

## Slovenia – ANED country profile

The information contained in this summary was compiled by the Academic Network of European Disability experts (ANED) in April 2009.

### Academic networks and resources

There are no national networks but disability research activities exist at the: University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Work, [Department for Social Justice and Inclusion](#) (contact: Darja Zaviršek, Ph.D.).

University of Ljubljana, [Faculty of Education](#), Department for Special Education and Rehabilitation (contact: Marija Kavkler, Ph.D.); Department of Primary School Education (contact: Mojca Peček, Ph.D.).

Research on social protection and education is carried out also by a public institute: [Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia](#) (contact: Barbara Kobal, MA)

### Policy and enforcement bodies

The key national bodies with responsibility for disability law and policy implementation include:

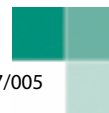
The [Ministry for Labour, Family and Social Affairs](#) of the Republic of Slovenia [Ministrstvo za delo, družino in socialne zadeve RS] assumes responsibility for policy. The [Directorate for Disabled People](#) participates in the preparation of laws and regulations that significantly affect the situation of disabled persons in society, and monitors the implementation of disability services, social services, employment programs etc. It also produces reports, guidance and expert opinions.

The [Parliamentary Committee for Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Disabled People](#) [Odbor državnega zbora za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in invalide] considers draft laws and issues relevant to the Ministry's remit, and in the context of the European Union.

### Organisations of disabled people

The national organisation representing disabled people at the European level (European Disability Forum) is:

The [National Council of Disability Organisations](#) [Nacionalni svet invalidskih organizacij], which includes [17 member organisations](#).



Other significant national organisations of disabled people include:

[Sonček - Cerebral Palsy Association of Slovenia](#) [Sonček - Zveza društev za cerebralno paralizo Slovenije]

[Sožitje-Union of Associations for Helping the Persons with Intellectual Disabilities of Slovenia](#) [Sožitje - Zveza društev za pomoč osebam z motnjami v duševnem razvoju Slovenije]

[Silva- Association for Quality of Life of Persons with Special Needs](#) [Sklad Silva, Društvo za kakovostno življenje ljudi s posebnimi potrebami]

[YHD – Association for Theory and Culture of Handicap](#) [YHD-Društvo za teorijo in kulturo hendikepa] and its information portal [www.handyworld-si.com](http://www.handyworld-si.com)

[Union of Associations of Blind and Visually Impaired of Slovenia](#) [Zveza društev slepih in slabovidnih Slovenije]

[Union of Associations of Deaf and Hearing Impaired of Slovenia](#) [Zveza društev gluhih in naglušnih Slovenije]

[Association for Muscular Dystrophy of Slovenia](#) [Društvo distrofikov Slovenije]

[Paraplegics Association of Slovenia](#) [Zveza paraplegikov Slovenije]

[Multiple Sclerosis Association of Slovenia](#) [Združenje multiple skleroze Slovenije]

[Slovenia Association of Disabled Workers](#) [Zveza delovnih invalidov Slovenije]

[Federation of Societies of Persons with Disabilities from Civil wars Slovenia](#) [Zveza društev civilnih invalidov vojn Slovenije]

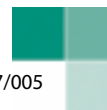
[Union of Associations of War Invalids of Slovenia](#) [Zveza društev vojnih invalidov Slovenije]

[Association for Sports of Invalids of Slovenia – Paralympic comittee](#) [Zveza za šport invalidov Slovenije - Paraolimpijski komite]

[Organisation of the Persons with Laryngectomy of Slovenia](#) [Društvo laringektomiranih Slovenije]

[Association of Disability Charities ILCO of Slovenia](#) [Zveza invalidskih društev ILCO Slovenije]

[Organisation of the Reumatics of Slovenia](#) [Društvo revmatikov Slovenije]



[Organisation of the Disabled Students of Slovenia](#) [Društvo študentov invalidov Slovenije]

[Organisation of the Paralysed of Slovenia](#) [Društvo paralitikov Slovenije]

[Organisation VIZIJA](#) – Association of physically disabled [Društvo VIZIJA - društvo gibalno oviranih]

[Organisation VITA](#) – Support After Head Injury – [Društvo VITA - pomoč po nezgodni poškodbi glave]

[Center for Autism](#) [Center za avtizem]

### **National law and strategy**

Slovenia ratified the [United Nations Convention](#) and its Optional Protocol on 24 April 2008.

