Consolidated Disability Findings from the 2017 United States Department of State Reports on Human Rights and Practices

# Introduction

The U.S. Department of State Report on Human Rights in 2017 is based on research performed by the State Department, specifically the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. The reports focus on the role of government in establishing policies to protect the human rights of all citizens.

USICD has consolidates the references on disability from each country report into one comprehensive document. Each country summary within the document is organized into four possible subheadings:

1. **Constitution and Laws:** If and how a country’s constitution or laws cover disability rights.
2. **Persons with Disabilities:** Material drawn from the report’s section on “Persons with Disabilities.”
3. **Other Relevant References:** Disability highlighted elsewhere in a country’s report (e.g. within the section on children, women, or prison and detention center conditions, etc.).
4. **The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:** The status of a country’s signature and ratification of the CRPD (Note: ratification dates are in a date/month/year format).

The following condensed reports are intended to be a resource only and do not necessarily reflect an endorsement of the quality of content or perspective contained within the reports. All content is pulled directly from the State Department reports with the exception of the CRPD status, which was added by USICD staff.

# Europe and Eurasia

# Albania

## Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

### c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

#### Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Physical Conditions: The ombudsman and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) reported that authorities held inmates with mental disabilities in regular prisons, where access to mental health care was wholly inadequate.

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The constitution and laws prohibit discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. Nevertheless, employers, schools, health-care providers, and providers of other state services at times engaged in discrimination. The law mandates that new public buildings be accessible to persons with disabilities, but the government only sporadically enforced the law. During the year the government adapted the premises of eight schools to accommodate persons with disabilities and eight others were in progress.

The government sponsored social services agencies to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, but these agencies traditionally lacked funding to implement their programs. Resource constraints and lack of infrastructure made it difficult for persons with disabilities to participate fully in civic affairs. Voting centers often were located in facilities lacking accommodations for such persons.

The government opened two new development centers for persons with disabilities in Pogradec and Bulqiza, supported by the UN Development Program, and three day-care centers for children with disabilities in Pogradec, Saranda, and Bulqiza. The ombudsman regularly inspected mental health institutions. Both the admission and release of patients at mental health institutions were problematic due to inadequate psychiatric evaluations. There was societal discrimination and stigmatization of persons with mental and other forms of disability.

# Andorra

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. The law mandates access to public buildings, information, and communications for persons with disabilities, and the government generally enforced this provision.

The Andorran Federation of Associations for Persons with Disabilities represented that accessibility for persons with disabilities and their entry into the workforce, are the two areas in which the country was not fully compliant with international standards.

## Section 7. Worker Rights

### d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

Some cases of discrimination against persons with disabilities, persons based on sexual orientation, and women occurred with respect to employment or occupation. Discrimination against persons with disabilities existed in the form of social and cultural barriers, as well as disadvantages in the labor market. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Justice, and Interior’s Department for Social Affairs and Labor’s four-year (2016-19) strategic plan favors labor insertion of persons with disabilities. The government established a Network of Inclusive Businesses to foster hiring of persons with disabilities. Companies received fiscal and social incentives for participating.

# Armenia

## Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

### c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

According to an October 2016 submission by the Partnership for Open Society Initiative (POSI) to the UN Committee against Torture, the lack of independent civilian oversight over psychiatric institutions led to inadequate protection of the right of persons with mental and social disabilities. According to the submission, regulations did not provide safeguards to prevent use of physical restraints, which were used not only on a physician’s decision, but also as a punishment and a method to intimidate other patients.

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with any disability in employment, education, and access to health care and other state services, but discrimination remained a problem. The law and a special government decree require both new buildings and those under renovation, including schools, to be accessible to persons with disabilities. Very few buildings or other facilities were accessible, even if newly constructed or renovated. Many public buildings, including schools and kindergartens, were inaccessible. This inaccessibility also deterred persons with disabilities from voting, since these buildings often served as polling stations during elections. According to the OSCE/ODIHR election observation report on the April 2 parliamentary elections, 69 percent of polling stations observed were not accessible to persons with physical disabilities or reduced mobility.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is responsible for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities but failed to carry out this mandate effectively. In September the government approved a decision to issue vouchers to persons with disabilities to purchase hearing aids and wheelchairs, instead of providing the actual devices. There were reports, however, the vouchers failed to cover the market price of hearing aids and wheelchairs, resulting in financial strain on the persons who needed them.

In 2014 the UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights reported that, despite state efforts to expand the network of inclusive schools, officials did not fully implement the policy. The law requires all public schools to become inclusive by 2025.

Persons with all types of disabilities experienced discrimination in every sphere, including access to health care, social and psychological rehabilitation, education, transportation, communication, employment, social protection, cultural events, and use of the internet. Lack of access to information and communications was a particularly significant problem for persons with sensory disabilities. Women with disabilities faced further discrimination, including in social acceptance and access to health and reproductive care, employment, and education, due to their gender.

Hospitals, residential care, and other facilities for persons with more significant disabilities remained substandard.

In 2015 the government introduced mandatory quotas for the employment of persons with disabilities for both public and private firms with more than 100 employees. In May, however, it decided to suspend the quota system.

Disability status determines eligibility for various social benefits. Media reports alleged corruption and arbitrary rulings on the part of the Medical-Social Expertise Commission, a governmental body under the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs that determines a person’s disability status. In December 2016 the NSS arrested and charged the head of the commission, Armen Soghoyan, and 16 other officials with soliciting bribes. The case was sent to court in September.

# Austria

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. The government did not always effectively enforce these provisions. Employment discrimination against persons with disabilities occurred.

While federal law mandates access to public buildings for persons with physical disabilities, NGOs complained many public buildings lacked such access. The Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Consumer Protection handled disability related problems. The government funded a wide range of programs for persons with disabilities, including transportation and other assistance to help integrate schoolchildren with disabilities into regular classes and employees with disabilities into the workplace.

## Section 7. Worker Rights

### d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

Companies sometimes preferred to pay a fine rather than hire a person with a disability.

# Azerbaijan

## Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

### d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

In May 2016 the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Arrests expressed concern regarding conditions in the special facilities for persons with disabilities…

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities, but the government did not enforce these provisions effectively.

A common belief persisted that children with disabilities were ill and needed to be separated from other children and institutionalized. Children with certain disabilities, including autism, received no education benefits or allowances. A local NGO reported there were approximately 60,000 children with disabilities in the country, of whom 6,000 to 10,000 had access to specialized educational facilities, while the rest were educated at home or not at all. The Ministry of Education, in coordination with UNICEF, took steps to increase inclusion of children with disabilities into regular classrooms, particularly at the primary education level. No laws mandate access to public or other buildings, information, or communications for persons with disabilities, and most buildings were not accessible. Conditions in facilities for persons with mental and other disabilities varied. Qualified staff, equipment, and supplies at times were lacking.

## Section 7. Worker Rights

### d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

Employers generally hesitated to hire persons with disabilities, and workplace access was limited.

# Belarus

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Women

Coercion in Population Control: Women with disabilities, as well as pregnant women whose children were diagnosed with potential disabilities in utero, reported that some doctors insisted they terminate their pregnancies. Estimates on maternal mortality and contraceptive prevalence are available at: [www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/monitoring/maternal-mortality2015/en/](http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/monitoring/maternal-mortality2015/en/).

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law does not specifically prohibit discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental disabilities; discrimination was common.

The law mandates that transport, residences, and businesses be accessible to persons with disabilities, but few public areas were wheelchair accessible or accessible for hearing and vision-impaired persons. The National Association of Disabled Wheelchair Users estimated that more than 90 percent of persons with physical disabilities were unable to leave their places of residence without assistance and stated their residences were not suitable to accommodate persons with physical disabilities. While authorities claimed that 30 percent of the country’s total infrastructure was accessible, disability rights organizations considered this figure inflated although the situation slightly improved during the year.

The country’s lack of independent living opportunities left many persons with disabilities no choice but to live in state-run institutions. Approximately 80 such institutions across the country housed more than 17,000 persons. Disability rights organizations reported that the quality of care in these facilities was low, and instances of fundamental human rights violations, harassment, mistreatment, and other abuse were reported. Authorities frequently placed persons with physical and mental disabilities in the same facilities and did not provide either group with specialized care.

Public transportation was free to persons with disabilities, but the majority of subway stations in Minsk and the bus system were not wheelchair accessible. In September experts of the ACT NGO released a monitoring report indicating that 3.3 percent of all educational institutions across the country were accessible to persons with disabilities, including with vision and hearing disabilities, and most of these facilities were recently constructed.

Disability rights organizations reported difficulty organizing advocacy activities due to impediments to freedom of assembly, censorship, and the government’s unwillingness to register assistance projects (see section 2.b.).

Persons with disabilities, especially those with vision and hearing disabilities, often encountered problems with access to courts and obtaining court interpreters. Women with disabilities often faced discrimination, and there were reports of authorities attempting to take children away from families in which parents had disabilities, claiming that they would not appropriately care for their children. Women with disabilities, as well as pregnant women whose children were diagnosed with potential disabilities in utero, reported that some doctors insisted they terminate their pregnancies.

## Section 7. Worker Rights

### d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

A government prohibition against workdays longer than seven hours for persons with disabilities reportedly made companies reluctant to hire them. Local NGOs reported that up to 85 percent of persons with disabilities were unemployed. Authorities provided minimal welfare benefits for persons with disabilities, and calculations of pensions did not consider disability status. Members of the country’s Paralympic teams received half the salaries and prize money of athletes without disabilities.

# Belgium

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. The government generally enforced the provisions.

While the government mandated that public buildings erected after 1970 must be accessible to persons with disabilities, many older buildings were still inaccessible. Although the law requires that prison inmates with disabilities receive adequate treatment in separate, appropriate facilities, there were still many such inmates incarcerated in inadequate facilities.

## Section 7. Worker Rights

### d. Discrimination With Respect to Employment and Occupation

Employers discriminated in employment and occupation against… persons with disabilities…

# Bosnia and Herzegovina

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law in both entities and at the state level prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. Discrimination in these areas continued, however. The government lacked a uniform legal definition of disabilities, which complicated access to benefits for those that would readily qualify, and normally prioritized support for war veterans.

The laws of both entities require increased accessibility to buildings for persons with disabilities, but authorities rarely enforced the requirement. Human rights NGOs complained that the construction of public buildings without access for persons with disabilities continued. In July 2016 the Federation government adopted a strategy that established benchmarks for the advancement of the rights of the disabled in areas of health, education, accessibility, professional rehabilitation and employment, social welfare, and culture and sports. The RS had no specific strategy regarding the rights of persons with disabilities.

NGOs complained that the government did not effectively implement laws and programs to help persons with disabilities. A special report by the human rights ombudsman released in December 2016 concluded, however, that significant progress had been made in the previous year towards increased accessibility and integration of the disabled into state-level legislative bodies in the country.

The law enables children with disabilities to attend regular classes when feasible. Due to lack of financial and physical resources, schools often reported that they were unable to accommodate them. Children with disabilities either attended classes using regular curricula in regular schools or attended special schools. Parents of children with significant disabilities reported receiving limited to no financial support from the government, notwithstanding that many of them were unemployed because of the round-the-clock care required for their dependents.

# Bulgaria

## Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

### c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

#### Prison and Detention Center Conditions

According to the country representative of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the centers did not provide accommodation for persons with limited mobility; there were no elevators, wheelchair-friendly ramps, or bathrooms for the mobility impaired. In addition, there was no accommodation for asylum seekers with visual, mental, or psychological disabilities.

## Section 3. Freedom to Participate in the Political Process

### Elections and Political Participation

The ODIHR [Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights] report noted that, despite the legal provisions facilitating voters with disabilities, “these measures are insufficient to ensure participation on an equal basis, especially for persons with visual impairments who cannot vote independently.”

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Children

Institutionalized Children: The government closed all residential care institutions for children with disabilities as part of a plan to close all such institutions by 2025 and replace them with community-based care. NGOs expressed concern over delays in the implementation of the plan and criticized the system of financing new centers by paying them on a per child/per day basis, as it motivated them to fill centers to capacity without regard to the individual needs of the child. The Bulgarian Helsinki Committee expressed concern that, despite its deinstitutionalization policy, the government continued to place children in institutions.

In its December report the CAT [Committee against Torture] expressed “grave concern” about “the absence of investigations into the deaths of 238 children with mental disabilities who died in the period 2000-2010” and “dismay by the statement that 22 inspections of the institutions in question did not establish inhuman treatment of children by the personnel of the specialized institutions.”

The government inspected the institutions and the new centers, uncovering malpractice and mistreatment of the children placed in them. For example, in October 2016 the ombudsman found that despite the change in leadership at the correctional boarding school in Podem, the staff continued to impose unauthorized punishments and there was violence among students.

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities but the government did not effectively enforce these provisions. The government focused most of its efforts on providing disability pensions, social services, and institutional care.

In September the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy complained of numerous cases of TELK decisions regarding children, citing whole villages in which nearly all the children have disability status. NGOs criticized the Labor Expert Medical Commission (TELK) model for assessing disabilities. They asserted that the system labeled persons with disabilities as “unfit for work” and ultimately subjected them to poverty. In September the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy alleged corruption in TELK decisions regarding children, citing whole villages in which nearly all the children have disability status.

According to the ombudsman, the government did not make enough efforts to integrate persons with disabilities into society.

While the law requires improved access to buildings for persons with disabilities, enforcement lagged in some new public works projects as well as in existing, unrenovated buildings.

The law promotes the employment of persons with disabilities and provides employers with subsidies covering 30 to 50 percent of the cost of insurance and the full cost of adjusting and equipping workplaces to accommodate them. According to the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, however, the government did not provide real opportunities, for professional training or free-market employment.

Individuals with mental and physical disabilities often were housed in institutions located in remote areas.

According to the National Statistical Institute, approximately 17 percent of students with special education needs were enrolled in 55 “special schools,” while the rest attended mainstream schools. Those studying in the special schools received diplomas that higher-level learning establishments did not recognize as qualifying them for further education. According to NGOs and the State Agency for Child Protection, the prevailing practice of considering childhood disability a medical issue, the lack of an inclusive social environment, and insufficient support infrastructure encouraged institutionalization.

The law provides specific measures for persons with disabilities to have access to the polls, including mobile ballot boxes, voting in a polling station of their choice, and assisted voting. According to ODIHR, those measures were “not sufficient to ensure equal participation, especially for persons with visual impairments who cannot vote independently.”

## Section 7. Worker Rights

### b. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

According to the Agency for Fundamental Rights, “children and adults with disabilities are forced into street begging and petty theft.”

### d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

According to the Commission for Protection against Discrimination, the majority of discrimination complaints received during the year were related to employment, predominantly concerning persons with disabilities.

The government funded programs to encourage employers to overcome stereotypes and prejudice when hiring members of disadvantaged groups such as persons with disabilities.

The law requires the Interior Ministry, the State Agency for National Security, and the State Agency for Technical Operations to allot 1 percent of their public administration positions for persons with disabilities. Enforcement was poor, however, and employers were not motivated to hire persons with disabilities, citing inaccessible public infrastructure, low levels of education, and lack of sufficient funding for modifying workplaces. NGOs criticized the system of evaluating persons with disabilities based on the degree of their lost ability to work, which effectively prevented many persons with disabilities who are able to work from having a job. The Commission for Protection against Discrimination reported receiving an increased number of complaints of employment discrimination. The Agency for Persons with Disabilities estimated that 10 percent of persons with disabilities earned an income. The law no longer grants preferential public procurement contracts to specialized enterprises and cooperatives employing persons with disabilities. The privilege was rescinded because many employers fictitiously hired persons with disabilities to win a contract. NGOs reported that the provision hurt companies that actually did employ persons with disabilities, and as a result the number of employed persons with disabilities decreased.

# Croatia

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities, but the government did not always enforce these provisions effectively. While the law mandates access to buildings for persons with disabilities, building owners and managers did not always comply, and there were no reported sanctions.

Children with disabilities attended all levels of school, although NGOs stated the lack of laws mandating equal access for persons with disabilities limited the access of students with disabilities to secondary and university education.

