

# **DOTCOM: The Disability Online Tool of the Commission**

## **Latvia**

### **A. UN Convention status**

#### **A1. Ratification or conclusion of the UN Convention**

Latvia signed the UN Convention on 18 July 2008. The law on the Convention was adopted on 28 January 2010. The UN Convention entered into force on 31 March 2010.

##### **Links**

Par Konvencijas spēkā stāšanos (Law on enforcement of the Convention)

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=206558&from=off>

Par Konvenciju par personu ar invaliditāti tiesībām (Law on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities)

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=205248>

Ārlietu ministrijas dienesta informācija Nr.41/174-1047, Rīgā 2010.gada 10.martā Par Konvencijas spēkā stāšanos (Official information of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs No. 41/174-1047, Riga, 10 March 2010. Enforcement of the UN Convention)

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=206558&from=off>

#### **A2. Ratification or accession to the Optional Protocol**

The Optional Protocol was signed on 22 January 2010 and ratified on 31 August 2010, in the headquarters of the UN General Assembly in New York.

##### **Links**

Konvencijas par personu ar invaliditāti tiesībām Fakultatīvais protokols (The Optional Protocol of the UN Convention)

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=212268&from=off>

Ārlietu ministrijas dienesta informācija Nr.41/578-3730, Rīgā 2010.gada 17.septembrī, Par Protokola spēkā stāšanos (Official information of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs No. 41/578-3730, Riga, 17 September 2010. Enforcement of the Protocol)

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=218428&from=off>

#### **A3. Declarations, Reservations and Objections**

Latvia signed and ratified the UN Convention without any interpretive declaration or reservation. No objections were submitted.

##### **Links**

Official information of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs No. 41/174-1047, Riga, 10 March 2010. Enforcement of the Convention

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=206558&from=off>

#### **A4. Comprehensive review**

On 29 May 2008 the Saeima (Latvian Parliament) obligated the Government to review existing national legislation. The responsible Ministry of Welfare sent an informative letter (Nr.18.3-03/4452 'Par Valsts kancelejas kontroles uzdevuma Nr.2008-2046 izpildi') to the State Chancellery on 31 December 2008, stating that national legislation in general corresponds to the UN Convention objectives. It mentioned that the UN Convention requirements of access to services, education and employment and accessible environment, are included in the existing legislation, but in praxis, there is a lack of financial resources for implementing them and for further development. It was also stated that in accordance with the UN Convention's Article 12 'Equal recognition before the law' and Article 17 'Protecting the integrity of the person' changes are needed in the Civil Law, the Civil Process Law and the Guardian Court Law enforcing partial legal capacity. On 29 November 2012 the Saeima accepted changes in the Civil Law enforcing partial legal capacity. Amendments to the Civil Law, the Civil Process Law and the Guardian Court Law were enforced from 1 January 2013.

### **Links**

Information from the Ministry of Welfare

[http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/cilvekiem\\_ar\\_invaliditati/konvencijasprogress\\_01022010.pdf](http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/cilvekiem_ar_invaliditati/konvencijasprogress_01022010.pdf)

Amendments to the Civil Law

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/253623-grozijumi-civillikuma>

## **A5. Focal point**

According to the Law on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Ministry of Welfare coordinates the implementation of the Convention. The implementation of the Convention is monitored by the Ombudsman - an independent institution whose function is to encourage individuals to contribute to the protection of human rights and ensure compliance with the principle of equal treatment and the prevention of any kind of discrimination. Other ministries (such as the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Traffic and others) are responsible for the implementation of specific activities according to the sphere of their competence.

### **Links**

Law on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

<http://likumi.lv/ta/id/205248-par-konvenciju-par-personu-ar-invaliditati-tiesibam>

The Ministry of Welfare

<http://www.lm.gov.lv/eng/about-us/ministry>

The Ombudsman of Latvia

<http://www.tiesibsargs.lv/en>

## **A6. Coordination mechanism**

The coordination mechanism within the Government is not formally established. It is carried out through the National Council of Disability Affairs (NCDA) (established as the National Council for Disabled Persons by the Ministry of Welfare in 1997). NCDA involves five responsible ministers, the Ombudsman, the Chairperson of the Latvian Association of Local Governments, the Chairperson of the Public Utilities Commission, the Director of the Foundation for Society Integration, the President of the Free Trade Union Confederation of

Latvia, the general-director of the Employers' Confederation of Latvia and the representatives of key non-governmental organisations (such as Latvian Deaf Association, Latvian Blind Society, the organisation of people with disabilities and their friends 'Apeirons', Latvian Association 'Rupju berns' and others). The Chairperson of the NCDA is the Minister of Welfare. Starting from 2009, questions about the implementation of the UN Convention have been included in every meeting. NCDA sets up different working groups for tackling different matters set by the UN Convention where all members, on equal rights, have possibilities to define problems and recommend solutions. The coordination of the implementation of the UN Convention is also carried out through several working groups organised by the Ministry of Welfare for the implementation of the UN Convention.

### **Links**

Initial Report by the Republic of Latvia to the UN

[http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/adopcija\\_rus/lmzino\\_271213\\_konv.pdf](http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/adopcija_rus/lmzino_271213_konv.pdf)

National Council of Disability Affairs

<http://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/nozares-politika/invaliditate/6-noderiga-informacija/invaliditates-lietu-nacionala-padome-ilnp>

## **A7. Independent mechanism**

The implementation of the UN Convention is monitored by the Ombudsman - an independent institution whose function is to encourage individuals to contribute to the protection of human rights and to comply with the principle of equal treatment and the prevention of any kind of discrimination.

Every year, the Ombudsman's attention has been focused on one of the areas covered by the UN Convention:

- In 2015 the Ombudsman paid attention to the Rights of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities. The Ombudsman, in cooperation with the Organisation of People with Disabilities and their Friends 'Apeirons' and the National Library of Latvia, organised the conference 'Legal aspects of the UN CRPD in Latvia', during which the monitoring results of the UN Convention for 2010-2014 were presented.
- In 2016 the focus was on access to higher education for people with disabilities. The conference topic was 'Accessibility to Education'.
- At the beginning of 2017, the Ombudsman submitted to the Saeima the report monitoring the implementation of the UN Convention from 2010 to 2016. The topic of the 2017 conference was 'Access to the labour market for people with disability'.
- In 2018 the topic of the conference was 'Is it easy to live in society? Disability' on the right of every person to live in society and the deinstitutionalisation (DI) process taking place in Latvia from the perspective of the state, local governments and non-governmental

organisations.

### Links

The Ombudsman of Latvia

<http://www.tiesibsargs.lv/en>

Pārskats par Latvijas Republikas tiesībsarga paveikto, monitorējot ANO Konvencijas par personu ar invaliditāti tiesībām ieviešanu (2010. - 2016.) (Report on the activities of the Ombudsman from 2010 to 2016 on monitoring the implementation of the UN Convention)

[http://www.tiesibsargs.lv/uploads/content/legacy/ano\\_konvencijas\\_monitorings\\_2010\\_2016\\_1502967444.pdf](http://www.tiesibsargs.lv/uploads/content/legacy/ano_konvencijas_monitorings_2010_2016_1502967444.pdf)

Latvijas Republikas tiesībsarga 2017.gada ziņojums (The Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia Annual Report 2017)

[http://www.tiesibsargs.lv/uploads/content/lapas/tiesibsarga\\_2017\\_gada\\_zinojums\\_1520515340.pdf](http://www.tiesibsargs.lv/uploads/content/lapas/tiesibsarga_2017_gada_zinojums_1520515340.pdf)

## A8. Official reporting

Latvia's initial state report was due in April 2012, two years after the ratification of the UN Convention, but it was not submitted. On 11 February 2014 the Government (the Cabinet of Ministers) accepted the Initial Report, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs submitted it to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in April 2014. On 14 June 2017 Latvia submitted Replies to the List of issues in relation to the initial report of Latvia. In September 2017 Latvia received Concluding observations on the initial report of Latvia of Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. On 25 February 2019 the Ministry of Welfare submitted a follow-up document 'About Concluding observations on the initial report of Latvia of Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities'.

