czech Television are obliged entities).

Under the MLSA, methodological materials, guides and professional publications are being produced on the topic of **Support for Family Life**, in particular foster care and adoption. A project focused on this area is also underway in cooperation with the regions. Programmes aiming to support the independent life of young persons with disabilities who are leaving institutional care are also being realised. One of the ongoing tasks is public awareness focused on prevention of violence against persons with disabilities in institutional care facilities.

The basic goal of the chapter **Education of Children and Students with Disabilities** is to apply the principle of inclusive education. Over the past five years, significant systemic changes have occurred in this area, helping improve the education of students with special needs, particularly in the availability of support measures for such students. However, it is still necessary to resolve a number of problems associated in particular with the quality of counselling services and ensuring sufficient staffing. To date no measures have been implemented for adopting standards for school counselling facilities for pupils with disabilities. Though an investigation was conducted on recommendations for education in schools specially set up for children with disabilities and an analysis was made of how full these schools are, including an analysis of the expertise of these schools in relation to the types of disabilities of their students, this part of the education system must still be addressed. It is also imperative to ensure that quality education be provided and that recommending education in such schools not be overused. The measure aiming to evaluate the functioning of the special educational needs assessment model based on a scale of support measures was also fulfilled. Several methodologies were produced concerning the teaching of pupils with hearing impairments. The measure for secondary school curricula to respect the specifics of educating individual groups of pupils with disabilities was also met. Significant progress was also made in tertiary education, specifically through an amendment to Act No. 111/1998 Coll., on Higher Education and on Amendment to Other Acts (the Higher Education Act) and the Government Regulation on Standards for Accreditation in Higher Education, which laid down that a university must ensure equal access to studies for all applicants. Post-secondary schools must however still be supported, especially financially, so as to fully open their studies to students with disabilities. Last but not least, another significant area is the training of pedagogical employees, both in terms of life-long learning, and in ensuring their training at university faculties. This is a long-term task addressed by the National Plan as well.

Important tasks in **Provision of Health Care** are the expansion of primary prevention, followed by health care, integrated care in health and social facilities, support of preventive and rehabilitational therapeutic activities for persons with disabilities and chronic illnesses, as well as support for expanding volunteer activities in healthcare facilities. These activities were supported through MH subsidies, but funding for this programme is constantly being cut back. The measure to amend the decree on medical documentation to make it compulsory to include information on compensation aids and forms of communication used by a patient with a disability was fulfilled. In order to ensure problem-free care provided by a caretaker while a patient with a disability is staying in a healthcare facility, this matter must be clearly adjusted, but this task has not been fulfilled. It was also checked whether the issues of disabilities and their consequences are sufficiently contained in the curricula of medical schools.

Separate tasks were devoted to **Reform of the Psychiatric Care System**, which are gradually being realised through a number of projects. Inter-ministerial cooperation is an ongoing problem, particularly with the MLSA but with other ministries as well. For 2018 the task was to create an inter-ministerial supervisory system for psychiatric care, which did occur, but this supervisory mechanism has not yet been enshrined in the legislation. A National Action Plan for Mental Health 2020–2030 was drawn up.

In order to ensure quality **Rehabilitation** of persons with disabilities it is essential that this process be carried out comprehensively and that the individual components of rehabilitation be linked together. No legal treatment ensuring coordination of rehabilitation and the instruments for its funding has yet been drawn up however, and this task remains undone, in fact, from the previous national plan.

In the area of **Employment of Persons with disabilities**, a key task has been to conduct a complete revision of the system of employment support for this group of persons, yet this task has not been completely fulfilled. So far only partial steps have been taken, dealing primarily with employment in the sheltered labour market. An important step was harmonising the minimum wage for all employees, including those with disabilities. Emphasis is also placed on

employing persons with disabilities in the civil service, which in this regard should serve as an example for the private sector, but this is still not exactly the case.

In terms of **Social Security and Social Protection**, an adequate standard of living must be ensured for persons with disabilities. For the purposes of this system, a health assessment system must be expanded and improved. The task of proposing changes to this system has not yet been fulfilled, however. The measure ordering that the suspension of use of the ICF classification be reviewed also remains unfulfilled. Another very important area is informal care provided in a family environment, and thus it is necessary to increase support for this form of care.

The Czech Office of the Government's subsidy programme Support for Public Benefit Activities of Associations of the Disabled primarily serves to **strengthen the Participation of Organisations for persons with disabilities in the Administration of Public Affairs**, but the funding earmarked for this programme is insufficient and thus many such associations that apply for a subsidy are not supported.

In terms of ensuring **Equal Access to Exercising the Right to Vote**, a feasibility analysis was drawn up to remove obstacles preventing persons with disabilities from exercising their right to vote due to restrictions on their legal capacity, working on experience from abroad. In this area the Czech Republic is still not living up to the Convention, in that the right to vote is not granted to all persons with disabilities without distinction.

It is also necessary to ensure the conditions for **Participation in Cultural Life** for persons with disabilities; this is done, for example, via barrier-free modifications to cultural institutions and regular organisation of special tours for persons with hearing and sight impairment. The digital collections of museums are also being expanded. Accessibility in this area is still improving, but the process is far from complete. Cultural activities by persons with disabilities are also supported through MC subsidies.

## 2.3 Statistic Data on Persons with disabilities

In order to streamline policy in relation to persons with disabilities, it is essential that the best possible statistical data be available on the number and structure of this group. The acquired information can be utilised as an instrument to identify and remove the barriers that persons with disabilities face in exercising their rights.

In 2018 the CSO conducted a Sample Survey of Persons with disabilities in cooperation with the Czech Institute of Health Information and Statistics<sup>9</sup>. In contrast to statistical surveys from 2007 and 2013, which drew on data acquired based on cooperation with general practitioners, these time data were collected through the method of surveying households, whereby trained CSO interviewers obtained the information they needed in the form of structured personal interviews directly with persons with disabilities. Just like the majority of statistical information on persons with disabilities in EU countries, this survey was based on the respondents' subjectively perceived limitations in performing everyday activities. The new method of obtaining statistical data does not allow comparison of results with output from previous studies, thus assessment of trends in the development of individual indicators will only be possible once another similar study has been conducted.

The primary task of the survey was to obtain information on the number of persons with disabilities in the Czech Republic and their structure in terms of age, gender, economic activity

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<sup>9</sup> Czech Statistical Office. 2019. Sample Survey of Persons with disabilities – 2018. Available at: <https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/vyberove-setreni-osob-se-zdravotnim-postizenim-2018>

and education. It was also determined what specific activities cause problems for persons with disabilities or cannot be managed without assistance or the need to use compensatory aids.

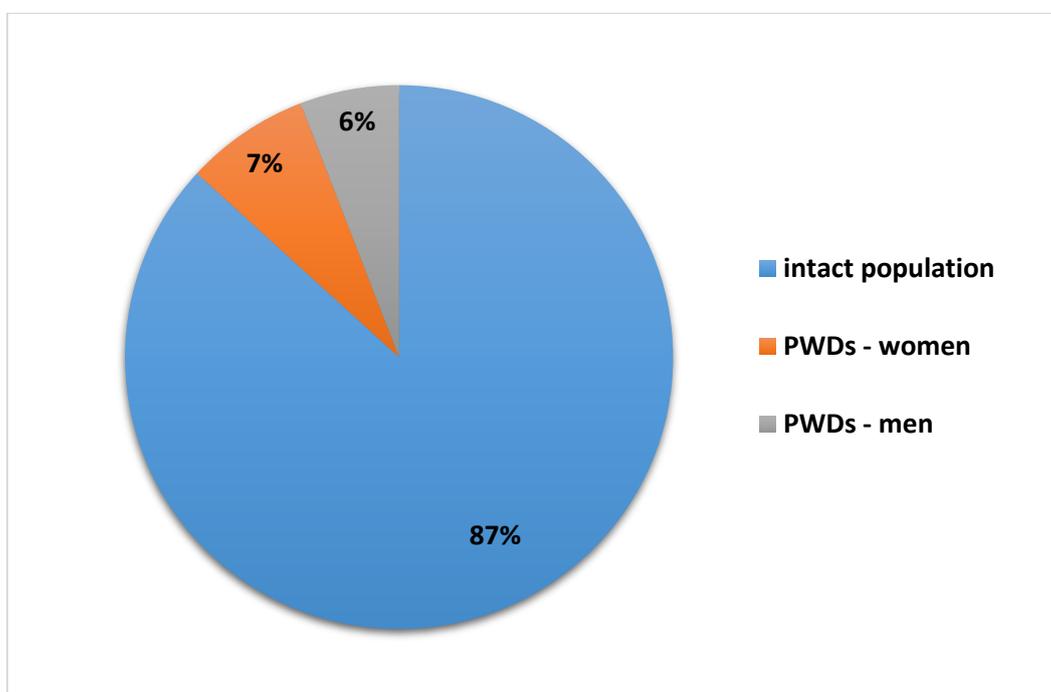
Along with the Sample Survey, an additional study was produced on persons with disabilities on whom the household survey did not focus<sup>10</sup>. This study therefore focused on children aged 0 to 14 with a disability and persons living permanently in residential facilities. The data on these people were processed using other available administrative sources of information.

### Main results from Sample Survey of Persons with disabilities 2018

According to the results of the study, 1.152 million persons with disabilities live in the Czech Republic, which is 13% of persons over 15 living in private households. In other European countries the percentage of persons with disabilities ranges from 5 to 25%. These large differences are not however due to a differing prevalence of disabilities, but differing methodologies and criteria in setting the definition of a disability.

Women slightly predominate among persons with disabilities (56%), which is caused primarily by the fact that they live to an older age, which is often associated with various health problems.

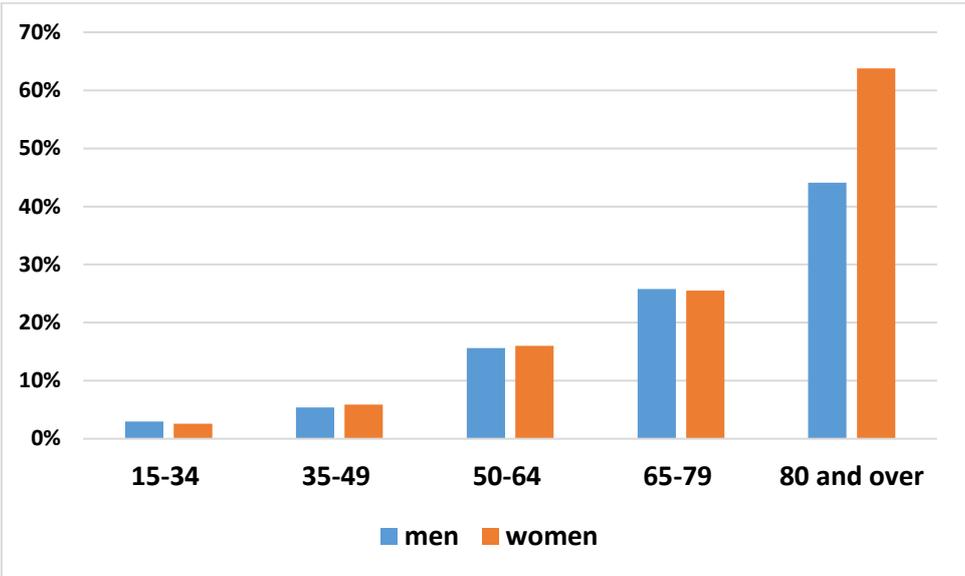
**Graph 1 Percentage of persons with disabilities in overall population**



At younger ages of up to 34, there are more men with disabilities on record than women (55%), but this proportion flips with increasing age and in the group of persons with disabilities older than 80, men form a mere 29%. The proportion of persons with disabilities in the population rises with age, forming a quarter among those aged 65–79 and every other person among seniors over 80 (56%).

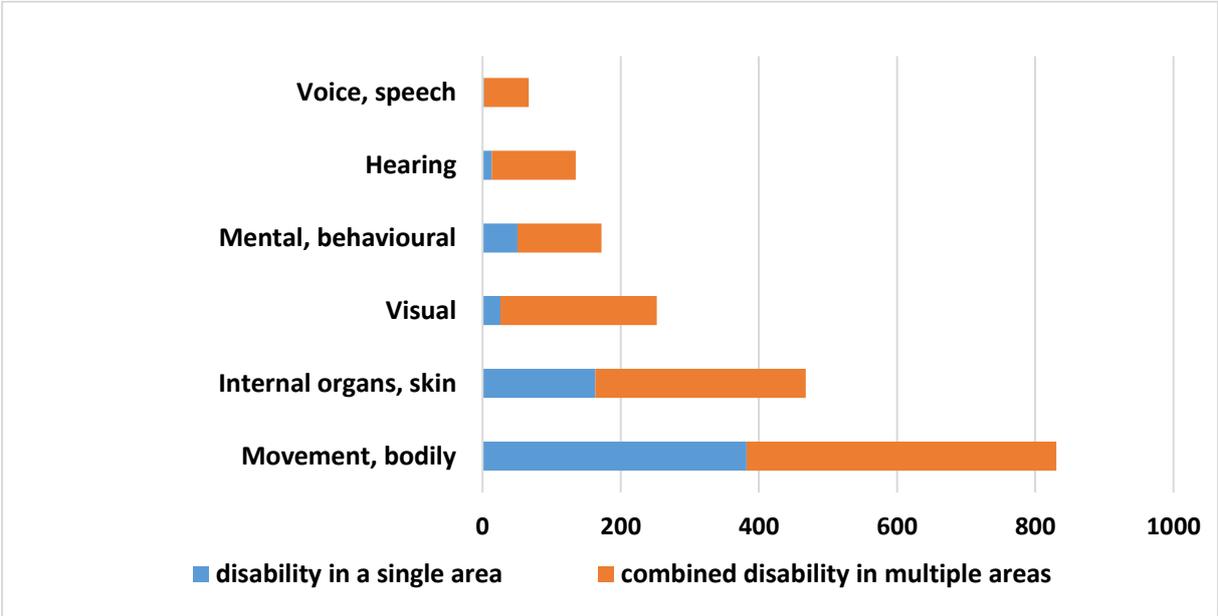
<sup>10</sup> Czech Statistical Office. 2019. Children with disabilities and persons with disabilities living outside private households – 2017, 2018. Available at: <https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/deti-se-zdravotnim-postizenim-a-osoby-se-zdravotnim-postizenim-zijici-mimo-soukrome-domacnosti-2017-2018>

**Graph 2 Percentage of persons with disabilities in overall population by age and gender**



Persons with disabilities are a very diverse group and their needs and problems also differ based on the area in which their disability manifests. A single illness or disability can impact multiple areas at the same time. Disabilities are felt most frequently, whether alone or in combination with another type of disability, as movement or bodily impairments (830 000), followed by internal or skin impairments (468 000) and visual impairments (252 400). In contrast, the least frequent disabilities are those affecting voice and speech, reported by 66 900 people.

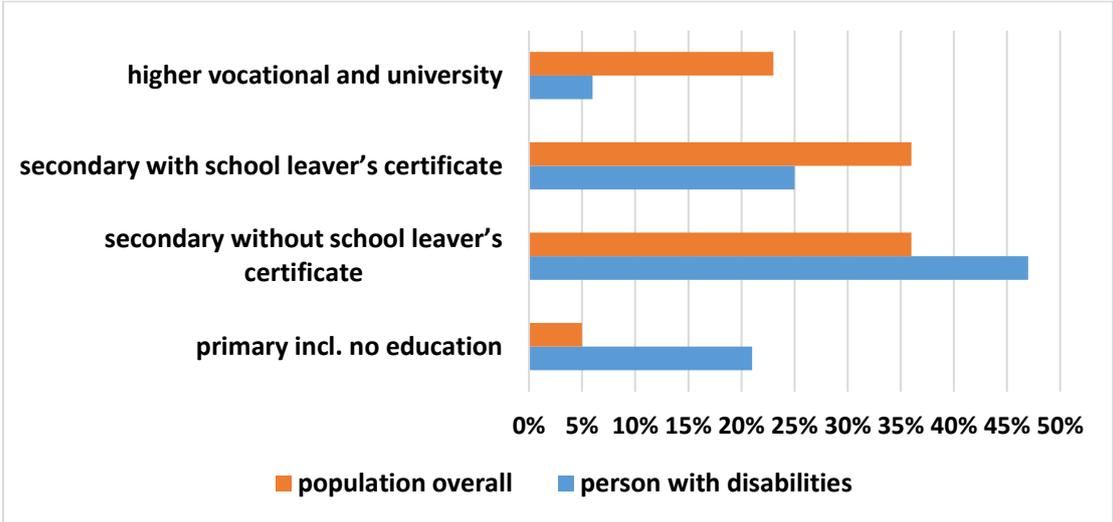
**Graph 3 Number of people with a disability by area of disability (in thousands)**



Most frequently, limitations caused by health problems only appear during the lifetime along with emerging illnesses or after injuries. Illness is the cause of disabilities for 75% of people, with injuries causing roughly 7% of disabilities, 9% being congenital and the remaining 9% a combination of the above causes.

