**Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities reviews initial report of Greece, asks about situation of refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities** 

Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

4 September 2019

**Experts also Discuss the Deinstitutionalization Process, Violence against Persons with Disabilities, and Denial of Legal Capacity**

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities this morning concluded its consideration of the initial report of Greece on its implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, during which the Committee Experts queried the delegation on a range of issues, including the situation of refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities, slow progress on the deinstitutionalization process and involuntary psychiatric treatment, measures to protect women with disabilities from violence and abuse, and the denial of legal capacity for persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities.

The arrival of a great number of people escaping the horrors of war in the Near East, combined with the economic hardship caused by the collapse of the financial system, had strained the Hellenic State and its society to the breaking point, the Experts recognized.

Refugees and asylum seekers, particularly those with disabilities, desperately needed the help and support of Greece, which indeed played a critical role.  The Committee was worried about the conditions under which they were housed on the islands and in the border centre in Evros - overcrowding and lack of reasonable accommodation, accessibility of asylum procedures, education of refugee children, and the socioeconomic situation.

The delegation recalled that more than one million people had entered Greece in 2015 and 2016 and that, together with the European Union and other partners, the State had done its utmost to address this situation.  It stressed that no country could stand alone and manage this kind of pressure, and outlined steps taken to identify refugees and migrants with disabilities and to ensure that they were adequately protected.

The institutionalization of persons with disabilities, especially children, was a great source of concern for the Committee, which raised question on systemic changes that were adopted towards the full and complete deinstitutionalization of all children with disabilities and the realization of their right to a life in a family and community.

Although the framework for combatting direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of disability was in place, Greece should take concrete legislative measures to recognize the denial of reasonable accommodation as direct discrimination and do away with laws that still contained discriminatory provisions such as those pertaining to social protection and social assistance, Experts said.

Matthildi Chatzipanagiotou, Special Advisor to the Minister of State of Greece, introducing Greece’s report, provided an overview of the status of implementation of the Convention in Greece, noting that the input by the Greek Commission for Human Rights, the Greek Ombudsman, and the National Confederation of Disabled People of Greece represented a valuable compass for the urgent and significant work ahead.

The new Government of Greece, sworn in on 9 July 2019, had set as an absolute priority the adoption of a national strategy for the effective response to the challenges faced by persons with disabilities and the protection of their rights, Ms. Chatzipanagiotou said.  The increased awareness of the society and the recovery from the economic crisis would allow the country to deliver upon its legal obligations and national strategy commitments.

The Greek National Commission for Human Rights called upon the Government to develop a coherent and reliable legal framework applicable to all persons with disabilities.  A serious concern remained about children with disabilities, the elderly, and persons with intellectual disabilities in the framework of deinstitutionalization policies and programmes.  
    
In her concluding remarks, Ms. Chatzipanagiotou, the head of the delegation of Greece, concurred with the Experts on the need to, inter alia, complete the deinstitutionalization process, address violence against women and girls with disability, protect refugees and migrants with disability, expand the participation of persons with disabilities in public and political life, and fully adopt the human rights based model of disability.

The delegation of Greece was composed of the representatives of the Minister of State, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Citizen Protection, Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Ministry of Infrastructure and Transportation, Ministry of Tourism, the Secretariat General for Communication and Media, and the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations Office at Geneva.

All the documents relating to the Committee’s work, including reports submitted by States parties, can be found on the [session’s webpage](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=1342&Lang=en), where the concluding observations and recommendations on the report of Greece will be available at the end of the session on 20 September.

The webcast of the Committee’s public meetings can be accessed [here](http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/).

Thursday, 5 September is an official holiday at the United Nations Office at Geneva.  The Committee will meet in private on Friday, 6 September and will hold its next public meeting on Monday, 9 September at 3 p.m., when it will start its consideration of the initial report of Kuwait ([CRPD/C/KWT/1](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD/C/KWT/1&Lang=en)).

**Report**

The Committee is considering the initial report of Greece ([CRPD/C/GRC/1](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD/C/GRC/1&Lang=en)).

**Presentation of the Report**

MATTHILDI CHATZIPANAGIOTOU, Special Advisor to the Minister of State of Greece, introducing the report, stressed that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol marked an unprecedented and innovative paradigm shift in how the human rights of persons with disabilities should be understood and practiced universally.

Greece’s initial report provided an overview of the status of implementation of the Convention and outlined key and horizontal issues, positive initiatives, and areas requiring further action.  The input by the Greek Commission for Human Rights, the Greek Ombudsman, and civil society organizations, in particular the National Confederation of Disabled People of Greece, represented a valuable compass for the urgent and significant work ahead.