### Links

State reports to the UN Committee

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=4&CountryID=95&DocTypeID=29](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=4&CountryID=95&DocTypeID=29)

Link to all UN reporting cycle documentation

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=4&CountryID=95](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=4&CountryID=95)

Cabinet minutes of meeting on 11 February 2014 No.8 35§

<http://likumi.lv/ta/id/264415-ministru-kabineta-sedes-protokols>

Initial Report (in Latvian)

[http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/adopcija\\_rus/lmzino\\_271213\\_konv.pdf](http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/adopcija_rus/lmzino_271213_konv.pdf)

Replies to the List of issues in relation to the initial report of Latvia

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fLVA%2fQ%2f1%2fAdd.1&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fLVA%2fQ%2f1%2fAdd.1&Lang=en)

Concluding observations on the initial report of Latvia

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fLVA%2fCO%2f1&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fLVA%2fCO%2f1&Lang=en)

Follow-up Concluding Observations

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fLVA%2fCO%2f1%2fAdd.1&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fLVA%2fCO%2f1%2fAdd.1&Lang=en)

## A9. Shadow reporting

The initial state report was prepared in cooperation with NGOs. The most relevant proposals included were submitted by the Association of people with disabilities and their friends 'Apeirons', the Resource Centre for people with mental disability 'Zelda', the Association Latvian Movement for Independent Living, the Latvian Umbrella Body for Disability Organisations SUSTENTO, the Riga City 'Child of Care' and the Latvian Association of the Deaf.

In 2017 the Ombudsman of Latvia submitted the Alternative Report on the Initial Report of the Republic of Latvia Regarding the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 13 December 2006 in the Republic of Latvia Between 31 March 2010 and 31 December 2013. The Resource Centre for people with mental disability 'Zelda', the Association Latvian Movement for Independent Living, the Latvian Umbrella Body For Disability Organizations SUSTENTO submitted proposals for the List of issues in relation to the initial report of the Republic of Latvia. The Ombudsman submitted the General Comment of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia Regarding the Response Report 'Answers to list of issues to the Initial Report of the Republic of Latvia on the Implementation of the UN CRPD of 13 December 2006 in the Republic of Latvia from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2016' Submitted by the Government of the Republic of Latvia, and the Latvian Umbrella Body For Disability Organizations SUSTENTO submitted responses to the list of issues.

### Links

Civil society reports to the UN Committee

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=4&CountryID=95](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=4&CountryID=95)

Link to all UN reporting cycle documentation

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=4&CountryID=95](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=4&CountryID=95)

## B. General legal framework

### B1. Anti-discrimination legislation

There is no specific law for non-discrimination on the grounds of disability. Article 91 of the Constitution (Satversme) states that all people in Latvia are equal before the law and the court, and human rights shall be realised without discrimination of any kind. Non-discrimination norms are included in several national laws, policies and strategies. The Law on Social Security (1995) identifies equal access to social services and legal protection. The Law on Local Governments (1995) sets out the general provisions and economic basis for the activities of the local governments of Latvia. According to the Law on Protection of the Rights of the Child (1998), the State shall ensure the rights and freedoms of all children without any discrimination. The Law determines that a child with physical or mental disabilities has also the right to everything that is necessary for the satisfaction of his or her special needs. The Education Law (1998) states that every citizen of the Republic of Latvia and every person who has the right to a non-citizen passport issued by the Republic of Latvia, every person who has received a permanent residence permit, as well as citizens from the European Union Member States who have been issued a temporary residence permit, and their children, have equal right to acquire education, regardless of their health status. After ratification of the UN

Convention on 12 October 2009, the Government (the Cabinet of Ministers) approved policy planning papers for certain time periods. On 21 November 2013 the Government (the Cabinet of Ministers) approved the Guidelines for the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2014 – 2020 defining the basic principles of disability policy resulting from the Convention basic principles. On 15 December 2015 the Government approved the Implementation plan 2015-2017 of the Guidelines on the Implementation of the UN CRPD 2014-2020, and on 12 December 2018 - the Implementation Plan 2018-2020. In both documents specific measures to reach the goals defined in the Guidelines are set.

## Links

The Latvian Constitution (Satversme)

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=57980>

Law on the Protection of the Rights of the Child

[http://www.vvc.gov.lv/export/sites/default/docs/LRTA/Likumi/Protection\\_of\\_the\\_Rights\\_of\\_the\\_Child.doc](http://www.vvc.gov.lv/export/sites/default/docs/LRTA/Likumi/Protection_of_the_Rights_of_the_Child.doc)

Labour Protection Law

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=26020>

Education Law

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=50759>

The Guidelines on the Implementation of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2014-2020

<http://likumi.lv/ta/id/262238-par-apvienoto-naciju-organizacijas-konvencijas-par-personu-ar-invaliditati-tiesibam-istenosanas-pamatnostadnem-2014-2020-gadam>

The Implementation Plan of the Guidelines for 2014-2017

<http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/5436>

The Implementation Plan of the Guidelines for 2018-2020

<http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/6349>

## B2. Recognition of legal capacity

Persons with disabilities, according to the Satversme and the Civil Law, have equal rights to any other person without disability, except, if the person with disability is deemed not able to defend his/her interests in which case a trustee or a guardian is assigned. The legislation of the Republic of Latvia currently provides both procedural and material legal acts that regulate the cases in which a person's capacity to act can be restricted by the judgement of the court and in which cases it can be renewed. According to the procedural legal acts in Latvia all persons can realize their rights via a legal representative. Article 216 of the Civil Law (1937, enforced 1993) states that persons in need of protection shall be entrusted to the care of guardians and trustees who shall act on behalf of these persons. The amendment to the Civil Law (in force from January 2013) states that a court may limit the legal capacity of a person to the extent to which a person with mental health or other health disorders is unable to understand the significance of his or her actions or is enabled to manage the actions instead of recognizing a person as not having the capacity to act. When the person's abilities are assessed, the court, at first, defines if and to what extent a guardian acts together with the person with disability and only afterwards - if and to what extent a guardian acts independently. Chapter 33 of the Civil Procedure Law (1998) provides legal provisions

concerning a person with limited ability to act and establishing trusteeships or temporary trusteeships.