The study also showed that persons with disabilities often achieve a lower level of education than in the overall population. Among persons with disabilities, the level of people with only primary or no education is four times higher (21% compared to 5%) than for those with secondary education with no school leaver’s certificate (47% compared to 36%), which more than two thirds of persons with disabilities aged 35–49 do not have.

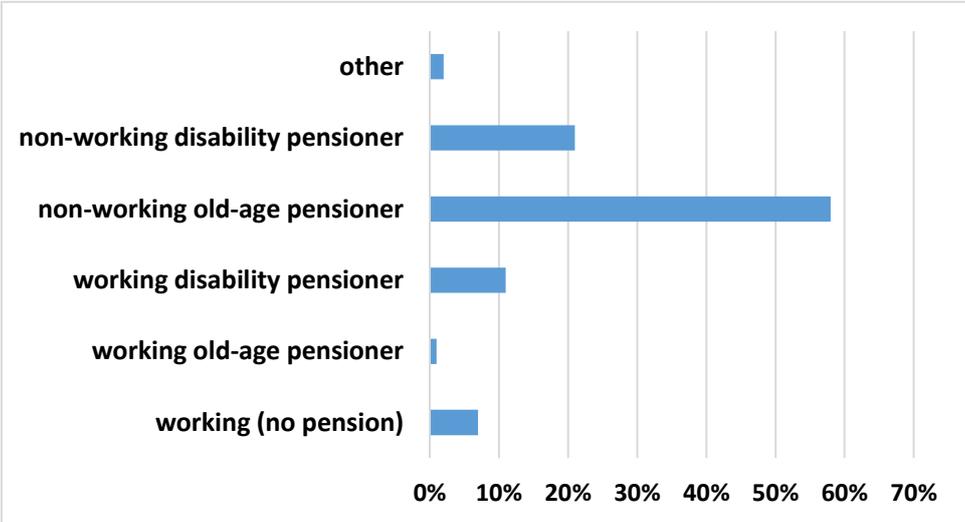
**Graph 4 Level of education of persons with disabilities and general population aged 35–49**



The proportion of persons that completed secondary education with a school leaver’s certificate or higher vocational or university education is less frequent than lower levels of education, with a school leaver’s certificate or higher education having been completed by just under a third (32%) of persons with disabilities, despite the fact that over half (53%) of the given age group had achieved such education in the overall population.

A disability in conjunction with age and level of education has a significant impact on economic status. The majority of persons with disabilities are people with old-age pensions, with nearly a third collecting a disability pension. According to the study, a mere 19% of all persons with disabilities, or 215 000, work. Two-thirds of those working with a disability work full-time, more men (76%) than women (55%). People under 50 also work full-time more frequently.

**Graph 5 Persons with disabilities by work and pension**



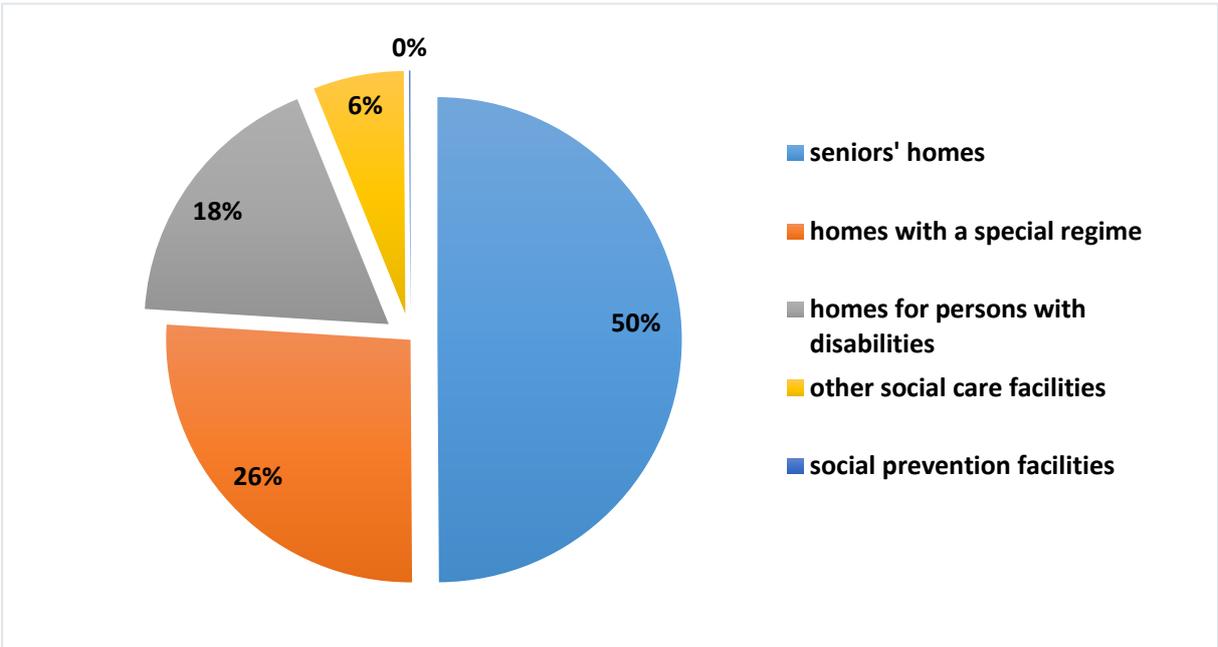
Disabilities also have a significant influence on other activities of everyday life. According to the study, persons with disabilities have the greatest trouble performing everyday housework and shopping, with further problems being architectural and orientational barriers in the environment and the accessibility of transport. Thus 52% of persons with disabilities make use of assistance from another person (596 000 people). Most frequently (96%), persons with disabilities are assisted by their relatives, with more than half of them living in a shared household.

**Main results of additional study on children with disabilities and persons living outside private households**

Roughly 7% (117 000) of children under 14 (inclusive) have a disability. This constitutes primarily children that have special educational needs due to a worsened state of health. Disability is twice as frequent in boys as in girls. Most frequently these are serious developmental learning or behavioural disorders or serious speech impediments.

Roughly 72 000 persons with disabilities live in selected social-service facilities, medical facilities and educational facilities. The majority of these, 65 000, live in social-service facilities. Half this number live in seniors' homes and roughly a quarter in homes with a special regime; 18% of them are clients from homes for persons with disabilities.

**Graph 6 Clients of exclusively residential social services with granted care allowance by type of facility as of 31 December 2017 (%)**



**2.4 Development in Case of "Zero Option"**

Although great progress has been made in many areas in the last 30 years, a number of problems remain that must be addressed for the progressive fulfilment of rights of persons with disabilities and their integration into society. If the National Plan and the measures contained therein are not adopted, the situation in this area can be assumed to remain the same as before, but in some cases it could be expected to worsen.

### 3 Strategic Areas of the National Plan

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The National Plan is divided up into thematic areas that tie in to selected articles of the Convention whose fulfilment is the most pressing for the coming period from the perspective of persons with disabilities.

A number of relevant objectives and specific measures are already contained in other strategies. In general, the National Plan, as in the case of the previous national plans, focuses primarily on those problems which have not been covered by other strategic documents. The National Plan is not in conflict with these approved documents and does not duplicate tasks.

Each of the areas of the National Plan contains a list of Convention articles that it helps implement, a description of the current situation, and a list of the main objectives and sub-objectives that the measures listed for that objective should help to fulfil.

The individual measures are listed under the sub-objectives in the order of their implementation deadlines.

#### **Area 1: General Obligations and Principles of Protecting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

Article 4 General obligations

Article 5 Equality and non-discrimination

Article 8 Awareness-raising

Article 16 Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse

Prohibition of discrimination and the principle of equal treatment are contained in Articles 4 and 5 of the Convention as general principles for ensuring the promotion and protection of persons with disabilities' rights. The prohibition of discrimination applies to all areas of life (employment, education, health care, etc.) and is expressed as a commitment to adopt legislative, administrative and other measures to take into account the protection and promotion of the human rights of persons with disabilities in all policies and programmes at both the national and regional level. Legal protection against discrimination on any grounds must also be ensured.

In order to comply with the general principles of the Convention, it is essential, in accordance with Article 8, to make society more aware and informed about the situation of persons with disabilities, to ensure that their rights and dignity are respected, and to help in the fight against stereotypes and prejudice in all aspects of life, for example by organising public awareness programmes and as part of basic education.

Article 16 of the Convention contains a commitment to take legislative, administrative, social, educational and other measures to protect persons with disabilities, both within and outside the home (e.g. in residential facilities of social or healthcare services), from all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse, including the gender-based aspects thereof.

The principles of non-discrimination and equal treatment, as basic principles for protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, permeate all the areas governed by the individual chapters of the National Plan. They must be taken into account by public authorities at all levels, both in terms of exercising their powers and in producing and issuing strategic documents. It is only possible to adopt measures that respect these principles and that help persons with disabilities to fully and effectively integrate into society.

An important precondition for fulfilling the aforementioned principles is ensuring an accessible environment. It is essential to adopt appropriate measures to provide for the necessary modifications, help remove existing barriers and not create new ones. Corresponding modifications should be carried out in all areas based on the principle of universal design, and should also apply to products, services, equipment and facilities that help persons with disabilities manage everyday activities and thus significantly help them fully participate in society.

It is also important for the quality of life of persons with disabilities how they are perceived and accepted by society. Awareness of the topic of disabilities should be raised through education, organisation of awareness drives and publishing examples of best practice. These activities help remove psychological barriers and stigmas and are an important instrument for changing attitudes in society and accepting persons with disabilities as a natural part thereof. They also help persons with disabilities to build up their personality, confidence and sense of belonging.

It is imperative not to neglect educating and informing those people of their rights, their educational and job opportunities and suitable available services, as well as how to avoid and prevent possible violence and abuse.

#### **Main objectives:**

- Preventing discrimination and ensuring equal treatment for persons with disabilities.
- Supporting observance of the principle of universal design.
- Breaking stereotypes and prejudices related to persons with disabilities, including those that concern gender or age, and promoting respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.
- Supporting awareness programmes regarding persons with disabilities and their rights.
- Preventing violence and abuse of persons with disabilities.

#### **1.1 Objective: To uphold the principle of equality and non-discrimination of persons with disabilities as part of state administration.**

The principle of equality and prohibition of discrimination must be observed across all state authorities and reflected in the strategic materials issued by them.

Measure 1.1.1 Making sure that no measures of state administration result in direct or indirect discrimination against persons with disabilities and upholding the principle of comprehensive planning (universal design) so that proposed solutions also suit persons with disabilities.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: all ministries, OG

Indicator: No measure can result in direct or indirect discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Measure 1.1.2 Taking into account the impact on persons with disabilities and their potential specific requirements in producing strategic materials.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: all ministries, OG

Indicator: The impact on persons with disabilities is also taken into account when producing strategic materials.

## **1.2 Objective: Supporting regional government in terms of observing the principle of equality and non-discrimination of persons with disabilities.**

In order to ensure coordinated and effective support and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities at the regional level as well, it is essential to provide the regions with systematic methodological support in upholding the principle of equality and non-discrimination.

Measure 1.2.1 To methodologically support the preparation, implementation and continuous monitoring of regional plans for the equalisation of opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: GBPD

Cooperation: CNDC

Indicator: Regions receive methodological support in the given area.

Measure 1.2.2 Providing methodological support to self-governing territorial units on the issue of persons with disabilities under the jurisdiction of the given coordinator.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MIT, MLSA, MEYS, MI, MH, MoA

Indicator: Methodological support is being provided by the individual ministries in the given area.

## **1.3 Objective: Supporting an increase in the number of products, services, equipment and facilities designed that observe the rules of universal design used in everyday life.**

Ensuring the widest possible amount of products, services, equipment and facilities that meet the rules of universal design allows persons with disabilities to participate more effectively in society in many various areas. For this reason, it is essential to raise awareness not only of the EAA directive on the accessibility of selected products and services and other important European and international standards, but also of the Czech technical standards, which in many ways also help create an accessible environment.

Measure 1.3.1 In connection with the adoption of the EAA directive, to draw up guidance documents ensuring that products and services are also accessible to persons with disabilities.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: the coordinator for implementing the EAA

Cooperation: all stakeholders

Indicator: A methodology has been drawn up for manufacturers and distributors of specific products or services concerning implementation of the EAA directive.

Measure 1.3.2 Drawing up, publishing and keeping up-to-date (on the website of the Czech Standardisation Agency) a list of European international standards for the protection, support and integration of persons with disabilities.

Deadline: 31 December 2023

Coordinator: MIT (CSA) in cooperation with the GBPD

Indicator: An electronic brochure has been drawn up and published on the website of the Czech Standardisation Agency, serving as a guide to creating a favourable environment for persons with disabilities in various areas of life.

Measure 1.3.3 Drawing up an electronic brochure containing appropriate measures, manner of support and aids for facilitating the full-fledged participation of persons with disabilities in meetings on the basis of the text of technical standard ČSN ISO 17069 Accessibility – Consideration and assistive products for accessible meeting.

Deadline: 31 December 2023

Coordinator: MIT (CSA) in cooperation with the GBPD

Indicator: The aforementioned electronic brochure has been drafted and published.

Measure 1.3.4 In connection with the adoption of the EAA, to carry out information activities intended for affected manufacturers (e.g. in the form of seminars and workshops).

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MIT

Indicator: The aforementioned information activities took place in the period in question.

Measure 1.3.5 Supporting research and development of products, services, equipment and facilities designed in accordance with the rules of universal design and new technologies, including information and communication technologies, that are suitable for persons with disabilities.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MIT

Indicator: Research and development of such products, services and technology is being supported.

#### **1.4 Objective: Raising awareness on the topic of disabilities and protection against discrimination.**

Awareness drives are the main means for increasing awareness on the topic of disabilities, thus it is essential to continue supporting such activities.

Measure 1.4.1 Announcing a GBPD Award for journalistic works focused on the topic of disabilities.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: GBPD

Indicator: The GBPD Award for journalistic works focused on the topic of disabilities has been announced in the given year.

Measure 1.4.2 Awarding a Health Minister's Award for work to benefit persons with disabilities and a Health Minister's Award for developing medical social care.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MH

Indicator: Health Minister's Awards for work to benefit persons with disabilities and for developing medical social care have been declared in the given year.

Measure 1.4.3 Supporting educational and informational activity in the field of equalising opportunities for persons with disabilities via subsidy programmes.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: OG, MH

Indicator: Subsidy programmes with the aforementioned focus are being declared.

### **1.5 Objective: Greater awareness of persons with disabilities about their rights.**

Sufficient information on the rights of persons with disabilities and on the range of social, counselling and other services available is essential for increasing these people's independence. It is important for medical professionals in particular to be able to refer the patient to, for example, suitable providers of social services or the competent government or local authority.

Measure 1.5.1 Updating the Guide for Persons with disabilities.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: Updating is underway and the updated version of the guide is available on the MLSA website.

Measure 1.5.2 Supporting the creation of informative materials for first-contact physicians in the Ministry of Health subsidy programmes about what counselling and other services are available for persons with individual types of disability.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MH

Indicator: A subsidy programme with the aforementioned focus has been declared.

### **1.6 Objective: To prevent violence against persons with disabilities.**

It is essential for increased attention to be paid to persons with disabilities as part of the system for assisting persons at risk of violence. These persons are often more vulnerable and defenceless against abuse in the family, community or institutions and need to receive instructions on how to prevent and recognise abuse, and they must also be able to report such acts so they can receive effective assistance.

Measure 1.6.1 Focusing on prevention and raising awareness for persons with disabilities under the system for assisting people at risk of violence.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MLSA, MJ, MEYS, MI, MH

Indicator: The aforementioned activities have been realised in the given period.

Measure 1.6.2 Placing increased emphasis on persons with disabilities as subjects at risk of abuse and domestic violence as part of preventive and awareness-raising activities.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MI

Indicator: The aforementioned issue is included in preventive and awareness-raising activities.

Measure 1.6.3 Focusing on violence against persons with disabilities when conducting inspections of social service residential facilities.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: The aforementioned activities have been carried out in the given period.