## Section 7. Worker Rights

The ombudsman for persons with disabilities reported that 2016 was the first year to mark an increase in employment of persons with disabilities, with a 34 percent increase in employment since 2014. The ombudsman for persons with disabilities concluded this increase was a direct result of new legislation that targets rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities and includes quotas and incentives for employers. The ombudsman reported underutilization of social and labor services provided by this legislation, stating the private sector lacked mechanisms to provide for and monitor reasonable accommodations for employing persons with disabilities.

# Cyprus

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities in employment, education, air travel and other transportation, access to health care, the judicial system, or in the provision of other state services. The law provides persons with disabilities the right to participate effectively and fully in political and public life, including by exercising their right to vote and to stand for election. The government generally enforced these provisions.

Problems facing persons with disabilities included access to natural and constructed environments, transportation, information, and communications.

The state provided facilities to enable children with disabilities to attend all levels of education. The MOE has adopted a code of good practices, prepared in collaboration with the ombudsman, regarding attendance of students with disabilities in special units of public schools. Authorities provided a personal assistant for students with disabilities attending public schools but not private ones.

In a March 13 report assessing the 2016 deinstitutionalization program for persons with mental disabilities, the ombudsman noted that authorities failed to handle effectively matters related to the rights, needs, and abilities of these persons, and did not meet the main objective, which was the enjoyment of the right of independent living within society.

The Cyprus Paraplegics Organization reported that several public buildings were still not accessible to wheelchair users.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Insurance’s Service for the Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled is responsible for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. Observers did not consider fines for violating the law against employment discrimination sufficient to deter employers from discriminating against persons with disabilities (see also section 7.d.).

# THE AREA ADMINISTERED BY TURKISH CYPRIOTS

## Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

### c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

In August 2016 the “Attorney General’s Office” opened an investigation against a police officer on assault and battery charges, and a “court” case was pending against the officer who allegedly beat a 67-year-old man arrested for the sexual assault of a mentally disabled 19-year-old boy. According to reports, police detained, beat, and insulted the man in an effort to obtain his confession without informing him of the nature of his arrest. When the victim was later brought to face and identify the alleged attacker, police discovered they had detained the wrong person. Political party leaders called for an investigation. The “Attorney General’s Office” reported the investigation was still ongoing, but would be delayed because the complainant will undergo open-heart surgery.

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The “law” prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities in employment, education, air travel and other transportation, access to health care, the “judicial system,” or the provision of other “state” services, and authorities effectively enforced these provisions. The “law” does not mandate access to public buildings and other facilities for persons with disabilities, and the disability community complained of the absence of infrastructure in public areas, including lack of sidewalks, blocked sidewalks, and the inability to use public transportation.

In May the Turkish Cypriot Federation for Disabled Persons complained that disabled persons had no access to buildings, sidewalks, or public areas, and there were no public restrooms they could use. The federation noted that the “government” had not employed a single person with disabilities since 2006 and reminded “authorities” that, according to the “law,” it is mandatory to have 4 percent of public sector positions filled by persons with disabilities.

## Section 7. Worker Rights

### d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

Persons with disabilities routinely found it difficult physically to access traditional workplace settings, such as office buildings.

# Czech Republic

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. The government generally enforced these provisions. Nevertheless, persons with disabilities faced a shortage of public accommodations and were unemployed at disproportionately high rates. Most children with disabilities were able to attend mainstream primary and secondary schools and universities.

According to the law, only children with significant disabilities should attend special schools with specially trained teachers.

The ombudsperson is required to make regular visits to all governmental and private workplaces employing incarcerated or institutionalized persons, including persons with disabilities, to examine conditions, assure respect for fundamental rights, and advocate for improved protection against mistreatment. The ombudsperson’s office conducted such visits throughout the year. According to a report by the Ministry for Human Rights, during 2016 government ministries were not complying with the law that requires 4 percent of the staff of companies and institutions with more than 25 employees to be persons with physical disabilities. Only four of 25 government ministries and their branches met the requirement. Instead of employing persons with disabilities, many companies and institutions paid fines or bought products from companies that employed persons with disabilities, a practice that the National Disability Council criticized.

# Denmark

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. It also mandates access by persons with disabilities to government buildings, education, information, and communications. The government enforced these provisions. The DIHR [Danish Institute of Human Rights] reported that the enforcement of antidiscrimination laws was well established for the workplace but less so in other areas, such as laws on accessibility, coercive measures in psychiatric treatment, self-determination, political participation, inclusion in the labor market, and equal access to healthcare. In addition[,] outside the labor market there is no express prohibition of discrimination against persons with disabilities.

The DIHR reported that the practice of using of physical force and restraints during psychiatric treatment for periods in excess of 48 hours continued. According to Ministry of Health statistics from March, physical force or restraints were used on approximately 30 percent of patients undergoing psychiatric treatment in facilities.

The right of persons with disabilities to vote or participate in civic affairs was generally not restricted, but some persons with disabilities reported problems in connection with elections, including ballots that were not accessible to blind persons or persons with mental disabilities. The country maintained a system of guardianship for persons considered incapable of managing their own affairs due to psychosocial or mental disabilities. Persons under guardianship who do not possess legal capacity have the right to vote in local and regional elections as well as elections to the European Parliament.

According to the DIHR, persons with disabilities in Greenland, including children, had limited access to support, including physical aids, counselling, educated professionals, and appropriate housing. Persons with severe disabilities were often placed in foster homes far from their families or relocated to Denmark because of lack of resources in Greenland.

# Estonia

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental. The government generally enforced these provisions.

Persons with disabilities may avail themselves of government assistance in accessing information and may request individual personal assistants when necessary. The law provides that buildings constructed or renovated after 2002 must be accessible to persons with disabilities. Few older buildings were accessible, but new or renovated ones generally were. According to the legal chancellor, measures to safeguard the fundamental rights of individuals in mental health facilities remained inadequate. Problems included abusive use of physical restraints, documentation thereof, and inadequate medical care. NGOs complained that, while services typically were accessible in the capital, persons with disabilities in some rural areas had difficulty receiving appropriate care. There were reports of discrimination in occupation or employment (also see section 7.d.).

The Ministry of Social Affairs is responsible for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, and local governments are responsible for the provision of social welfare services to persons with disabilities. The government implemented the Work Ability Reform, which was intended for persons with reduced working ability and whose ability to be active in the society was assessed individually. The government focused on developing rehabilitation services to improve the ability of those with disabilities to cope independently. The government also provided compensation for some additional expenses incurred by persons with disabilities.

In 2016 police recorded one case of physical abuse, which included hatred against a person with a disability.

## Section 7. Worker Rights

### d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

Fewer than 25 percent of persons with disabilities had jobs. During the year the commissioner for gender equality and equal treatment received more claims of discrimination based on disability than in previous years. Persons with disabilities faced discrimination in employment and access to the workplace.

# Finland

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities in all fields and the provision of other state services. The government effectively enforced these provisions.

Authorities generally enforced laws mandating access to buildings for persons with disabilities, although many older buildings remained inaccessible. Most forms of public transportation were accessible, but problems continued in some geographically isolated areas.

Official 2016 law enforcement figures recorded 24 cases of crimes based on bias toward persons with disabilities, including 17 physical assaults, six verbal threats, and one case of “mutual combat.”

# France

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. The government generally enforced these provisions effectively.

While the law requires companies with more than 20 workers to hire persons with disabilities, many such companies failed to do so (see section 7.d.).

The law requires that buildings, education, and employment be accessible to persons with disabilities. According to government estimates, 40 percent of establishments in the country were accessible. In July 2015 parliament ratified decrees that extend the deadline for owners to make their buildings and facilities accessible by three to nine years. In May 2016 then president Hollande announced that 500,000 public buildings across the country were undergoing major renovation work to improve accessibility.

On January 19, a Bayonne criminal court fined easyJet Airline 60,000 euros ($72,000) for refusing to board a passenger with a disability. The airline denied boarding to the 55-year-old plaintiff, Joseph Etcheveste, in 2010, citing “security” reasons.