### **Links**

The Civil Law

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=90223>

The Civil Procedure Law

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=50500>

Judgement of the Constitutional Court on Conformity of the Civil Law, Articles 358 and 364 to the Constitutional Law (Satversme) Article 96, Case of 27 December 2010, No. 2010-38-01

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=223658&from=off>

Initial Report by the Republic of Latvia on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities from 31 March 2010 to 31 December 2013

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fLVA%2f1&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD%2fC%2fLVA%2f1&Lang=en)

## **B3. Accessibility of voting and elections**

The Constitutional Law (Satversme) determines that every person has the right to vote (Chapter on Basic human rights) without any limitations. The Saeima (Latvian Parliament) Election Law, the Law on European Parliament Elections, the Law on National Referendum and Initiation of Legislation, and the Law on the City Council, the Local Council and the Rural Municipality Council include provisions for people with disabilities. If physical disability prevents a voter from voting or signing the voters' list, a family member or other trustworthy person shall make marks on the ballot paper in the voter's presence according to his/her instructions. If a voter is unable to travel to the polling station for health reasons, on the basis of a written request filed by the disabled person or a person authorised by a disabled person and registered in a special journal, the polling station commission shall conduct a voting by secret ballot at a place where the voter is located (at home, social care centre, or hospital).

### **Links**

The Saeima (Latvian Parliament) Election Law

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=35261>

The Constitutional Law (Satversme)

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=57980B4>

Law on European Parliament Elections

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=84185>

Law on National Referendum and Initiation of Legislation

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=58065>

Law on City Council, Local Council and Rural Municipality Council

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=57839>

## **B4. Official recognition of sign language**

Article 3 of the Official Language Law (1999) states that the official language in the Republic of Latvia is the Latvian language. In the same Article, in section 3, it is stated that 'The State shall ensure the development and use of the Latvian sign language for communication with



people with impaired hearing.' This statement is not recognised in any other laws.

### **Links**

The Official Language Law

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=14740>

## **B5. National disability strategy and action plan**

The first Action plan for the implementation of the Convention 2010-2012 was adopted by the Government in October 2009. The action plan in general includes short term activities without additional financing or supported by the EU Structural funds. One of the tasks was the elaboration of the Convention implementation programme for 2013-2019. On 21 November 2013, the Government (the Cabinet of Ministers) approved the Guidelines for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2014-2020. The Guidelines state that, despite the fact that in 2009 the Government approved the first Plan for the Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, there are still many people with disabilities who have not been able to exercise their rights in areas defined by the UN Convention. On 15 December 2015 the Government approved the Implementation plan for 2015-2017, where specific measures to reach the goals defined in the Guidelines were set. Education, labour and employment, social protection and public awareness were set out as priority areas in the field of disability policy for 2015-2017. On 12 December 2018, the Government approved the Implementation Plan for 2018-2020. The aim of the plan is to promote the involvement of people with disabilities in various public processes. Main strands of actions are education (in particular, access to higher education), inclusive employment, social protection (getting more efficient services based on person's needs) and public awareness (reduction of stereotypes, access to elections).

On 21 February 2019 the Government accepted the Informative report 'Mid-term evaluation of the Guidelines for the Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2014-2020'. The main conclusion is that 'much needs to be done to ensure equal opportunities for people with disabilities, a financially independent future, a change in stereotypes in society and a better understanding of the role of people with disabilities in society'. The implementation of the activities included in the plan for 2014-2017 leads to the strengthening of inclusive education, subsidised employment measures have been developed, changes are being made to the disability system, moving away from the medical model to the human rights approach. Some of the expected results for social entrepreneurship and the institutionalisation have not been achieved since the implementation of these measures is in the process, some of the measures lost their topicality.

### **Links**

Guidelines for the Implementation of the UN CRPD in 2014 - 2020

<http://likumi.lv/ta/id/262238-par-apvienoto-naciju-organizacijas-konvencijas-par-personu-ar-invaliditati-tiesibam-istenosanas-pamatnostadnem-2014-2020-gadam>

The Implementation plan for 2015-2017 of the Guidelines

<http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/5436>



The Implementation plan for 2018-2020 of the Guidelines

<http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/6349>

Mid-term evaluation of the Guidelines

<http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/6394>

## **C. Accessibility**

### **C1. Transport accessibility**

Transport providers are required to provide accessibility for disabled passengers in specific laws regulating each of the public transport fields. The Law on Public Transport services (2007) and consequent regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers regulate the transport field. Regulations No 599 'The Order of Provision and Utilization of Public Transport Services' (2012) determine procedures for the provision and use of public transportation services, including that all information in a bus about bus stops shall be accessible in visual form and carried in audio form. The Regulations No 148 'Requirements for Obtaining a Special Permit (License) from the Planning Region and the Republic Cities and the Procedure for the Carriage of Passengers by Taxi' (2018) states requirement that in case of necessity, carrier supports person with disability to get into and out of taxi. Standards LVS 190-8:2012 'Regulations on the Design of Bus Stops' (2012), LVS 190-10-2007/A1:2010 'Regulations on the Design of Pedestrian Crossings' (2010) and LVS 370:2010 'Road Traffic Control Equipment. Signal Heads' (2010) LVS 448:2012 'Railway applications. Passenger platforms for 1520mm railway lines' must be taken into consideration.

Regulations No 1193 Amendments in Regulations of 29 December 2010 No 1210 'Regulations Regarding the Interoperability of Trans-European Rail System' (2013), prescribe that disabled passengers have the same rights traveling by railway as other people. Requirements included in Regulations No. 1193 were enforced from 1 January 2014 and apply to construction of new railway objects and existing objects in case of reconstruction.

In the field of aviation, the regulation (EC) No 1107/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 concerning the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air including European Civil Aviation Conference Doc 30, is applicable to the Republic of Latvia. Quality standards for the passengers with reduced mobility have been set by the managing body of Riga International Airport (RIX) in cooperation with airport users and NGOs. Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No 145 'Regulations regarding the Safety of Ro-Ro Passenger Ships and High-Speed Passenger Craft' (2006) by implementing Directive 2003/24, which amends Directive 98/18/EC on safety rules and standards for passenger ships engaged on domestic voyages, includes specific requirements for persons with reduced mobility.

#### **Links**

Law on Public Transport services

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=159858>

Regulations No 599 'The Order of Provision and Utilization of Public Services' (2012)

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=251480&from=off>

Regulations No 148 'Requirements for Obtaining a Special Permit (License) from the Planning Region and the Republic Cities and the Procedure for the Carriage of Passengers by Taxi'

(2018)

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/297820-prasibas-planosanas-regiona-un-republikas-pilsetas-specialas-atlaujas-licences-sanemsanai-un-kartiba-kada-veicami-pasazieru-kom...>

Regulations No 145 'Regulations regarding the Safety of Ro-Ro Passenger Ships and High-Speed Passenger Craft'

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/130188-noteikumi-par-ro-ro-pasazieru-kugu-un-atrgaitas-pasazieru-kugu-drosibu>

Regulations No 1193 'Amendments in Cabinet Regulations of 29 December 2010 No 1210 'Regulations Regarding the Interoperability of Trans-European Rail System'' (2013)

<http://likumi.lv/ta/id/261502-grozijumi-ministru-kabineta-2010-gada-28-decembra-noteikumos-nr-1210-noteikumi-par-eiropas-dzelzcela-sistemu-savstarpeju-izmantojamibu>

Standard LVS 190-8-2012 'Regulations on the Design of Bus Stops'

<https://www.lvs.lv/lv/products/31477>

Standard LVS 190-10-2007/A1:2010 'Regulations on the Design of Pedestrian Crossings'

<https://www.lvs.lv/lv/products/27553>

Standard LVS 370:2010 'Road Traffic Control Equipment. Signal Heads'

<https://www.lvs.lv/lv/products/27555>

Standard LVS 448:2012 'Railway applications. Passenger platforms for 1520mm railway'

<https://www.lvs.lv/en/products/32744>

## **C2. Built environment accessibility**

The accessibility of the built environment is regulated by the Construction law (2013), which came into force from 1 October 2014. The Law applies to construction of new buildings, as well to rebuilding, renewal, restoration, demolition, and reconstruction of existing buildings, to changing of the type of use without rebuilding and to preservation. As one of the construction principles, the law defines the principle of environmental accessibility, according to which such environment is created during the construction process, in which any person may move with comfort and use the building according to its purpose of use. On 30 June 2015, the Government approved Latvian construction standards - Latvian Building Code LBN 208-15 'Public Buildings' requiring accessibility of public buildings, and Latvian Building Code LBN 211-15 'Residential Buildings' requiring accessibility of residential buildings.

