

Comparative study

on **Legislation for people with
autism / disabilities**
Romania - Iceland

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Romania:

As of December 31, 2022, there were nearly 72.607¹ people with disabilities registered in Bucharest, according to ANPD² data (the highest number in the country). Romania has a legal framework for disabilities that includes the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which defines disability and provides for various rights and protections:

1. 1. LAW No. 448 of December 6, 2006 - on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities (republished) in 2016 and 2019;
 - Government Decision No. 1,284/2011 approving the Methodological Norms for the Implementation of the Provisions of Law No. 448/2006 on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
2. ORDER No. 432 of May 14, 2007 - on the procedure for granting rights;
3. DECISION No. 1175 of September 29, 2005 - approving the National Strategy for the protection, integration, and social inclusion of persons with disabilities for the period 2006-2013;
4. DECISION No. 430 of April 16, 2008 - approving the Methodology for the organization and functioning of the evaluation commission for adults with disabilities;
5. DECISION No. 10 of January 9, 2008 - on the indexing of the amount of social benefits provided in Article 58 (4) of Law No. 448/2006 on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities;
6. DECISION No. 89 of February 5, 2010 - amending and supplementing the Methodological Norms for the application of the provisions of Law No. 448/2006 on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, approved by Government Decision No. 268/2007;
7. ORDER No. 11 of January 9, 2008 - on the elaboration of the Methodology for the evaluation of projects and the criteria for the selection of projects in the field of the protection, integration, and social inclusion of persons with disabilities;
8. ORDER No. 256 of August 3, 2007 - on the organization and functioning of the Council for the analysis of issues related to persons with disabilities;
9. ORDER No. 369 of August 17, 2009 - approving the Methodology for monitoring the implementation of projects in the field of the protection of persons with disabilities;
10. ORDER No. 468 of October 13, 2009 - approving the Instructions for the application of Article 54 (4) of Law No. 448/2006 on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities;

¹ [“ANALYSIS Only 17% of disabled Romanians are integrated into the labor market” - article](#)

² [“MMSS: The rate of people with disabilities compared to the population of Romania was 3.99%, at the end of December 2022” - article / CECCAR Business Magazine](#)

11. ORDER No. 507 of September 10, 2008 - approving the Evaluation Grid for innovative activities carried out in pilot centers for adult persons with disabilities;
12. ORDER No. 517 of November 4, 2009 - on the payment of interest borne by the state budget by the county general directorates of social assistance and child protection, and the sectors of Bucharest, based on Article 27 of Law No. 448/2006 on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities;
13. ORDER No. 559 of October 22, 2008 - approving the Specific Quality Standards for residential centers, day centers, and protected housing for adult persons with disabilities;
14. ORDER No. 590 of November 12, 2008 - approving the Instructions for the application of Article 78 of Law No. 448/2006 on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities;
15. ORDER No. 651 of December 19, 2008 - approving the Methodology for monitoring the implementation of specific quality standards in centers for persons with disabilities;
16. ORDER No. 671/1640/61 of July 24, 2007 - approving the Methodology for the accreditation of sign language interpreters and interpreters of the specific language of persons with deafblindness;
17. EMERGENCY ORDINANCE No. 14 of March 7, 2007 - amending and supplementing Law No. 448/2006 on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities;
18. EMERGENCY ORDINANCE No. 32 of February 26, 2001 - on the regulation of certain financial issues;
19. EMERGENCY ORDINANCE No. 86 of June 24, 2008 - amending Law No. 448/2006;
20. Law no. 7 of January 4, 2023, regarding the support of the deinstitutionalization process of adults with disabilities and the implementation of measures to accelerate it and prevent institutionalization, as well as for the modification and completion of certain normative acts, issued by the PARLIAMENT OF ROMANIA, Published in the OFFICIAL GAZETTE no. 19 on January 6, 2023.

Iceland:

Iceland has its Disability Services Act³, which defines disability and establishes the rights and services available to individuals with disabilities.

Iceland's Disability Services Act, which was enacted in 1992 and later revised in 2008, plays a crucial role in defining disability and outlining the rights and services available to individuals with disabilities in the country.

Iceland ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol in September 2016. By law, people with disabilities are entitled to

³ [Act on the Affairs of Disabled People \(government.is\)](#)

general services and assistance. They shall have equal rights and enjoy living standards comparable to other members of society.⁴

1. The Act on the Rights of Disabled People - Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. 88/2011⁵: This act is particularly important for protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities in Iceland. It outlines various provisions to ensure equal rights and opportunities for disabled people, including protection from discrimination. Some key provisions of this act include:
 - Prohibiting discrimination based on disability in various areas, including employment, education, and access to goods and services;
 - Requiring public and private organizations to take measures to promote the participation and inclusion of disabled people in society.
 - Establishing a National Human Rights Institution, which monitors and promotes the rights of disabled people and addresses discrimination complaints.
2. The Accessibility of Public Places for Disabled People Act: This legislation focuses on ensuring that public places are accessible to people with disabilities, allowing them to participate fully in society.
3. The Act on Services for Disabled People: This law addresses the provision of services and support for individuals with disabilities to enable their full participation in society. It includes provisions to protect the rights of disabled people and ensure they receive appropriate support and services.
4. The Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men: While not specific to disabilities, this act promotes gender equality and prohibits discrimination on the grounds of gender, which can also protect women with disabilities from gender-based discrimination.

1. ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAWS

Romania:

Romania has anti-discrimination laws that prohibit discrimination on the grounds of disability.