## Section 7. Worker Rights

### d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

The Fund Management Organization for the Professional Integration of People with Disabilities (AGEFIPH) reported the unemployment rate for persons with disabilities grew 25 percent in 2015, faster than the growth rate for the general population (10 percent). The law requires at least 6 percent of the workforce in companies with more than 20 employees to be persons with disabilities. The law requires noncompliant companies to contribute to a fund managed by AGEFIPH. Approximately 52 percent of companies met the requirement in 2013, while 48 percent contributed into the fund and a small number (mostly large corporations) received an exemption from the government based on a negotiated action plan, according to AGEFIPH. During the year President Macron initiated a plan to promote the inclusion of workers with disabilities in the workplace.

# Georgia

## Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

### c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

#### Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Physical Conditions: While the Ministry of Corrections maintained a special medical unit for prisoners with disabilities, in 2015 the Public Defender’s Office reported the needs of persons with disabilities, including for medical services, were not taken into account in prisons and temporary detention centers. The Public Defender’s Office also noted the majority of institutions failed to compile data on and register the needs of persons with disabilities.

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Children

Institutionalized Children: UNICEF and a foreign development agency supported the government in developing small-scale facilities for children with severe and profound disabilities with the view to closing the Tbilisi infant home.

### Persons with Disabilities

While the constitution and law prohibit discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities in employment, education, transportation, access to health care, the judicial system and right to a fair trial, and the provision of other government or private-sector services, the government did not effectively enforce these provisions. The Public Defender’s Office reported that persons with disabilities continued to encounter barriers to participating fully in public life. Many families with children with disabilities considered themselves stigmatized and kept their children from public view. Discrimination in employment was also a problem.

The law mandates access to buildings for persons with disabilities and stipulates fines for noncompliance. Very few public facilities or buildings, however, were accessible. Public and private transportation generally did not accommodate persons with disabilities, and sidewalk and street-crossing access was poor.

The Public Defender’s Office stated that inclusive education remained a major challenge. Despite the introduction of inclusive education in professional and general educational institutions, preschool and higher education were not part of the system. Only a limited number of preschools among the 165 monitored by the Public Defender’s Office in Tbilisi in 2016 were accessible to children with disabilities.

The Public Defender’s Office reported that state-run institutions caring for persons with disabilities lacked the infrastructure, trained staff, psychosocial services, and contact with the outside world and families needed to provide for the delivery of services. It raised concerns about a high number of deaths of residents in regional facilities. The Ministry of Internal Affairs opened investigations into several deaths at state-run institutions, but the Public Defender’s Office reported its study of these investigations revealed the investigations were ineffective.

In April parents of children with disabilities protested the unequal distribution of government assistance for persons with disabilities and claimed that only children in some regions received government funding. The parents requested an increased budget for rehabilitation programs for children with disabilities.

A report on the privatization of psychiatric facilities in the country by the Foundation Global Initiative on Psychiatry--Tbilisi, the Federation Global Initiative on Psychiatry, and the Public Defender of Georgia described overcrowding at the Naneishvili Psychiatric Health Center (Kutiri hospital), where some patients slept in halls. The physical and sanitary conditions were poor, and the hospital offered little therapeutic treatment.

## Section 7. Worker Rights

### d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

There was some evidence of discrimination in employment based on disability. While the government was unable to provide statistics on employment of persons with disabilities, the Ministry of Labor, Health, and Social Affairs reported that questionnaires used during its inspection process included a question on whether persons with disabilities were employed at the company.

# Germany

## Section 5. Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Abuses of Human Rights

Government Human Rights Bodies: The Office of the Federal Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities has specific responsibility for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical or mental disabilities in employment, education, access to health care, the judicial system, and the provision of other federal government services, including access to other transportation. The law makes no specific mention of the rights of persons with sensory or intellectual disabilities, but their rights are considered included under the other headings. NGOs disagreed on the effectiveness of government’s enforcement of antidiscrimination laws.

In August the federal government commissioner for matters relating to persons with disabilities criticized the fact that more than 84,000 individuals in the country were not allowed to vote in federal elections. The stated reason was that many were the subjects of court orders declaring they are not capable of independently managing their administrative and financial matters.

Persons with disabilities faced particular difficulties finding housing. The country’s approximately 500,000 children with disabilities attended school.

States decide whether children with disabilities may be included in regular schools or whether they must attend special needs schools.

In February a public hearing organized by the German Institute for Human Rights showed that refugees with disabilities were not always granted the special protection and reasonable accommodation for which they are eligible according to EU Commission guidelines.

## Section 7. Worker Rights

### d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

There were also reports of employment discrimination against persons with disabilities. The unemployment rate among persons with disabilities was 13.4 percent in 2016, considerably higher than that of the general population (on average 6.1 percent for 2016). Employers with 20 or more employees must hire persons with more significant disabilities to fill at least 5 percent of all positions; companies with 20 to 40 employees must fill one position with a person with disabilities, and companies with 40 to 60 employees must fill two positions. Companies that fail to meet these quotas face a monthly fine for each required position not filled by a person with disabilities.

# Greece

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities in employment, education, access to health care, and the judicial system. It provides for other government services, such as transportation and special education. NGOs and organizations for disability rights reported that government enforcement of these provisions was inconsistent.

Persons with disabilities, including children, continued to have poor access to buildings, transportation, and public areas, which the law mandates they should have, particularly to buildings, ramps for sidewalks, and public transportation vehicles. While the law allows service animals to accompany blind individuals in all mass transit and eating establishments, blind activists maintained that they occasionally faced difficulties when attempting to travel by airplane or bus with service animals or were charged additional fees for transporting them.

In his 2016 antidiscrimination report, the ombudsman reported handling 73 complaints related to persons with disabilities.

There were complaints by parents who wanted to register their children in mainstream schools despite having an official recommendation for enrollment in a special school. The Ministry of Education and the ombudsman reiterated that parents had the right to choose the environment in which their children would be educated, regardless of the child’s diagnosis.

On September 13 parliament passed legislation requiring the public administration to communicate with handicapped citizens in a way that is accessible to them, including Greek sign language and Greek Braille. The same law provides for additional leave for parents raising children with autism, Down syndrome, or serious mental disability.

## Section 7. Worker Rights

### d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

Of 73 complaints of disability-related discrimination examined by the ombudsman in 2016, 23 cases concerned discrimination in employment.

# Hungary

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The constitution and the law prohibit discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, or intellectual disabilities in employment, education, air travel and other transportation, access to health care, or the provision of other state services.

In harmony with the law, both the central government and municipalities continued to renovate public buildings to make them accessible to persons with disabilities. There were no data available on the percentage of government buildings that complied with the law, but NGOs asserted that many public buildings remained inaccessible. NGOs also noted that public transportation had limited accessibility. NGOs claimed public elementary schools are not obligated to enroll children with disabilities. The National Federation of Disabled Persons’ Associations criticized the lack of accessible dormitory space for persons with disabilities at higher educational institutions.

The government continued to implement its 30-year (2011-41) strategy to reduce the number of persons with disabilities living in institutions with capacities greater than 50 persons. Between 2007 and 2013, approximately 600 of 23,000 such persons moved to group homes or smaller institutions with up to 30 beds. NGOs claimed, however, that the strategy covered only 10,000 of the 23,000 persons with disabilities living at large institutions and criticized the sustainability of newly created supported living facilities and the lack of transparency in monitoring processes and the risk of new group homes functioning as large institutions.

The constitution provides that a court may deprive persons with disabilities who are under guardianship of the right to vote due to limited mental capacity. This was criticized by the international NGO Mental Disability Advocacy Center as an “unsophisticated disguise for disability-based discrimination.”

NGOs noted that polling places were generally not accessible to persons with disabilities. The law also provides persons with physical disabilities the option of requesting a mobile ballot box.

The lead agency for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities is the Ministry of Human Capacities. On May 4, it announced that a special inquiry at the Tophaz home for the mentally and physically disabled in God, north of Budapest, found residents were malnourished; many were kept in chains; and others had open, untreated wounds, while some of the home’s 220 children were tied to their beds or made to wear straitjackets. The ministry suspended the director of the home and stated it had plans to close the facility.

In July the ombudsman announced finding that the state was failing in its duty to provide suitable and accessible education for students with disabilities in violation of international agreements. The ombudsman found that, as the state had no data on the exact number of students with disabilities, it failed to establish institutions to serve them, and that there was a lack of properly trained teachers.

# Iceland

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The constitution prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities.

