

My name is Anna Lára Steindal and I am a project manager at the National Association of Intellectual Disabilities in Iceland, a human rights organisation which works for the rights and interests of people with disabilities, with a specific focus on disabled children and young people and people with intellectual disabilities. The organisation is a member of various European and international co-operation networks working for disabled rights across borders.

I will be addressing pressing human rights issues regarding persons with disabilities.

First, I urge authorities in Iceland to implement the UN convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities and ratify the Optional Protocol as soon as possible.

On 30 March 2007, Iceland signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Optional Protocol thereto. The Convention was ratified on 23 September 2016 and the Parliament passed a Resolution to ratify the Optional Protocol before the end of 2017.

To date, the Optional Protocol, which is a very important tool to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy their rights, has not been ratified.

Another Parliament Resolution was passed in June 2019, on the presentation of a law proposal, no later than 13 December 2020 for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of person with Disabilities into Icelandic law and for changes in other relevant legislation for it to be in accordance with the Convention. Now, almost a year later, the law proposal is yet to be presented.

Secondly, I urge authorities to establish a National Human Rights Institution, as is obligatory according to the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, as soon as possible. In the process it is necessary to consult human rights organisations and interests'

groups as well as building on the expertise, experience, know-how and network of the Icelandic Human Rights Office which is run jointly by several organisations in Iceland, including The National Association of Intellectual Disabilities.

The UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities is very clear on the obligation to consult people with disabilities, or organisations acting on their behalf, in all matters that concern the lives of persons with disabilities, which this most certainly does.

Thirdly I want to address an issue that is of growing concern and that is how immigration authorities in Iceland are handling applications for international protection from persons with disabilities. There is a great need to install a framework to make sure that disability is evaluated and taken into consideration in processing such application, which is not sufficiently done now.