Important national laws, policies and strategies concerning disabled people include:

Laws:

Apart from the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia which mentions the rights of the people with disabilities in three articles, Slovenia has several laws regarding people with disabilities, and has adopted most of the international directives as well as the UN Convention. The current legislation still refers to people with disabilities as 'invalids', based on the value-system from the pre-1991 era. The most important legal documents are:

Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, Official Gazette 33/91, 42/1997, 66/2000, 24/2003, 69/2004, Articles 14, 50, 52.

The Social Care of Mentally and Physically Handicapped Persons Act 1983 (Official Gazette 41/1983) regulates the administrative status of disabled person in different categories, upon which other benefits and services may depend.

Act on the Use of Slovene Sign Language [Zakon o uporabi slovenskega znakovnega jezika, Ur.l. RS, št. [96/2002](#)] establishes the right of deaf people to use Slovenian sign language and to access information with the same rights and opportunities as others.

Invalid Organisations Act 2002, Official Gazette 108/2000 [Zakon o invalidskih organizacijah, Ur.l. RS, št. [108/2002](#)] regulates the status, scope, financing and property of organizations operating in the public interest in the field of disability.

Act on the Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment 2004, Official Gazette 50/2004.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons Act, Official Gazette 18/76, 8/90, 63/04, 63/2004. [Zakon o zaposlitveni rehabilitaciji in zaposlovanju invalidov, Ur.l. RS, št. [63/2004](#)] regulates the right to vocational rehabilitation and employment of disabled people and provides other measures and incentives for their employment.

The Health Care and Health Insurance Act 2004, Official Gazette 9/1992, 13/1993, 126/2003, 20/2004.

The Act for the Placement of children with special needs (Official Gazette of the RS, nr. 54/2000; 3/2007 [http://zakonodaja.gov.si/rpsi/r02/predpis\\_ZAKO5112.html](http://zakonodaja.gov.si/rpsi/r02/predpis_ZAKO5112.html)) officially came to force in 2000, but it was only in 2003 when a Supplementary document 'Rules on the organisation and methods of work of commissions for the placement of children with special needs and on criteria for determining the type and degree of disadvantages, impairments and disabilities of children with special needs' was passed that it really came to life. According to this Act, children with special needs, with the exception of some categories, can be placed in mainstream schools and receive additional support when needed. The extent and form of support is decided by the placement commissions, and should be reviewed at least once every three years.

Policy documents:

[National Guidance for the Improvement of Accessibility of the Build Environment, Information and Communication for Disabled People](#) 2005 [Nacionalne usmeritve za izboljšanje dostopnosti grajenega okolja, informacij in komunikacij za invalide] addressed accessibility in public buildings, construction of new homes, educational establishments, workplaces, information and public transport. It also committed to establish sectoral committees and responsibility within the Ministry.

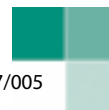
The [Action programme for the disabled 2007-2013](#) [Akcijski program za invalide 2007-2013] views disability as multi-dimensional phenomenon (in accordance with the WHO ICF) that originates from interaction with the physical and social environment. It affirms universal rights, respect for difference, non-discrimination, accessibility and an individual approach to provision across a range of areas.

[Resolution on the National Programme of Social Protection 2006-2010](#) [Resolucija o nacionalnem programu socialnega varstva za obdobje 2006- 2010. Ur.l. RS 39/2006 (ReNPSV06-10)]

## Facts and figures

Data on population indicate that:

Slovenia has a population of 2 million persons, including approximately 170,000 disabled people: work disabled, children with special needs, war disabled, people with moderate, severe or profound intellectual disability and severely physically disabled people. There are also 230,000 people with long-term illnesses. Among them 83% are defined as work disabled.



Disability status is recognised by a legal document of an official body, issued on the basis of different acts, like the Pension and Disability insurance Act, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons Act, Act on Social Care of Mentally and Physically disabled Persons Act, etc., meaning that different persons may have disability status, but receive the 'invalid status' on the basis of different Acts and therefore, may have have different rights.

Data on employment indicate that:

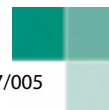
Introduction of the quota system in 2004 was one of the bigger changes, aiming to motivate employers towards the increased employment of disabled persons. The quota was introduced in the Vocational rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled People Act (Official Gazette, 100/05- UPB1), along with a comprehensive system of measures for increased employment opportunities for the disabled people. According to the data from the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS), prior to the 2004 Act, in respective years 1995, 1999 and 2004, there were 617, 818 and 987 disabled persons newly employed, and after the quota introduction in 2005 and 2006, there were respectively 1,296 and 1,927 disabled people newly employed.