### **Links**

Construction Law

<http://likumi.lv/ta/id/258572-buvniecibas-likums>

Regulations No.331 'Regulation on Latvian Building Code LBN208-15 'Public Buildings' (2015)

<http://likumi.lv/ta/id/274995-noteikumi-par-latvijas-buvnormativu-lbn-208-15-publiskas-buves>

Regulations No.340 'Regulation on Latvian Building Code LBN 211-15 'Residential Buildings' (2015)

<http://likumi.lv/ta/id/275016-noteikumi-par-latvijas-buvnormativu-lbn-211-15-dzivojamas-ekas>

## **C3. ICT and Web accessibility**

Chapter 'Universal service' (Section 63) of the Electronic Communications Law (2004) defines special measures in relation to disabled persons. The National regulatory authority (Public Utilities Commission) promotes for end-users, including special social groups and disabled

persons, the possibility to choose an electronic communications merchant, the electronic communications services, and electronic communications service tariffs. The Public Utilities Commission may take a decision that the public telephone network operator shall perform special measures in order to ensure publicly accessible electronic communications services for disabled persons, including the State Fire-Fighting and Rescue Service, State police, emergency medical care, gas emergency and comprehensive telephone directory service and a comprehensive subscriber directory, moreover such services shall be equivalent to those services, which are received by other end-users. The Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No.611 'On Procedure about how institutions put information on the Internet' (2018) provides that institutions official websites and mobile applications should be created in accordance with the user-oriented approach and the principle of iterative development in accordance with Latvian National Standard LVS EN ISO 9241-210: 2016 'Human and System Interaction Ergonomics', Part 210 'Human-oriented Interactive Systems Design'. According to these Regulations the official website should include 'Easy to read' section with brief descriptive information about the institution and other information needed by the institution's customers in 'easy to read' language.

In 2013, the Cabinet of Ministers accepted the Information Society Development Guidelines for 2014-2020. The Guidelines aim to provide an opportunity for everyone to use information and communication technologies, to create a knowledge-based economy and to improve the overall quality of life, to contribute to growth of public administration efficiency, country competitiveness and economic development and the creation of jobs.

Latvia neither signed nor ratified the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled. However, the amendments to the Copyright law (2002) were adopted in December 2018 based on Regulation 2017/1563 / EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 September 2017 on the cross-border exchange between the Union and third countries of accessible format copies of certain works and other subject matter protected by copyright and related rights for the benefit of persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print-disabled.

## **Links**

Electronic Communications Law

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=96611>

Copyright Law

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/5138-autortiesibu-likums>

Law 'Amendments to Copyright Law'

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/303584-grozijumi-autortiesibu-likuma>

The Regulations No.611 'On Procedure about how institutions put information into the Internet' (2018)

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/301865>

The Information Society Development Guidelines for 2014-2020

<http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=260931>

## **D. Independent living**

### **D1. Choice of living arrangements**

Article 97 of the Constitution (Satversme) states that every person, residing lawfully in the territory of Latvia has the right to move freely and to choose his or her place of residence. Disabled persons can use these rights in close connection with rights to receive necessary social services. According to the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance (2003), social services shall be provided only based on an assessment of the individual needs and resources of a person, conducted by a social work specialist, in the place of residence of the client or as near to it as possible. Only when the scope of such services is not sufficient, social care and social rehabilitation shall be provided in a long-term care and social rehabilitation institution. When providing social services, the institutions shall ensure interdisciplinary and inter-institutional cooperation, in accordance with the basic principles of social services provision: provision of services in the place of residence of the client or as near to it as possible; provision of social care and social rehabilitation in long-term social care rehabilitation institutions only when the amount of social services is not sufficient for the client; evaluation of individual needs and resources; participation of the person in the decision making process; and child care in the family-like environment. In general, the local government of the territory, where a person with disability is registered as the main place of residence, has a duty to provide this person with necessary social services and social assistance corresponding to his or her needs. The same law states that a client (referring also to people with disabilities) has the right to participate in the decision-making process related to the receipt of social services. Social work specialists involve people with disabilities as much as possible in decision-making about their personal care plans, which include provision of necessary social services.

### Links

Law on Social Services and Social Assistance

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=68488>

The Ministry of Welfare

<http://www.lm.gov.lv/text/54>

## D2. De-institutionalisation

In 2013, the Cabinet of Ministers accepted The Guidelines for the Development of Social Services 2014-2020 (Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of 4 December 2013 No 589). In these Guidelines de-institutionalisation is stated as one of the directions for action. The specific policy objectives are to decrease the number of persons with mental disabilities in social care institutions, to promote social care and social rehabilitation services and support to children and persons with disabilities in local government and to improve the customer's individual needs-based services in social care institutions. It is planned that during 2014-2020, 1,000 places in state social care institutions will be cut down, and 700 persons will live independently receiving necessary support.

Cabinet Regulations No 313 on the 'Implementation of European Social Fund operational programme 'Growth and employment' 9.2.2. specific objective 'Increase the availability of high-quality services at home and close to family environment alternative to institutional care for persons with disabilities and children' measure 9.2.2.1. 'De-institutionalisation' (2015) set out the objective of the measure, the available funding, the requirements for the

project applicant and the cooperation partner, the actions to be supported, the eligibility of costs and other conditions. On 15 July 2015, the Minister of Welfare approved the 'Action Plan for the Implementation of De-institutionalisation for 2015-2020' which includes the definition of de-institutionalisation, the objective, assessment of the situation regarding target groups, results to be achieved, directions of action, monitoring and evaluation. To implement the Action Plan, the Ministry of Welfare, in cooperation with planning regions and municipalities, had initiated the project throughout Latvia, which aims to replace large institutional care centres with community-based social services and services close to the family environment.

### Links

Regulations No.313 on the 'Implementation of European Social Fund operational programme 'Growth and employment' 9.2.2. specific objective 'Increase the availability of high quality services at home and close to family environment alternative to institutional care for persons with disabilities and children' measure 9.2.2.1. 'De-institutionalisation' (2015)

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/274957-darbibas-programmas-izausme-un-nodarbinatiba-9-2-2-specifiska-atbalsta-merka-palielinat-kvalitativu-institucionalai-aprupei>

The Guidelines for Development of Social Services 2014-2020

<http://likumi.lv/ta/id/262647-par-socialo-pakalpojumu-attistibas-pamatnostadnem-2014-2020-gadam>

Action Plan for the Implementation of De-institutionalisation 2015-2020

[http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/aktualitates/null/2015\\_15\\_07\\_ricplans\\_final1.pdf](http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/aktualitates/null/2015_15_07_ricplans_final1.pdf)

The Ministry of Welfare. Community-based social services and de-institutionalisation

[http://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=81579](http://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/?option=com_content&view=article&id=81579)

The Ministry of Welfare. De-institutionalisation.