The new Government of Greece, sworn in on 9 July 2019, had set as an absolute priority the adoption of a national strategy for the effective response to the challenges faced by persons with disabilities and the protection of their rights.  The Office of the Prime Minister, specifically the Minister of State as the national coordinator for the implementation of the Convention, had been entrusted with the supervision and coordination of the strategic action and planning, which guaranteed a whole-of-Government approach and the cross-cutting effect of laws, policies and measures.

The Government of Greece had embraced the powerful phrase “nothing about us without us” and had turned it into its commitment.  The increased awareness of the society and the recovery from the economic crisis would allow the country to deliver upon its legal obligations and national strategy commitments, Ms. Chatzipanagiotou said, adding that a Hellenic Accessibility Authority at the Prime Minister level had been created to oversee the implementation of the institutional framework for persons with disabilities and to propose regulatory interventions.

The national legal framework secured and promoted the rights of persons with disabilities in civil and criminal proceedings and facilitated their unimpeded access to justice.  The Ministry of Interior was responsible for a range of critical issues, such as civil status and citizenship and political participation of persons with disabilities both as voters and candidates, while local and regional authorities were responsible, in accordance with the subsidiarity principle, for preschool and social care services, ramps in school buildings, and reduction of exemption from municipal taxes in order to address social exclusion.  The main axes of E-Government and Digital Policy included the simplification of the administrative procedures and the removal of barriers that prevented the access of persons with disabilities to public services.

The social inclusion of persons with disabilities was a central strategic objective for the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which had also developed targeted policies and programmes for independent living.  Supported living homes, apartments or houses within urban areas for persons with disabilities, were a path to social inclusion and independency of persons with disabilities.

High priority was accorded to autonomous and equitable living conditions in the urban and natural environments.  Greece had adopted new building regulations in 2012 while the “Designing for All” tool provided inclusive design techniques and specialized guidance for built infrastructure.  Local and regional accessibility committees were authorized to address accessibility issues and act in cooperation with all competent bodies, while persons with disabilities could use the local public transport system.

Greece had taken steps to eliminate barriers to equitable access to education and to mental health support services for students with disabilities.  It had co-education programmes in mainstream and special schools; it had defined, for the first time, what inclusive education stood for; it had 570 new inclusion classes within mainstream school units; and it had considerably increased specialized teaching support for students with disabilities.

The operational framework of Social Cooperative Enterprises, an innovative institution of social economy, expressly provided for the participation of persons with disabilities, 30 of which were for persons with psychosocial disabilities.  Structures had been developed to enhance psychosocial care of children with disabilities and their pre-vocational education, and to reinforce family environment cohesion and support of community living as a high priority.  Support to unaccompanied children with disabilities and the deinstitutionalization programme, together with the legal framework on adoption and fostering, shaped a new framework for the care and living of children and adults with disabilities.

**Statement by the Greek National Commission for Human Rights**

A representative of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions read out the statement of the Greek National Commission for Human Rights, calling upon the Government of Greece to develop a coherent and reliable legal framework applicable to all persons with disabilities.  In the area of inclusive education, the Commission pointed to the need to create integrated classes and provide sufficient financial resources.

Some positive steps towards accessibility of public buildings and structures had been taken but the State should continue to ensure the access of persons with disabilities, on an equal basis, to physical and digital environments, facilities and services, in urban and rural areas.  A serious concern remained about children with disabilities, the elderly and persons with intellectual disabilities in the framework of deinstitutionalization policies and programmes,  
     
The Commission welcomed the positive legislative developments for the protection of refugees and migrants and reiterated its longstanding concern about the lack of transparency in the asylum procedures and the inefficiency in the asylum claim assessments, especially for claimants with disabilities, and the conditions in the reception centres.  Greece should ensure the immediate transfer of vulnerable persons from the islands and clear procedures for granting international protection.

**Questions from the Experts**  
  
MARKUS SCHEFER, Committee Co-Rapporteur for Greece, recalled that, by ratifying the Convention, the Member States took upon themselves obligations of a considerable magnitude.  The simple idea that all persons were equal and endowed with equal rights, enshrined in the project of human rights since the dawn of enlightenment, had far-reaching consequences when applied to persons with disabilities.  Each of the 180 Member States had to find ways to change its laws, its society’s long-held prejudices against persons with disabilities, and many of its habits and seemingly unalterable truths, the Co-Rapporteur stressed.

During the last decade, Greece had encountered two crises of momentous proportions: the collapse of the financial system with the ensuing economic hardship and the arrival of a great number of persons escaping the horrors of war in the Near East which strained the Hellenic State and its society to the breaking point.  Despite these dire circumstances, Greece had not nominally reduced disability allowances, Mr. Schefer noted with satisfaction.