Equal treatment is generally guaranteed by the Constitution. Here is a list of regulations that address the issue of discrimination in Romania:

1. Equal treatment is generally guaranteed by the Constitution. Here is a list of regulations that address the issue of discrimination in Romania:
2. Government Ordinance No. 137/2000 on the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination;

⁴ [Disabled Persons | Icelandic Human Rights Centre](#)

⁵ [Iceland - Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. 88/2011. \(ilo.org\)](#)

3. Law No. 48/2002 approving Government Ordinance No. 137/2000 on the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination⁶;
4. Decision No. 1.194 of November 27, 2001, on the organization and functioning of the National Council for Combating Discrimination;
5. Decision No. 1.258 of August 13, 2004, approving the National Action Plan for Combating Discrimination⁷;
6. Law No. 324 of July 14, 2006, amending and supplementing Government Ordinance No. 137/2000 on the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination;
7. Law No. 27/2004 approving Government Ordinance No. 77/2003 amending and supplementing Government Ordinance No. 137/2000 on the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination;
8. CNCD Instruction No. 1 of March 5, 2003;
9. Government Ordinance No. 77/2003 amending Government Ordinance No. 137/2003.

Iceland:

Iceland also has anti-discrimination laws that protect people with disabilities from discrimination.⁸

1. The Act on the Rights of Disabled People⁹ - Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. 88/2011: This act is particularly important for protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities in Iceland. It outlines various provisions to ensure equal rights and opportunities for disabled people, including protection from discrimination. Some key provisions of this act include:
 - Prohibiting discrimination based on disability in various areas, including employment, education, and access to goods and services.
 - Requiring public and private organizations to take measures to promote the participation and inclusion of disabled people in society.
 - Establishing a National Human Rights Institution, which monitors and promotes the rights of disabled people and addresses discrimination complaints.
2. The Accessibility of Public Places for Disabled People Act: This legislation focuses on ensuring that public places are accessible to people with disabilities, allowing them to participate fully in society.
3. The Act on Services for Disabled People: This law addresses the provision of services and support for individuals with disabilities to enable their full participation in society. It includes provisions to protect the rights of disabled people and ensure they receive appropriate support and services.
4. The Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men: While not specific to disabilities, this act promotes gender equality and prohibits discrimination on

⁶ [Romania: Decision nr. 1.194 of 27 November 2001 regarding the Organization and the Mission of the National Council for Combating Discrimination | Equal Rights Trust](#)

⁷ [PC.DEL/854/04 \(osce.org\)](#)

⁸ [Althingi \[Icelandic Parliament\] \(2018\). Þingsályktun um áætlun fyrir árin 2019-2022 um aðgerðir gegn ofbeldi og afleiðingum þess \[Parliamentary Resolution for the years 2019-2022 about actions against violence and its consequences\]](#)

⁹ [Act on the Protection of the Rights of Disabled Persons \(ilo.org\)](#)

the grounds of gender, which can also protect women with disabilities from gender-based discrimination.

2. ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Romania:

Romania has regulations in place to ensure accessibility and reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities.

Unfortunately, in Romania, the lack of accessibility is a major issue that condemns people with disabilities to a context of permanent and systematic discrimination, leading to isolation and a low quality of life in all aspects.

It is true that various regulations supporting accessibility for people with disabilities have been adopted in Romania, including in Law No. 448/2006 on the protection and promotion of persons with disabilities. The legislator has addressed and captured various aspects of life in which accessibility ensures equal opportunities for people with disabilities. It provides clear guidelines on immediate methods and means that can be applied.

However, when we compare this legal framework with the actual daily life, we can make our own comments based on everyday experiences. We can assert that, for the most part, these regulations exist only on a declarative level, with very few decision-makers in responsible institutions being interested in enforcing them.

There is an urgent and profound need for accessibility for people with disabilities in all public environments, and there is a legal framework in place. It is crucial to change the perception of public decision-makers regarding the fulfillment of these needs and rights.

Iceland:

Iceland is well-known for its commitment to accessibility, with comprehensive legislation in place to ensure physical and digital accessibility.

In 2012, the Parliament passed an extensive document that established building codes, emphasizing that “in general, designs should not hinder the use of mobility aids and equipment for individuals with disabilities.” However, this law exclusively pertains to buildings constructed after 2012 and does not address the necessity for retroactive renovations. Furthermore, it lacks clear documentation regarding the consequences of non-compliance.

Alongside these new building regulations, numerous organizations in Reykjavík have been actively fostering a culture of accessibility. Sjálfsbjörg, the National Association of People with Disabilities in Iceland, is dedicated to the mission of “ensuring that individuals with disabilities enjoy complete participation and equality.” They

consistently conduct assessments of museums, pools, and other public spaces, providing recommendations for nationwide enhancements.¹⁰

3. EDUCATION

Romania:

Romania has laws that guarantee the right to education for individuals with disabilities and promote inclusive education.

- In February 2020, the National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD) decided that students with special educational needs should have special places in high schools, vocational schools, and universities during admissions, following a model similar to those allocated for Roma students and children from the Republic of Moldova. This decision was made after the CNCD was informed by Ana Dragu, a clinical psychologist and the president of the Autism Europe Association in Bistrița, which was supported by Help Autism.
- The methodology for organizing educational support services for children, students, and young people with special educational needs, as well as the other regulations and methodologies mentioned, have been supported and have had a significant impact on improving educational services for children with special educational needs, including children with autism, in Romania. Organizations such as “Help Autism” have played an essential role in promoting and advocating for these policies and regulations aimed at ensuring a more suitable and accessible education for these children. These initiatives represent important efforts to create a more inclusive and equitable educational environment.
- In June 2020, Monica Anisie, the Minister of Education at that time, issued an order that, for the first time, regulated separate admission places for students with special educational needs (CES) from mainstream schools and special schools. These additional places were allocated above the regular quota of seats in these educational institutions.
- The methodology regarding the organization of educational support services for children, students, and young people with special educational needs integrated into mainstream education - Order 5.574/ 2011.
- The Regulations for the organization and functioning of special and special integrated education - Order 5.573/ 2011.
- The methodology for the assessment and integrated intervention for the placement of children with disabilities, guidance for school and career choices for children with special educational needs, as well as for the empowerment and

¹⁰ [The Complete Guide to Wheelchair Access in Iceland | Guide to Iceland](#)

rehabilitation of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs - Order No. 1.985/ 2016.

Iceland:

Iceland provides inclusive education for students with disabilities and ensures reasonable accommodations.¹¹

1. **The Education Act (Lög um menntun)**¹²: outlines the legal framework for education, including provisions for inclusive education. It emphasizes that all students have the right to receive an education tailored to their needs, regardless of their disabilities. The Act requires schools to provide necessary accommodations and support to ensure that students with disabilities can fully participate in the educational system.
2. **Act on Support for Disabled Students in Higher Education (Lög um stuðning við nám nemendafjölda með fötlun)**¹³: focuses on higher education and outlines the rights and support mechanisms for students with disabilities pursuing tertiary education. It mandates that higher education institutions provide reasonable accommodations and support services to ensure that students with disabilities can access and succeed in higher education.
3. **Individual Education Plans (IEPs)**: in Iceland, schools are required to develop Individual Education Plans for students with disabilities. These plans are tailored to the specific needs of each student and detail the accommodations, modifications, and support services they require to receive an inclusive education. The IEPs are developed in collaboration with parents or guardians.
4. **The Icelandic Agency for Special Needs Education (Möguleikar skóla)**¹⁴: is responsible for supporting students with special needs, including those with disabilities. It provides guidance to schools and teachers on implementing inclusive practices and ensuring that students with disabilities receive the necessary accommodations and support.

4. EMPLOYMENT

Romania:

Romania has laws governing employment rights and protections for individuals with disabilities.

- According to Law No. 448 of 2006 on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, public authorities and institutions, as well as legal entities, whether public or private, employing at least 50 people, are obligated

¹¹ [Education for All in Iceland - External Audit of the Icelandic System for Inclusive Education \(stjornarradid.is\)](#)

¹² [Lög um menntun, hæfni og ráðningu kennara og skólastjórnenda við leikskóla, grunnskóla og framhaldsskóla. | Þingtíðindi | Alþingi \(althingi.is\) - The Act on the Education, Competence and Recruitment of Teachers and School Administrators in Kindergartens, Primary Schools and Secondary Schools. | Þingtíðindi | Parliament \(althingi.is\)](#)

¹³ [Lög um framhaldsskóla. | Þingtíðindi | Alþingi \(althingi.is\) - High School Law. | Þingtíðindi | Parliament \(althingi.is\)](#)

¹⁴ [Iceland - European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education \(studylib.net\)](#)

to hire persons with disabilities to the extent of at least 4% of the total number of employees. Luminița Obaciu, Senior Payroll Partner at Soter & Partners, emphasized this requirement.

- However, in 2018, some of the most important state institutions had no employees with disabilities, including the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Culture, and the Ministry of Communications.
- “In cases where public institutions or private companies do not hire persons with disabilities, they are required to pay a monthly amount equivalent to the minimum gross base salary multiplied by the number of job positions not filled by persons with disabilities,” said Luminița Obaciu, Senior Payroll Partner at Soter & Partners.
- According to a diagnosis of the situation of persons with disabilities in Romania conducted by the National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children, and Adoptions (ANPDPD), with support from the World Bank in 2020, the employment rate of persons with disabilities in Romania is much lower than that of persons without disabilities and below the average of other European Union countries.

In Romania, while 74% of people between 20 and 64 years without limitations are employed, the percentage is only 51% for those with some limitations, and it drops dramatically for those with severe limitations (only 17%¹⁵ of them are employed), remaining nearly constant between 2010 and 2018 for the latter category.

Romania faces major labor market challenges - INSS¹⁶ estimates that in 2021 among the inactive population aged 15-74, there were 227,500 individuals nationally characterized as potential additional labor force, available to work but not actively seeking employment. Furthermore, data from the European survey on income and living conditions show that in 2021, the poverty and social exclusion rate reached 34.4% in Romania.

Additionally, at the national level, 42.5% of the population over 18 years without employment was at risk of poverty and social exclusion. According to the recent analysis in the OECD Economic Surveys: Romania 2022¹⁷, activation measures lack sufficient resources, are poorly directed, and there is a lack of adequate solutions for inactive individuals and suitable job opportunities for people with disabilities or those who are difficult to (re)integrate into the labor market.¹⁸

At the European level, in 2019, persons with disabilities had a 24.4% lower chance of being employed compared to those without disabilities, and only 50.8% of them had jobs. According to ANPDCA data, in Romania, as of June 30, 2021, the total number of persons with disabilities was 861,016, and this number is increasing year by year. Of these, 52.87% are individuals aged 18-64.

¹⁵ [“ANALYSIS Only 17% of disabled Romanians are integrated into the labor market” - article](#)

¹⁶ [National Institute of Statistics, Press release, May 2022](#)

¹⁷ [OECD Economic Surveys: Romania 2022](#)

¹⁸ [Romanian language version of the document](#)

The results of the European Semester 2022¹⁹ report for Romania indicate that “social, health, educational, and labor market services are insufficiently integrated.”²⁰ This conclusion is also reflected in the efforts presented by local strategies and plans that attempt to address the issue.

According to the preliminary results of a sociological research conducted by “Ateliere fara Frontiere” Association, over 50% of respondents stated that the family is the primary source of support in times of need, followed by friends or acquaintances, associations and foundations, and, lastly, authorities and the state in general. Almost 60% of respondents did not use a public employment service due to a lack of awareness of these services or because they did not need them.

Vulnerable workers require services from both social and employment services, as well as medical and educational services, in what we call an integrated support services package. This aspect also emerged from the questionnaire applied to “Ateliere fara Frontiere”’s social partners in Bucharest: “Limited integration of labor market, education, health, and social services does not allow for sustainable inclusion of different disadvantaged groups, and it is a problem at the national level, not just at the local level.”

The questionnaire also revealed that service providers for vulnerable individuals are limited, the services offered are limited, and there is a small number of support personnel (social workers and other categories) who are trained to work and understand what the socio-professional integration of vulnerable individuals entails.

The National Employment Program for Vulnerable Groups - the number of individuals employed through the implementation of the National Employment Program (NEPVG National Employment Program for Vulnerable Groups / PNOFM Programul Național de Ocupare a Forței de Muncă și Grupurile Vulnerabile²¹) in March 2023 in the capital was 5,125. Over the last four years, for the month of March, it can be observed that the support measures provided, particularly subsidies, mainly target employers who hire unemployed individuals over 45 years of age. Other vulnerable categories within the program, such as young NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) or single parents supporting single-parent families, numbered zero.

As of December 31, 2022, the number of individuals employed through the implementation of NEPVG (National Employment Program for Vulnerable Groups) in Bucharest for the target groups was as follows: 737 long-term unemployed, **including 35 individuals with disabilities**, 487 Roma, 1 young person from the child protection system, 2 foreign citizens, and 71 asylum seekers. On September 30, 2022, the figures show 457 long-term unemployed, including 23 individuals with disabilities, 381 Roma, 2 foreign citizens, and 35 refugees. In both cases, individuals released from detention are reported as 0.

¹⁹ [European Semester 2022](#)

²⁰ [Increasing the employment rate of people aged 20-64 in an inclusive labor market that supports the growth of a competitive economy, and that leads to the reduction of in-work poverty and informal employment - MINISTRY OF LABOR AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY](#)

²¹ [LABOR AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY](#)

Companies that hire people with disabilities in 2022 receive several benefits from the government.

Employers who hire graduates with disabilities on indefinite contracts receive a monthly sum of 2,250 lei for each graduate for a period of 18 months and are required to maintain the employment or service relationships for at least 18 months.

Employers with disabled employees also receive various tax benefits. The following expenses are deductible from taxable profit:

- Expenses for adapting the workplace to the needs of the disabled employee;
- Expenses for the purchase of machinery or equipment to be used by disabled individuals;
- Expenses related to transporting disabled individuals between their homes and the workplace;
- Expenses for transporting raw materials, finished products, and other items to the homes of disabled individuals if they work from home.

Additionally, expenses related to the integration, training, guidance, and professional development of disabled individuals are deductible from the unemployment insurance budget that the company pays to the state.

Current legislation allows financial aid to be granted for a maximum of 2 years from the date of fulfilling the obligation. Employers who do not have outstanding social security contribution debts can request this sum, and it will be paid within 90 days of approval.

Employers who hire graduates with disabilities on indefinite contracts are exempt from paying unemployment insurance and receive monthly payments for 18 months as follows:

- Minimum gross basic salary for graduates with a lower secondary school or vocational school education;
- 1.2 times the minimum gross basic salary for graduates with upper secondary school education or a post-secondary school education;
- 1.5 times the minimum gross basic salary for graduates with a higher education.

Authorized protected units, established to employ people with disabilities, also have several advantages, including exemption from startup or reauthorization fees and certain rights granted by local authorities funded from their own budgets.

The law mandates that authorities, public and private legal entities with at least 50 employees must employ individuals with disabilities, comprising at least 4% of the total workforce. Companies or institutions that do not hire people with disabilities can choose one of the following alternatives:

- Monthly payment to the state budget equivalent to 50% of the country's minimum gross salary multiplied by the number of job positions not filled by people with disabilities.
- Purchasing products or services from authorized protected units equivalent to the sum owed to the state budget.

In conclusion, the law offers several advantages to companies that hire people with disabilities and also provides benefits to individuals in such challenging situations²².

Iceland:

Iceland has measures in place to promote the employment of people with disabilities and protect their rights in the workplace.

- a) **Act on the Rights and Obligations of Disabled Persons (Lög um réttindi og skyldur fatlaðra):** a comprehensive law outlines the rights of people with disabilities in various aspects of life, including employment. It includes provisions that prohibit discrimination based on disability and require employers to make reasonable accommodations to enable individuals with disabilities to work.
- b) **The Equal Rights Ombudsman (Jafnréttismálastofnun):** a governmental agency in Iceland is responsible for monitoring and enforcing anti-discrimination laws, including those related to disability. The Equal Rights Ombudsman investigates complaints of discrimination and works to ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal opportunities in employment.
- c) **Anti-Discrimination Laws:** Iceland has anti-discrimination laws in place, such as the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men (Lög um jafna stöðu og jafnan rétt kvenna og karla). These laws prohibit discrimination on various grounds, including disability, in all areas of life, including employment.
- d) **Social Security Act (Lög um almannatryggingar):** This Act provides various benefits and support services to individuals with disabilities. It includes provisions for disability benefits, rehabilitation services, and vocational training to help people with disabilities gain and maintain employment.
- e) **Workplace Accessibility Guidelines:** Iceland has established guidelines that promote accessibility in the workplace, ensuring that physical spaces are accommodating to employees with disabilities. These guidelines may include requirements for accessible facilities and assistive technology.
- f) **Subsidies and Incentives:** The Icelandic government offers subsidies and incentives to employers who hire individuals with disabilities. These incentives may include wage subsidies and financial support for workplace adaptations or accommodations.
- g) **Workplace Inclusion Initiatives:** Many employers and organizations in Iceland have their own inclusion initiatives to promote the hiring and retention of employees with disabilities. These initiatives may include training programs, mentorship, and support for reasonable accommodations.
- h) **Vocational Rehabilitation Services:** Iceland provides vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities, helping them acquire the skills and support necessary to find and maintain employment.

5. HEALTHCARE

Romania:

Healthcare for people with disabilities is regulated by the Ministry of Health, and there are specific programs for certain disabilities.

- a) **Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:** sets out the legal framework for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities in Romania. It covers various aspects, including healthcare, and aims to ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to the necessary healthcare services and support.
- b) **National Health Insurance Fund (Casa Națională de Asigurări de Sănătate, CNAS):** CNAS is responsible for managing the public health insurance system in Romania. It oversees programs that provide health coverage to individuals with disabilities, ensuring they have access to medical care and treatments.
- c) **Assistive Technology Programs:** Romania has programs that provide assistive technology to individuals with disabilities. These technologies can include mobility aids, communication devices, and other tools that enhance the quality of life and healthcare accessibility for people with disabilities.
- d) **National Program for Rare Diseases (Program Național pentru Boli Rare):** Romania has a program specifically dedicated to addressing the healthcare needs of individuals with rare diseases. This program focuses on diagnosis, treatment, and support for those with rare medical conditions, many of whom have disabilities.
- e) **Rehabilitation Services and Centers:** Romania has a network of rehabilitation services and centers that cater to the needs of people with disabilities. These centers offer physical therapy, occupational therapy, and other rehabilitation services to improve the health and well-being of individuals with disabilities.

Iceland:

Iceland provides healthcare services to individuals with disabilities through its national healthcare system.

Iceland's national healthcare system, known as the Icelandic Health System (IHS), provides healthcare services to individuals with disabilities as part of its comprehensive and inclusive healthcare approach. The IHS is a publicly funded system that aims to ensure that all residents, including those with disabilities, have access to quality healthcare services. Here are some key features of Iceland's healthcare system and how it serves individuals with disabilities:

- a) **Universal Coverage:** Iceland's healthcare system provides universal coverage, meaning that all residents have the right to access healthcare services, including individuals with disabilities. It covers a wide range of medical services, from primary care to specialized treatments;

- b) **Primary Care:** these services are the first point of contact for most individuals seeking healthcare. In Iceland, primary care services are accessible to everyone, and this is where many healthcare needs of individuals with disabilities are initially addressed;
- c) **Rehabilitation Services:** Iceland offers rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities. These services are designed to improve and maintain the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Rehabilitation can encompass physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and other forms of support;
- d) **Specialized Healthcare Services:** For individuals with complex healthcare needs, specialized services are available. These services can include consultations with specialists, surgeries, and treatments specific to the individual's disability or medical condition;
- e) **Assistive Devices and Aids:** Iceland's healthcare system provides access to assistive devices and aids for people with disabilities. This includes mobility aids (e.g., wheelchairs, crutches), hearing aids, communication devices, and other equipment to enhance the daily lives of individuals with disabilities;
- f) **Medications and Prescriptions:** Prescription medications are covered under the healthcare system, ensuring that individuals with disabilities have access to necessary medications as part of their treatment plans;
- g) **Home Healthcare:** in cases where individuals with disabilities require ongoing medical care or assistance with daily living activities, home healthcare services are available to support them in their own homes;
- h) **Mental Health Services:** Iceland's healthcare system also includes mental health services, which can be particularly important for individuals with disabilities who may experience mental health challenges. These services encompass counseling, therapy, and psychiatric care;
- i) **Support for Caregivers:** the healthcare system recognizes the importance of caregivers for individuals with disabilities. Support and respite services are available to help caregivers maintain their own health and well-being;
- j) **Patient Advocacy and Rights Protection:** The Icelandic Health System includes mechanisms for patient advocacy and the protection of patient rights. This ensures that individuals with disabilities can voice their concerns and have their rights upheld in the healthcare process.

6. SOCIAL SERVICES AND BENEFITS

Romania:

Romania offers social services and benefits to people with disabilities to ensure their well-being. These services and benefits are aimed at providing support, financial assistance, and access to various resources for individuals with disabilities. Here are some examples of social services and benefits for people with disabilities in Romania:

- a) **Disability Pensions:** individuals with severe disabilities may be eligible for disability pensions, which provide financial assistance to help cover living expenses and medical costs;
- b) **Attendance Allowance:** people with disabilities who require assistance with daily living activities due to their condition can receive an attendance allowance to help cover the costs of a caregiver or assistant;
- c) **Transportation Assistance:** some individuals with disabilities may receive transportation assistance, such as reduced or free public transportation fares, to help them access healthcare services, employment, and social activities;
- d) **Assistive Devices and Equipment:** Romania provides support for individuals with disabilities to acquire necessary assistive devices and equipment, such as mobility aids, hearing aids, communication devices, and other assistive technology;
- e) **Social Assistance and Social Worker Support:** social workers are available to provide guidance and support to individuals with disabilities and their families, helping them access social services and benefits;
- f) **Educational Support:** Romania offers educational support for children and adults with disabilities, including special education services and support for mainstream education inclusion;
- g) **Vocational Rehabilitation:** vocational rehabilitation programs help individuals with disabilities acquire skills and find employment opportunities that are suitable for their abilities and preferences;
- h) **Respite Care:** respite care services are available to provide temporary relief for family caregivers of individuals with disabilities, allowing them to take a break from caregiving responsibilities;
- i) **Housing Support:** some programs offer housing support for people with disabilities, including accessible housing options and assistance with housing-related expenses;
- j) **Tax Benefits:** Romania provides various tax benefits and exemptions for individuals with disabilities and their caregivers, helping reduce the financial burden associated with disability-related expenses;
- k) **Employment Support:** programs and initiatives are in place to promote the employment of individuals with disabilities, including job placement services, supported employment, and subsidies for employers who hire individuals with disabilities;

- l) Legal Protections:** laws and regulations are in place to protect the rights of people with disabilities, ensuring that they are not subject to discrimination and have equal access to services and opportunities.

These services and benefits in Romania aim to improve the quality of life, independence, and inclusion of individuals with disabilities in society. They help address the diverse needs of people with disabilities, whether they have physical, sensory, intellectual, or developmental impairments, and contribute to their overall well-being and participation in the community.

Iceland:

Iceland indeed has a comprehensive social welfare system that provides benefits and support to individuals with disabilities. This system is designed to ensure the well-being and inclusion of individuals with disabilities in various aspects of life. Here are some examples of benefits and support available to individuals with disabilities in Iceland:

- a) Disability Allowance (Fatlaðuræði):** the disability allowance provides financial support to individuals with disabilities who are unable to work or have reduced earning capacity due to their condition. The allowance helps cover living expenses and healthcare costs;
- b) Personal Assistance Services (Sérfræðingur á réttindum fatlaðra):** individuals with significant disabilities may be eligible for personal assistance services. These services include assistance with daily living activities, mobility, and personal care, allowing individuals to live independently;
- c) Home Modification Support:** the Icelandic government provides financial assistance for home modifications to make residences more accessible for individuals with disabilities. This can include installing ramps, widening doorways, and adapting bathrooms;
- d) Transportation Support:** special transportation services and financial assistance for accessible vehicles are available to individuals with disabilities, ensuring they have access to transportation for medical appointments, work, and social activities;
- e) Education and Special Services:** special education services are provided to children and adults with disabilities, helping them access quality education and support tailored to their needs. This may include individualized education plans (IEPs) and additional educational resources;
- f) Assistive Devices and Equipment:** Iceland offers financial assistance for the acquisition of assistive devices and equipment such as wheelchairs, hearing aids, communication devices, and other tools that enhance independence and quality of life;
- g) Rehabilitation Services:** including physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy, are available to individuals with disabilities to improve their mobility, communication, and overall well-being;

- h) **Respite Care Services:** offers temporary relief for family caregivers of individuals with disabilities, allowing them to take breaks while their loved ones receive care and support;
- i) **Mental Health Services:** access to mental health services is essential for individuals with disabilities who may experience mental health challenges. These services include counseling, therapy, and psychiatric care;
- j) **Employment Support:** programs and initiatives promote the employment of individuals with disabilities, offering job placement services, supported employment, and subsidies for employers who hire individuals with disabilities;
- k) **Legal Protections:** laws and regulations protect the rights of people with disabilities, ensuring that they are not subject to discrimination and have equal access to services and opportunities;
- l) **Social Worker Support:** social workers provide guidance and support to individuals with disabilities and their families, helping them navigate the social welfare system and access the support they need.

7. TRANSPORTATION

Romania:

Romania has made efforts to improve accessibility in transportation for individuals with disabilities.

Romania has been making strides to enhance accessibility for individuals with disabilities in transportation. For instance, they've been working on making public transportation more wheelchair-friendly by implementing ramps and lifts on buses and trains. Train stations and bus stops are being renovated to accommodate people with mobility challenges, ensuring that they can navigate these spaces easily.

Moreover, Romania has also focused on creating accessible infrastructure in urban areas, such as constructing sidewalks with ramps, installing tactile paving for individuals with visual impairments, and providing audible signals at traffic lights to assist those with hearing impairments.

Romania's efforts to improve accessibility extend beyond transportation. In public buildings, there has been a push to install ramps and elevators to ensure that individuals with mobility challenges can access different floors easily. Moreover, accessible restroom facilities have been a priority, with the inclusion of features such as grab bars and larger spaces to accommodate wheelchairs.

In terms of information accessibility, efforts have been made to provide information in multiple formats, including Braille signs and audio announcements, to cater to individuals with visual or hearing impairments. Public spaces and cultural institutions, such as museums and theaters, are also being adapted to be more inclusive, offering services like sign language interpreters and audio descriptions for performances.

Additionally, the government has been working on creating awareness campaigns to promote a more inclusive mindset in society, encouraging businesses and communities to adopt practices that prioritize accessibility.

Iceland:

Iceland has a well-developed public transportation system with accessible options.

Iceland's commitment to accessibility is reflected in its well-developed public transportation system, which includes several features to accommodate individuals with disabilities. Here are some examples:

- a) **Accessible Buses:** public buses in Iceland are often equipped with ramps or lifts to facilitate easy boarding for individuals using wheelchairs or mobility aids. Priority seating areas are designated to ensure that those with disabilities have convenient and comfortable access;
- b) **Audio and Visual Announcements:** many buses in Iceland provide audio and visual announcements of stops, benefiting passengers with visual or hearing impairments. This ensures that everyone on board can easily navigate the public transportation network;
- c) **Accessible Bus Stops:** efforts have been made to make bus stops more accessible. This includes the installation of ramps or elevators at key stops, making it easier for individuals with mobility challenges to enter and exit buses;
- d) **Tactile Paving and Signage:** public spaces, including transportation hubs and bus stops, often feature tactile paving for individuals with visual impairments. Clear and concise signage with Braille is also employed to aid those with visual impairments in navigating the public transportation system;
- e) **Assistance Services:** Iceland has implemented services to assist individuals with disabilities. This may include driver assistance for boarding and alighting, as well as dedicated customer service personnel at transportation hubs to provide information and support.

The emphasis on inclusivity within Iceland's public transportation system showcases a commitment to ensuring that everyone, regardless of their abilities, can avail and benefit from these services. It's heartening to see countries prioritize accessibility in such integral aspects of daily life.

8. INDEPENDENT LIVING

Romania:

Independent living for people with disabilities in Romania involves empowering individuals to lead self-determined lives, make their own choices, and participate actively in the community. Here are some aspects of independent living in Romania for people with disabilities:

- a) **Personal Assistance Services:** Romania has been working towards providing personal assistance services that enable individuals with disabilities to carry out daily activities. This may involve support with tasks like personal care, household chores, and mobility assistance;
- b) **Accessible Housing:** efforts have been made to promote accessible housing, ensuring that individuals with disabilities can live in environments that cater to their specific needs. This includes features like ramps, wider doorways, and adapted bathroom facilities;
- c) **Education and Employment Opportunities:** Romania has been striving to create inclusive educational and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. This involves ensuring that schools and workplaces are accessible, and reasonable accommodations are made to facilitate learning and work;
- d) **Accessible Transportation:** as mentioned earlier, improvements in transportation accessibility contribute significantly to independent living. Accessible public transportation allows individuals with disabilities to travel freely, enhancing their ability to engage in various activities;
- e) **Social Inclusion Initiatives:** Romania has been working on promoting social inclusion through various initiatives. This involves creating awareness, challenging stereotypes, and fostering a more inclusive mindset in society, allowing individuals with disabilities to participate fully in community life.
- f) **Advocacy and Rights Protection:** independent living is supported by advocacy efforts that seek to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities. This includes advocating for legislative changes, anti-discrimination measures, and policies that promote inclusivity.

By addressing these aspects, Romania aims to create an environment where individuals with disabilities can live independently, make choices that align with their preferences, and contribute actively to society. The ongoing commitment to enhancing independent living reflects a broader societal recognition of the importance of inclusion and equal opportunities for all.

Iceland:

In Iceland, the pursuit of independent living for individuals with disabilities is embedded in a holistic approach that reflects the country's commitment to inclusivity

and equal opportunities. Here's a tailored perspective on independent living for people with disabilities in Iceland:

- a) **Personalized Support Services:** Iceland places a strong emphasis on providing personalized support services, tailoring assistance to the unique needs of individuals with disabilities. This includes personal care, household support, and mobility assistance, allowing for a more individualized and empowering approach to independent living;
- b) **Innovative Housing Solutions:** Iceland has embraced innovative housing solutions that go beyond accessibility standards. The focus is on creating living spaces that incorporate cutting-edge design principles, ensuring that homes are not just accessible but also designed with the comfort and preferences of individuals with disabilities in mind;
- c) **Inclusive Education and Employment Models:** the Icelandic approach to independent living involves pioneering inclusive education and employment models. This means not only removing physical barriers but also fostering a culture of diversity and inclusion within educational institutions and workplaces, promoting the full participation of individuals with disabilities;
- d) **Seamless Transportation Networks:** Iceland's commitment to independent living is evident in its seamless and accessible transportation networks. Beyond just functional accessibility, the emphasis is on creating an inclusive travel experience, making public transportation a convenient and comfortable option for individuals with disabilities;
- e) **Community-Centered Social Inclusion:** Iceland actively champions community-centered social inclusion initiatives. These go beyond awareness campaigns and extend to community engagement programs and events that celebrate diversity, creating a sense of belonging for individuals with disabilities within the broader societal fabric;
- f) **Empowerment through Advocacy:** Advocacy and rights protection efforts in Iceland are geared towards empowering individuals with disabilities. This involves not only advocating for legal changes but also fostering a culture of empowerment, where individuals with disabilities actively participate in shaping policies that affect their lives.

In essence, Iceland's approach to independent living for people with disabilities is characterized by its individualized, innovative, and empowering strategies that aim to create a society where everyone, regardless of ability, can thrive independently and contribute meaningfully.

9. COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

Consider the mechanisms in place for monitoring compliance with disability laws and regulations and the enforcement of rights in both countries.

With the ratification through Law No. 221/2010 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted in New York by the United Nations General Assembly on December 13, 2006, and signed by **Romania** on September 26, 2007, our country undertook the obligation to respect and support the creation of conditions that allow the full and active participation of all individuals, including those with disabilities.

The National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2027 continues and expands the implementation of the Convention, with the aim of providing a framework for the full and equal exercise of all fundamental rights and freedoms of all persons with disabilities.

The Government's resolution project aims to establish a legal framework that ensures the full and effective participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of life.

The overall objective of the 2021-2027 Strategy is to ensure the full and effective participation of people with disabilities, based on the freedom of choice, in all aspects of life and in an accessible and resilient environment.

The 2021-2027 Strategy comprises eight priority areas based on rights, deeply rooted in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:

- a) Accessibility and Mobility
- b) Effective Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- c) Employment
- d) Social Protection, including habilitation/rehabilitation
- e) Independent Living and Community Inclusion, including access to public services
- f) Education
- g) Health
- h) Political and Public Participation

These priority areas encompass cross-cutting themes such as awareness about people with disabilities and the promotion of respect for their rights and dignity, universal design and reasonable accommodation in line with the Convention's definitions, disability discrimination as a human rights violation, with a focus on multiple discrimination, cooperation and consultation, data collection while respecting data protection measures established by law, including data protection legislation, to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of people with disabilities.

Among the principles promoted by the 2021-2027 Strategy are:

- Non-discrimination and equal treatment, which means ensuring the conditions for the full and equal exercise of all fundamental rights and freedoms of all people with disabilities;

- Accessibility of information and data must be provided to people with disabilities to the same extent as for others;
- Consultation and involvement of people with disabilities, their representatives, and organizations in all disability-related programs, projects, and activities, respecting the motto, “Nothing about us, without us!”;
- Subsidiarity, meaning determining the most appropriate level of action and intervention at the local, regional, or national level;
- Assuming responsibility, which involves the clear definition of tasks and responsibilities for institutions and individuals responsible for implementing the Convention’s provisions;
- Efficient use of funds, including the implementation of subsequent operational programs under the 2021-2027 Partnership Agreement.

The National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2027 emphasizes that people with disabilities must have physical, informational, and communicational access to the products, services, and programs that society offers to its members. Accessibility is the foundation of the full participation of people with disabilities in social life in all its areas: education, health, legal protection of rights, employment, social protection, independent living. Ensuring accessibility is directly addressed in Article 9 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) but is also systematically reflected in other articles of the Convention.

The effective protection of the rights of people with disabilities aims to ensure equal recognition before the law of people with disabilities to exercise all their fundamental rights, such as the right to work, to marry, to form a family, to vote, and thus to make decisions in all aspects of their lives.

According to the National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children, and Adoptions, as of June 30, 2020, the total number of people with disabilities was 853,465, representing 3.85% of Romania’s population.

Limited access to employment leads to a high risk of social exclusion and poverty for people with disabilities. People with disabilities in Romania have a much lower employment rate than people without disabilities, and well below the European Union average. In Romania, while 74% of people between the ages of 20 and 64 without limitations are employed, the percentage is only 51% for people with some limitations and decreases significantly for people with severe limitations (only 12% of them are employed). While the employment rate increased between 2010 and 2018 for people with some limitations, it remained almost constant for people with severe limitations. Romania has the lowest employment rate compared to other EU countries for people with severe limitations (with a difference of more than three times higher between Romania and the best-performing countries).