[http://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=81593](http://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=81593)

## D3. Quality of social services

According to the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance (2003) the Cabinet of Ministers adopted Regulation No 338 'Requirements to social service providers' in 2017. The Regulation defines general requirements (available information, client registration, client evaluation, planning of necessary services, documentation, etc.) and special requirements for service providers to people with disabilities, such as, social service providers (local government social services), home care providers, providers of long-term childcare and social rehabilitation services for children (including those with disabilities), providers of services in long-term social care and social rehabilitation institutions, half-way home service providers, boarding house service providers, respite service providers, group home (apartment) service providers, social service providers providing social rehabilitation services for hearing impaired persons, social service providers providing social rehabilitation services for people with visual impairment, service providers in day care centres, social rehabilitation services for restoration of social functioning service providers, specialised workshop service providers. The law states that municipalities have the right to develop necessary services, therefore the situation may differ from municipality to municipality. Some of local municipalities use (or buy) social services developed by NGOs or from the private sector, such as social care services in institutions.

Section 17<sup>1</sup> of the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance defines a complaints

procedure. According to the Law, the administrative statements that are issued or actual actions of service providers may be contested in the Ministry of Welfare, but the decisions thereof may be appealed in a court if it is not otherwise specified by the law or Cabinet regulations. The administrative statements issued or actual actions of the local governments and institutions as providers of social services or social assistance may be contested in accordance with the Law on Local Governments. Part 4 of Section 17<sup>1</sup> states that the contesting or appeal of a decision of the Ministry of Welfare regarding the removal of a social service provider from the Register of social service providers, a decision of the Ministry of Welfare or a social service provider regarding the suspension or termination of the provision of social services, as well as a decision of the local government regarding the suspension or termination of the provision of social services shall not suspend the operation of the relevant decision, except the case where this operation is suspended by a decision of the institution in which the decision is being contested.

### Links

Law on Social Services and Social Assistance

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=68488>

Regulation No 338 'Requirements to social service providers' (2017)

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291788-prasibas-socialo-pakalpojumu-sniedzjiem>

## D4. Provision of assistive devices at home

Section 25 'Provision of Technical Aids' in the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance states that disabled persons, disabled children under the age of 18, children and adults for whom the technical aids are necessary to reduce or eliminate functional inability, and persons with 'anatomical defects' have the right to receive technical aids if they have received an opinion of a medical practitioner regarding the need for these technical aids. The Cabinet of Ministers, in Regulations No 1474 'On Technical Aids' (2009) and Regulations No 1472 'Order in which Latvian Blind Society and Latvian Deaf Association Provide Social Rehabilitation Services and Technical Aids' (2009) with amendments in 2012, regulates procedures according to which persons receive technical aids and the distribution of technical aids, and approves the list of technical aids (the so-called 'positive list') to be financed from the state budget. People with disabilities can receive technical aids from the National Rehabilitation Centre 'Vaivari' and its regional units free of charge; they need pay only a participation fee. In accordance with amendments in Regulations No 1474 (2012), people with disabilities can choose the provider of technical aid. If the price is higher than the state's defined price, the person should pay the difference. Additionally, technical aids can be purchased in special shops or from specialised NGOs.

### Links

Regulations No 1474 'On Technical Aids' (2009)

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=202674&from=off>

Law on Social Services and Social Assistance

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=68488>

Regulations No 1472 'Order in which Latvian Blind Society and Latvian Deaf Association Provide Social Rehabilitation Services and Technical Aids' (2009)

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=202630&from=off>

Technical Aids Centre  
<https://www.vtpc.lv/lv>

## **D5. Availability of personal assistance schemes**

According to the Disability Law (2010), disabled persons with severe functional, intellectual or hearing impairments from 1 January 2013 have the right to a home service of personal assistants up to 40 hours per week financed from the state budget. From 1 September 2012 children with disabilities in general basic education, basic vocational education, general secondary education and secondary vocational education institutions have rights to receive the service of an assistant for mobility and self-care paid for from the state budget.

### **Links**

Disability Law

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=211494>

Regulations No 942 'Procedures for granting and financing assistant service in the municipality' (2012)

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/253781-kartiba-kada-pieskir-un-finanse-asistenta-pakalpojumu-pasvaldiba>

Regulations No 698 'Provisions for the benefit of assistant use for persons with group I vision disability' (2014)

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/270262-noteikumi-par-pabalstu-par-asistenta-izmantosanu-personam-ar-i-grupas-redzes-invaliditati>

Regulations No 695 'Procedures for granting and financing assistant services at an educational institution' (2012)

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/252140-kartiba-kada-pieskir-un-finanse-asistenta-pakalpojumu-izglitiba-iestade>

## **D6. Income maintenance**

Articles 14-17 of the Law on State Pensions (1995) define the right to a disability pension, which is calculated in accordance with the severity of disability and the suspension of disability pension's payment. According to the law, a person insured for not less than three years, has the right to a disability pension before reaching the age for receiving an old-age pension, if this person has been recognised disabled. In case of a work-related disability or occupational disease, a disability pension shall be granted in accordance with the Law on Compulsory Social Insurance in respect of Accidents at Work and Occupational Diseases. The minimum amounts of the disability pension are based on the State Social Security Benefit:

- for persons with disability of Group I the amount is 1.6 times of the State Social Security Benefit;
- for persons with disability of Group II it is 1.4 times of the State Social Security Benefit;
- the disability pension for Group III is fixed at the amount of the State Social Security Benefit.



In accordance to Article 17, disabled persons, who have attained the age for receiving old-age pension, continue to receive the old-age pension in place of the disability pension. According to Article 13 of the Law on State Social Allowances (2003) a disabled person, who does not have the right to receive a state pension, is not employed and is over 18 years of age, has the right to receive a State social security benefit for the duration of specified disablement. From 1 July 2014 the amount of the State Social Security Benefit has increased by applying a coefficient: for Group I disability – 1.3; and for Group II disability – 1.2. Article 6 'State Family Allowance' defines the rights of the parents of a disabled child younger than 18 years of age to receive a supplement to the State Family Allowance. The right to this supplement is in force from the first day of assigning the status of disability, regardless of the payment of the State Family Allowance, and it is paid until the child reaches 18 years of age.

### Links

Law on State Pensions

[http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=38048#saist\\_11](http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=38048#saist_11)

Law on State Social Allowances

[http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=68483#saist\\_11](http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=68483#saist_11)

Regulations of 22 December 2009 No 1605 'Regulations Regarding the Amount of the State Social Security Benefit and Funeral Benefit'

<http://likumi.lv/ta/id/202850-noteikumi-par-valsts-sociala-nodrosinajuma-pabalsta-un-apbedisanas-pabalsta-apmeru-ta-parskatsanas-kartibu-un-pabalstu>

## D7. Additional costs

Article 7.1 'Care of Disabled Child Benefit' of the Law on State Social Allowances (2003) defines the right of a person who cares for a disabled child to receive the disabled child care benefit, following the decision of the State Medical Commission for the Assessment of Health Condition and Working Ability regarding the child's necessity for special care, due to serious impairments. The payment of this benefit shall terminate at the end of the period of time for which the impairment and the necessity for special care have been specified, or when the child reaches the age of 18. Article 12 'Allowance for Compensation of Transport Expenses for Disabled Persons who have Difficulties in Movement' defines the rights of disabled persons who have mobility impairments to receive an allowance for compensating their transport expenses. The allowance is disbursed twice a year for a full six-month period. This allowance is terminated when the period of time for which the impairment has been specified has expired. Article 12.1 'Allowance for a Disabled Person for Whom Care is Necessary' defines the rights of disabled persons of 18 years of age and over, who due to serious impairments need special care, to receive a Care Allowance. To be eligible to this allowance, disabled persons must have an assessment that determines the necessity of special care, issued by the State Medical Commission for the Assessment of Health Condition and Working Ability, in compliance with the criteria determined by the Cabinet of Ministers.