## **Area 2: Accessibility of Buildings, Transport and Roads**

Article 9 Accessibility

Article 20 Personal mobility

The area of accessibility of buildings, transport and roads ties in to Article 9 of the Convention – Accessibility, which in general deals with providing for independent and full involvement of persons with disabilities in all areas of society, particularly through the elimination of obstacles and barriers that prevent accessibility to buildings, transport and information and information technology. A separate chapter of the National Plan is dedicated to access to information.

Freedom of movement is governed by Article 20 of the Convention – Personal mobility, which is dedicated to the possibilities for transporting persons with disabilities so as to ensure they are as independent as possible, e.g. with access to assistive technologies and development of assistance services.

In the area of personal mobility, it is necessary to systematically continue removing barriers and ensure the accessibility of public offices, schools, cultural facilities, transport structures and other public buildings. Many of these buildings were erected before the Building Act requiring barrier-free construction came into effect, or else the legitimate requirements were not realised for various reasons. Compliance with and proper application of the regulations for new buildings or modifications to completed buildings and changes in the use of structures, must therefore be strictly monitored.

It is also advisable that comprehensive and continuous barrier-free routes be created to connect important buildings in cities and municipalities in a conceptual barrier-free manner. The Mobility for All National Development Programme has been serving this purpose for some years now.

Ensuring the accessibility of buildings and roads is also tied to the accessibility of public transport, that is stations and stops, boarding platforms, vehicles, and also the availability and accessibility of information provided in transport. In the case of new vehicles, the requirements that they be barrier-free are governed by international regulations. The situation is, however, problematic for vehicles that were produced before the legislation requiring accessibility for persons with limited mobility or orientation was adopted. Ensuring the accessibility of information provided in transport is now also governed by the EAA directive. Despite positive changes in the accessibility of transport, it is imperative that the process of adopting and expanding appropriate measures and modifications continue so that public transport is as accessible to persons with disabilities as possible.

Easy orientation in the requirements for accessibility of buildings, transport and roads requires that strict conditions and requirements be set for their barrier-free use. The established criteria determining the level of accessibility must take into account the needs of persons with reduced mobility and of those with reduced orientation. Removal of barriers is, however, also important for other groups of citizens, such as pregnant women, parents with strollers, the elderly, or people with temporarily limited mobility.

**Main objectives:**

- Ensuring persons with disabilities' independent and safe movement and orientation in public buildings, on roads and in public areas.
- Supporting the accessibility of public passenger transport for persons with disabilities.

**2.1 Objective: Ensuring the accessibility of public buildings, public space and roads.**

It is essential to progressively make public buildings, public spaces and roads more accessible, as the current legal treatment or actual state of affairs cannot always be considered sufficient in this regard. It is particularly important to place emphasis on systematically removing barriers in the buildings of public institutions and to publish information about accessibility on their websites.

Measure 2.1.1 Adjusting the details in transport standard ČSN 73 6110 "Designing local roads" for implementing corridors for crossing tram tracks in terms of barrier-free design.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MT, MRD, MIT (CSA)

Indicator: The standard in question has been adopted.

Measure 2.1.2 Performing an accessibility analysis on all buildings owned and leased by the coordinator (including organisations it manages directly).

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: all ministries, OG

Indicator: A building accessibility analysis has been conducted.

Measure 2.1.3 Publishing information on the accessibility of buildings on their websites based on the accessibility analysis of buildings owned and leased by the coordinator (including organisations it manages directly).

Deadline: 30 June 2023

Coordinator: all ministries, OG

Indicator: The webpage of the coordinator and the organisations it manages directly include information on the accessibility of the buildings in which the coordinator and its directly managed organisations are based.

Measure 2.1.4 Creating a plan based on the analysis of buildings owned by the coordinator (including organisations it manages directly) to make those buildings accessible, and implementing that plan.

Deadline: Producing the plan: 31 December 2023; submitting a report on implementation of the plan: 31 December 2025.

Coordinator: all ministries

Indicator: The plan in question has been drawn up and a report on the steps to implement it has been submitted.

Measure 2.1.5 Drawing up and submitting to the government for approval a Government Plan for Funding the Mobility for All National Development Programme for 2026–2035.

Deadline: 30 June 2024

Coordinator: GBPD

Indicator: A Government Plan for Funding the Mobility for All National Development Programme 2026–2035 has been drawn up and submitted to the government for approval.

## **2.2 Objective: Thorough application of the regulations on barrier-free use of buildings.**

Thorough application of the regulations governing barrier-free use of buildings and regular revision of the corresponding standards, as well as drawing attention to poor practice in application of these regulations, is an important prerequisite for systematic elimination of architectural barriers in existing and newly constructed structures. It is also important to pay attention to the methodological management of Building Offices and draw up and provide information on the barrier-free environment to persons with limited mobility or orientation.

Measure 2.2.1 Monitoring and evaluating the activity of ČSN and other technical regulations in the field of barrier-free use of buildings during their application in practice and making sure they are expediently amended and updated. The COSMT (CSA) continues to work with European and international technical organisations in this area.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MRD, MT, MIT

Indicator: Compliance of the standards was monitored in the given year and any needed changes were made.

Measure 2.2.2 Carrying out methodological activities for Building Offices in terms of general technical requirements ensuring barrier-free use of buildings.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MRD

Indicator: A methodological instruction or other methodological document is issued at least once a year, or training of Building Office employees in the given area is carried out.

Measure 2.2.3 Regularly declaring a subsidy programme for non-profit non-governmental organisations. Support and protection of the public interest in terms of barrier-free use of buildings.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MRD

Indicator: The given subsidy programme is announced every year.

### **2.3 Objective: Greater security of persons with disabilities when moving on roads.**

Knowledge of the basic rules for road safety helps ensure the safety of persons with disabilities as road users; it is therefore essential to conduct awareness campaigns.

Measure 2.3.1 Drawing attention to ensuring the safety of persons with disabilities through an awareness campaign aimed at all road users.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MT (Road Safety)

Indicator: The awareness campaign has been realised.

### **2.4 Objective: Accessible public transport for all groups of persons with disabilities.**

It must be ensured that carriers, including commercial ones, provide for access and use by persons with limited mobility or orientation as part of the provision of public transport.

Measure 2.4.1 Drawing up a methodological guideline concerning the provision of barrier-free regular bus transport and distributing it to the regions.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: MT

Indicator: The methodological guideline has been drawn up and distributed to the regions.

Measure 2.4.2 Finish addressing the provision of assistance services for persons with disabilities as part of rail transport.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: MT (Správa železnic)

Indicator: Rules have been established for the provision of assistance services for persons with disabilities as part of rail transport in cooperation with organisations representing persons with disabilities.

Measure 2.4.3 Amending the ČSN concerning the requirements for facilities and modification of barrier-free rail cars for persons with visual impairments (e.g. haptic seat markings, door opening system). Also amending the related legislative regulations in accordance with the modifications made.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MT

Co-coordinator: MIT (CSA)

Indicator: The ČSN concerning the requirements for facilities and modifications of barrier-free rail cars has been amended on the basis of consultations with organisations representing persons with visual impairments.

Measure 2.4.4 Enshrining in the legislation an obligation to equip urban public transport vehicles with external acoustic announcement of the line number and the vehicle direction.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MT

Indicator: The legislative amendment in question has been carried out.

Measure 2.4.5 Finding a solution for ensuring barrier-free transport by commercial carriers.

Deadline: 31 December 2024

Coordinator: MT

Indicator: A solution has been found for ensuring barrier-free transport by commercial carriers (e.g. by establishing conditions as part of the licensing procedure).

Measure 2.4.6 Evaluating the implementation of regional tenders concerning public transport in terms of ensuring barrier-free transport. If shortcomings are found in the provision of barrier-free transport, issuing or modifying the methodological recommendations as a guideline for regions to improve the situation. Submitting a report on the evaluation at the GBPD meeting.

Deadline: 31 December 2021, 31 December 2023, 31 December 2025

Coordinator: MT

Indicator: The aforementioned evaluation has been conducted and, if shortcomings were found, methodological recommendations were issued or amended.

Measure 2.4.7 Supporting the development of new technologies in terms of their applicability for supporting the independent and safe movement of persons with disabilities. In cases where these technologies are ready to be deployed, supporting their implementation.

Deadline: ongoing (report to be submitted for years 2021, 2023, 2025)

Coordinator: MT

Indicator: In the given period the aforementioned activities and their implementation were supported.

## **2.5 Objective: Ensuring the accessibility of transport structures.**

In order to ensure full and equal access to transport for persons with limited mobility or orientation, it is essential to ensure accessibility of transport structures. For train stations and boarding platforms, it is necessary for Správa železnic (the railway administration body) to introduce a single orientation and information system that allows independent movement for persons with disabilities while travelling.

Measure 2.5.1 Drawing up a plan for making train stations and boarding platforms managed by Správa železnic accessible, and regularly acquainting the GBPD with its implementation.

Deadline: 31 December 2021, then ongoing (reports to be submitted for years 2023 and 2025)

Coordinator: MT

Indicator: A plan has been drawn up. The GBPD has been acquainted with its implementation for 2023 and 2025.

Measure 2.5.2 Drawing up a ČSN comprising a graphic manual for Správa železnic's single orientation and information system.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MT

Co-coordinator: MIT (CSA)

Indicator: The ČSN has been drawn up and published.

Measure 2.5.3 Adjusting ČSN 73 6380 concerning railway crossings with regard to persons with limited orientation.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MT

Co-ordinator: MIT (CSA)

Indicator: ČSN 73 6380 has been adjusted so as to contain a solution for safe movement of those with limited orientation.

Measure 2.5.4 Providing for consultation and advisory activities in the field of barrier-free use of transport structures and means of transport under its jurisdiction.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MT

Indicator: A consultation point for the public has been set up at the MT concerning the aforementioned area.

### **Area 3: Accessibility of Information and Public Services**

Article 9 Accessibility

Article 21 Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information

Article 9 of the Convention – Accessibility deals generally with ensuring the independent and full participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life in society; aside from the removal of physical obstacles, it also addresses the accessibility of information, communication and other services.

Access to information is also dealt with by Article 21 of the Convention, which concerns freedom of expression and the right to freely seek, receive and impart information and ideas through all forms of communication of their choice.

The topic of access to information and public services is very current in connection with digitisation and the development of eGovernment services. For persons with disabilities it is important that public services provided and regulated by public administration be accessible and usable on an equal basis. A contributing factor, aside from digitisation itself, is the possibility of assisted submission, standardisation of agenda execution and activities, and data and facts already known to the public administration not being required.

Although the Czech Republic used to provide a standard of accessibility comparable to that in other European states, for example by enshrining the obligation for public authority websites to be accessible and setting out specific technical realisation rules, the European legislation in this area has contributed to further significant improvement through the newly adopted legislation on the accessibility of websites and mobile apps.

One thing that remains problematic is the accessibility of public administration digital documents. Despite the fact that persons with disabilities can make use of eGovernment services and communicate with authorities via a data mailbox, for example, the documents issued are not always accessible to persons with sensory disabilities. Similar problems occur in the use of electronic forms and other means of submission, as not all public administration electronic forms are sufficiently accessible.

Information also needs to be accessible to persons who are impaired with respect to reading and perceiving complex information (for whom it is appropriate to provide information in an easy-to-understand form). For the provision of information in an understandable form, in 2019 the MI drew up a *Methodological Procedure for the Creation of Understandable Messages in Public Administration and Producing Simplified Texts for Persons Requiring a Special Approach*<sup>11</sup> (hereinafter the "Easy-To-Read Methodology"). This methodology must be put into practice and it must be ensured that its use becomes the standard at individual offices. For persons with hearing impairments, it is also crucial that basic information on public administration be available in Czech Sign Language.

In terms of ensuring the accessibility of public administration services, it is essential not to forget the importance of training employees on the topic of disabilities and developing knowledge and skills regarding the selection and proper application of an appropriate manner of communication for persons with certain types of disability.

#### **Main objective:**

- Ensuring persons with disabilities access to information and public services on an equal footing with other citizens.

#### **3.1 Objective: Accessible public services.**

It is essential that public administration endeavour to ensure full accessibility, which includes providing for an appropriate manner of communication with persons with various types of disability. It would be very beneficial to create a comprehensive overview of all public authorities and the services they provide. Spreading examples of best practice is also important.

Measure 3.1.1 Creating a "Where to for Public Services" app that provides citizens, including those with disabilities, information on the accessibility of all public offices and the services they provide.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: MI

Indicator: A "Where to for Public Services" application has been produced.

Measure 3.1.2 Supporting awareness-raising, examples of best practice and motivation in the area of accessibility of public offices for persons with disabilities through a competition for self-governing territorial units (the "Friendly Office" competition).

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MI

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<sup>11</sup> Available at: <http://www.vlada.cz/cz/ppov/vvozp/dokumenty/metodika-easy-to-read-174932/>.

Indicator: The "Friendly Office" competition is announced every year.

Measure 3.1.3 Introducing check of accessibility solutions when approving ICT projects on the part of the MI Chief Architect Department.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MI

Indicator: A check of accessibility solutions has been implemented for approval applications for ICT projects.

### **3.2 Objective: Accessible websites and electronic public services.**

In order to ensure the accessibility of public administration, the websites and electronic services of individual ministries and institutions must be made accessible to persons with disabilities. In order to fulfil the legally stipulated obligations in this area, it is therefore essential to provide for methodological guidance, methodological documents, training and also mapping out of problems and potential problems and actively address shortcomings.

Measure 3.2.1 Establishing an obligation to complete training on the accessibility of websites as per Act No. 99/2019 Coll. on the Accessibility of Website and Mobile Applications and on Amendment to Act No. 365/2000 Coll., on Public Administration Information Systems and on the Amendment to Certain Other Acts, as amended, or demonstrably acquainting the administrators and creators of websites at the given institution with the obligations arising from this act.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: all ministries, OG

Indicator: The aforementioned obligation for the competent ministry employees has been established.

Measure 3.2.2 Drawing up a report on the state of accessibility of websites in the Czech Republic and monitoring, passing it on to the European Commission and publishing it.

Deadline: 31 September 2021

Coordinator: MI

Indicator: The report has been drawn up, published and passed on to the European Commission.

Measure 3.2.3 Drawing up methodological documents to fulfil the obligations laid down by Act No. 99/2019 Coll., on the Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications and on Amendment to Act No. 365/2000 Coll., on Public Administration Information Systems and on the Amendment to Certain Other Acts, as amended, for obliged entities, in particular for the obligations arising from the WCAG standard<sup>12</sup>.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: MI

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<sup>12</sup> WCAG - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (rules for the creation of websites).

Indicator: The methodological documents have been drawn up.

Measure 3.2.4 Publishing information on appropriate tools for automatic scanning of websites in order to verify their accessibility and procedures for manual testing for obliged entities.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: MI

Indicator: The information has been published.

Measure 3.2.5 Determining the basic information on the activities of individual ministries that will be translated into Czech Sign Language in cooperation with organisations representing persons with hearing impairments, and realising this translation.

Deadline: 31 December 2024

Coordinator: all ministries, OG

Indicator: A section or link on information in Czech Sign Language has been added to the websites of the ministries and the organisations they run directly.

Measure 3.2.6 Pointing out the obligation for public tenders to be accessible as part of the methodological materials concerning public procurement.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MRD

Indicator: Methodological materials include a reminder of the obligation for public tenders to be accessible.

Measure 3.2.7 Carrying out methodological and awareness-raising activities in terms of the accessibility of websites and mobile applications.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MI

Indicator: At least one methodological or awareness-raising activity was conducted in the given area during the evaluated period.

### **3.3 Objective: Accessible public administration documents.**

Documents issued by public administration should also be accessible to persons with disabilities. It is also necessary to ensure the accessibility of basic information on individual public offices in a simplified, easy-to-read format. As part of ensuring accessibility in public administration, it is particularly important to provide methodological guidance, set minimum standards and subsequently implement systematic adjustments.

In order to facilitate the employment of persons with disabilities in the public sector, it is also key that the current state of IT systems used by employees be mapped out, from the basic ones such as the e-mail client or attendance system to the more complex ones used in specialised positions. Following up on these findings should be a plan of adjustments on the basis of which the given systems will be made accessible.

Measure 3.3.1 Creating and publishing methodological documents and recommendations for the accessibility of digital documents.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: MI

Indicator: Methodological documents and recommendations have been created and published.