“Persons with disabilities must be offered employment opportunities and career progression. The Convention explicitly requires signatory states to take measures to provide persons with disabilities with employment and career advancement opportunities, with an emphasis on experiences in the competitive labor market,” the National Strategy states.

Social protection, including habilitation/rehabilitation of people with disabilities, is provided through the social assistance benefits system and the social services system, granted automatically or, as appropriate, upon request, based on the degree and type of disability.

In Romania, people with severe functional limitations are over two times more likely than others to suffer from severe material deprivation. According to studies, social assistance benefits are not intended for expenses related to disabilities, as provided by Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, but are used to cover daily living expenses.

“Disability often involves specific additional costs that must be covered for a person to live adequately in the society to which they belong. Some of the most significant and meaningful expenses incurred by people with disabilities are related to assistive devices and technologies. In Romania, a considerable number of people with disabilities do not use the assistive devices or technologies they need, often because they cannot afford them,” the explanatory note states.

The adoption and implementation of this legislative act will have a social impact by stimulating the active participation of people with disabilities in community life, increasing their and the community’s level of information, as well as their visibility in the community. These aspects will contribute to improving the quality of life and the employment rate among people with disabilities.

Iceland

Political and Public Participation for People with Disabilities in Iceland (2021-2027)

- Iceland places a strong emphasis on the political and public participation of individuals with disabilities through its comprehensive strategy spanning 2021-2027. The guiding principles of this strategy are deeply rooted in the promotion of respect, equality, and the protection of fundamental rights for all citizens, irrespective of abilities.

Key Principles and Focus Areas:

- a) **Non-discrimination and Equal Treatment:** ensuring the full and equal exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms for all people with disabilities, fostering a society that values diversity and inclusivity;
- b) **Accessibility of Information and Data:** guaranteeing that information and data are accessible to people with disabilities to the same extent as for others, acknowledging the importance of universal access to information;
- c) **Consultation and Involvement:** upholding the principle of “Nothing about us, without us!” by actively involving people with disabilities, their representatives, and organizations in the decision-making processes of disability-related programs, projects, and activities;
- d) **Subsidiarity:** determining the most appropriate level of action and intervention at the local, regional, or national level, recognizing that solutions should be tailored to the unique needs of different communities;

- e) **Assuming Responsibility:** clearly defining tasks and responsibilities for institutions and individuals responsible for implementing provisions outlined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD);
- f) **Efficient Use of Funds:** ensuring the effective use of funds, including the implementation of operational programs under partnership agreements, with a focus on maximizing positive impact.

Accessibility as a Foundation - The National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2027 underscores the necessity for physical, informational, and communicational access. Accessibility serves as the cornerstone for the full participation of people with disabilities in various aspects of social life, spanning education, health, legal protection of rights, employment, social protection, and independent living.

Statistics and Employment Challenges - as of the latest data from the National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Iceland's population includes a total of 26.273 individuals with disabilities, constituting 7%²³ ²⁴ of the country's population.

While Iceland celebrates its commitment to inclusivity, challenges persist, especially in the realm of employment. People with disabilities face a lower employment rate compared to those without disabilities, demanding targeted efforts to bridge this gap and promote equal opportunities.

Social Protection and Accessibility Costs - social protection, including habilitation and rehabilitation services, is integral to Iceland's support system for people with disabilities. However, specific additional costs associated with disability, such as those related to assistive devices and technologies, are acknowledged. Efforts are directed towards ensuring that social assistance benefits cover these essential expenses, aligning with the principles outlined in the CRPD.

Social Impact and Quality of Life - the adoption and implementation of Iceland's legislative initiatives are anticipated to have a profound social impact. By actively engaging people with disabilities in community life, increasing their visibility, and enhancing access to information, Iceland aims to significantly improve the overall quality of life and employment rates among this vital segment of its population. The strategy underscores Iceland's commitment to creating a society where every individual can actively participate and thrive.

²³ [Overview - Statistics Iceland \(statice.is\)](#)

²⁴ [Disability and Welfare in Iceland](#)

CONCLUSIONS

Romania:

Within Romanian legislation, there is a robust network of anti-discrimination regulations, particularly the Government Ordinance and related legislative acts, focused on prohibiting discrimination based on disability. These regulations, such as Law No. 48/2002 and Government Ordinance No. 137/2000, are fundamental in preventing and penalizing discriminatory practices, covering aspects related to employment, access to services, and education.

The National Council for Combating Discrimination plays an essential role in this context, acting as a supervisory and resolution authority for discrimination-related complaints, ensuring the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. Subsequent legislative changes, such as Law No. 27/2004, reflect ongoing efforts to strengthen the protection and equality of treatment for people with disabilities, dynamically responding to their needs.

Iceland:

In Iceland, anti-discrimination legislation, including Law No. 88/2011 on the rights of persons with disabilities, aimed at prohibiting discrimination based on disability, represents a fundamental pillar for protecting and promoting the rights of individuals with disabilities. This law covers various domains, including employment, education, and access to goods and services, providing an extended framework of protection for individuals with disabilities.

The National Human Rights Institution performs crucial monitoring and advocacy functions for the rights of individuals with disabilities, ensuring the implementation and adherence to legislation. Additionally, gender equality laws indirectly contribute to protecting women with disabilities from discrimination, thereby consolidating a complex and integrated system for safeguarding the rights of individuals with disabilities in Iceland.

In light of robust legislations and dedicated institutions, both Romania and Iceland strengthen their commitment to protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities, providing a robust framework aimed at eliminating discrimination and fostering an inclusive and equitable society for all citizens.

In conclusion, both Romania, through its extensive network of anti-discrimination regulations and continuous efforts to adapt and expand protection for individuals with disabilities, and Iceland, with a comprehensive and integrated legislative framework focusing on the rights and inclusion of individuals with disabilities, demonstrate a firm commitment to promoting equality and respecting fundamental human rights for all citizens.

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