### Links

Law on State Social Allowances

[http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=68483#saist\\_11](http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=68483#saist_11)

## D8. Retirement income

In accordance to Article 17 of the Law on State Pensions disabled persons who reach the age for receiving old-age pension shall receive the old-age pension in place of the disability pension.

### **Links**

Law on State Pensions

[http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=38048#saist\\_11](http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=38048#saist_11)

## **E. Education**

### **E1. Special schools**

The Law on General Education (1999) defines the types of education implemented in Latvia. It states that special education is a part of general education. Chapter 8 of this Law defines the implementation of special education programmes. The emphasis of special education is on making possible for a child to acquire general education, taking into account child's health conditions, abilities and level of development. Students with special needs can acquire special education programmes in regular education classes, special classes or groups of general education institutions or in municipal or private special educational institutions.

Parents have the right to choose what kind of education institution their child will attend, but the child should have a statement from the State Pedagogical Medical Commission or municipal commission about an appropriate special education programme. The competence of the Commission and municipal commissions is defined in Regulations No 709 (2012) issued by the Cabinet of Ministers. After obtaining the statement from the Commission about an appropriate special education programme, a child can attend a mainstream school if the school is licensed to provide the special education programme and is appropriately accommodating. A child will be admitted to an ordinary, general class, or to a separate class for certain categories of pupils. In other cases there is only way to special school.

There is no formal appeal system because the statement issued by the Commission is only considered as a recommendation for parents.

### **Links**

Law on General Education

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=20243>

Regulations No 709 (2012) defining the Competence of the State Pedagogical Medical Commission and Municipal Commissions

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=252162&from=off>

### **E2. Mainstream schools**

The Constitutional Law (Satversme) determines the right to education for every resident of Latvia. Every citizen, non-citizen and permanent resident of the Republic of Latvia, as well as European Union citizens who have been issued a temporary residence permit and their children have an equal right to acquire education regardless their health status or disability. The Law on the Protection of the Children's Rights (1998) determines equal rights and the possibilities for all children to acquire education according to their personal abilities. The Law

on Education (1998) defines the main organisational principles and procedures of educational services and the Law on General Education (1999) defines the organisational principles and procedures of general education services. The main principles and procedures of students' assessment, including those with special needs, are set out in Regulations No 591 (2015, with amendments in 2018) adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers. The Regulations No 543 on the 'Requirements for enrollment of students with special needs in general education programmes implemented by general education institutions' contain the necessary provisions for primary and secondary education institutions concerning the integration of pupils with special needs in mainstream schools to acquire a general education programme.

On 22 May 2014 the Parliament approved the Guidelines for Education Development 2014-2020 and on 29 June 2015 the Government agreed on the Implementation plan for 2015-2017. The implementation of the activities stated in these policy papers will ensure opportunities for persons with disability to acquire a good quality education throughout their life course, to promote the competitiveness of people with disabilities in the labour market and their independent living as adults.

There are no specific grants, allowances or stipends (scholarships) available to disabled students and trainees for the purposes of their education and training. Disabled people or parents of disabled children receive a disability pension or state social benefits and social services funded from social security (disability pensions) or the state budget.

### **Links**

Law on Education

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=50759>

Constitutional Law (Satversme)

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=57980>

Law on the Protection of the Children's Rights (1998)

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=49096>

Law on General Education

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=20243>

Regulations No 591 (2015) 'Procedure by which the students are enrolled in, discharged from and promoted to a higher grade in regular educational programmes, special education institutions and special pre-school groups'

<http://likumi.lv/ta/id/277597-kartiba-kada-izglitojamie-tiek-uznemti-visparejas-izqlitibas-iestades-un-specialajas-pirmsskolas-izqlitibas-grupas-un-atskaitit...>

Guidelines for Education Development 2014-2020

<http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266406>

Regulations No 543 (2018) on the 'Requirements for enrollment of students with special needs in general education programmes implemented by general education institutions'

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/301251>

### **E3. Sign language and Braille in school**

According to the Law on General Education (1999) and relevant regulations, deaf and blind students have rights to practical assistance such as Sign language interpretation, Braille, etc. in mainstream schools. According to the Disability Law (2010), from 1 September 2011 pupils

have the right to receive the service of a Sign language interpreter paid from the State budget for up to 480 academic hours during one school year to attend a programme of basic vocational education, secondary vocational education or higher education. The service of a sign language interpreter is provided by the Latvian Association of the Deaf.

### **Links**

Law on General Education

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=20243>

Disability Law

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=211494>

## **E4. Vocational training**

The Vocational Education Law (1999) regulates the implementation of vocational initial education, vocational secondary education and first level higher vocational education and the award of corresponding vocational qualifications. The Ministry of Education and Science is the ministry responsible.

At the same time, the vocational rehabilitation (education and training) of persons with disabilities remains the responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare (Article 15<sup>1</sup> of the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance). People with disabilities receive vocational rehabilitation services provided by the Social Integration State Agency's (an administrative institution under the supervision of the Ministry of Welfare) College and Jurmala Vocational secondary school. These institutions implement initial and secondary vocational education, first level higher vocational education (college education), vocational further education and vocational in-service training programmes. The main objective is to provide and develop vocational rehabilitation and services for people with disabilities, giving them opportunities to acquire a suitable qualification for their future occupation. The Social Integration State Agency provides various multidisciplinary services for people with disabilities to facilitate their successful integration into the labour market according to their specific health conditions, general skills and abilities.

### **Links**

Vocational Education Law

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=20244>

Law on Social Services and Social Assistance

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=68488>

Social Integration State Agency

<http://www.siva.gov.lv/izqlitiba.html>

## **E5. Higher education**

Higher education is regulated by the Law on Higher Education Institutions (1995) which applies to all existing institutions of higher education and colleges irrespective of the procedures for the founding and financing and the specialisation thereof. This Law regulates the legal grounds for the activities of higher education institutions and colleges, and determines and protects their autonomy. The Constitutional Law (Satversme) provides equal rights to all people. Although higher education is regulated by another law, disabled people's

rights to receive the necessary support apply also after compulsory schooling age.

The Guidelines for Education Development 2014-2020 (2014) include measures which applies to all students (also those with disabilities). According to the Guidelines, it is planned that share of population aged 30-34 with higher education by 2020 will increase up to 40% (from 37.2% in 2012). The Implementation plan for 2018-2020 of the Guidelines on the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2014-2020 include measures to promote increasing access to higher education for people with disabilities, which would enhance their personal growth and increase their competitiveness in the labour market.

There are no specific grants, allowances or stipends (scholarships) available to disabled students and trainees for their education and training. Disabled people or parents of disabled children receive a disability pension or state social benefits and social services. But in accordance with the Guidelines for Education Development 2014-2020 it is planned that by 2020 3,000 persons from vulnerable groups will receive financial support (including scholarships and grants to cover tuition fees) for obtaining a higher education.