Measure 3.3.2 Analysing and proposing the following: (a) possible solutions for modifying the functions of the information system through which CzechPOINT is run; b) further measures so that output from authorised document conversion and output from the ISVS issued via CzechPOINT are accessible.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MI

Indicator: Possible solutions for modifying the functions of the information system and other measures to ensure the accessibility of converted documents and output from the ISVS issued via CzechPOINT have been analysed and proposed.

Measure 3.3.3 Performing a check of the accessibility of employee IT systems.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: all ministries, OG

Indicator: A check of the accessibility of employee IT systems has been conducted.

Measure 3.3.4 Convert the basic general information on scope and description of public services on the websites of ministries and the organisations they run directly that are intended for the public, on the Public Administration Portal and on the Citizen Portal, into an easy-to-understand form using the Easy-To-Read Methodology. Ensuring that this information is accessible pursuant to Act No. 99/2019 Coll. on the Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications and on Amendment to Act No. 365/2000 Coll., on Public Administration Information Systems and on the Amendment to Certain Other Acts, as amended.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: all ministries, OG

Indicator: The aforementioned information on the websites of ministries, the organisations they run, on the Public Administration Portal and on the Citizen Portal has been published in an easy-to-understand form based on the Easy-To-Read Methodology, and this information is accessible.

Measure 3.3.5 Ensuring publication of basic cards for selected agendas based on the Easy-To-Read Methodology templates and pictogram cards for clients.

Deadline: 31 December 2023

Coordinator: all ministries, OG

Indicator: The basic cards have been published.

Measure 3.3.6 Based on the results of the check on accessibility of employee IT systems, making adjustments to them so that they are fully accessible.

Deadline: 31 December 2025

Coordinator: all ministries, OG

Indicator: Adjustments have been made to at least one system and/or an adjustment plan has been prepared.

Measure 3.3.7 Implementing pilot training for application of the Easy-To-Read Methodology for employees of territorial public administration. Based on the results of the pilot training, proposing a training mechanism for public administration and carrying this training out.

Deadline: 31 December 2022, then ongoing

Coordinator: MI

Indicator: A training mechanism has been proposed. Training is being regularly implemented.

### **3.4 Objective: Educating public employees on topics concerning disabilities.**

In order to establish a suitable and effective method of communication and the corresponding approach towards persons with disabilities, it is essential to increase the knowledge and awareness of public employees on the aspects of various types of disability.

Measure 3.4.1 Conducting education in the field of governance accessibility, the issue of disabilities and principles of communication with selected groups of persons with disabilities for employees of public administration.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MI

Indicator: The training in question has been carried out.

Measure 3.4.2 Incorporating the issue of persons with disabilities into the basic training of police officers and specialised courses for the criminal police service and investigation and riot police.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MI

Indicator: The issue of persons with disabilities has been incorporated into the given field of professional training.

### **3.5 Objective: Coordinating activities in the field of accessibility in public administration.**

Due to the number of requirements and obligations in respect of ensuring public administration accessibility, it is essential to internally coordinate the activities of individual ministries and monitor all measures adopted. To date no such activity has been provided for at ministries, with a few exceptions.

Measure 3.5.1 Designating a coordinator, or working group, for the area of accessibility of public administration and governance accessibility.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: all ministries

Indicator: A coordinator for the area of accessibility of public administration and governance accessibility has been designated.

## **Area 4: Emergencies and Critical Situations**

### Article 11 Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies

Ensuring the protection and safety of persons with disabilities during emergencies and critical situations such as emergencies caused by natural disasters is addressed by Article 11 of the Convention – Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies.

Experience to date has shown that persons with disabilities are more vulnerable than the general population during emergencies. This is primarily due to insufficient awareness on the specific needs of persons with sub-types of disabilities; the lack of corresponding inclusive policies, strategies and programmes for reducing or averting risks; insufficient access to information or inaccessible facilities and services. In order to increase the safety of persons with disabilities it is therefore essential to increase their awareness on possibilities for acquiring information, solutions and behaviour during emergencies, and above all to make appropriate adjustments to the plans for resolving crisis situations so they contain measures concerning persons with disabilities, and to carry out training for all components of the integrated rescue system concerning the specific needs in communicating with and assisting persons with disabilities.

#### **Main objective:**

- Ensuring the protection and safety of persons with disabilities during emergencies and critical situations.

#### **4.1 Objective: Ensuring that persons with disabilities are informed about emergencies and critical situations.**

In order to ensure the safety of persons with disabilities in the event of emergencies, it is essential that such persons be suitably informed about the situation and ways to ensure safety, while also modifying the type plans so that they also contain specifics for ensuring the safety of persons with various types of disability.

Measure 4.1.1 Modifying the type plans for crisis management so as to contain provisions concerning persons with disabilities.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: MI

Indicator: The type plans for crisis management contain provisions concerning persons with disabilities.

Measure 4.1.2 Conducting regular training of all components of the integrated rescue system dealing with the specific needs in communicating with and assisting persons with disabilities.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MI

Indicator: Training on the given topic is regularly conducted.

Measure 4.1.3 Organising seminars and awareness events for persons with disabilities, focussing on the area of safety adapted to the type of disability.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MI

Indicator: These seminars and awareness are being organised.

#### **4.2 Objective: Accessible emergency calling for all groups of persons with disabilities.**

When providing emergency calling services it is imperative not to forget the specifics of communicating with persons with hearing impairments. It is therefore necessary to set up emergency communication so that persons with hearing impairments can use it on an equal footing with others.

Measure 4.2.1 Incorporating the two-way text communication into the emergency calling service for use by persons with hearing impairments.

Deadline: 30 June 2022

Coordinator: MIT

Indicator: Two-way text communication has been incorporated into the emergency calling service.

Measure 4.2.2 Drawing up a concept for emergency communication with persons with hearing impairments that accounts for all groups of persons with hearing impairments and their communication methods.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MI

Indicator: An emergency communication concept has been drawn up.

Measure 4.2.3 Specifying the procedural and organisational principles for the receipt of emergency SMSs on the 112 line and national emergency lines.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MI

Indicator: The procedural and organisational principles for the aforementioned lines have been established.

## Area 5: Independent Living

Article 19 Living independently and being included in the community

Article 20 Personal mobility

Article 19 of the Convention – Living independently and being included in the community – establishes the equal right of all persons with disabilities to live in the community and freely and independently choose where they live. This also ties in to ensuring the availability of services provided in the home environment, including personal assistance.

The right to independent living is complemented by Article 20 of the Convention – Personal Mobility, according to which persons with disabilities should be afforded access to quality compensatory aids, devices, assistive technologies and various forms of assistance and that these should be made affordable.

A necessary prerequisite for persons with disabilities to have an independent and autonomous life in a home environment and fully participate in public, social, cultural and sporting life is ensuring adequate housing, suitable assistance services and compensatory aids.

Although the conditions stemming from the regulations governing barrier-free use of structures must be observed when constructing new flats, it is necessary to support independent living for persons with disabilities and facilitate the construction of modifiable flats allowing for barrier-free use.

In the upcoming period it is necessary to continue to systematically help transforming residential social-service facilities and particularly to support the provision of outreach and outpatient social services in the user's natural environment. Setting up the manner of funding social services through a transparent, efficient and just system is no less important.

Aside from social services it is also necessary to ensure the availability and affordability of aids and medical devices, which are used by more than half of those with disabilities<sup>13</sup>. Support for research and development activities in this area, in order to increase the use of modern methods of product manufacture and distribution, is also important.

What tends to be an obstacle for persons with impairments from fully participating in all areas of life is the lack of Czech Sign Language interpreters. It is therefore necessary to systematically support educational programmes so the number of these interpreters constantly increases.

### **Main objectives:**

- Creating the conditions for persons with disabilities to be able to live as independently as possible in their own natural social environment.
- Supporting the development of a network of outreach and outpatient services allowing persons with disabilities to live a normal life in the local community.
- Supporting the spread and availability of aids and medical devices.

### **5.1 Objective: Supporting independent living of persons with disabilities in a natural social environment, especially remaining in a home environment.**

Every person with a disability has the right to live in a natural home environment, but not always do they have sufficient information on the composition and availability of social services or other possible forms of support and the opportunities to exercise this right. Social workers in

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<sup>13</sup> See Czech Statistical Office. 2019. Sample Survey of Persons with disabilities – 2018. Available at: <https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/vyberove-setreni-osob-se-zdravotnim-postizenim-2018>.

municipalities should therefore be closely acquainted with the situation in their region in terms of social services, housing affordability, employment, etc. It is also necessary to support the construction of customisable barrier-free flats and spread public awareness on alternative forms of support in the community.

Measure 5.1.1 Spreading awareness on the provision of homesharing care by presenting examples of good practice.

Deadline: 31 December 2023

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: Examples of good practice concerning care provision have been developed.

Measure 5.1.2 Coordinating support for persons with disabilities within the framework of social care in municipalities with extended powers.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: Coordination of support for persons with disabilities is provided for in municipalities with extended powers.

Measures 5.1.3 Supporting facilities for carrying out social work in municipalities with regard to the needs of persons with disabilities.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: Financial and methodological support for social work in municipalities is provided.

Measure 5.1.4 Including customisable flats allowing for barrier-free use as part of investment support for housing.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MRD

Indicator: A subsidy programme with the aforementioned aid is regularly announced.

Measure 5.1.5 In rural areas, creating conditions for the establishment and expansion of social farms that are a partner for community work and one of the centres of support services in rural areas where persons with disabilities live in a natural environment they know and which also becomes a safe space for their social functioning.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MoA

Indicator: A subsidy programme with the aforementioned aid is regularly announced.

## **5.2 Objective: Accessible social services throughout the Czech Republic.**

Accessible and high-quality social services help persons with disabilities to ensure their own physical and mental self-sufficiency so as to become as involved as possible in everyday life.

It is therefore essential to adopt measures that support the functionality and quality of the whole social service system and stable funding thereof.

Measure 5.2.1 Legislatively adjusting the definition of social services so that they are clearly defined and do not overlap.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: The definition of individual social services has been amended legislatively.

Measure 5.2.2 Creating and legally enshrining staffing and material technical standards for social services that establish a minimum cut-off for the provision of social services that will be a condition for the registration thereof.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: A staffing and material technical standard for social services has been produced and legally enshrined.

Measure 5.2.3 Introducing the institution of supervision in social services.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: The institution of supervision has been established.

Measure 5.2.4 Legislatively enshrining an instrument that allows the state to actually influence the availability of social services.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: An instrument allowing the availability of social services to be influenced has been legislatively enshrined.

Measure 5.2.5 Drafting a proposal for funding social services through "care insurance".

Deadline: 31 December 2024

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: A proposal for funding social services through "care insurance" has been drafted.

### **5.3 Objective: Supporting the deinstitutionalisation of residential facilities for persons with disabilities.**

Supporting the processes of deinstitutionalisation and transformation is a key precondition for persons with disabilities to exercise their right to autonomous and independent living. The goal is to allow them to freely choose where they live, participate in society and play everyday roles in society.

Measure 5.3.1 Continuing with the deinstitutionalisation of residential facilities for persons with disabilities, including facilities where deinstitutionalisation has not yet begun.

Deadline: ongoing (report to be submitted for 2022 and 2024)

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: During the given period, transformation has taken place at the specific social-service facilities listed in the implementation report.

#### **5.4 Objective: Available information for persons with disabilities and their families on care and support options.**

In order to provide high-quality care, it is essential to ensure caregivers are sufficiently informed, including furthering their knowledge on ethics in providing this care. Caregiving is a highly demanding activity, not only with regard to high demands in provision of care, but also with respect to the responsibility associated with caregiving.

Measure 5.4.1 Producing informative materials for caregivers concerning their status, their rights and their responsibilities, and ensuring the distribution of such materials.

Deadline: 31 December 2021, then ongoing

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: The informative materials have been produced. Distribution has been arranged to persons who are becoming caregivers for persons at all levels of dependence under the legislation governing care allowances.

#### **5.5 Objective: Accessible high-quality aids and medical devices.**

Compensatory aids and medical devices help integrate persons with disabilities into society, perform their jobs, gain access to education, and also to serve themselves. For this reason, their accessibility should be supported, both in terms of availability and affordability, and employees of the Czech Labour Office should be informed about the provision of special aid allowances. In light of technological developments, it is also essential to support aid manufacturers, the development of new technologies and the field of research and development, particularly through a national programme or EU funds.

Measure 5.5.1 Supporting the affordability of special aids for persons with disabilities.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: Financial support exists for persons with disabilities to ensure special aids are accessible.

Measure 5.5.2 Regularly informing Czech Labour Office employees about special aids for which a special aid allowance can be provided.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MLSA (LO)

Indicator: Czech Labour Office employees are methodologically guided and trained about special aids for which a special aid allowance can be provided.

Measure 5.5.3 Supporting the affordability of medical devices for persons with disabilities.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MH

Indicator: Regular financial support for medical devices is available from the public health insurance system.

Measure 5.5.4 Supporting the development and manufacture of compensatory aids and medical devices for persons with disabilities, particularly through funding from EU funds.

Deadline: ongoing (conference/seminar 31 December 2021)

Coordinator: MIT

Cooperation: CNDC

Indicator: Under the provisions of the relevant subsidy programmes from the EU funds, manufacturers of compensatory aids and medical devices can also apply. All relevant subsidy programmes from the EU funds contain the information that supported activities must fulfil the principles of universal design and accessibility. In 2021, a conference/seminar for manufacturers took place to address the possibility of drawing the EU funds financial support for research and development of compensatory aids and medical devices for persons with disabilities.

## **5.6 Objective: Supporting interpreter services for persons with hearing impairments.**

In order to ensure the accessibility of information to persons with hearing impairments through interpreting into Czech Sign Language, it is necessary to support the education of Czech Sign Language interpreters, both financially and systemically. It is also essential to ensure the availability of education in this language at all levels of the education system, including lifelong learning. Without ensuring an appropriate means of communication, the quality or accessibility of learning for persons with hearing impairments could be endangered. In order to ensure quality teaching in Czech Sign Language, a referential framework should be enshrined to serve as an instrument for setting standards for use of Czech Sign Language in education.

Measure 5.6.1 Boosting funding for the provision of interpreting services into Czech Sign Language and simultaneous speech transcription services as part of social services.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: A legal treatment or methodological instruction has been drawn up that takes into account the boosting of funding for Czech Sign Language interpreting and simultaneous speech transcription.

Measure 5.6.2 Ensuring the organisation and funding of an educational programme for Czech sign language interpreters and establishing a system for recognising qualifications of the Czech Sign Language interpreting programme. Enshrining a national referential framework for Czech Sign Language.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: The given educational programme has been provided for and financed. A system for recognising qualifications has been established and a national referential framework adopted.

Measure 5.6.3 Supporting education in Czech Sign Language at all levels of the educational system and as part of lifelong learning; supporting research on and description of the structure of Czech Sign Language.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: Subsidy programmes in the given areas have been announced.

## Area 6: Equality before the Law and Access to Justice

Article 12 Equal recognition before the law

Article 13 Access to justice

Article 12 of the Convention – Equal recognition before the law – lays down the obligation to recognise persons with disabilities as persons before the law and their legal capacity on an equal basis with others in all aspects of life. It calls on State Parties to ensure that all measures that relate to the exercise of legal capacity respect the rights, will and preferences of the person, are free of conflict of interest and undue influence. They must be applied for the shortest possible time and be subject to regular review by a competent, independent and impartial authority or judicial body.

Also relating to ensuring equality before the law is Article 13 of the Convention, which relates to ensuring effective access to justice for persons with disabilities, including through the provision of procedural accommodations that facilitate their role as direct and indirect participants or witnesses in legal proceedings. For the same reason, persons working in the field of administration of justice, including police and prison staff, should be trained in this issue.

The adoption of the new Civil Code was a positive change, enshrining fundamental changes concerning human legal capacity and for the first time addressing the rules for potential restriction thereto. It draws on the concept of supportive or assisted decision-making based on each person being able to decide, but possibly needing a greater or lesser level of support to do so. For this reason, the law allows use of "supportive measures" instead of restricting legal capacity (representation by a guardian, by a household member or a supporter under an assistance agreement). Currently, however, these alternatives are not overly used in judicial practice in the Czech Republic.

Ensuring equal access to justice also relates to technical measures and administrative procedures that allow persons with disabilities to fully exercise their rights. From the perspective of the needs of persons with hearing impairments and deaf-blind persons, it is essential to uphold their right to freely choose a manner of communication that suits their needs, and this choice must be respected to the greatest extent possible as laid down by Act No. 155/1998 Coll., on Communication Systems for the Deaf and Deaf-Blind, as amended.

### **Main objective:**

- Ensuring persons with disabilities access to justice on an equal footing with others.