Latest data from the Fund for Promotion of Employment of Disabled People (established under 2004 Act, primarily to monitor fulfilment of the quota) indicate that there were, among all employed people in Slovenia (835,034 in October 2009), 32,490 disabled employees (3.89%). At the end of October 2009 there were 12,779 registered unemployed disabled persons.

More than 90% of employed disabled people are defined as work disabled (labour invalids) of 2nd and 3rd category. The 2nd category means that the person was assessed as having remaining work abilities reduced by 50% or more; 3<sup>rd</sup> category means that person was assessed as not capable of working full-time, or that the remaining work ability is reduced by less than 50% or that person is unable to do their current job, but could be trained for another job; 1<sup>st</sup> category means that person is assessed as not being capable of work. People with moderate or severe intellectual impairments have no right to work.

In October 2009 there were 5,163 companies employing 20 or more people, of which 1,387 companies had fulfilled the quota defined by the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled People Act. 1,502 companies exceeded the quota and are thus entitled to financial incentives and 2,274 companies had not fulfilled quota and are thus paying the fine in the amount of 70% of minimum wage for each disabled person they fail to employ.

In 2008, open market companies submitted 858 contracts of business cooperation with 'invalid' companies and employment centres (special companies and sheltered workplaces that employ disabled people), as substitution fulfilment of quota.



The Fund for Promotion of Employment of Disabled People, according to its report for the year 2008 still hasn't fully started implementing the possibilities and incentives for supported employment, envisaged by the 2004 Act, as the formal background and procedures for this incentives are not yet clear. As a result, only one work place adaptation was funded in 2008, and no support services.

Data on education indicate that:

According to data from the Ministry of Education and Sport, at the preschool level, there were, in 2006, two thirds of children with special needs integrated in regular kindergarten.

5,000 children with special needs went to mainstream elementary schools and had adapted implementation and additional support, and 1,600 children were placed in schools with lower educational standard.

Children with moderate, severe and profound developmental difficulties are educated in special programmes in segregated elementary schools, schools with adapted programmes or social and care centres. There were approximately 1,000 children placed in this programmes in 2006.

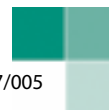
Schools are obliged to prepare an individualised programme for every child with special needs and monitor his/her progress. There are a lot of reports that show, that despite the legislative possibility of inclusionary education, the vast majority of teachers and other professionals did not get any special training for implementing inclusion. Many critics of the segregated education claim that by investing in the special education system the segregation practices are being promoted, instead of supporting teachers and other staff in mainstream schools for inclusionary practices and developing resource centres for the support of inclusion.

The condition for the placement in regular school in a local environment of a child is an ability to acquire knowledge standard set for elementary schools. This means that children with any sort of intellectual disabilities, can under no conditions be included in a mainstream school.

Even though inclusion is possible since 2000 or 2003, none of the old-special schools have been closed so far, and there are a number of special schools for children with sensory or physical impairments. They are promoted as a good choice for parents, as having the staff and equipment that can best meet the child's educational needs.

Data on accessibility indicate that:

The government committed itself to create an accessible environment with [the national policy document accepted in 2005](#). The practice remains far from the goals set. The [Annual report of the Ombudsman Office of the Republic of Slovenia](#) for the year 2008 (published in June 2009) found poor accessibility of the Slovenian Railways (such as locked lifts in the Ljubljana main railway station).



In response to request from the Ombudsman Office, Slovenian Railways planned to correct the situation only after five years (regarded by disability activists as a violation of human rights).

[Data from the MeAC accessibility survey](#) (2007) showed that none of the selected public or commercial websites passed the manual accessibility evaluation.

The main emergency number was not accessible by text phone,

Both public television channels provided more national language TV programs with subtitling (around 40%), and some programmes with signing (but only about 1%).

Neither provided audio description.

Neither of the two main commercial TV channels provided national language programs with subtitling, signing or audio description.

One of the two main banks had installed talking five 'talking' ATMs and planned a small number of additional machines.

Data on poverty and incomes indicate that:

There is currently no reliable national data on the extent of poverty amongst disabled people and their families in Slovenia.