### **Links**

Law on Higher Education Institutions

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=37967>

The Constitutional Law (Satversme)

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=57980>

The Guidelines for Education Development 2014-2020

<http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=266406>

The Implementation Plan for 2018-2020 of the Guidelines on the Implementation of the UNCRPD 2014-2020

<http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/6349>

## **F. Employment**

### **F1. Non-discrimination in employment**

The Labour Law (2002) provides protection against all forms of discrimination: direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, instruction to discrimination and victimisation in all aspects of employment relations in public and private sectors. Since 2006, non-discrimination provisions apply to state civil service. According to the Labour Law, everyone has an equal right to work, to fair, safe and healthy working conditions, as well as to fair work remuneration. The Labour Law refers directly to disability and includes a provision of shift of burden of proof. The Law does not include the issues of discrimination by association with disability. The Guidelines on Inclusive Employment 2015-2020 specify actions to be undertaken to support the integration of disabled persons into the labour market, simultaneously promoting person's economic independence and social inclusion. The Guidelines on the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2014-2020 (2013) call for actions towards inclusion of disabled persons into labour market by provision of appropriate support, taking into account the type of functional disorder.

### **Links**

The Labour Law

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=26019>

The Guidelines on Inclusive Employment 2015-2020

[http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/darba\\_tirgus/pamatnostadnes\\_latvijas\\_vestnesis.pdf](http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/darba_tirgus/pamatnostadnes_latvijas_vestnesis.pdf)

The Guidelines for the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2014-2020

<http://likumi.lv/ta/id/262238-par-apvienoto-naciju-organizacijas-konvencijas-par-personu-ar-invaliditati-tiesibam-istenosanas-pamatnostadnem-2014-2020-gadam>

## **F2. Public employment services**

According to the Law on Support for Unemployed Persons and Job Seekers (2002), the State Employment Agency ensures the organisation and implementation of the active labour market policy measures, which promote competitiveness among unemployed people and job seekers in the labour market. The State Employment Agency within active labor market policy measures ensures career counselling, measures for the improvement of skills, measures to promote employment, measures for long-term unemployed, measures for youth and adult involvement in lifelong learning. All these measures also apply to disabled persons, who are registered at the State Employment Agency as unemployed or job seekers. Specifically for disabled persons (within measures for disabled persons) the State Employment Agency provides motivation program for job search with social mentor, determination of professional suitability and subsidized employment.

### **Links**

Law on Support for Unemployed Persons and Job Seekers

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=62539>

The State Employment Agency

<http://www.nva.gov.lv/index.php?cid=433>

The Ministry of Welfare

<http://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/nozares-politika/darba-tirgus/aktivas-darba-tirgus-politikas-pasakumi>

The Guidelines on Inclusive Employment

[http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/darba\\_tirgus/pamatnostadnes\\_latvijas\\_vestnesis.pdf](http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/darba_tirgus/pamatnostadnes_latvijas_vestnesis.pdf)

## **F3. Workplace adaptations**

The Labour Law (2002) defines it as a duty of the employer to ensure reasonable accommodation in the workplace. Within the state programme for subsidised employment, employers receive financial support for adjusting a workplace according to the specific health needs of each person with disability, administered by the State Employment Agency. Technical equipment and technical aids for individual use are available for people with disabilities in accordance with the Social Service and Social Assistance Law (2003).

### **Links**

Labour Law

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=26019>

Social Service and Social Assistance Law (2003)

<http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=68488>

Social Service and Social Assistance Law (2003) (English translation)

[http://www.vvc.gov.lv/export/sites/default/docs/LRTA/Likumi/Social\\_Services\\_and\\_Social\\_Assistance\\_Law.doc](http://www.vvc.gov.lv/export/sites/default/docs/LRTA/Likumi/Social_Services_and_Social_Assistance_Law.doc)

The State Employment Agency

<http://www.nva.gov.lv/index.php?cid=433&mid=313&txt=2908&from=0>

## **F4. Financial incentives**

Disabled people in the open labour market receive the full amount of the disability pension. In addition, the Law on Personal Income Tax states that the non-taxable minimum for persons receiving disability pension in accordance with the Law on State Pensions is higher than the ordinary non-taxable minimum. The State Employment Agency provides financial incentives to employers among which are the following:

- a wage subsidy that does not exceed one and a half of the minimum monthly wage amount or equals the state defined minimum monthly wage amount if the unemployed person is employed in low-qualified jobs;
- an additional payment or monthly wage for foreman in the amount of 50% of the minimum monthly wage amount;
- a subsidy for mandatory social contributions (if the employer is an NGO whose activities are aimed to support people with disabilities);
- a single subsidy for expenses due to health examinations set in legal acts on mandatory health examinations and single subsidy for expenses caused by purchase of equipment and facilities; and
- expenses caused by the production and purchase of technical aids to adjust the workplaces to the needs of a person with disability (but not exceeding EUR 711 for one workplace).

The duration of the provision of the financial support for the employment of unemployed persons with disabilities is 24 months. There is no quota system in Latvia.

### **Links**

Law on Personal Income Tax

[http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=56880#saist\\_11](http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=56880#saist_11)

The State Employment Agency

<http://www.nva.gov.lv/index.php?cid=433&mid=53&txt=4013&mode=content&method=edit&from=0>

## **G. Statistics and data collection**

### **G1. Official research**

Latvia has no official research institute or department responsible for research on disability equality and the collection of relevant data and statistics. Statistical data which cover disability matters are collected and available in several ministries and institutions (the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Health, the State



Social Insurance Agency, the State Employment Agency, the State Medical Expertise Commission of Health and Capacity for Work). At the end of 2017, the Centre for Health Management and Informatics of the Faculty of Medicine conducted a study entitled "Assessment of the Costs of Musculoskeletal Diseases and Recommendations for Cost Optimisation". The main aim of the study was to obtain evidence of the total cost burden for society of individuals with musculoskeletal disorders in order to better target support measures for this group of people and their inclusion in society and the labour market. Based on the results of the research, thirteen recommendations have been developed related to cost optimisation, improvement of welfare policy and research opportunities, improvement of the disability allocation process and the possibilities of changing existing social support practices in cases of incapacity for work.

### Links

Information from the Ministry of Welfare

<http://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/publikacijas-petijumi-un-statistika/petijumi/1-invaliditate>

The study "Assessment of Costs of Musculoskeletal Diseases and Recommendations for Cost Optimisation"

[http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/petijumi/mss\\_petijums\\_lu\\_lm\\_final.26.01.2018.pdf](http://www.lm.gov.lv/upload/petijumi/mss_petijums_lu_lm_final.26.01.2018.pdf)

## G2. Census data

In accordance with the Law on Statistics (2015) the Central Statistical Bureau is responsible for the official statistical system. The Population and Housing Census (the first Population and Housing Census after Latvia joined the European Union (EU) and the tenth Census since Latvia was founded) was established on 1 March 2011. Individual data acquired during the Population and Housing Census on each resident and his/her housing are confidential. The individual questionnaire includes questions on legal marital status, ethnicity, main language used at home, education and economic activity as well as on migration of the population. The housing questionnaire includes questions on the number of household members as well as on indicators that characterise the housing in terms of type of building, ownership, useful floor space, water supply system, type of heating, facilities etc. Residents are also asked to provide information on persons emigrated from Latvia for permanent residence in other countries. There are no disability related questions.