### **6.1 Objective: Ensuring persons with disabilities support for their legal proceedings.**

A fundamental problem of public guardianship in the Czech Republic is seen in the long-lasting negative competence dispute over this area, with no ministry having yet clearly claimed this

competence. Public guardianship concerns the agenda of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (for its focus on social issues and the execution of public guardianship primarily by social workers), the Ministry of Justice (with regard to its relation to courts and the Civil Code, which sets down the rules for guardianship) and the Ministry of the Interior (for entities concerned – municipalities). Currently all the aforementioned ministries are active in this area to a certain extent, though only in certain component matters. Resolution of this issue is desirable for the proper functioning of public guardianship, as the issues of training, expert counselling, consultation and conflict mediation also need to be resolved.

Measure 6.1.1 Resolving the competence dispute on jurisdiction over public guardianship.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: MLSA, MJ, MI

Indicator: A coordinator has been appointed for public guardianship.

## **6.2 Objective: Equal access to information in legal proceedings.**

Performing the function of supporter (guardian, household representative, supporter under an assistance agreement) is a demanding task and is associated with the performance of many duties. While the state provides public guardians with training and supports the regions methodologically in such issues, other guardians and supporters do not have this support, with assistance often provided by non-profit organisations. In order for these functions to be performed well, those who perform them must be sufficiently informed. At the same time, it is necessary to place emphasis on educating justice workers in terms of supporting the rights of persons with disabilities.

Measure 6.2.1. Collecting or compiling informative materials for both public and private guardians, supporters and household representatives and ensuring their distribution through courts in cooperation with organisations that represent persons with limited legal capacity.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: MJ

Indicator: Courts have access to collected or compiled informative materials and have been instructed on how to distribute them.

Measure 6.2.2 Providing training for judges, state prosecutors, assistants, trainee judges and senior court officials that is focused on the issue of disabilities and the rights arising from the Convention, in particular the right to support and security during legal proceedings, as well as the issue of communication with selected groups of persons with disabilities (communication systems of persons with hearing impairments, easy-to-read communication, etc.).

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MJ

Indicator: Training is being conducted on the given topics. Information on measure implementation contains the number of planned and realised training sessions and number of participants.

## Area 7: Family Life

### Article 23 Respect for home and the family

Article 23 of the Convention – Respect for home and the family – calls for the elimination of discrimination against persons with disabilities in matters that relating to marriage, family, parenthood and relationships. This means, for example, measures ensuring that children are brought up in a family environment, guaranteeing the right to guardianship and custody.

Life in a family and a natural family environment is an important prerequisite for the mental and physical development of children. The measures in this chapter concerning reduced numbers of children in institutional facilities are therefore focused on supporting families and family members with the goal of preserving or restoring the function of the family and increasing interest in alternative family care. It is particularly important to support the provision of assistance and support to parents and other persons taking care of children with disabilities and the professionalization of foster care so as to prevent frequent changes of environment and caregivers.

It is also essential to support young persons with disabilities who are leaving institutional care or first entering employment so that they can realise their own ideas about independent life. Successfully managing these life changes helps subsequent integration into society to be easier and more effective.

#### **Main objective:**

- Supporting the independent life and family life of persons with disabilities.

#### **7.1 Objective: Helping reduce the number of children with disabilities in institutional care.**

The family is the most natural environment for raising children. It is therefore imperative to constantly and systematically support services and programmes that allow children with disabilities to live in their biological family. In cases where it is not possible to live in the original family, alternative family care should be prioritised ahead of institutional care and this care should be expanded and professionalised through public awareness, education and support for caregivers.

Measure 7.1.1 Developing and professionalising foster care in order to increase the number of people interested in providing alternative family care to children with disabilities, ensuring they are trained to receive a child with a disability into the family and are given adequate support while providing foster care to the child.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: The aforementioned programmes were implemented in the given period.

Measure 7.1.2 Developing further programmes to support the return of a child with a disability to their original family.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: The aforementioned programmes were implemented in the given period.

## **7.2 Objective: Ensuring the conditions for young persons with disabilities leaving institutional care to live independently.**

Supporting and creating suitable conditions for young persons with disabilities to live independently after they leave institutional care is crucial. The period of early adulthood and entering the workforce tends to be a deciding factor in their subsequent successful integration into society, and it is therefore essential that programmes be implemented to help them better adapt and that these people are provided with appropriate assistance and support in this period.

Measure 7.2.1 Implementing programmes to support the independent living of young persons with disabilities who are leaving institutional care after reaching the age of majority or completing training for their future profession.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: The aforementioned programmes were implemented in the given period.

## **7.3 Objective: Ensuring that the right of persons with limited legal capacity to family life is respected.**

The Convention binds the State Parties to recognise the right to family life of all persons with disabilities. After measures to live up to this right have been adapted, it is essential to conduct an analysis of the current state and determine what facts are impeding fulfilment of the right to family life and in what way potential shortcomings could be eliminated.

Measure 7.3.1 Conducting an analysis of the legal treatment of the right to family life for persons with limited legal capacity from the perspective of the Convention and proposing corresponding legislative changes as needed.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: The given analysis has been produced.

## Area 8: Education and the School System

### Article 24 Education

Article 24 of the Convention is devoted to the right to education without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, which among other things means supporting an inclusive education system, and providing reasonable accommodation and assistance based on the individual's needs so that persons with disabilities can fully develop their potential, gifts and creativity and participate effectively in society.

As part of the system of inclusive education, support measures are applied so as to ensure equality in access to education at all levels of school for every child or student. Inclusive education is also important in terms of acquiring the skills necessary to succeed in the social environment (friendships, the work environment, etc.). Statistics are regularly collected on children and students with special educational needs (hereinafter "SEN").

It is above all necessary to systematically address awareness, support projects explaining the positives of inclusion and create a climate in society that respects the right of all persons to education without distinction, as this concept of education is not always viewed positively.

In the coming period it is also necessary to deal with improving the effectiveness of the counselling system, harmonising approaches at the level of self-governing units, founders, schools and also by educating pedagogical staff, and in undergraduate preparation. University programmes focused on teaching should ensure sufficient education of teachers in terms of working with students with SEN.

In the field of higher education, the principle of equal opportunities for persons with disabilities should be observed at all levels of strategic documents and legal regulations. The openness of higher education must be supported over the whole educational career, i.e. in access to education, during studies, and also in success rates in completing studies. An inclusive environment at universities must also be supported by funding the increased costs of universities providing access to persons with specific needs through an investment programme to develop post-secondary infrastructure. Emphasis should also be placed on acquiring information on students with specific needs and their problems associated with studying.

#### **Main objectives:**

- Choosing a form of education in keeping with the best interests of the child or student.
- Supporting a system of common education.
- Providing support to persons with disabilities in education at all levels of the education system, including lifelong learning.

#### **8.1 Objective: High-quality work by school counselling facilities, including shortening the deadline for examination.**

School counselling facilities provide support not only to children, pupils and their legal representatives, but also to teachers. In order to ensure a uniform approach in all regions, especially in terms of determining the necessary support measures for children with SEN and improving the quality of services provided, their activities should be standardised, for example through a single electronic registration system or by setting up supervisory support for pedagogical workers.

Measure 8.1.1 Standardising the activity and work procedures of staff in school counselling facilities and ensuring funding for the counselling services provided from the state budget so that

- a) the legislatively stipulated deadlines for commencing provision of counselling services and issuing of a recommendation are met at all school counselling facilities
- b) the availability and enforceability of school counselling services of comparable quality is ensured in all regions of the Czech Republic
- c) regular direct methodological support can be conducted at schools and school facilities when introducing and implementing support measures in education, including methodological support of teaching assistants
- d) a uniform system of assessing SEN and establishing types of degrees of support measures is ensured (based on type of disadvantage under Section 16 (9) of Act No. 561/2004 Coll., on Pre-School, Primary, Secondary, Higher Vocational and Other Education (the Education Act), as amended, and the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health) at school counselling facilities. A uniform methodology for establishing the type and degree of supportive measures for all school counselling facilities that provide services to children and students with disabilities must be provided for.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: MEYS, CSI

Indicator: Standards have been set and funding secured for counselling services in accordance with the above requirements.

Measure 8.1.2 Introducing a single electronic registration system for services provided at all school counselling facilities in the Czech Republic.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: A single electronic registration system has been introduced.

Measure 8.1.3 Establishing the legislative, organisational and financial basis for school counselling facility staff by setting a staffing standard and transforming counselling services.

Deadline: 31 December 2022, then ongoing

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: A staffing standard has been established and transformation of counselling services is underway.

Measure 8.1.4 Creating a functional system of regular supervisory support of school counselling facility staff in all regions of the Czech Republic and securing funding thereof.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: Measures have been adopted to ensure supervisory support and funding thereof.

Measure 8.1.5 Evaluating the effectiveness and benefit of revisions taking place pursuant to Section 16b of Act No. 561/2004 Coll., on Pre-School, Primary, Secondary, Higher Vocational and Other Education (the Education Act), as amended.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: A report has been submitted evaluating the effectiveness and benefit of the revisions as per the aforementioned provisions.

### **8.2 Objective: Quality training and support of all pedagogical professions in teaching children and students with disabilities.**

In order to ensure an individualised approach in educating children and students with disabilities, it is essential that teaching staff be well educated and trained in this area. Without application of a suitable approach, the needs of children and students with SEN cannot be met within the framework of education and the highest possible level of development for their knowledge, abilities and skills cannot be reached.

Measure 8.2.1 In connection with the activities of the NAB, making sure the accreditation process assesses whether study programs preparing students in pedagogical fields in terms of their content also prepares graduates to work with the target group of children with SEN.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: Within the accreditation process, MEYS points out the fact that curricula for training teachers must also include study disciplines that prepare teachers for working with pupils with SEN.

Measure 8.2.2 Supporting the development of further education of teaching staff in teaching children and students with disabilities in the main educational stream.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: Educational activities on the aforementioned topic took place in the monitored period.

### **8.3 Objective: High-quality education of children and students with disabilities that takes into account their individual needs.**

Education for children and students with disabilities must be provided with an individualised approach that takes into account their needs and abilities. At the same time, it is essential to continue supporting inclusive education so that all children and students with disabilities are ensured equal access to education and the approach of all entities and staff involved in educating these persons be uniform, respect their specific needs and help develop their potential, skills and knowledge.

Measure 8.3.1 Establishing cooperation between early care and special pedagogical centres in order to achieve greater coherence and fluidity in the child's education and development.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: MEYS, MLSA

Indicator: Cooperation has been established.

Measure 8.3.2 Adopting a standard for teaching assistants that is valid for all schools.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: A standard for the activity of teaching assistants has been adopted.

Measure 8.3.3 Carrying out a study to determine the number of schools for pupils with hearing impairments established under Section 16 (9) of Act No. 561/2004 Coll., on Pre-School, Primary, Secondary, Higher Vocational and Other Education (the Education Act), as amended, and determining at how many of them the subject "Czech Sign Language" is not included in the curriculum.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MEYS, CSB

Indicator: The study in question has been carried out.

Measure 8.3.4 Ensuring the provision of healthcare services to children and pupils with disabilities at schools and selected educational facilities through home care providers.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: MH

Indicator: Medical treatment at schools is provided for via home care providers

Measure 8.3.5 Gradually expanding the activity of schools and educational facilities for children and students with disabilities established under Section 16 (9) of Act No. 561/2004 Coll., on Pre-School, Primary, Secondary and Higher Vocational and Other Education (the Education Act), as amended, to start offering supportive care and services, including providing for methodological assistance to pedagogues of other schools and legal representatives, passing along examples of good practice, etc. Using schools established separately for these groups of pupils primarily for pupils with the highest levels of disability.

Deadline: 31 December 2021, then ongoing

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: Schools and educational facilities established under Section 16 (9) of Act No. 561/2004 Coll., on Pre-School, Primary, Secondary and Higher Vocational and Other Education (the Education Act), as amended, offer services and methodological assistance to other schools.

Measure 8.3.6 Ensuring and regularly evaluating the provision of methodological support to teaching assistants via a unified system of methodological guidance and further education with an emphasis on the specifics of individual types of disability.

Deadline: 31 December 2021, then ongoing

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: The aforementioned methodological support is provided for and regularly evaluated.

Measure 8.3.7 According to mapped-out interest prepare and realise courses of further education "Instructor on Spatial Orientation and Independent Movement for the Visually Impaired".

Deadline: 31 December 2021, then ongoing

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: In the case of interest, the programme is continuously provided and funded.

Measure 8.3.8 Incorporating the checking of fulfilment of recommendations on educating children/pupils with disabilities into the Plan of Main Tasks of the Czech School Inspectorate along with monitoring the educational results of pupils being educated according to Section 50 (3) and Section 41 of Act No. 561/2004 Coll., on Pre-School, Primary, Secondary, Higher Vocational and Other Education (the Education Act), as amended.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: Mapping out of the situation in the given area has been incorporated into the activity of the Czech School Inspectorate.

Measure 8.3.9 Depending on the data from the electronic registration system, if necessary, create regional rental sites of aids, which are provided as a supportive measure for students with SEN, which will distribute investment and (in selected cases) non-investment aid to schools educating pupils with SEN in the form of a loan.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: Regional rental centres for the aforementioned aids have been created as needed.

Measure 8.3.10 Adjusting the conditions for the practical part of secondary education completion in the form of a uniform final examination so that pupils with SEN are able to demonstrate the acquired skills required by the given field of education.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: The conditions for completing secondary education have been set up in the aforementioned manner.

Measure 8.3.11 Creating a methodological recommendation for school counselling facilities and schools in order to specify the approach and intervention options in educating students under Section 50 (3) of Act No. 561/2004 Coll., on Pre-School, Primary, Secondary, Higher Vocational and Other Education (the Education Act), as amended, in cases where the established supportive measures are not sufficient.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: The conditions under the aforementioned provisions of the Education Act are met.

Measure 8.3.12 Increasing support for the production of teaching materials (electronic textbooks) available in Czech Sign Language for all areas of education.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: Support for the creation of the aforementioned teaching materials is being provided.

Measure 8.3.13 Regularly evaluating the results of diagnostic activities of school counselling facilities for children and students with disabilities and publishing these in order to ensure societal supervision and standardisation of the activities of school counselling facilities throughout the Czech Republic.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: The aforementioned evaluation has taken place during the monitored period and its results have been published.

Measure 8.3.14 Systematically carrying out awareness-raising activities on inclusive education as a preventive measure against excluding children and students with SEN from the main educational stream.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: Awareness-raising materials concerning this area are being issued.

#### **8.4 Objective: Increasing the accessibility of universities for students with disabilities.**

Higher education, as one of the prerequisites for better employment, should be accessible to as great a number of persons with disabilities as possible. Applicants and students with disabilities should therefore have opportunities to be admitted and to study comparable to students without disabilities. Currently, equal conditions in this area are not ensured systemically, thus it is necessary for support for students with disabilities to be guaranteed under higher education based on their individual needs.

Measure 8.4.1 Submitting an amendment to Act No. 111/1998 Coll., on Higher Education and on Amendment to Certain Acts (the Higher Education Act), as amended, adding new obligations to the provisions of Sections 21 and 42 whereby universities will be obliged to ensure accessible measures to equalise opportunities in the admissions procedure and subsequently in the fulfilment of study obligations for applicants and students with special needs. Universities shall regulate these measures as part of their internal regulations.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: An amendment regulating the given issue has been approved.

Measure 8.4.2 Systematically monitoring the characteristics of groups of students with specific needs at universities. Basic monitoring will be supplemented by sample surveys focused on students' study conditions. The studies will monitor the progress of studies, participation in mobility programmes and the preparedness of universities for specific needs of students, both in terms of staffing and infrastructure.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: The aforementioned studies are gradually being realised.

Measure 8.4.3 Financially supporting revitalisation and construction of university spaces with regard to their use by students with specific needs (barrier-free entrances, etc.) through an investment programme for the development and renewal of the material and technical foundation of universities.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: An investment programme with the aforementioned focus has been announced.

Measure 8.4.4 Utilising a financial instrument under the state budget for universities for compensation of increased costs associated with the studies of students with specific needs in accredited study programmes.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: Increased costs are being compensated via the state budget.

### **8.5 Objective: Expanding the lifelong learning options for persons with disabilities.**

Learning and educating oneself over the whole course of one's life is important for everyone and not only allows one to develop and deepen one's knowledge and skills for employment, but is also an instrument of social inclusion and participation in civic life. For this reason, it is expedient to broaden the offer of accessible educational programmes for persons with disabilities and, in light of the need for information technology knowledge, also to focus on courses dealing with the development of digital literacy.

