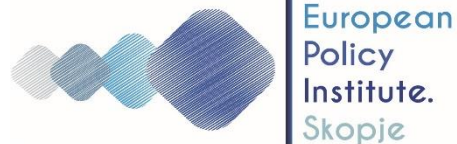


The challenges and obstacles to independence and pluralism of the
National Equality Body
and
The challenges and infringement of the ESC rights of persons with
disabilities, respectively the right to inclusive education

IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA (MK)

Delivered by:



Key developments
since the
last cycle
regarding the first
issue:

- Adoption of the Law on Prevention and Protection from Discrimination and establishment of a professionalised national equality body - The Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination (CPPD);
- Limited state funding and financial and administrative reliance of CPPD on the executive power;
- CPPD lacks human resources independence;
- Legal violations and political party pressure in the election of new CPPD members undermine the independence of the body, the merit-based foundation for electing members, and the fundamental principles of pluralism and gender equality.

Recommendations:

- 1) The Government should **draft and adopt an action plan to full and effective independence for the CPPD** based on an in-depth review of the obstacles in the current legal and policy frameworks, and their implementation, **focusing specifically on financial and human resources independence and on the commissioners' election process;**
- 2) Based on this action plan, the Government should **propose**, and the Parliament should **adopt necessary legislative changes to enable full and effective independence for the CPPD in line with the Paris Principles.**

Key
developments
since the
last cycle
regarding the
second issue:

- Adoption of the Law on Primary Education, the Concept for Primary Education, and the Concept for Inclusive Education, providing personal assistants and special educators for children over six;
- Law on Primary Education lacks clarity on 'reasonable accommodation,' qualifications for assistants, and provisions for crucial subjects like Braille. Schools face challenges with assistive technology, adequate staffing, and wheelchair accessibility;
- In secondary and higher education, the absence of inclusive education provisions in the Laws on Higher and Secondary Education poses accessibility challenges in facilities, literature, and administrative services;
- Laws on all levels of education and Concepts on inclusive education don't fully align with CRPD; implementation lags, leading to a shortage of personal assistants and special educators. The inclusive primary education concept diverges from CRPD, categorizing children separately without essential support regulations.

Recommendations:

- 1) The State should undertake measures for **greater accessibility of school facilities; introduce specialised subjects** for learning Braille, Sign language, and spatial orientation for children with visual and hearing impairments, and **expand the employment of special educators and educational assistants** in all municipalities, as well as **define their qualifications**;
- 2) The State should **effectively engage with Organizations of Persons with disabilities (OPDs)** and other relevant institutions and experts in regular consultations in the processes of development, planning, and implementation of legislation and strategies regarding inclusive education;
- 3) The State should **adopt the Law on Secondary Education and Law on Higher Education with amended provisions** which are **in line with the CRPD** and ensure their practical implementation through measurable action plans.

Thank you!

From all the organizations that submitted the joint contribution:

