**Questionnaire on the provision of support to persons with disabilities**

**Answers provided by the Government of Montenegro**

1. **Please provide information on the following services that are available for persons with disabilities in your country, including data on their coverage, geographic distribution and delivery arrangements, funding and sustainability, challenges and shortcoming in their implementation:**
2. **Personal assistance;**
3. **In-home, residential and community support;**
4. **Support in decision-making, including peer support; and**
5. **Communication support, including support for augmentative and alternative communication.**

**a)** Employment Agency of Montenegro has been realizing continuously the public work "Personal assistant" in cooperation with the public and civil sector since 2009. In the period 2009 - 2015, about 700 persons were involved in the program that provided technical support and assistance in performing basic life functions for at least 700 persons with disabilities.

In 2016, at least 280 users (of whom 60% from the northern region), received services thereby enabling the employment for about 280 unemployed persons who are licensed as a personal assistant. For this purpose, the Employment Agency of Montenegro has allocated funds in the amount of € 441,193.50.

Lessons-learned in the implementation of this program clearly indicate its multiple benefits, for both persons with disabilities and their parents, indicating the necessity of finding ways to realize the program continuously and ensure its sustainability.

**b)** "Home assistance for the elderly", implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare is mainly intended for the elderly. However, the users of the allowance for care and assistance and personal disability which are realized on the basis of health status are largely covered by this project. The project has been implemented in sixteen municipalities in the northern and central region of Montenegro and included about 1,100 users. Financial resources are provided through the project titled the "Continuation of the Social Welfare and Child Care System Reform", and UNDP.

Employment Agency of Montenegro provides technical support and assistance to persons with disabilities in the educational process, as well as in performing basic life functions through the program of public works. Thus, in 2015, it provided social support for 460 persons with disabilities, engaging 405 teaching assistants and 245 assistant to help persons with disabilities in the home, centre or association, hiring psychologists, special education teachers, speech therapists, educators, teachers, physiatrists, physiotherapists and other professionals.

As part of the project titled "Provision of Social Services and Health Care to Persons with Disabilities", as well as the continuation of the same project, one of the civil society organizations ensured he provision of services of helping in the house for 10 socially vulnerable persons with disabilities, including the elderly.

There are nine daily care centres operating in Montenegro, which provide a daily care service for children and youth with disabilities. At this point, 146 users are residing in daily care centres, and the tendency is to include as many municipalities in the development of social and child protection. Professional workers of daily care centres annually submit a report to the local government, which funds the salaries of employees, while the users’ stay is funded by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare.

In order to promote a greater degree of realization of the rights of children with disabilities, who are without parental care, their socialization and integration into the community on the principles of equal opportunities and in accordance with their abilities, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, in cooperation with the US Embassy in Podgorica, Delegation of the European Union, UNICEF and the Municipality of Bijelo Polje, financed the construction of a small group community in Bijelo Polje. This service is open and functioning as a separate organizational unit within the institution Daily Care Centre "Tisa".

**c)** Centres for social work, which are under the authority of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, provide counselling services and legal aid within everyday activities. During 2015, one of the civil society organizations dealing with issues of persons with disabilities provided free legal aid to 65 members through the legal office. We note that this type of support and information to its members is one of the main activities implemented also by other NGOs in this area.

The activities of "partial inclusion" are conduced regularly - children with disabilities from special classes are included in regular teaching activities with their peers. As part of its projects, the Ministry of Education has been focused on the organization of workshops in schools on the theme of acceptance and promotion of diversity and peer activities.

Specialized equipment, supplies, and didactics for children with visual impairments, including labels in braille have been provided. The cooperation of the Institute for textbooks and teaching aids and Resource Centre "Podgorica" was established with the aim to transfer textbooks for primary schools (second and third cycle) in audio format. Trainings are conducted for the use of textbooks in Daisy format.

1. **Please explain how persons with disabilities can access information about the existing services referred to in question one, including referral procedures, eligibility criteria and application requirements.**

Persons with disabilities can be informed about existing support services, as well as on all rights in general through the websites of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and the Centres for Social Welfare, through the portal **disabilityinfo.me**, as well as in all state institutions and NGOs providing support services.

Requests for exercising the rights of social and child protection could be submitted to the competent authorities or referred to the relevant departments.

Department for Service Development has been established within the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, which in cooperation with local governments develop social services and child protection, according to the local action plans for social inclusion.

1. **Please elaborate on how these services respond to the specific needs of persons with disabilities throughout their life cycle (infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and older age) and how is service delivery ensured in the transition periods between life cycle stages.**

As regards the meeting the needs of early childhood, the Resource Centre "Podgorica" ​​– conducts early stimulation for children; training of staff in kindergartens and health centres according to contemporary programs and approaches to early intervention; school visits. Parents with children are staying in the Resource Centre Kotor for Hearing and Speech Disorders for early intervention. The Center is equipped with the Cabinet for early intervention; the training of personnel of kindergartens for early intervention in autism disorders has begun, including individual treatments for children of preschool age. In later life, programs for vocational rehabilitation play a greater role. The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in cooperation with the Employment Agency of Montenegro has continuously implemented active employment policy measures in accordance with the plan and program of work of the Ministry. Having implemented measures and activities of professional rehabilitation, four persons have been employed. During the vocational rehabilitation period, persons with disabilities receive financial aid, for covering the costs of transport and food.

The service provider for life in the community is obliged to provide to all users the following: an adequate space, material conditions, accommodation respecting the age and gender, nutrition and access to health care, maintaining personal hygiene and hygiene of the space, a safe environment, developing of potential of users and their empowerment.

1. **Please provide information on the number of certified sign language interpreters and deafblind interpreters available in your country.**

Currently, there are 5 sign language interpreters, with acquired certificate in Montenegro

1. **Please provide information on the existence of any partnership between State institutions and private services providers (e.g., non-governmental organizations, for profit service providers) for the provision of support to persons with disabilities.**

A significant number of services and support services for persons with disabilities, including children have been provided by the NGO sector, funded through the State Public Works of the Employment Agency of Montenegro, the competition for the allocation of lottery revenues, as well as through donations.

1. **Please describe to what extent and how are persons with disabilities and their representative organizations involved in the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of support services.**

Civil society organizations, dealing with the rights of persons with disabilities in Montenegro, are involved in all decision-making processes through membership in the working bodies established by the Government of Montenegro with an aim to adopt legislation and policy documents. Intersectoral working group, participated in the process of developing the Strategy for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020, is composed of representatives of relevant ministries and representatives of NGOs dealing with the rights of persons with disabilities. This ensured integration of disability issues in all sectors, through the direct involvement of end users, both in policy-making and in monitoring the implementation of defined measures and activities. In addition, four representatives of NGOs participated in the Working Group for drafting the Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of People with Disabilities.

1. **Please provide any other relevant information and statistics (concluding surveys, censuses, administrative data, reports and studies) related to the provision of support to persons with disabilities in your country.**

In cooperation with the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights continuously conducts trainings on the basis of the established "Training plan for civil servants, members of the judiciary and employees of other authorities, organizations or institutions that come into contact with cases of discrimination". One of the topics is the "Discrimination of persons with disabilities”. The training plan in the previous period included representatives of courts, prosecutor's offices, Ombudsman, non-governmental organisations dealing with protection of human rights and freedoms, along with representatives of all regional police units and outposts in Montenegrin municipalities and representatives of local governments, i.e. the Secretariat of Social Affairs and Public Administration, representatives of all inspection departments in Montenegro, as well as representatives of all misdemeanour courts in Montenegro. In 2016 employees from Social Work Centres are attending this training.

The Ministry of Human and Minority Rights also regularly conducts the media campaign on prohibition of discrimination and promotion of anti-discriminatory behaviour, which has the goal to raise awareness of the general population on discrimination, create tolerant environment and sensitise the public especially to persons with disabilities, LGBTI population, Roma, as well as to discrimination on the basis of gender identity and other commonly discriminated social groups. The media campaign was implemented through broadcasting videos and radio jingles on public and private television stations and the installation of billboards in key locations in Montenegro, publication of advertisements in the daily press and printing and distributing flyers. Printed materials were, for the first time, accessible for persons with visual impairment and, respectively, were printed in Braille.

The Ministry of Human and Minority Rights is presently carrying out the survey on the level of discrimination and intolerance, as well as on the level of social and ethnic distance towards certain social groups and monitoring of the attitudes of citizens of Montenegro about the occurrence of discrimination. The results of the last survey from December 2015 show that in the opinion of the citizens of Montenegro, the most discriminated are Roma, then homosexuals, then persons with disabilities. These results are consistent with previous findings, with an exception that the percentage of discrimination against persons with disabilities has been reduced comparing to the research results from previous years (2011 and 2013).

The process of drafting the Strategy to protect persons with disabilities from discrimination and promote equality for the period 2017-2021, together with the Action Plan 2017-2018 is ongoing.

The Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of People with Disabilities ("Official Gazette of Montenegro", no. 49/08 of 15 August 2008, 73/10 of 10 December 2010, 39/11 of 04 August 2011), in its article 36 paragraph 1 defines that an employer who employs a person with disability is entitled to a subsidies related to the participation in funding the costs for the engagement of personal assistant (work assistant) to the persons with disabilities. In accordance with the Rulebook on conditions, criteria and procedure for exercising the right to subsidies, participation in funding personal costs of the personal assistant (work assistant) is calculated up to the amount of the minimum wage in accordance with regulations on labour, depending on the time spent at work.In the period between 1 January - 31 May 2016, the right to get funds for personal costs of assistants (work assistant) has been exercised by 11 employers of 13 employees with disabilities. On the day 31 May 2016, based on a decision issued prior to the reporting period, this right has been exercised by 22 employers for 28 employees with disabilities.

The Law on Prohibition of Discrimination of Persons with Disabilities was adopted by the Parliament of Montenegro in June 2015 (Official Gazette of Montenegro, no. 35/15). Adoption of this law (containing provisions that define penalties for discrimination and introducing definition of new forms of discrimination), has been a breakthrough in establishing new standards in relation between the state and the society towards this vulnerable group. The Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms keeps the records on the proceedings conducted before this institution. Almost all cases were related to the inaccessibility to buildings in public use.