The law provides that persons with disabilities have access to buildings, information, and communications. Disability rights advocates complained that authorities did not fully implement the law and regulations. While violations of these regulations are punishable by a fine or a jail sentence of up to two years, one of the main associations for persons with disabilities contended that authorities rarely, if ever, assessed penalties for noncompliance.

## Section 7. Worker Rights

### d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

Disability rights advocates asserted that persons with disabilities had a more difficult time finding jobs due to prejudice and because fewer job opportunities, especially part-time, were available for persons with disabilities. The positions that persons with disabilities were able to find were usually low-paying, required only a low level of education or skills, and offered limited opportunities for advancement.

# Ireland

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. The government effectively enforced these provisions and implemented laws and programs to give persons with disabilities access to buildings, information, and communications.

Children with disabilities generally had full access to educational options at all levels. In a practice condemned by children’s rights and mental health groups, authorities continued to admit minors to adult psychiatric units, with 68 reported admissions of children to adult units, according to the 2016 annual report of the Mental Health Commission.

# Italy

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. The government enforced these provisions, but there were incidents of societal and employment discrimination. Although the law mandates access to government buildings and public transportation for persons with disabilities, physical barriers continued to pose challenges.

# Kosovo

## Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

### c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

#### Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Physical Conditions: Facilities and treatment for inmates with disabilities remained substandard. The Kosovo Forensics Psychiatric Institute provided limited treatment and shelter for detained persons with mental disabilities. Advocates for persons with disabilities faulted the government for regularly housing pretrial detainees with diagnosed mental disabilities together with other pretrial detainees. Pretrial detainees were held separately from the convicted prisoner population.

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. The government did not effectively enforce these provisions, and persons with disabilities suffered discrimination.

According to Handi-Kos, a disability rights organization, health, social assistance, rehabilitation, and assistive devices for persons with disabilities remained insufficient, and physical access to public institutions remained difficult even after the implementation of bylaws on building and administrative support.

The law regulates the commitment of persons to psychiatric or social care facilities and protects their rights within such institutions but has not been implemented. The KRCT described mental health facilities as substandard. The KRCT reported that several persons with mental disabilities were in detention without any legal basis but noted courts were reviewing some cases.

# Latvia

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental disabilities, and the government generally enforced these provisions.

Although the law mandates access to public buildings for persons with disabilities, most were not accessible. The NGO Apeirons reported that approximately 80 percent of new and renovated buildings in the country were not accessible to persons with disabilities, and only 2 percent of all buildings were fully accessible. The State Audit Office and NGOs criticized the rules and regulations governing government provision of personal assistance services.

The law grants additional assistance to children with disabilities, allowing them and their caretakers to use public transportation free of charge. The law also permits families of children with disabilities to receive government-funded counseling. Children with disabilities generally attended school, the majority attending specialized schools. While they were also allowed to attend regular schools that could accommodate their needs, very few schools outside of Riga were able to accommodate them. The government provided eligible children with disabilities with assistants in schools. COE Human Rights Commissioner Muiznieks reported that, during the 2015/16 school year, 11,846 students with disabilities attended mainstream schools.

While health and labor services are provided as stipulated by law, NGOs stated that the majority of persons with disabilities had limited access to work and health care due to a lack of personal assistants, poor infrastructure, and the absence of specialized programs for such persons. NGOs also expressed concerns about the technical aid procurement service, which did not allow persons with disabilities to choose their own equipment, such as wheelchairs.

# Lichtenstein

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental disabilities.

The law requires public buildings constructed before 2002 to be barrier-free by 2019 and public buildings constructed between 2002 and 2007 to be barrier-free by 2027. The government effectively implemented laws and programs to ensure that persons with disabilities readily had access to buildings, information, and communications. The law mandates that public kindergartens and schools as well as public transportation systems must be accessible to persons with disabilities. Children with disabilities were able to attend public schools or a special school established by the country’s remedial center. According to the Liechtenstein Association for Disabled Persons, however, only a third of all public kindergartens and schools were barrier-free.

# Lithuania

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities. There was no proactive enforcement of these requirements. By September 28, the equal opportunities ombudsman investigated 31 cases of alleged discrimination based on disability (see section 7.d.).

Although the law mandates that buildings be accessible to persons with disabilities, according to the Lithuanian Disability Forum, approximately 50 percent of public buildings were not accessible for persons with disabilities.

On January 3, the equal opportunity ombudsperson found that 65 percent of voting stations were not accessible for persons with disabilities.

According to the Council of Europe, there were an estimated 15,000 persons under 18 with disabilities in the country. The law requires that all schools that provide compulsory and universally accessible education make available education to students with disabilities. The country has a tradition of separate schools for children with various disabilities, and the majority of children attended separate schools segregated from the mainstream educational facilities and system. According to the Lithuanian Disability Forum, only 16.5 percent of 109 schools inspected in the 2011-2015 period were accessible to persons with disabilities, with 31.2 percent having limited accessibility and 52.3 percent being completely inaccessible. The inspection also found only 40 percent of the buildings of establishments of higher education adapted to the needs of students with reduced mobility.

The law prohibits persons with disabilities who have been deprived of their legal capacity from voting or standing for election.

On January 1, amendments to the civil code and the code of civil procedure to afford persons with mental disabilities greater rights during competency hearings and to address shortcomings found by the ECHR in a 2012 decision came into effect. The government continued implementation of the National Strategy for Social Integration of Persons with Disabilities for 2013-19. During the year the Department for the Affairs of the Disabled obligated 16 million euros ($19 million) as part of this strategy, which provided support to social care institutions for persons with disabilities and funding for civil society organizations to improve services for persons with disabilities.

# Luxembourg

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. The government mostly enforced these provisions. The law requires all new government-owned buildings and buildings undergoing renovation to be accessible to persons with disabilities. Private facilities and services as well as existing government-owned buildings are not subject to the law. The accessibility of public transportation outside the capital was limited.

Parents have the right to decide whether their children with disabilities will attend their regular local school or a specialized school for children with disabilities.

## Section 7. Worker Rights

### d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

Employers occasionally discriminated against persons with disabilities in employment (see section 6, Persons with Disabilities). The law establishes quotas that require businesses employing more than 25 persons to hire workers with disabilities and pay them prevailing wages, but the government acknowledged it had not applied or enforced these laws consistently.

# Macedonia

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities, but the government did not always enforce these provisions effectively. The law allows persons who have experienced discrimination to submit complaints to the Commission for Protection from Discrimination. The commission was located in an office sometimes inaccessible to persons with physical disabilities.

A separate law regulates a special government fund for stimulating employment of persons with disabilities. The Employment Agency manages the fund with oversight by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. The fund provided grants for office reconstruction or procurement of equipment for workstations to provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities. The law requires persons with physical or mental disabilities to obtain approval from a government medical commission to serve in supervisory positions in the private and public sectors.

The law establishes accessibility standards for new buildings; existing public structures were to be made accessible for persons with disabilities by the end of 2015. NGOs reported many public buildings did not comply with the law. Although all buses purchased since 2013 by the government for Skopje were accessible to persons with physical disabilities, public transportation remained largely inaccessible in other regions. The Ministry of Transport and Communications continued a multiyear project to procure accessible train cars and make train stations in Skopje and 10 other cities accessible.

The Ministry of Education and Science made efforts to provide suitable support to enable children with disabilities to attend regular schools. It employed special educators, assigned either to individual selected schools or as “mobile” municipal special educators covering all schools in their municipality, to support teachers who had children with disabilities in their regular classes. School authorities also installed elevators in several primary schools and deployed technology to assist students with disabilities in using computers in selected primary and secondary schools. Despite these efforts, a large number of students with disabilities continued to attend separate schools.

## Section 7. Worker Rights

### d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

Persons with disabilities faced discrimination in hiring and access to the workplace.

# Malta

## Section 5. Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Abuses of Human Rights

Government Human Rights Bodies: The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) and the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities operated effectively and independently with adequate resources and oversaw human rights issues related to gender equality and disabilities. The prime minister, on the advice of or consultations with the minister responsible for each entity, appoints members of these commissions, who serve for terms of two and three years, respectively. They may be reappointed at the end of their term.