Those crises had left their mark as refugees and asylum seekers, particularly those with disabilities, desperately needed the help and support of the receiving State.  The Committee was worried about the conditions under which they were housed on the islands and in the border centre in Evros, the Co-Rapporteur said.

Citing the problem of overcrowding and reasonable accommodation in accommodation centres, he inquired about the accessibility of asylum procedures, the inclusion of migrant children into the education system, and the rules on geographical restriction of refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities.  What rules were in place for refugees and asylum seekers who had been released from reception centres and who were trying to take a foothold in the Greek society?

Although the framework for combatting direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of disability was in place, there were still laws that contained discriminatory aspects, for example in the area of social assistance and social protection.  Would Greece take concrete legislative measures to recognize that a denial of reasonable accommodation constituted direct discrimination?  What actions were being taken to address intersecting forms of discrimination that women with disabilities suffered in various spheres of life?

The delegation was asked to update the Committee on the progress made towards the adoption of a social model of disability in all spheres of life.

How many of the refugee children enrolled in schools in 2017-2018 were children with disabilities?  What measures had been taken to protect refugee and migrant children in reception and identification centres from all forms of exploitation and trafficking in persons?

Committee Experts regretted the lack of accessibility in Athens, the capital of Greece – sidewalks were broken and not suitable for wheelchairs, there were many obstacles and barriers for the blind and visually impaired, and buildings, including public buildings, were largely inaccessible.  Was there a national strategy for the implementation of accessibility standards?

What did “meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations” mean in Greece and how were they involved in the development and implementation of laws, policies, and the report to the Committee?

Following the economic crisis, there had been a reassessment of disability in which a number of persons with disabilities had lost the benefits they had, Experts noted, and asked the delegation to explain the disability assessment process.

The Experts denounced the continued institutionalization of children with disabilities, which effectively denied them the right to a life with their families.  While the adoption of the law 4538 on foster care of children with disabilities was commendable, its insufficient operationalization and implementation was a source of concern.  What systemic changes had been adopted towards the full and complete deinstitutionalization of all children with disabilities?

Taking positive note of the national programme for preventing and combatting violence against women, the Experts asked the delegation to explain how it applied to women with disabilities and about the participation of women with disabilities in power structured and decision-making processes in the implementation of the national action plan on gender equality.  What results in the implementation of this action plan had been achieved for women and girls with disabilities?

LÁSZLO GÁBOR LOVASZY, Committee Co-Rapporteur for Greece, asked about the position of the Government of Greece on the request made by the National Confederation of Disabled People to amend article 5 of the Constitution to include disability as a prohibited ground of discrimination.

**Responses by the Delegation**  
  
The delegation said that the legislative framework on disability indeed needed to expand beyond employment and occupation, in order to respond to the lived experiences of persons with disabilities, including in social policies and education.  This would be a part of the legislative initiatives that the new Government would be adopting in the months to come.

The National Confederation of Disabled People had submitted to the Government a very elaborate programme for the implementation of the Convention in the national legislation.   This, together with the Committee’s concluding observations, which Greece considered truly a compass for further action, would be used to start legislative work on codifying a draft law on accessibility and creating a national action plan on the rights of persons with disabilities.

Greece was in the process of adopting a human rights based approach to disabilities throughout the competent ministries and in all areas concerning the rights of persons with disabilities.  The Government of Greece saw such an approach as a cross-cutting issue, which was also part of the strategy for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.

The anti-racism law of 2013 had harmonized the legal framework with the European Union framework decision and had strengthened the country’s criminal legislation.  It prohibited acts that could result in discrimination or violence, for example public incitement, and also prohibited participation in an organization of any kind that systematically promoted such acts.  The National Council against Racism and Intolerance, set up by the provisions of that law, consisted of representatives of the National Confederation of Disabled People and civil society organizations.

Judicial safeguards applicable to children included children with disabilities and it guaranteed the right of the child to express their opinion.  Prior to delivering a judgement in case of family law, the court had to take into consideration the child’s level of maturity.

Turning to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, the delegation said that the law 4443 prohibited any discrimination on the basis of more than one ground while the General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality, under the national action plan on gender equality 2016-2020, had promoted policies and actions to protect the rights of women who faced multiple forms of discrimination, such as women with disabilities, Roma and refugee women.  Women with disabilities were covered also under the general law on the rights of persons with disabilities.

The national programme for preventing and combatting violence against women had been implemented since 2010 and under this programme, 172 women with disabilities had been supported.  Greece had ratified the Istanbul Convention which provided for the protection of all women, including women with disabilities, while the law 4604 of 2019 would help with the prevention and combatting of violence against women with disabilities.