Measure 8.5.1 Supporting the lifelong learning of persons with disabilities with a further range of educational programmes, including digital literacy courses.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: There is an offer of lifelong learning courses suitable for persons with disabilities and digital literacy courses suitable for persons with disabilities that culminate in examinations for professional qualifications in IT.

## Area 9: Health and Health Care

### Article 25 Health

According to Article 25 of the Convention, persons with disabilities have the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health without discrimination, and access to health services of the same range and quality as other persons, and must not be discriminated against within the public health insurance system. It is necessary to develop the health services that persons with disabilities need with regard to their disability, including early intervention and services designed to prevent secondary disabilities.

The current system of health care for the population of the Czech Republic is characterised by the successful development of individual clinical fields. A necessary precondition for providing adequate health care to persons with disabilities is respect for their specific needs, without which quality provision of this care cannot be guaranteed to the highest possible extent.

An integral component of personal health care is prevention and one of the tools for preventing disabilities is awareness-raising activities focused on the general public as well as persons with disabilities themselves. It is necessary to provide information concerning caring for one's health and preventing complications, particularly those that are typical for persons with a particular type of disability. Preventive programmes thus play a fundamental role in increasing the health of the population.

Another important task is continued reform of psychiatric care, in which state and local authorities and non-governmental organisations must participate. This area must be addressed legislatively so that expanding the network of outreach and outpatient services for persons with mental illness can be supported in all regions of the Czech Republic.

#### **Main objectives:**

- Ensuring accessible and high-quality health care for persons with disabilities.
- Increasing awareness in terms of both patient disabilities and healthcare professionals

#### **9.1 Objective: Taking into account the specific needs of persons with disabilities in providing health care.**

When providing health care to persons with disabilities, it is very important to respect their specific needs, especially choosing an appropriate method, manner and form of communication and ensuring that each patient is provided with sufficient information, not only about their state of health, but also on available health and social services that can improve their health.

Measure 9.1.1 Supporting the creation of informational materials and educational activities on the issue of persons with disabilities (in particular on methods, manners and forms of communication) that also take into account the specific needs of women, men and children with disabilities, and helping spread this information among the medical public.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MH

Indicator: A subsidy programme with the given focus has been announced.

Measure 9.1.2 Respecting the specific needs of persons with sensory or mental disabilities or persons with severe mobility impairments with respect to the provision of health care.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MH

Indicator: Rules have been established for respecting the specific needs of the aforementioned groups of persons.

Measure 9.1.3 Using awareness-raising to bring the attention of health service providers to the obligations laid down for them under Section 46 of Act No. 372/2011 Coll., on Health Services and the Conditions for their Provision (the Health Services Act), as amended, with respect to informing patients about further health and social services that can improve their state of health, in particular about the possibilities of social, work and pedagogical rehabilitation.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MH

Indicator: Training on the aforementioned matter was conducted, or methodological information drawn up and published during the given period.

Measure 9.1.4 Supporting the development of volunteer programmes and activities with health service providers focused on the chronically ill and disabled.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MH

Indicator: A subsidy programme with the given focus has been announced.

## **9.2 Objective: Preventing disabilities and mitigating the consequences thereof.**

Health awareness and access to information should be accessible to all citizens and allow them to make health decisions properly. As preventive programmes focus primarily on plans for immunisation and medical screening programmes for early detection, it is essential to support the creation of educational materials concerning disability prevention. Furthermore, it is also necessary to place emphasis on mitigating the consequences of disabilities through quality rehabilitative care.

Measure 9.2.1 Supporting the creation of informational and awareness-raising materials and activities focused on the general public as part of disability prevention.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MH

Indicator: A subsidy programme with the above focus has been announced.

Measure 9.2.2 Supporting domestic rehabilitation and educational sojourns for the chronically ill and disabled through subsidy programmes.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MH

Indicator: A subsidy programme with the above focus has been announced.

Measure 9.2.3 Supporting rehabilitation centres with an emphasis on specialisation for specific groups of persons with disabilities.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MH

Indicator: A subsidy programme with the above focus has been announced.

Measure 9.2.4 Supporting long-term rehabilitation and educational attendance events for the chronically ill or disabled through subsidy programmes.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MH

Indicator: A subsidy programme with the above focus has been announced.

### **9.3 Objective: Reforming psychiatric care.**

The system of psychiatric care in the Czech Republic still consists of large psychiatric hospitals where persons with serious mental illnesses are often hospitalised long-term, which is clearly cost-inefficient in comparison with community care, i.e. care provided in the natural environment of people with mental illness. It is therefore imperative to continue reforming psychiatric care, particularly the process of deinstitutionalisation, supporting the integration of mental health care into primary care by general practitioners, and increasing the number of multidisciplinary teams.

9.3.1 Integrating mental health care into primary care from general practitioners by increasing their powers in screening and care for stabilised patients, networking with specialised care and community services, and eliminating the indication restrictions on defined medications.

Deadline: 31 December 2022, then ongoing

Coordinator: MH

Indicator: Accredited educational courses have been organised for general practitioners in the field of mental health.

Measure 9.3.2 Strengthening the partnership role in the whole mental health care system by creating specific educational programmes both for users of this care and for professionals, and providing for the existence of patient organisations organisationally and financially.

Deadline: ongoing, 31 December 2025 (evaluation report from the Recovery College project)

Coordinator: MH

Co-Coordinator: MLSA, MEYS, MF

Indicator: Subsidy programmes for supporting patient organisations have been announced, there is a platform for involving users and family members in every region of the Czech Republic, and an evaluation report has been submitted from the Recovery College project<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> A project focused on integrating people with mental illness and strengthening social cohesion co-financed by the European Union.

Measure 9.3.3 Based on an evaluation of pilot projects as part of the psychiatric care reform, further increase of the number of multidisciplinary teams for persons with severe mental illness and other target groups of persons with mental illness.

Deadline: ongoing (report to be submitted for 2021, 2023 and 2025)

Coordinator: MH

Co-Coordinator: MLSA, MEYS

Indicator: According to the submitted reports, the number of patients/clients with severe mental illness, children with mental illness and patients/clients with an addiction issue in the care of multidisciplinary teams is rising.

Measure 9.3.4 Implementing deinstitutionalisation as a gradual transition from large psychiatric hospitals to community care, including expansion of acute care capacity at the psychiatric and paediatric wards of general hospitals.

Deadline: ongoing (report to be submitted for 2022 and 2024)

Coordinator: MH

Co-Coordinator: MLSA, MF

Indicator: According to the submitted reports, the number of acute psychiatric care beds in pre-defined and approved facilities for both adult and child and adolescent psychiatry is rising and the number of aftercare beds in the field of psychiatry is declining.

## **Area 10: Rehabilitation**

### Article 26 Habilitation and rehabilitation

According to Article 26 – Habilitation and rehabilitation, it is essential to adopt measures that allow persons with disabilities to attain and maintain maximum independence, exercise their abilities and fully participate in society. Comprehensive rehabilitation services and programmes, primarily in the field of health care, employment, education and social services, should serve this purpose.

Rehabilitation is a multidisciplinary field dealing with eliminating or reducing the progression of an illness or the consequences of an injury and mitigating their consequences through systematic, interconnected and coordinated planning and management of medical, social, work, educational, technological and other instruments. Comprehensive rehabilitation has the goal of abilities and skills being acquired in a natural environment leading to the handling of everyday tasks and a return to a dignified and active life.

In order to ensure maximum effectiveness of rehabilitation, it is essential for the whole process to take place in a comprehensive manner so that the individual components (medical, social, instructional and work-related) tie together. Comprehensive rehabilitation is not only important for the individual with the disability, but it is also advantageous for the state and society, as by practising the necessary skills a person becomes less dependent on their surroundings and, in most cases, also able to work. This affords them full or at least partial economic independence, and they become more self-sufficient and confident.

Despite the fact that individual areas of rehabilitation are constantly evolving, their interconnection and coordination is not yet sufficiently addressed. It is therefore necessary to find a consensus among the ministries involved and set up a system for coordinating

rehabilitation so that persons with disabilities who demonstrably need it receive the best care and support within the individual components of rehabilitation, and the provision of these services is also interconnected and coordinated.

**Main objective:**

- Allowing persons with disabilities to attain and maintain maximum independence and self-sufficiency in everyday life.

**10.1 Objective: Establishing conditions and rules for coordinating rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.**

Arranging the conditions and configuring the rules for functioning is a cornerstone for the emergence of coordinated rehabilitation, and for this reason it is essential to adopt the corresponding legal treatment that defines the coordination of rehabilitation and the conditions for its provision, as well as addressing the funding thereof.

Measure 10.1.1 Drawing up a legal treatment ensuring coordination of rehabilitation and the instruments for financing it.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MLSA

Co-Coordinator: MH, MEYS, MF

Indicator: A draft act governing coordination of rehabilitation has been drawn up.

**10.2 Objective: Expanding rehabilitation services.**

In order to fulfil the basic purpose of rehabilitation, it is essential to continue to develop all components thereof, ensure their timely and effective provision, and strengthen interconnection and coordination between them.

Measure 10.2.1 Expanding the area of medical rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and creating the conditions for better cooperation with other areas of rehabilitation.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MH

Indicator: Information has been submitted on development of the area of medical rehabilitation for persons with disabilities and measures have been adopted to ensure better cooperation with other areas of rehabilitation.

Measure 10.2.2 Expanding the area of social and occupational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and creating the conditions for better cooperation with other areas of rehabilitation.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: Information has been provided on development of the area of social and occupational rehabilitation for persons with disabilities and measures have been adopted to ensure better cooperation with other areas of rehabilitation.

Measure 10.2.3 Expanding the area of education for children and students with disabilities in the context of coordinating rehabilitation and creating the conditions for better cooperation with other areas of rehabilitation.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MEYS

Indicator: Information has been submitted on development of the area of educating children and students with disabilities in the context of coordinating rehabilitation and measures have been adopted to ensure better cooperation with other areas of rehabilitation.

Measure 10.2.4 Supporting rehabilitation processes based on agricultural activities within the framework of social agriculture in cooperation with non-profit, non-governmental organisations.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MoA

Indicator: A subsidy programme is being announced to support the above-mentioned rehabilitation processes.

## **Area 11: Employing Persons with disabilities**

### Article 27 Work and employment

Article 27 of the Convention deals with prohibiting discrimination due to discrimination in all matters associated with employment, particularly the right of persons with disabilities to earn a living from work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and creating an accessible work environment. It is also important to ensure equal conditions in hiring, remuneration, career advancement and safe and healthy work conditions. The article also highlights the importance of professional guidance and placement services. Employment of persons with disabilities should be supported in both the private and public sector, as should opportunities for self-employment.

Employment does not constitute a mere source of income for persons with disabilities, it is also one of the most important tools for integration and preventing social exclusion. In light of the fact that these persons are among the most vulnerable on the labour market, their employment is supported by a number of instruments. Elements of both active and passive support for employment are utilised in combination with incentives and sanction measures. Component aspects of the individual institutions of support are adjusted so as to react to current developments in the given area. Despite growing expenditures on these measures, however, the employment rate of such persons continues to remain unsatisfactory, it is therefore also necessary to boost social responsibility and positive motivation of employers and persons with disabilities themselves.

Employees with disabilities can be employed in the sheltered<sup>15</sup> or open labour market. Although the goal of employing and supporting persons with disabilities in the labour market should be for such persons to be employed primarily in the open labour market, a trend can be observed of employees with disabilities shifting to the sheltered labour market.

Education and qualification are stronger deciding factors in the employment of persons with disabilities than for the intact population, but the type of disability is also an important factor.

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<sup>15</sup> Employers with over 50% of employees with disabilities.

For this reason, it is also important to respect the specific needs of individual employees and establish the possibility for necessary adjustments to the work regime or work environment. According to the Sample Survey of Persons with disabilities from 2018, for 6% of employees with disabilities it would be appropriate to modify the work environment, while the necessary modifications were made for 7% of employees with disabilities. Ten percent of employees with disabilities would welcome modification of the work regime, for example working hours, breaks at work or allowing them to work from home. Approximately one-third of employees with disabilities in the open work market make use of these options.

**Main objective:**

- Ensuring persons with disabilities the right to earn a living from work freely chosen or accepted in the labour market.

**11.1 Objective: Effective support for employment of persons with disabilities in the sheltered and open labour market.**

Despite a number of instruments that support the employment of persons with disabilities, the gap between the unemployment rate of this group and that of intact society is pronounced. It is therefore necessary to make efforts in this area more effective, adjust the existing instruments as necessary and also seek out new methods for supporting the employment of persons with disabilities, particularly in the open labour market.

Measure 11.1.1 Adjusting the instruments for supporting employment of persons with disabilities enshrined in Act No. 435/2004 Coll., on Employment, as amended, in order to increase the motivation of employers to employ persons with disabilities in the open labour market.

Deadline: 31 December 2023

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: An amendment to the legislation has been made leading to support for employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market.

Measure 11.1.2 Making partial adjustments to support for employing persons with disabilities in the sheltered market enshrined in Act No. 435/2004 Coll., on Employment, as amended, in order to eliminate abuse of the support.

Deadline: 31 December 2023

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: An amendment has been made to the legislation concerning elimination of abuse of support for employing persons with disabilities in the sheltered labour market.

Measure 11.1.3 Submitting an annual evaluation to the GBPD on implementation of the "Developing the system of support for employing persons with disabilities in the open labour market" project. The evaluation shall contain information on the number of persons with disabilities supported under the project and the number of persons with disabilities placed through project activities in the labour market, broken down according to the sheltered and open labour markets.

Deadline: once a year for the duration of project implementation

Coordinator: MLSA, LO

Indicator: A report evaluating the project has been submitted.

Measure 11.1.4 Strengthening the professionalism of the Czech Labour Office in terms of supporting the employment of persons with disabilities. Submitting information annually on the number of employees trained for working with the target group of persons with disabilities as part of the "Developing the system of support for employing persons with disabilities in the open labour market" project and the number of employees trained who, after the project has ended, continue to operate at Czech Labour Offices in individual regions as advisors or coordinators for persons with disabilities.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MLSA, LO

Indicator: Information has been submitted on training sessions realised and the overall number of Czech Labour Office employees acting as advisors or coordinators for persons with disabilities.

Measure 11.1.5 Submitting annual reports to the GBPD on the activities of employers active in the sheltered labour market, which these employers are obliged to provide to the Czech Labour Office under the provisions of Section 78 (6) d) of Act No. 435/2004 Coll., on Employment, as amended. The evaluation shall contain a mapping out of the structure of these employers, including any legislative and non-legislative proposals to adjust the system of support for employing persons with disabilities in the sheltered labour market.

Deadline: once a year

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: A report has been submitted evaluating the annual reports, always by 30 November of the year in question.

Measure 11.1.6 Devoting increased attention to applicants or jobseekers with disabilities in selection and placement, especially in the form of counselling activities by the Czech Labour Office with a focus on employment in the labour market.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: Development in the number of supported persons with disabilities as part of Czech Labour Office counselling (the year-on-year decrease or increase in this number is assessed).

Measure 11.1.7 Continue supporting and expanding projects realised in cooperation with the MoA, the Agrarian Chamber of the Czech Republic, and the French Agricultural social mutual organization (MSA) with the purpose of occupational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities by employing them in agriculture. Conditions are to be created so that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to use their skills working on farms and in crafts associated with rural life.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MoA

Indicator: A subsidy programme is being announced to support the above-mentioned rehabilitation processes.

## **11.2 Objective: Supporting the employment of persons with disabilities in the public sector.**

It is appropriate and expedient for the state to set an example for private employers in terms of employing persons with disabilities. Thus, it is necessary to continue implementing the existing measures and adopting new measures as needed in order to ensure effective support for employment of persons with disabilities in the civil service. For example, most ministries do not even reach half the mandatory percentage of truly employed persons with disabilities.

Measure 11.2.1 Providing time at methodological events held for state secretaries and HR department heads of ministries for presentation of the issue of employing persons with disabilities, including the requisite operating and technical conditions for their work.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MI

Co-Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: Time has been provided for presentation of the above topic.

Measure 11.2.2 Supporting an increase in the number of employed persons with disabilities and submitting information on development of employment rates for persons with disabilities at individual ministries.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: all ministries, OG

Indicator: Development of the number of persons with disabilities employed (the year-on-year decrease or increase in this number is assessed).

## **Area 12: Health Assessment for Individual Social Security Sub-Systems**

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

Article 28 of the Convention declares a right to an adequate standard of living, social protection, access to services, aid devices, housing, pension system benefits and state assistance in times of material need.

The measures contained in this chapter are focused primarily on finding ways to increase the precision and quality of the health assessment system for the individual social security sub-systems. The fundamental task for the coming period is revising the whole assessment system, as despite a number of measures, the current medical assessment service system wrestles with long deadlines in processing applications. It is thus imperative that the assessment system be configured so that not only are the stipulated deadlines observed, but the conclusiveness and greatest possible objectivity of the assessments is ensured. In order to ensure that the assessments are of high quality and understandable and the process by which they are issued is transparent, it is necessary to provide for continuity of training for assessment physicians and set up a system for testing the acquired knowledge.

Last but not least, it is essential to reconsider the possibilities for introducing a system of multidisciplinary assessment through the ICF international classification, which leads to a more objective and transparent evaluation of long-term adverse health conditions and their consequences, and which is successfully being used by many European countries.

**Main objective:**

- Ensuring a functional system for implementation of social security.

**12.1 Objective: A quality health assessment system for the purposes of social security.**

For persons with disabilities, proper health assessment and issuing of a conclusive and objective assessment is an important prerequisite for ensuring support under the social security system. It is therefore necessary to pay particular attention to the quality of the assessment, its comprehensibility and the observance of the deadlines set for it to be issued.

Measure 12.1.1 Stabilising the medical assessment service system.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: Measures have been adopted leading to stabilisation of the system.

Measure 12.1.2 Finding a systemic solution for the provision of services that straddle the social-health boundary, and enshrining it in the legislation.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MLSA, MH

Indicator: A legal treatment addressing the aforementioned area has been presented.

Measure 12.1.3 Conducting a revision of the health assessment system, taking into account new approaches in this area.

Deadline: 31 December 2023

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: An internal analysis was conducted and a solution proposed.

Measure 12.1.4 Gradually introducing and implementing the ICF classification in the Czech Republic. Drawing up user forms for application of ICF for the practice of health and social service providers. Proposing an information collection system for using the ICF classification.

Deadline: 31 December 2024

Coordinator: MH

Co-Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: User forms for application of the ICF classification have been drawn up for the practice of health and social service providers.

Measure 12.1.5 Raising awareness of general practitioners about the necessity for accurate and proper completion of medical assessment service forms based on the patient's ascertained state of health for social security purposes.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MLSA, MH

Indicator: During the monitored period, training took place and/or informative material on the given topic was produced.

Measure 12.1.6 Working with the GBPD to nail down the methodological rules for assessing state of health and its consequences.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MLSA

Co-Coordinator: GBPD

Indicator: Consultations on this topic took place during the monitored period.

## Area 13: Caregivers

Article 28 Adequate standard of living and social protection

Article 28 of the Convention also applies to the right to accessible assistance for persons with disabilities in respect of activities which, due to their disability, they are not able to perform themselves.

One important part of a quality life and fulfilment of the right to an independent life in a community is remaining in one's natural social environment. A high level of self-sufficiency is needed for this, however. If this is not the case, assistance and support is needed, provided through the offer of social services or through caregivers, especially from the family, but also friends or neighbours. Assistance from "informal caregivers", generally family members, numbers among the most important forms of assistance in ensuring long-term care in a home environment. The high demands associated with caring for a close one are not only reflected in the life of the person dependent on assistance from another physical person, but also in all aspects of the lives of other family members. For the caregivers, this activity generally constitutes an enormous mental and physical burden, a lack of free time, and often limitations on their own gainful activity.

It is therefore essential for measures to be adopted and supported to ensure that, aside from the necessary material security, caregivers are also able to take advantage of adequate social services and other appropriate support so as to minimise the negative effects associated with the provision of such care.

### **Main objective:**

- Ensuring support and an adequate standard of living for caregivers.

### **13.1 Objective: Supporting those who care for persons with disabilities.**

Given the mental and often also physical demands of providing care, due to which caregivers often cannot perform gainful activity, it is necessary to support them by including them as a target group for social services so they can take advantage of, in particular, counselling and relief services. It is also necessary to ensure greater support for caregivers in the context of pensions, as despite the fact that caregiving periods are included in the total insured period necessary to claim a pension, the amount of old-age pensions for caregivers is often very low, which is largely reflected in their quality of life.

Measure 13.1.1 Proposing the inclusion of informal caregivers in the target groups of social services.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: A proposed legal amendment including caregivers among the target groups of social services has been drafted and has entered the legislative process.

Measure 13.1.2 Proposing possible changes that would more significantly take into account the period of personal care for a person dependent on the assistance of another at the specified degree of dependence in pension claims for the caregiver.

Deadline: 31 December 2023

Coordinator: MLSA

Indicator: Changes have been proposed to help to increase the pension security of caregivers.

## **Area 14: Participation of Persons with disabilities and Their Organisations in Political and Public Life**

### Article 29 Participation in political and public life

Article 29 of the Convention concerns the guarantee of political rights for all persons with disabilities, in particular through the possibility of participating in political and public life directly or through elected representatives. This article also emphasises the right of persons with disabilities to participate in public affairs by participating in non-profit non-governmental organisations.

Organisations for persons with disabilities, especially associations, provide for the indispensable connection of persons with disabilities with public administration, significantly contributing through consultations and comments to the formulations of measures that fulfil the specific needs and interests of persons with disabilities. They also provide a broad range of much-needed services (social services, social rehabilitation, etc.), also ensuring counselling and awareness-raising, not only focused on persons with disabilities, but also on their families and the public, thereby significantly helping integrate persons with disabilities into society. Their activity must thus continue to be supported, especially through suitable subsidy programmes. It is also important to deepen cooperation between such organisations and public administration, as well as other social partners.

The right to take part in political and public life is also exercised through the right to vote, which as a fundamental right should not be restricted. Despite the fact that Article 29 of the Convention guarantees all persons both the active and passive right to vote without distinction, this right is often not recognised, particularly for people with mental illnesses or mental disabilities. The often alleged abusability of their vote should not, however, be grounds for restricting this right, as it stems solely from the presumption of possible third-party behaviour and thus priority should be given to measures that prevent such potential abuse rather than restricting voting rights.

Another issue that remains in this area is sufficient access to voting documents and information, which must be accessible and comprehensible to all persons with disabilities. It is also important to provide for alternative voting stations for persons with limited mobility in cases where voting stations are not barrier-free.

**Main objectives:**

- Creating the conditions for ensuring the participation of persons with disabilities and their organisations in public life on an equal footing with others.
- Ensuring and supporting exercise of the right to vote by persons with disabilities.

**14.1 Objective: Persons with disabilities participate in the administration of public affairs.**

In light of the importance and significance of organisations for persons with disabilities in defending, supporting and lobbying for the rights of persons with disabilities, it is essential that these organisations be actively worked with in forming public policies and that support be provided for their activities, in particular through provided subsidies.

Measure 14.1.1 Working with representatives of organisations for persons with disabilities in formulating public administration measures and preparing materials for international talks concerning persons with disabilities.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: all ministries, CNDC

Indicator: Public administration measures that have an impact on persons with disabilities have been consulted with representatives of organisations for persons with disabilities.

Measure 14.1.2 Announcing a subsidy programme "Support for Public Benefit Activities of Associations of the Disabled" with a nationwide scope and preserving at least the current level of financial support for this programme.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: OG

Indicator: The subsidy programme has been declared with at least the current level of financial support.

**14.2 Objective: Involving organisations for persons with disabilities in international activities.**

International cooperation is an important part of the activities of organisations for persons with disabilities. Alongside membership in international organisations devoted to protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, this allows for professionalization of the organisations and sharing of information and examples of good practice, thus it is desirable to support such activities.

Measure 14.2.1 Supporting international cooperation of organisations for persons with disabilities under the subsidy programme "Support for Public Benefit Activities of Associations of the Disabled".

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: OG

Indicator: The subsidy programme contains support for the above activities.

**14.3 Objective: Providing for exercise by persons with disabilities of their right to vote.**

Eliminating obstacles to exercising the active right to vote will provide all persons with disabilities without distinction with the opportunity to freely choose their representatives and thus participate in political and public life, deepening their interest in goings-on in the community and in society and leading to social inclusion.

Measure 14.3.1 Eliminating the restriction on legal capacity to exercise the right to vote.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MI

Indicator: The legal treatment of electoral laws does not contain limitations on legal capacity that pose an obstacle to actively exercising the right to vote.

**14.4 Objective: The conditions enabling persons with disabilities to exercise the right to vote are ensured.**

In order for the right to vote to be exercised, it is necessary to ensure that essential information is available and accessible to all eligible voters. Members of election committees should be acquainted with methods and forms of appropriate communication with persons with individual types of disability, the options for assistance, and other tools for providing support in the exercising of voting rights. It is also important that ensuring the accessibility of voting stations not be omitted.

Measure 14.4.1 Supporting assistance and other ways to help voters with disabilities at the polling station and using voter documentation by putting through legislative and other instruments.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: MI

Indicator: Changes have been carried out leading to improved access of persons with disabilities to exercise their right to vote.

Measure 14.4.2 Creating a public portal with information on the accessibility of voting stations and allowing voters with disabilities to change their voting district with regard to the accessibility of the voting station.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: MI

Indicator: A public portal has been established with information on the accessibility of voting stations, and this information is listed there. The relevant legal regulations contain provisions allowing voters with disabilities to change their voting district with regard to the accessibility of the voting station.

Measure 14.4.3 Providing district election committees with methodological support for dealing with persons with disabilities, including procedures when voting with portable ballot boxes.

Deadline: 31 December 2021, then ongoing

Coordinator: MI

Co-Coordinator: MLSA, MH

Indicator: Methodological materials have been drawn up for district election committees with the given information.

Measure 14.4.4 Providing information on voting agendas, elections and methods of voting that are accessible to persons with disabilities, including texts in an easy-to-understand form and videos in Czech Sign Language.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MI

Indicator: Information relating to elections has been published in an accessible electronic form, in an easy-to-understand form, and basic information relating to elections has been translated into Czech Sign Language.

## **Area 15: Access to Cultural Heritage and Participation in Cultural Life and Sporting Activities**

Article 30 Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

Article 30 of the Convention declares the right of persons with disabilities to participate in cultural life on an equal basis with others by ensuring access to cultural properties, television programmes, films, theatre and other performances and access to places for cultural activities such as theatres, museums, cinemas, libraries and tourism services, and, as far as possible, to monuments and sites of national cultural importance. The article also deals with the obligation to take appropriate measures to enable persons with disabilities to have the opportunity to develop and utilise their creative and artistic potential. The article also mentions the right of persons with disabilities to recognition and support of their specific cultural and linguistic identity, including sign language and deaf culture. The article goes on to mention the importance of supporting recreational, leisure and sporting activities of persons with disabilities.

Culture is a significant part of public, social and economic life, supporting the elimination of prejudices and boundaries and having an important educative and awareness-spreading character. It also fulfils a therapeutic and rehabilitation function. Thus, it acts as an irreplaceable means of involving persons with disabilities in the life of society, and the contribution of artists with disabilities is indispensable.

For this reason, one of the goals of the National Plan in this area remains supporting the removal of physical and administrative barriers that prevent more intensive access of persons with disabilities to cultural properties and services and, at the same time, enabling the self-realisation of these persons, e.g. through working in the field of culture.

The cultural policy fully takes into account the significance of culture and its benefit for persons with disabilities. It is a constant endeavour of the Ministry of Culture's subsidy policy to make buildings intended for cultural activities accessible and to expand the accessible collections of works, sightseeing or educational trails and other cultural activities.

A persistent problem is insufficient accessibility of television and radio broadcasts for people with visual and hearing impairments. It is therefore necessary to support and increase the percentage of shows with subtitles or closed captions or interpretation into Czech Sign Language for persons with hearing impairments, and audio descriptions for persons with visual impairments.

Article 30 of the Convention also includes support for sports and sporting activities. Not only do they help improve the state of health and fitness of persons with disabilities, but sporting activities and physical recreation are also an important factor for improving their lives and helping with rehabilitation and integration into society. Among the important measures leading to support for these activities is the support of associations and organisations providing sporting activities for persons with disabilities, which play an irreplaceable role in this area.

**Main objectives:**

- Ensuring that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in the cultural life of society on an equal basis with others.
- Ensuring that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in sporting activities on an equal basis with others.

**15.1 Objective: Access to monuments, theatres, museums, cinemas, libraries and other cultural facilities, including the services they provide.**

The right to participate in cultural life is fulfilled primarily by making cultural monuments and other facilities accessible, including museums and galleries, and by ensuring the accessibility of public library and information services. For this reason, it is essential to continue with these activities and also to support the adoption of further measures allowing persons with disabilities access to other cultural properties and services.

Measure 15.1.1 Setting up a work group for the area of museums and galleries, the goal of which will be to systematically map out the issue of how persons with disabilities can access cultural heritage, and preparing any recommendations.

Deadline: 31 December 2021

Coordinator: MC

Indicator: A working group has been established and meets regularly.

Measure 15.1.2 Drawing up an analysis of subsidy programmes from the Museums Department of the MC and submitting any resulting proposal for adjustments improving the access of persons with disabilities to cultural heritage.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MC

Indicator: The aforementioned analysis and potential proposal have been produced.

Measure 15.1.3 Support for making museum and gallery exhibits accessible to persons with limited mobility or orientation within the framework of providing standardised public services of museums and galleries for persons with disabilities within the meaning of Act No. 122/2000 Coll., on the Protection of Museum Collections and on Amendment to Other Acts, as amended, and helping make monuments managed by the National Heritage Institute and other cultural facilities accessible.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MC

Indicator: The aforementioned support has been realised.

Measure 15.1.4 Supporting the digitisation of national cultural wealth and making it accessible using technologies enabling remote access and various types of presentation according to the disability, and publishing at least 50 digitised records of furnishing items a year on the "e-collections" portal ([www.esbirky.cz](http://www.esbirky.cz)) under the National Heritage Institute.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MC

Indicator: A subsidy programme to support the given area has been announced in the given year and at least 50 digitised records of furnishing items have been published on the "e-collections" portal.

Measure 15.1.5 As part of the subsidy policy, supporting activities consisting of the issue of publications, guides and other printed materials in an easy-to-understand print or digital form enabling easier access to the collections of museums, galleries and other monuments for persons with disabilities.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MC

Indicator: A subsidy programme to support the aforementioned activities has been declared.

Measure 15.1.6 Supporting own contributory organisations in creating a system of admission discounts for persons with disabilities.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MC

Indicator: Contributory organisations are motivated to provide discounts on admission.

Measure 15.1.7 Supporting the availability of public libraries and library information services through a subsidy procedure to ensure an offer of audio books and the introduction of technical facilities that allow persons with visual impairments access to library collections and electronic sources of information.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MC

Indicator: A subsidy programme supporting the above activities has been announced.

Measure 15.1.8 Supporting the introduction of the Handicap Friendly<sup>16</sup> standard at libraries and providing services to persons with disabilities according to this standard; supporting and developing the activities of the Section of Services for Persons with Specific Needs, the SKIP 60+ Section and the Section of Librarians – Memory Trainers at the Association of Librarians and Information Workers of the Czech Republic.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MC

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<sup>16</sup> The Handicap Friendly standard offers suitable measures and lays down criteria that a library should meet in order to be user-friendly for persons with specific needs and to ensure equal conditions for such people. National Library of the Czech Republic. 2019. Available at: <https://ipk.nkp.cz/docs/aktualizovana-verze-publikace-rovny-pristup.-standard-handicap-friendly-2019>

Indicator: The given activities are supported at libraries.

Measure 15.1.9 Operating a new service as part of the activities of the K. E. Macan Library and Printing House for the Blind of a CAMELOT digital library for persons with visual impairments providing access to periodicals and maintaining an annual production of approximately 150 audio books and 50 books in Braille.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MC

Indicator: The CAMELOT service is being operated at the K. E. Macan Library and Printing House for the Blind. The annual production of this library is approximately 150 audio books and 50 books in Braille.

## **15.2 Objective: Making a higher number of audio-visual works accessible to persons with disabilities.**

In order to ensure equal access for persons with disabilities to all forms of cultural works, it is also necessary to provide access to as many audio-visual works as possible, as these also serve as an important means for acquiring information or education.

Measure 15.2.1 Proposing specification and raising of the obligation to provide subtitles and audio descriptions to television programmes under Act No. 231/2001 Coll., on the Operation of Radio and Television Broadcasting and on the Amendment of Other Acts, as amended.

Deadline: 31 December 2022

Coordinator: MC

Indicator: A proposal of the legal treatment, including specification and raising of the obligation for television programmes to have subtitles and an audio description, has been drafted and submitted to the legislative process.