### Links

The Central Statistical Bureau

<http://www.csb.gov.lv>

The Law on Statistics

<http://likumi.lv/ta/id/274749-statistikas-likums>

Regulations No 732 (2018) on Central Statistical Bureau

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/303355-centralas-statistikas-parvaldes-nolikums>

## G3. Labour Force Survey

The Central Statistical Bureau is responsible for organising the statistical work and for the reliability of the data it produces by summarizing the information obtained from the respondents. In the National Labour Force Survey, compiled by the Central Statistical Bureau, persons have a possibility, when doing self-evaluation, to make a reference that he/she has

long-term incapacity for work or disability. Specific questions on disability are not included.

Latvia did not participate in the European Labour Force Survey module 2002. From 2002 the survey is taken every week throughout the whole year. Data on employment and unemployment are published and are available in section E-publications. Publication 'Labour force survey in 1995-2014' is available only in Latvian. 'Labour Force Survey: key indicators in 2017' is published in 2018. Specific questions on disability are not included.

## **Links**

The Central Statistical Bureau

<http://www.csb.gov.lv/en>

Labour Force Survey 1995-2014

<https://www.csb.gov.lv/en/statistics/statistics-by-theme/social-conditions/unemployment/search-in-theme/235-labour-force-survey-1995-2014-only>

Labour Force Survey: key indicators in 2017

<https://www.csb.gov.lv/en/statistics/statistics-by-theme/social-conditions/unemployment/search-in-theme/306-labour-force-survey-key-indicators>

## **G4. Disability equality indicators**

Latvia does not have any disability equality indicators for measuring progress towards disability equality.

## **H. Awareness and external action**

### **H1. Awareness raising programs**

On 21 November 2013, the Government (the Cabinet of Ministers) approved the Guidelines for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2014 – 2020. The Guidelines include a section on 'Society Awareness' aimed to promote opportunities for persons with disabilities to implement their human rights and freedoms. From 2015 to 2020 a number of activities are planned to inform and educate society about disabled persons and their rights, preventive measures related to avoidable or hidden disability, best practices in promoting tolerance, as well as to promote awareness-raising of specialists in different fields.

On 5 December 2015 the Government approved the Implementation Plan 2015-2017 of the Guidelines on the Implementation of the UN CRPD for 2014-2020 where specific measures to reach the goals defined in the Guidelines are stated. 'Public awareness' is one of four actions under which it is planned to promote opportunities for persons with disabilities to implement their human rights and freedom to live a full-fledged and dignified life, ensure qualitative informative and democratic society, and strengthen communication and understanding. On 12 December 2018 the Government approved the Implementation Plan 2018-2020. Within the action 'Public awareness' it is planned to reduce stereotypes, to provide opportunities for people with disabilities to be active members of society by receiving the necessary information about the elections, participating in them, and moving towards an increasingly accessible environment, emphasizing the right of persons with disabilities to free access to information and the environment. The Ministry of Welfare is responsible for the implementation of the Plan.

## Links

The Guidelines for the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2014 – 2020

<http://likumi.lv/ta/id/262238-par-apvienoto-naciju-organizacijas-konvencijas-par-personu-ar-invaliditati-tiesibam-istenosanas-pamatnostadnem-2014-2020-gadam>

The Implementation Plan for 2015-2017

<http://www.lm.gov.lv/text/3462>

The Implementation Plan for 2018-2020

<http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/6349>

The Mid-term evaluation of the Guidelines

<http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/6394>

## H2. Training for teachers

Disability issues are included in the general curriculum of the university training for school teachers. Teachers are trained at higher education level at a university or a college. Training includes general education studies, studies related to specific subjects, and professional studies. A full course of professional studies lasts from 4 to 5 years. The qualification of a special teacher can be acquired by completing a 4 or 4.5 years professional study programme concerning a specific disability. For previously qualified teachers the special teaching qualification may be acquired after completing a 2.5 year programme of study. There is no information on whether awareness/equality issues (non-discrimination, etc.) are included in training programmes. Disabled persons organisations are not involved in training.

The information on training courses for the professional development of teachers is available on the homepage of the Ministry of Education. The Pedagogical Education Centre for Adults of the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art at the University of Latvia offers paid courses for teachers' professional competence development, inter alia, a course on 'Typical features of the pedagogic process of working with children with intellectual disabilities and learning difficulties' (72 hours) or a course 'Organising a modern learning process for students with moderate or severe mental disabilities or multiple severe developmental disorders' (72 hours). These programmes help teachers develop their knowledge and practical skills in organising pedagogic work, choosing methods and tools suitable for students with intellectual disabilities and learning difficulties to follow the course content; get an introduction into possibilities for diagnosis of development impairments and practical assessment methods, as well as to develop their knowledge and skills in preparing individual training and behaviour programmes, in evaluating pupils' knowledge and developing teachers, parents and society cooperation models. At the end of the course, teachers receive a Certificate on the right to work with relevant programmes.

## Links

The Ministry of Education and Science

<http://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/pedagogiem/pedagoqu-profesionala-pilnveide>

Teachers' professional development courses (The Ministry of Education and Science)

<http://www.ppmf.lu.lv/gribu-studet/prof-pilnv-programmas/>

## H3. Training for lawyers

The Latvian Judicial Training Centre is the only institution in Latvia to provide continuing education for judges and court employees. The main task of this Centre is to provide quality continuing education and professional qualification-building activities (seminars, experience exchange trips, etc.) for professionals within the legal system, with special attention to subjects on and improvements to the quality of court judgements, as well as preparing professionals for quality work within the legal system of the European Union. The Centre also provides training for other legal professionals, including public prosecutors, attorneys, lawyers and employees of governmental bodies and municipal institutions. However, disability-awareness and equality issues are not included in these training programmes. Disabled persons' organisations are not involved in training.

#### **Links**

The Latvian Judicial Training Centre

<http://www.ltmc.lv/en/about-us>

### **H4. Training for doctors**

In 2018 the study course 'Knowledge about disability' was approved and realized in Riga Stradiņš University in Bachelor study programme for obtaining Professional Bachelor's Degree in Health Care and Occupational Therapist Qualification. After the completion of the course students will be able to explain how public attitudes towards disability have changed from antiquity to modern times; the development of the concept of disability, using a medical and social model; to name disability types and describe the most frequent barriers caused by disability. Representative from the Latvian Deaf Association is involved in the training.

#### **Links**

Riga Stradiņš University

<http://www.rsu.lv/eng/>

Riga Stradiņš University study programme 'Ergotherapy'

<https://www.rsu.lv/studiju-programma/ergoterapija>

### **H5. Training for engineers**

There is no information whether awareness/equality issues are included in the training programmes for engineers. Disabled persons' organisations are not involved in these trainings.

#### **Links**

Riga Technical University, study programmes

<https://stud.rtu.lv/rtu/vaaApp/sprpub>

### **H6. International development aid**

On 20 March 2018 the Cabinet of Ministers approved the Development Cooperation Policy Plan for 2018 drawn up by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The plan sets out concrete measures for putting into practice Latvia's Development Cooperation Policy Guidelines for 2016–2020. The objective of the development cooperation policy of Latvia is to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in developing countries, particularly in priority

partner countries of Latvia, by promoting sustainable development and eradication of poverty, rule of law, and good governance. Disability aspects are not indicated in this document.

### **Links**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

<http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/about-the-ministry>

Development Cooperation Policy Guidelines for 2016-2020

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/284775-par-attistibas-sadarbibas-politikas-pamatnostadnem-2016-2020-gadam>