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits both the public and private sectors from discriminating against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities, and the government effectively enforced these provisions. The law requires accessibility to buildings, information, and communication. While the government made efforts to ensure accessibility, many historical buildings remained inaccessible due to limited structural adaptability.

# Moldova

*Note: Unless otherwise noted, all references in this report exclude the secessionist region of Transnistria.*

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities in employment, education, access to public facilities, health care, or the provision of other government services, but authorities rarely enforced the law. It prohibits construction companies from designing or constructing buildings without specific access for persons with disabilities and requires transportation companies to equip their vehicles to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. The law also requires that land, railroad, and air transportation authorities provide access for persons with disabilities and adapt public spaces and transportation to provide access for wheelchair users. The airport administration must provide an escort for persons with disabilities. Authorities implemented the provisions of the law only to a limited extent.

The restructuring of the National Council to Determine Disability and Work Capacity, continued during the year. Under the reform, disability status will be determined based on both medical and psychosocial criteria. The reform was designed to increase transparency and reduce corruption within the system. Persons with disabilities will be able to request determination of their disability status online and special expert committees will examine the requests.

Human rights observers criticized the country’s guardianship system. A person placed under guardianship loses all standing before the law and cannot perform social and legal acts, such as marriage, voting, claiming social benefits, and consenting to or refusing medication.

Human rights NGOs reported cases of violence, abuse, involuntary confinement, forced labor, forced medication, and humiliating and degrading treatment in segregated institutions for persons with mental disabilities. Most residential institutions had a shortage of medical staff, inadequate housing and sanitation facilities, and lacked proper accommodation for persons with mobility impairments.

According to the Promo-Lex presidential election observation mission, in the 2016 presidential elections, 36 percent of polling stations were not accessible for persons with mobility impairments and 33 percent lacked proper conditions for persons with vision disabilities.

Most schools were ill equipped to address the needs of children with disabilities. Some children with disabilities attended mainstream schools, while authorities placed others in boarding schools or they were home schooled.

In Transnistria, children with disabilities rarely attended school and lacked access to specialized resources.

While many newly built or reconstructed buildings were accessible, older buildings often were not. More than 70 percent of public institutions lacked access ramps for persons with disabilities. Persons with limited mobility complained about the lack of access to public transportation and public institutions as well as the shortage of designated parking places.

Although the law provides for equal employment opportunities and prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities (with the exception of jobs requiring specific health standards), many employers either failed to accommodate or avoided employing such persons.

In Transnistria, legislation provides for protection of the rights of persons with disabilities in the areas of education, health care, and employment. Reliable information about the treatment of persons with disabilities in Transnistria was unavailable.

# Monaco

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The constitution and the law prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities in education, employment, health services, information, communications, buildings, transportation, the judicial system, and other state services. The government effectively implemented these laws.

# Montenegro

## Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

### c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

#### Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Physical Conditions: Podgorica prison was still not fully accessible to persons with disabilities.

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental disabilities. The government was implementing the *Strategy for Integration of Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020,* but NGOs claimed that it did not do so effectively. During the year, 10 NGOs that worked with persons with disabilities formed a network to coordinate and monitor implementation of the government’s strategy better.

Authorities generally enforced the requirement that new public buildings be accessible to persons with disabilities, but most public facilities, including buildings and public transportation, were older and lacked access. Although election laws specifically require accessible polling places, the majority of polling stations remained inaccessible.

Despite legal protections, persons with disabilities often hesitated to bring legal proceedings against persons or institutions seen to be violating their rights. Observers ascribed this reluctance to the adverse outcomes of previous court cases or, according to the ombudsman, to insufficient public awareness of human rights and protection mechanisms relating to disabilities. The NGO Association of Youth with Disabilities initiated several discrimination cases against the Kotor Basic Court and Kotor Social Center this year while court processes against the national parliament, the Podgorica municipality, and social centers in Podgorica, Tivat, and Budva continued.

The Ministries of Health; Labor and Social Welfare; Education; Sports; Finance; Justice; Human and Minority Rights; Sustainable Development and Tourism, as well as the Secretariat for Legislation, the State Employment Agency, and five NGOs provided assistance and protection within their respective spheres. Together, they constituted the Council for Care of Persons with Disabilities, chaired by the minister of labor and social welfare with the responsibility for policies protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.

According to NGOs, services at the local level to children with mental and physical disabilities remained inadequate. Associations of parents of children with disabilities were the primary providers of these services. The law permits parents or guardians of persons with disabilities to work half time, but employers did not respect this right.

The government made efforts to enable children with disabilities to attend schools and universities, but the quality of the education they received and the facilities to accommodate them remained inadequate at all levels. NGOs also stated that supported-living assistance at home and similar services were not provided to families and parents of children with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities were generally institutionalized, or encouraged towards institutions, which perpetuated stigmatization. Persons with physical disabilities had difficulty obtaining high-quality medical devices to facilitate their mobility through health and social insurance.

## Section 7. Worker Rights

### d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

Persons with disabilities faced significant discrimination in employment despite affirmative action programs that provided significant financial incentives to employers to hire persons with disabilities. According to the state employment agency, only 2 percent of persons with disabilities were employed. Advocates noted there were too few training programs for persons with disabilities to contribute significantly to their economic integration. Neither governmental entities nor private employers hired many persons with disabilities. NGOs reported that employers often chose to pay fines rather than employ a person with a disability.

# The Netherlands

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

Laws throughout the kingdom ban discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. In the Netherlands the law requires equal access to employment, education, transportation, housing, and goods and services. It requires that persons with disabilities have access to public buildings, information, and communications, and it prohibits making a distinction in supplying goods and services. The law provides criminal penalties for discrimination and administrative sanctions for failure to provide access. Government enforcement of rules governing access was inadequate. Despite continued progress, public buildings and public transport were not always easily accessible, lacking access ramps.

The NIHR [Netherlands Institute for Human Rights] acts as supervisor of the country’s compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In 2017 it ruled on 124 cases (30 percent of total number of cases) in which plaintiffs requested an opinion on alleged discrimination on grounds of disability.

In the Dutch Caribbean, a wide-ranging law prohibiting discrimination was applied to persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities in employment, education, health care, transportation, and the provision of other government services. Some public buildings and public transport were not easily accessible to persons with physical disabilities.

Human rights observers from UNICEF noted that in Curacao persons with disabilities had to rely on improvised measures to access buildings, and parking areas, and to obtain information.

Not all schools in Sint Maarten were equipped for children with a range of physical disabilities, but the government reported that all children with physical disabilities had access to public and subsidized schools.

# Norway

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment, education, transportation, access to health care, the judicial system, and the provision of other governmental services, and the government effectively enforced and implemented these provisions. The law mandates access to public buildings, information, and communications for persons with disabilities. In 2016 there were 10 complaints of problems such as lack of ramps for wheelchair users where there are steps or stairs to enter a building.

In June parliament revised the Equality and Discrimination Act to prohibit discrimination based on disability. The LDO noted the amended law should make identifying and investigating discrimination easier by consolidating several antidiscrimination statutes.

# Poland

## Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

### c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

#### Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Physical Conditions: According to a July 2016 report by the human rights defender, most prisons and detention facilities did not meet the needs of persons with disabilities. Although prisoners with disabilities may be placed in cells modified for their disability, prisoners with disabilities had limited access to shower rooms, community rooms, and walking areas.

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental disabilities. While the government effectively enforced these provisions, there were reports of some societal discrimination against persons with disabilities. The government restricted the right of persons with certain mental disabilities to vote or participate in civic affairs.

The law states that buildings should be accessible for persons with disabilities, but many buildings remained inaccessible. Public buildings and transportation generally were accessible, although older trains and vehicles were often less so, and many train stations were not fully accessible.

# Portugal

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. The government effectively enforced the law. The law mandates access to public buildings, information, and communication for persons with disabilities, but no such legislation covers private businesses or other facilities.

# Romania

## Section 5. Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Abuses of Human Rights

There were some reports that government officials were reluctant to cooperate with NGOs that focused on institutionalized persons with disabilities or to accept NGO criticism of institutions for persons with disabilities. In July the Ministry of Labor and Social Justice ceased to allow representatives of the Center for Legal Resources (CLR) to visit institutions for persons with disabilities, stating that the ministry’s agreement with CLR could not be renewed. CLR is an NGO that has reported over several years on alleged abuse of institutionalized persons with disabilities.