Measure 15.2.2 As part of the subsidy policy, supporting activities consisting of providing subtitles and interpreting into Czech Sign Language for audio-visual works, making audio-visual works accessible through audio descriptions for persons with visual impairments, creating a network of theatre presentations interpreted into Czech Sign Language, creating publications in Czech Sign Language and producing audio books.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MC

Indicator: A subsidy programme with the above focus has been announced.

## **15.3 Objective: Supporting the creative and artistic potential of persons with disabilities.**

Creative and artistic activities help persons with disabilities with self-realisation and self-identification, also contributing to the development of their intellectual and emotional level. Through subsidy programmes, these activities can be made accessible and help better and more effectively make use of the artistic potential of persons with disabilities, not just to their own benefit, but also to enrich society as a whole.

Measure 15.3.1 Helping create a space in which persons with disabilities can satisfy their cultural needs and realise their own work through support for the cultural activities of legal and natural persons.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: MC

Indicator: A subsidy programme with the given focus has been announced.

#### **15.4 Objective: Supporting the involvement of persons with disabilities in sporting activities.**

In order to expand sporting activities, it is necessary to set up regular financial support for making sport accessible to as broad a circle of persons with disabilities as possible.

Measure 15.4.1 Providing financial support to athletes with disabilities and such athletic associations.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: NSA

Indicator: A subsidy programme for the above support has been announced.

## **Area 16: Statistical Data**

### Article 31 Statistics and data collection

Article 31 of the Convention concerns the obligation to collect information, statistical data and study results important for formulating and implementing policies for fulfilling the rights of persons with disabilities. The information is used as a tool for evaluating fulfilment of measures and to identify and propose solutions for individual areas affecting the life of persons with disabilities.

In order to establish an effective state policy in relation to persons with disabilities, it is essential to have access to as accurate statistical data as possible on the number and structure of this group. In fulfilling the measures of the National Plans, three statistical surveys were conducted in 2007, 2013 and 2018. In the final study the data on persons with disabilities were determined by directly questioning those whose disability limits them in everyday activities.

With regard to the importance of statistical data, it is essential to continue collecting them in the coming period.

#### **Main objective:**

- Collecting and publishing statistical data concerning persons with disabilities.

#### **16.1 Objective: Obtaining quality and factual data concerning persons with disabilities.**

Given the importance of collecting and evaluating statistical data concerning persons with disabilities for more effective pursuit of their rights, it is imperative to carry out further sample surveys so that information on the number and structure of such persons can be updated and, at the same time, so that trends in the development thereof can be monitored.

Measure 16.1.1 Conducting another sample survey on the number and structure of persons with disabilities in private households.

Deadline: 31 October 2024

Coordinator: CSO

Co-Coordinator: IHIS, MLSA

Indicator: The survey in question has been conducted.

## **Area 17: Coordination and Monitoring of Implementation of the National Plan**

Implementation and ongoing monitoring of the National Plan is an interconnected interdisciplinary process, in which most central state authorities participate, along with a number of other institutions and organisations for persons with disabilities as well. Based on experiences with coordinating and monitoring National Plans implemented so far, it is expedient to retain the model whereby all relevant ministries submit a Progress Report on the National Plan measures under their purview every year for the past calendar year. The report is then taken up by the Czech government, which proposes changes or additions to the individual measures if necessary. Although the measures of the National Plan cannot be binding for individual regions, it is important to provide them with continuous methodological support and to mediate dialogue among them on current issues concerning persons with disabilities that fall under their independent jurisdiction so that they can carry out the state policy in this area more effectively.

### **Main objective:**

- To regularly monitor and evaluate implementation of National Plan measures, also involving organisations for persons with disabilities in this monitoring activity.

### **17.1 Objective: Annual check on implementation of National Plan measures.**

The submission of reports is essential for ensuring monitoring and acquiring information on the implementation and effectiveness of individual measures, and it is therefore necessary for these reports to be regularly submitted, evaluated and for changes or additions to them to be proposed as necessary.

Measure 17.1.1 Once a year, by 28 February, all ministries and institutions that have had measures assigned are to submit a report on implementation of the National Plan measures that fall within their jurisdiction over the past year.

Deadline: ongoing

Coordinator: all ministries, OG

Indicator: A report has been submitted by the given deadline.

Measure 17.1.2 Once a year, at the latest by 30 June, the Government Commissioner for Human Rights, the GBPD and subsequently the Czech government are to evaluate and potentially update the National Plan.

Deadline: ongoing (GBPD to submit report to the government by 30 June)

Coordinator: Government Commissioner for Human Rights, GBPD

Indicator: A report on implementation of the National Plan has been drawn up and submitted to the Czech government. The government has taken up the report and approved any potential update to the National Plan.

## 4 Implementation of the National Plan

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In order for the National Plan to be successfully implemented, it is essential to set out the rules and mechanisms through which it will be implemented and also monitored. Monitoring of the National Plan is governed by the *Rules for Monitoring and Evaluating Implementation of the Tasks of the National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with disabilities 2021–2025*, which is an annex to this document.

Providing for the corresponding institutional coverage is an essential precondition for the National Plan to be implemented and for its implementation to be monitored. The primary body, the GBPD, does not have any executive powers, however. As an advisory body, it passes its standpoints to the Czech government, which regularly takes up and approves reports on implementation of the National Plan, as with any potential modifications to the National Plan.

The coordinator ensuring implementation and monitoring of the National Plan is the GBPD Secretariat, which is part of the Czech Office of the Government. Considering that this department does not have sufficient powers or staff to comprehensively advance equal rights for persons with disabilities, it acts primarily as a consultation site for ministries and other institutions that coordinate measures on the methods of implementation for National Plan tasks.

### 4.1 Implementation Structure and Coordination

**The key actors in the implementation process are:**

At the central level:

- the Czech government
- the ministries: MT, MRD, MLSA, MJ, MEYS, MI, MH
- the Government Commissioner for Human Rights
- the GBPD
- the GBPD expert groups
- non-profit NGOs associating and representing persons with disabilities

At the regional and local level:

- regions, municipalities
- non-profit NGOs associating and representing persons with disabilities

The coordinators, and potentially co-ordinators, are responsible for implementing the individual measures. These are the individual ministries under whose jurisdiction the given issue falls. The GBPD, organisations for persons with disabilities and potentially other institutions concerned also participate in certain tasks.

Measures aimed at implementing the National Plan are assigned by Czech Government Resolutions and are thus binding for ministries and the organisations they run. In relation to regions, municipalities and non-profit NGOs, fulfilment of the National Plan is realised through cooperation and also the option of utilising incentives (e.g. in the form of subsidies).

The central coordinator for implementing the strategy is the Government Commissioner for Human Rights, who is the Executive Vice-Chair of the GBPD. The function of coordinator is held by the GBPD Secretariat Department.

## 4.2 Timetable

Each measure of the National Plan has a clearly defined deadline for implementation or is implemented on an ongoing basis, i.e. for the whole duration of the National Plan. The deadlines were chosen with regard to experience with the duration of legislative processes, systemic changes, producing analyses and other tasks the National Plan contains. The responsible coordinators had the opportunity to comment on all measures and deadlines during talks of the Working Group for Creation of a New National Plan for Persons with disabilities, and as part of the inter-ministerial comments procedure.

Implementation of the National Plan will be checked every year through progress reports, which are to be submitted to the Czech government for approval. On the basis of these reports, potential modifications to both the text and deadlines of measures will be proposed.

A comprehensive evaluation of implementation of the National Plan will take place along with the final interim progress report, i.e. for 2025.

## 4.3 Budget and Sources of Funding

Implementation of the proposed measures will be financially secured **under the approved expenditure limits for the relevant chapters** and medium-term expenditure frameworks laid down for the individual chapters. All budget chapters that are to be involved in implementing National Plan measures will provide for expenditures associated with implementing the given tasks within those expenditure limits and frameworks. This financial provision concerns coverage resulting from legislative proposals as well as coverage of measures of a non-legislative nature.

If, however, any financial claims arise from the tasks contained in the National Plan, the competent ministry, or budget chapter under which the requested measure belongs, must find a specific source from which these claims will be covered, e.g. by transferring funds within its chapter.

## 5 Creation of the National Plan

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### 5.1 Authors and Stakeholders of the National Plan

The government of the Czech Republic ordered the creation of the National Plan. The responsible coordinator for its creation is the Government Commissioner for Human Rights and the GBPD. The GBPD Secretariat Department coordinated its creation.

Preparation of the document was contributed to primarily by the **Working Group for Preparation of a New National Plan for Persons with disabilities** (hereinafter the "Working Group"), established by the GBPD with its resolution of 10 January 2019. This working group consisted of representatives from all concerned ministries, institutions and the CNDC representing persons with disabilities. Specifically, these were the following ministries and institutions: OG, MT, MF, MC, MRD, MIT, MLSA, MJ, MEYS, MI, MH, MoA and the Czech Association of Employers of the Disabled. Regional government was also represented via the Czech Association of the Regions, despite the fact that regions and municipalities cannot be assigned tasks under the National Plan based on their right to self-governance. A representative of the CSO also regularly attended meetings of the Working Group as a guest.

Several other organisations for persons with disabilities also participated in creating the National Plan (the Association of Organisations of the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Their Friends, the Society for the Support of Persons with Mental Disabilities Czech Republic, the Czech Blind Union, etc.), sending in proposed measures or also attending some of the meetings.

### 5.2 Description of the Procedure for Producing the National Plan

The Methodology for Preparing Public Strategies<sup>17</sup> was used to draft the National Plan, but the structure and preservation of a similar form to the National Plans implemented so far was also respected.

Preparation of the National Plan was dealt with primarily by the Working Group. Working Group meetings first addressed the structure and form of the National Plan. Working Group members agreed that the structure of the previous plan, which was based on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities, had proved its worth and should be maintained in the new document. In connection with individual articles of the Convention, important areas to be addressed by the National Plan were laid out. Within the framework of the individual areas, objectives to be focused on were defined. Specific measures were then attached to the objectives for achieving them.

At the regular meetings of the Working Group, proposed measures for individual objectives were discussed, on the part of both ministries and organisations for persons with disabilities. Certain areas were also discussed at separate meetings with the ministries and organisations concerned. The final wording of the individual measures was thus a compromise between the representatives of persons with disabilities and the relevant ministries. The output from the meetings of working groups was compiled and served as the basis for drafting of the National Plan by the GBPD Secretariat Department.

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<sup>17</sup> Ministry for Regional Development. 2018. *Methodology for Preparing Public Strategies*. Available at: <https://www.mmr.cz/cs/Microsites/PORTAL-STRATEGICKE-PRACE-V-CESKE-REPUBLICE/Nastroje-a-metodicka-podpora/Vystupy-projektu>

The Working Group met on the following dates:

- 14 March 2019, topic: the form and structure of the National Plan
- 16 May 2019, topic: a list of National Plan areas, proposed objectives and measures
- 17 September 2019, topic: independent living, family life, rehabilitation, employment and supporting self-employment of persons with disabilities, social security and social protection, education and the school system, health and health care
- 26 September 2019, topic: general commitments, obligations and principles, accessibility of buildings, transport and communication, accessibility of information, equality before the law and access to justice, accessibility of public administration, participation of persons with disabilities and their organisations in public affairs, access to cultural heritage and participation in cultural life, statistical data, coordination and monitoring of implementation of the National Plan
- 13 November 2019, topic: information on separate talks on selected areas of the National Plan, discussion on areas, objectives and measures (ongoing conflicts discussed)
- 30 January 2020, topic: information of separate talks on selected areas of the National Plans, discussion on areas, objectives and measures (completing the discussion of ongoing conflicts)

Subsequently the material was passed along for the inter-ministerial comments procedure on 19 May 2020. After this was completed, the National Plan was approved on 25 June 2020 by the GBPD. The National Plan was then passed along for discussion and approval by the Czech government, which approved it by way of Resolution No. 761 of 20 July 2020.

## 6 List of Abbreviations

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CNDC	Czech National Disability Council
COSMT	Czech Office for Standards, Metrology and Testing
CSA	Czech Standardisation Agency
CSI	Czech School Inspectorate
CSO	Czech Statistical Office
ČSN	Czech Technical Standard
EAA	European Accessibility Act
EU	European Union
GBPD	Government Board for Persons with Disabilities
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
IHIS	Institute of Health Information and Statistics
ISVS	Public Administration Information System
LO	Labour Office of the Czech Republic
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MC	Ministry of Culture
MEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
MF	Ministry of Finance
MH	Ministry of Health
MI	Ministry of the Interior
MIT	Ministry of Industry and Trade
MJ	Ministry of Justice
MLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MRD	Ministry for Regional Development
MT	Ministry of Transport
National Plan	National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2021–2025
NAB	National Accreditation Bureau
NSA	National Sports Agency
OG	Office of the Government of the Czech Republic
Convention	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
SEN	Special Educational Needs
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UN	United Nations

### **Rules for Monitoring and Evaluating Implementation of the Tasks of the National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with disabilities 2021–2025**

Implementation and ongoing monitoring of the National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with disabilities 2021–2025 (hereinafter the "National Plan") is an interconnected, inter-ministerial and multidisciplinary process, and for this reason it is essential that all affected central state authorities, as well as all other institutions ordered to do so by the National Plan, participate in implementing it.

Under Measure 17.1.1, the National Plan orders all ministries to submit a report once a year on implementation of the National Plan measures that fall within its jurisdiction for the past calendar year (hereinafter the "Progress Report"). The following Measure 17.1.2 lays down the obligation for the Government Commissioner for Human Rights, the Government Board for Persons with disabilities (hereinafter the "GBPD") and subsequently the Government of the Czech Republic to conduct an evaluation and potential update of the National Plan once a year, at the latest by 30 June.

Monitoring is based on procedures that have already been established and verified. In monitoring and evaluating the individual measures contained in the National Plan, the following rules and principles shall be followed:

1. The Executive Vice-Chair of the GBPD requests, by letter with a deadline of 20 January of the year following the evaluated period, that the individual ministries and other relevant institutions submit reports on implementation of the National Plan measures that were to have been fulfilled on an ongoing basis and whose deadlines were set at up to 31 December of the year under evaluation.  
Deadline: 20 January
2. The individual ministries send the GBPD Secretariat a report on implementation of measures in an accessible electronic form so that it can be further processed electronically.  
Deadline: 28 February
3. The submitted Progress Report shall contain the following:
  - a) in the case of a measure with a set deadline, the exact manner of its implementation
  - b) in the case of measures implemented on an ongoing basis, specific output produced by the responsible body in the evaluated year to implement the given measure
  - c) if a deadline or ongoing measure is being implemented in cooperation with another ministry, the forms of cooperation
  - d) indicators of measure fulfilment and data related to fulfilment thereof.
4. If the National Plan measure that is the subject of the Progress Report was fulfilled only partially or was not implemented at all, the Progress Report must state the justification for non-fulfilment and set out a proposal for further steps, including an alternative solution.

5. Following analysis of the materials, the GBPD Secretariat shall compile a summary National Plan Progress Report for the given year, including a standpoint on implementation of the individual measures. Assessment of implementation of National Plan measures shall be governed primarily by the established indicators.
6. The GBPD Secretariat shall pass along the individual bodies' measure implementation reports to the CNDC for its statement.  
Deadline: 10 March
7. The CNDC shall submit its reasoned opinion on the individual ministries' measure implementation reports to the GBPD Secretariat in electronic form.  
Deadline: 31 March
8. In the case of differing opinions on the part of the GBPD Secretariat, CNDC and any of the ministries on the evaluation of implementation of individual measures, the GBPD Secretariat shall initiate separate talks in order to establish the next steps.
9. By letter of the GBPD Executive Vice-Chair, the GBPD Secretariat shall send out a report on implementation of National Plan measures for the evaluated year for inter-ministerial commentary proceedings via the electronic library of the Czech Office of the Government (eKLEP).  
Deadline: 30 April
10. The GBPD Secretariat shall compile the comments sent by the individual ministries, and in the case of differing opinions on the evaluation of implementation of individual measures the GBPD shall attempt to reach a consensus under separate talks with the affected ministries and subsequently prepare the material for the GBPD meeting.  
Deadline: 31 May
11. The GBPD shall discuss the report on implementation of National Plan measures for the evaluated year at its session.  
Deadline: 15 June
12. The GBPD Secretariat shall incorporate any comments arising from the GBPD session into the material, prepare it for submission for discussion by the Government of the Czech Republic, and submit it to the government agenda.  
Deadline: 30 June