The main problem remains that there are different benefits for disabled people, awarded according to different laws. Actual benefits are connected to the disability status of a person and not to the needs of an individual, meaning that two persons may have similar assistance needs but receive very different benefits. Some of these benefits are very low and often do not ensure a decent living.

Data on attitudes indicate that:

The [2007 Special Eurobarometer on Discrimination in Europe](#) showed that 55% of people knew someone who was disabled (compared to 55% EU average) and 81% acknowledged that being disabled tended to be disadvantage in society (EU average 79%).

Disability discrimination was viewed as widespread by 43% (EU average 53%); 36% thought that disability discrimination was more widespread than five years ago. 39% thought that not enough was being done to combat discrimination in general (EU average 51%).

61% thought that more disabled people should be in the workplace (EU average 74%) and 89% thought specific measures on equal opportunities were needed in this field.

In spite of the Employment Act examples of everyday discrimination are unofficially reported from persons with disabilities, but because of the lack of any comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and enforcement, there are no officially reported cases of discrimination against disabled people.

Data on public spending indicate that:

[Resolution on the National Programme of Social Protection 2006-2010](#) (ReNPSV06-10) gave some projection figures on public spending within social welfare.

The Resolution emphasised that because of the increasing elderly population public spending will be increased. In 2005 public spending was approx. €241 million), while the prognosis is that public spending in 2010 should increase to approx. €293 million. In 2006 Slovenia spent 8.5% of total social benefit expenditure on disability benefits compared to the EU27 average of 7.5% (European System of Integrated Social Protection Statistics).

### Social protection

Key features of the national system include (including adapted items from the MISSOC database December 2008):

#### Disability benefits:

There are a range of disability benefits and the system is complicated, with certain benefits dependent upon holding the fixed administrative disability status. Under the 1983 Act, the person must be defined as 'unable to live independently and work' to hold the status of disabled person (further defined as moderate, serious or profound).

Disability allowance (nadomestilo za invalidnost) is paid 35% of the average net salary in Slovenia, updated twice yearly (€284.11 at July 2009).

Assistance allowance (dodatek za tujo nego in pomoč) may also be paid to persons requiring in performing basic life functions. The amount depends on whether the person needs assistance in performing all or most life functions. Accordingly, this amounts to 20% or 10% of average net salary. Since July 2009 the higher amount is €162.34 and the lower amount is €81.18.

According to the Pension and invalidity insurance Act, insured persons who become disabled may have obligatory health insurance covered from the state budget.

Disability is defined in Article 60 as changes in health condition which cannot be reversed by treatment or by measures of medical rehabilitation that reduce the capacity of an insured person to secure or keep a job or to advance in career.

Invalidity is determined in three categories of capacity, in relation to the work that the person was 'trained for', arising from work-related injury, occupational disease, illness or non-work-related injury. The person has right to vocational rehabilitation services pursuant to the Act.

According to the [institute of pension and invalidity insurance of Slovenia](#), disability pension was being paid to 96,892 people in 2004 and 93,338 in 2008. According to [recent evaluation](#), in 2007 the average pension was €446.48.

A monthly allowance for invalidity for physical impairment can be paid to persons insured at the time of impairment. There were 55,575 beneficiaries on average in 2007. In [2008](#) invalidity for employed persons ranged from €39.85 to €9564 and for unemployed person €27.90 to €6695.

Assistance allowance can be paid to persons who receive old-age, disability or widowers pension; blind and partially sighted persons who are employed or self-employed or receive pension; physically disabled persons whose mobility is reduced to 30% or less, but are employed for at least 20 hours/week.

In [2008](#), the lower amount was 139,47 €, higher amount 278,94 €, and the highest amount for the most severely disabled (398,48 €).

A disabled person who is insured by the Institute for pension and invalidity insurance has the right to partial disability pension if he or she is no longer capable of working full time, but can still work at least 20 hours/week. In 2007 there were 6.057 beneficiaries and the average partial disability pension was €259.58. In 2008 there were 7,720 beneficiaries, with average pension €275.19.

Right to occupational rehabilitation, and allowance during the occupational rehabilitation: an allowance that the person is entitled to during occupational rehabilitation. In 2008 it amounted on average €403.23, 267 beneficiaries received it on average.

According to Parental Protection and Family Benefit Act (Official Gazette RS, No. [97/2001](#)) in addition to other rights, a parent who cares for a disabled child has a right to a part time job until the child is 18 years old. The state covers the difference to the full amount of social, health and pension insurance cost. The family is entitled to Care allowance for a child that needs care and protection (if the child is not in institutional care). In 2007 this was €90 (the lowest amount) or €180 (the highest amount).

According to the Social Security Act (Official Gazette RS, No. [54/1992](#)) disabled people are entitled to up to 20 hours/week assistance at home (pomoč na domu); institutional care; care and employment under special conditions (sheltered workshops); a family helper (družinski pomočnik), a new development since 2005. The family helper is an alternative to institutional care and can be a person (a family member) who lives at the same address as the disabled person, is unemployed and a formal job seeker. Most often the person who becomes family helper is the parent. The state pays minimal wage and social insurance, but the disabled person loses care allowance and has to contribute his/her own financial sources or property toward the payment of the family helper. The local municipalities, which are obliged to pay for the family helpers, have limited resources and the number of family helpers has decreased in last two years.

#### Rehabilitation and re-training:

There is a distinction between occupational rehabilitation and vocational rehabilitation. Occupational rehabilitation is a right for persons who became disabled while they were in paid employment and can either be trained to do the same job as they did before accident or illness, under new conditions, or be re-trained for a different job. According to the Pension and Invalidity Act, a person who became disabled at work is obliged to enter occupational rehabilitation if it is so decided by an expert body, otherwise he/she can lose a job.

Vocational rehabilitation is regulated by the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons Act and is the right of any disabled person. It is most often used by disabled people who have never been in paid employment or are unemployed.

#### Preferential employment and quotas:

In 2004 the Employment and Vocational Rehabilitation Act introduced a quota system for the employment of disabled people, employment companies and protected workplaces. Companies which employ more than 20 workers are obliged to employ persons with disabilities (the quota varies from 2-6 %, depending on the sort of business).

Invalid companies and employment centres are important employers of disabled people in Slovenia. In 2008 there were 167 Invalid companies employing 6,400 disabled persons. They emerged before 1976 with the establishment of Invalid workshops and were transformed into companies in 1988. After independence, when Slovenia turned to a market economy, the number of such companies drastically increased (mostly in 1993-94). They now employ almost a fifth of all employed disabled persons.

The number of employment centres has increased, from 18 in 2008 to 27 in January 2010, currently employing 249 persons.

Together employment centres and invalid companies employ 5,693 disabled persons (October 2009 – data of the Fund for Promotion of Employment of Disabled People), which is almost 18% of all employed disabled people.

Long-term support and care:

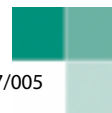
There are still a rather high number of disabled people living in six public care institutions (javni socialnovarstveni zavodi) and eight units for special forms of care for adults based within old people's homes. In 2008 there were 2,478 persons permanently living in so called '[special public care institutions](#)' (posebni socialnovarstveni zavodi). There has been a small move towards deinstitutionalisation, with 2% less people living in the special public care institutions than in the year 2007 (an equal proportion of men and women).

The [Resolution on the National Social Care Programme 2006-2010](#) (Section 5, Institutional care) included no plans to decrease the number of placements within the of the institutional care for children, adults or elderly with disabilities.

One of the most important types of care and support, which has been extensively increased in recent years, is sheltered workshops/centres for protection and training (varstveno delovni centri). Some are part of special public care institutions where the residents permanently live and work, while the others take a form of a day care sheltered workshop. The number of persons living/working in sheltered workshops has doubled since 2006 (from 1,587 in 2006 to 3,016 in 2008). In 2008 there were 3,016 persons living in sheltered workshops, 15% more than in 2007 (more men than women). The majority of people in the sheltered workshops in 2008 are not older than 45 years (81.7% of the total number), and the biggest group were aged 26-35 years (41.7%).

Since 2006 the government has been drafting a Long-term Care Insurance Law, which is expected to be finished in 2010. The law is supposed to make it possible for older persons and disabled people to live in the community instead of nursing homes.

Influenced by the strong advocacy of the disability activist organisation YHD, the government has started to work on a separate law on Personal Assistance, which



would regulate all personal assistance, not only the assistance related to basic nursing needs, and based on the principles of independent living and self-determination.

In 2009 the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (*Center RS za poklicno izobraževanje, CPI*) started to develop a proposal for the establishment of a professional profile for a new registered vocation/profession of 'personal assistant' (*osebni asistent/asistentka*) to be part of a new Law on Personal Assistance.