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Children

Child Abuse: In March the European Center for the Rights of Children with Disabilities notified prosecutors, the ombudsman, and the National Authority for the Protection of Children’s Rights that, according to video footage in their possession, children enrolled in a special school in Bucharest were systematically beaten by teachers, tied with ropes, and subjected to emotional abuse.

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. The government did not fully implement the law, and discrimination against persons with disabilities remained a problem. The law mandates that buildings and public transportation be accessible for persons with disabilities. The country continued to have an insufficient number of facilities specifically designed to accommodate persons with disabilities who could have extreme difficulty navigating city streets or gaining access to public buildings. Persons with disabilities reported a lack of access ramps, adapted public transportation, and adapted toilets in major buildings.

Discrimination against children with disabilities in education was a widespread problem due to lack of adequate teacher training on inclusion of children with disabilities and lack of investment to make schools accessible. Most children with disabilities were either placed in special schools or not placed in school. In May the Antidiscrimination Council fined a teacher and the directors of Petre Tutea School in Galati for their treatment of a girl with Asperger’s syndrome.

Since 2016 the Center for Legal Resources (CRJ) made unannounced visits to centers for persons with disabilities or psychiatric sections. During the visits the NGO identified a series of problems, including verbal and physical abuse of children, sedation, excessive use of physical restraints, lack of hygiene, inadequate living conditions, and lack of adequate medical care. The CRJ also noted problems including a general shortage of staff, a chronic shortage of specialized staff, reliance on psychiatric medication as the sole treatment solution, segregation from communities, lack of access to education, absence of a complaints mechanism, and a lack of community living options.

The National Authority for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities, under the labor ministry, coordinated services for persons with disabilities and drafted policies, strategies, and standards in the field of disabilities rights.

## Section 7. Worker Rights

### d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

Although systematic discrimination against persons with disabilities did not exist, the public at large had a bias against those with disabilities. NGOs worked actively to change attitudes and assist persons with disabilities to gain skills and employment, but the government lacked adequate programs to prevent discrimination. A government ordinance that took effect in September includes a provision whereby companies or institutions with more than 50 employees whose workforce does not include at least 4 percent disabled workers must pay a fine for lack of compliance. Before the ordinance was adopted, the law allowed companies not in compliance with the quota to fulfil their legal obligation by buying products from NGOs or firms where large numbers of disabled persons are employed, known as “sheltered units.” NGOs reported that, as a consequence of this change, sheltered units lost an important source of income.

# Russia

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

While several laws prohibit discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities, the government generally did not enforce these laws.

The conditions of guardianship imposed by courts on persons with mental disabilities deprived them of almost all personal rights. Under the family code, individuals with mental disabilities were at times prevented from marrying without a guardian’s consent.

Conditions in institutions for adults with disabilities were often poor, with unqualified staff and overcrowding. Institutions rarely attempted to develop the abilities of residents, whom they frequently confined to the premises and whose movements they sometimes restricted within the institutions themselves.

On January 1, a new law for the social protection of persons with disabilities that introduces a federal register of persons with disabilities became effective.

Federal law requires that buildings be accessible to persons with disabilities, but authorities did not enforce the law, and many buildings and modes of public transportation remained inaccessible. According to Moscow Transport, approximately 20 percent of subway stations are equipped with elevators. Disability rights NGOs confirmed, however, that accessibility remained a problem. In February the transport prosecutor’s office brought an administrative violation against Russian Railways for not complying with accessibility requirements at the Domodedovo railway station.

Election laws do not specifically mandate that polling places be accessible to persons with disabilities, and the majority of them were not. Election officials generally brought mobile ballot boxes to the homes of voters with disabilities.

According to Human Rights Watch, although the government began to implement inclusive education, most children with disabilities did not study in mainstream schools due to a lack of reasonable accommodations to facilitate their individual learning needs. The lack of reasonable accommodations left tens of thousands of children with disabilities isolated at home or in specialized schools, often far from their homes. Most children with disabilities in orphanages had at least one living parent, and many faced violence and neglect, including inadequate health care, education, and opportunities to play, according to Human Rights Watch.

According to Ministry of Internal Affairs data, more than 45 percent of the country’s total population of children with disabilities were institutionalized. While the law mandates inclusive education for children with disabilities, authorities generally segregated them from mainstream society through a system that institutionalized them through adulthood. Graduates of such institutions often lacked the social, educational, and vocational skills to function in society.

Most children with disabilities remained isolated from other community members and were unable to attend public schools, since only 3 percent of schools could accommodate them. According to a 2014 Human Rights Watch report, nearly 30 percent of children with disabilities lived in state orphanages, where they faced violence and neglect. Some children interviewed by the NGO reported that orphanage staff beat them, injected them with sedatives, and sent them to psychiatric hospitals for days or weeks at a time to control or punish them.

Human Rights Watch reported that at least 95 percent of children living in orphanages and foster care had at least one living parent, although children with disabilities who entered institutions at a young age were unlikely to return to their birth families, mostly due to the practice of local-level state commissions recommending continued institutionalization of children. Within orphanages, Human Rights Watch documented the segregation of children whom staff deemed to have the most severe disabilities into “lying-down” rooms, where they were confined to cribs and often tied to furniture with rags. Many of these children received little attention except for feeding and diaper changing.

There appeared to be no legal mechanism by which individuals could contest their assignment to a facility for persons with disabilities. The classification of children with mental disabilities by category of disability often followed them through their lives. The official designations “imbecile” and “idiot,” assigned by a commission that assesses children with developmental problems at the age of three, signified that authorities considered a child uneducable. These designations were almost always irrevocable. The designation “weak” (having a slight cognitive or intellectual disability) followed an individual on official documents, creating barriers to employment and housing after graduation from state institutions.

## Section 7. Worker Rights

### d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

Persons with disabilities were subject to employment discrimination. Companies with 35 to 100 employees have an employment quota of 1 to 3 percent for persons with disabilities, while those with more than 100 employees have a 2 to 4 percent quota. Some local authorities and private employers continued to discourage persons with disabilities from working. Inadequate workplace access for handicapped persons limited their work opportunities.

# San Marino

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. The government generally enforced these prohibitions effectively, but not all public buildings were accessible to persons with physical disabilities. The San Marino Commission on Disabilities made numerous requests for authorities to implement laws passed in 2015 to protect the rights of persons with disabilities. There were no reported cases of discrimination against a person with disabilities during the first nine months of the year.

# Serbia

## Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

### d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

#### Arrest Procedures and Treatment of Detainees

The law allows for indefinite detention of prisoners deemed a danger to the public because of a mental disability.

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Children

Institutionalized Children: Children with disabilities who were housed in institutions faced problems including isolation, neglect, and a lack of stimulation and were mixed with adults in the same facility.

### Persons with Disabilities

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. The government did not enforce these laws effectively. Persons with disabilities and their families suffered from stigmatization and segregation because of deeply entrenched prejudices and the lack of information.

The criminal code defines “sexual intercourse with a helpless person” as a crime separate from rape. Under the law taking advantage of persons with disabilities when the person is “incapable of resistance” has a shorter minimum prison sentence than rape of a person not defined as “helpless.”

According to a February report by Mental Disability Rights Initiative Serbia, persons with disabilities were exposed to discrimination in almost every aspect of life, including access to justice, access to health, education, employment, and political participation. Deputy Ombudsman Milos Jankovic told media on May 24 that the country needed to have local mental health institutions in order to help people with mental health issues and support their life in the community. He noted that many persons with a mental disability were accommodated in social care institutions because conditions were lacking to accommodate them in the community. Mental Disability Rights Initiative of Serbia research from late 2016 showed that women with disabilities in residential institutions were exposed to various forms of violence, including physical, psychological, sexual, and gender-based violence. Results also showed that, due to their very specific position and isolation from the outside world, a majority of women accepted violence as an inevitable part of their daily lives in institutions.

According to the World Health Organization, persons with disabilities represented 15 percent of the country’s total population. The law provides for all public buildings to be accessible to persons with disabilities, but public transportation and many older public buildings were not accessible. Many children and adults with intellectual disabilities remained in institutions, sometimes restrained or isolated. The law also prohibits physical, emotional, and verbal abuse in schools. Children with disabilities (institutionalized and noninstitutionalized) generally attended school and, depending on parents’ preferences, could enroll in regular or special schools. Parents found that enrolling children with intellectual disabilities in regular schools was challenging and often chose to enroll their children in special schools. NGOs noted that children with disabilities faced discrimination in access to education and health care. Individualized support in education for children with disabilities was a problem because there were no clear and specified legal regulations for it.

The Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veterans, and Social Issues, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Health had sections with responsibilities to protect persons with disabilities. The Labor Ministry had a broad mandate to engage with NGOs, distribute social assistance, manage residential institutions, and monitor laws to ensure protection for the rights of persons with disabilities. The Ministries of Health and Education offered assistance and protection in their respective spheres. The minister of labor, employment, veterans, and social issues reported in May that his ministry’s budget increased by 40 million dinars (approximately $400,000) to help improve the status of persons with disabilities.

According to the National Employment Agency, the number of unemployed persons with disabilities in early May was 15,627—a decrease of 8.4 percent in comparison with 2016.

# Slovakia

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities in employment, education, access to health care, the judicial system, other transportation, or the provision of other public services.

Psychiatric institutions and hospitals, which fall under the purview of the Ministry of Health, used cage beds to restrain patients. The law prohibits both physical and nonphysical restraints in social care homes managed by the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family.

No broadcaster complied with laws requiring television stations to provide audio descriptions for viewers who are blind or have impaired vision. While the law defines mandatory standards for access to buildings, NGOs noted they were not fully implemented, although access to privately owned buildings improved more rapidly than access to public buildings.

The government’s Council on Human Rights, National Minorities, and Gender Equality operated a committee on persons with disabilities. The council served as a governmental advisory body and included representation from NGOs working on disability problems. The country’s first national human rights strategy included a chapter on the rights of persons with disabilities.

# Slovenia

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. The government generally enforced these provisions. The law mandates access to buildings for persons with disabilities, but modification of public and private structures to improve access continued at a slow pace, and some buildings--particularly older buildings--were not accessible. The law provides social welfare assistance and early-childhood, elementary, secondary, and vocational education programs for children with disabilities. It also provides vocational and independent living resources for adults with disabilities. The government continued to implement laws and programs to provide persons with disabilities with access to buildings, information, and communications.

# Spain

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits, with fines of up to one million euros ($1.2 million), discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. The government generally enforced these provisions effectively.

The law requires private companies with more than 50 employees to hire persons with disabilities for at least 2 percent of their jobs. In February 2016 the NGO Leialta estimated that 81 percent of the companies did not comply with the obligation.

Of the 1,272 hate crimes reported in 2016, 262 (20.6 percent) were committed against persons with disabilities.

The law mandates access to buildings for persons with disabilities. While the government generally enforced these provisions, levels of assistance and accessibility varied among regions.

# Sweden

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits employers from discriminating against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities and prohibits universities from discriminating against students with disabilities in making admission decisions. The law protects, and the government effectively enforced, the right to access to health care and other public services.

Adequate accessibility for persons with disabilities is required by law: Government regulations require full accessibility for new buildings, and similar requirements exist for public facilities. Observers reported cases of insufficient access to privately owned buildings used by the public, such as apartments, restaurants, and bars. Many buildings and some means of public transportation remained inaccessible.

# Switzerland

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The constitution and federal law prohibit discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities, and the government generally enforced the prohibition. The law mandates access to public buildings and government services, including information and communications, for persons with disabilities, and the government generally enforced these provisions.

The NGO Humanrights.ch noted the incarceration of patients in regular detention centers for up to 23 hours a day and the denial to detainees with mental disabilities of their right to free legal counsel (see also section 1.c.). In its 2016 report, the CPT noted that some persons were hospitalized in conditions that were inappropriate to their mental disabilities.

The Federal Equal Opportunity Office for Persons with Disabilities promoted awareness of the law and respect for the rights of individuals with disabilities through counseling and financial support for projects to facilitate their integration in society and the labor market.

In April the cantonal court of Appenzell Ausserrhoden sentenced a health spa to pay 34,000 Swiss francs ($34,000) in compensation to the disability organizations Procap, Pro Infirmis, and Insieme, which filed discrimination charges against the spa’s management for refusing five children with Down’s syndrome entry during a school visit in 2012. The spa reportedly told the children’s guardians that their “presence disturbed other guests.” The ruling was the first in the country’s history to approve a legal claim based on discrimination against persons with disabilities.

## Section 7. Worker Rights

### d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

According to Procap, one of the country’s largest organizations for persons with disabilities, problems remained in integrating individuals with disabilities into the labor market, and many persons with disabilities lacked adequate support from social insurance after taking a job, which made sustained employment difficult.

# Turkey

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The constitution permits “positive discrimination” favoring persons with disabilities, and the law prohibits discrimination against them. NGOs that advocate for persons with disabilities asserted the government did not enforce the law effectively.

The law requires all governmental institutions and businesses to provide persons with disabilities access to public areas and public transportation and allows for the establishment of review commissions and fines for noncompliance. The government, nonetheless, made little progress implementing the law, and access in most cities remained extremely limited.

The Disabled and Senior Citizens Directorate General, under the MOFSP [Ministry of Family and Social Policies], is responsible for protecting persons with disabilities. The MOFSP reported there were social service centers assisting vulnerable individuals, including persons with disabilities. The ministry stated there were special education students in schools (prekindergarten through high school). The majority of children with disabilities were “mainstreamed” in public schools. The Ministry of National Education reported there were special education centers for students whose disability precluded them from participating in regular public schools.

The law requires all public schools to accommodate students with disabilities, although activists reported instances of such students being refused admission or encouraged to drop out of school. According to disability activists, a large number of school-age children with disabilities did not receive adequate access to education. UNESCO’s October *Global Education Monitoring Report* noted that 69 percent of school principals with children with disabilities at their schools said their schools had physical access problems. A MOFSP program allowed individuals with autism to stay in government-run houses and offered state resources to families who were unable to attend to all the needs of their autistic children.

## Section 7. Worker Rights

### d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

For companies with more than 50 workers, the law requires that at least 3 percent of the workforce consists of persons with disabilities; in the public sector, the requirement is 4 percent. Despite these government efforts, NGOs reported examples of discrimination in employment of persons with disabilities.

# Ukraine

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. The government did not effectively enforce these provisions. The law requires the government to provide access to public venues and opportunities for involvement in public, educational, cultural, and sporting activities for persons with disabilities. The law also requires employers to take into account the individual needs of employees with disabilities. The government generally did not enforce these laws.

Advocacy groups maintained that, despite the legal requirements, most public buildings remained inaccessible to persons with disabilities. Access to employment, education, health care, transportation, and financial services remained difficult (see section 7.d.).

Authorities often did not integrate students with disabilities into the general student population. Only secondary schools offered classes for students with disabilities.

Government policy favored the institutionalization of children with disabilities over placement with their families. Persons with disabilities in areas controlled by Russia-led forces in the east of the country suffered from a lack of appropriate care. Patients in mental health facilities remained at risk of abuse, and many psychiatric hospitals continued to use outdated methods and medicines.

By law employers must set aside 4 percent of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. NGOs noted that many of those employed to satisfy the requirement received nominal salaries but did not actually perform work at their companies.

# United Kingdom

## Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

### Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. The government effectively enforced the law.

Britain’s equality watchdog, the EHRC [Equality and Human Rights Commission], contended persons with disabilities were still treated as “second-class citizens,” because progress in promoting improvements by governments, businesses, and the wider community had stalled. In January a man with disabilities won a Supreme Court case over a wheelchair space on public buses. He was refused entry into a bus operated by FirstGroup because a mother with a baby stroller refused to make room for him.

Bermudian law protects the rights of persons with disabilities in the workplace. The law does not include any protection from discrimination on the grounds of mental health.

The EHRC provided legal advice and support to individuals, a hotline and could conduct formal investigations, arrange conciliation, require persons or organizations to adopt action plans to ensure compliance with the law, and apply for injunctions to prevent acts of unlawful discrimination.