There was no discrimination in law in the provision of social provision and social benefits.  Persons with disabilities were equally entitled to the social solidarity allowance and housing allowance, while the law 4611 of 2019 exempted from taxes the allowances and benefits paid to persons with disabilities.

The disability assessment process had indeed suffered from insufficiencies and abuse by the previous system.  The new Government had already taken steps to remedy the situation and currently 170,000 persons with disabilities received disability allowances.

Under the 2013 law, 12 social welfare centres had been set up to provide child protection, including for children with disabilities.  Specific rules defined the setting up and operation of integrated care centres which offered services to children under the age of six, while private non-profit entities and the public social welfare operated open day care centres.  Those provided specialized services and early childhood intervention to children with disabilities under the age of six, which were mostly tailored to the individual needs of the child.

The new law on fostering and adoption had been adopted in 2018.  A national register of minors in institutions and a national register of foster parents had been set up in the national centres of social solidarity, with the final aim of the deinstitutionalizing all children.  A fostering allowance was available in the amount of €300 for a child without disabilities and €800 for a child with disabilities.

The national action plan for the rights of the child included provisions for the protection of children in communities, while the national action plan on the rights of persons with disabilities would focus, among other issues, on the rights of children with disabilities.

The comprehensive law 4554 of 2018 on guardianship had been enacted and was applicable also to refugee and migrant children.  Since January 2019, and in view of the application of the new institutional and legal framework, the piloting of the implementation of the guardianship law for unaccompanied migrant and asylum children had been ongoing, with a view to its full implementation by March 2020.  At the moment, there were 1,100 children seeking asylum in Greece.

The situation of refugee children with disabilities was of particular importance to the Ministry of Education, the delegation stressed, and said that in the school year 2018-19, the very first attempt to register them had taken place, with a view to place them in appropriate school settings.

During this exercise, 129 refugee children with disabilities had been identified and most had already been in some sort of educational setting.  At the moment, this was only a pilot project rather than an extended action plan and Greece was in discussions with the United Nations Refugee Agency and the United Nations Children’s Fund on setting up a platform for data collection on refugee children with disabilities.

In the same school year, there had been 282 reception classes in junior high schools and 1,169 reception classes in elementary schools which had been attended by 8,290 students.  It was not known how many of those were children with disabilities.

**Questions from the Experts**  
  
In the next round of questions, a Committee Expert asked whether Greece categorized the current refugee and migrant situation as a “situation of risk and humanitarian emergency”, noting with surprise that the word “refugee” had been mentioned only once in the State party’s report and word “migrant” only four times.  This was rather strange considering Greece’s critical role in the current refugee and migrant reality in Europe, he said.

The Expert asked the delegation to brief the Committee on what Greece was doing or had done to protect the rights of refugees and migrants with disabilities, on strategies or plans to address their socioeconomic situations, and on measures in place to identify refugees and asylum seekers in need of special status due to their disability related needs, especially women and children.  The current emergency plan and emergency policy were silent on the issues and needs of persons with disabilities – how would this gap be closed?

Referring to the new law on involuntary psychiatric treatment, another Expert asked about the system in place to protect persons with disabilities from involuntary treatment and placement, especially those with intellectual disabilities.  What plans were there to institute supported decision-making?  Experts also asked and inquired for how long legal capacity could be taken away from persons with intellectual disabilities?  What happened to a person with intellectual disabilities who was accused of a crime, what rights did they have, and what reasonable accommodation was provided during and after the trial?

There was evidence that physical restraints and other harmful practices were still being used in institutions for children and adults with disabilities, including in institutions for persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities.  How often did the Greek Ombudsperson – the national prevention mechanism - monitor those institutions, including psychiatric facilities?

Austerity measures that had been instituted for the economic and social crisis had impacted the deinstitutionalization process, an Expert remarked, and asked what actions were being taken to urgently reinvigorate that process now that the Greek economy was emerging from the crisis.

MARKUS SCHEFER, Committee Co-Rapporteur for Greece, reiterated concern about overcrowding in institutions, unrecorded injuries of patients in such institutions, and lack of information about legal safeguards and monitoring mechanisms.  What measures were being taken to detect, prevent and combat domestic violence against persons with disabilities, especially women and children?

LÁSZLO GÁBOR LOVASZY, Committee Co-Rapporteur for Greece, asked the delegation to confirm the information from the July report by the Greek Ombudsperson that persons with disabilities were deprived of liberty because their relatives were unable to pay court fees.

**Responses by the Delegation**  
  
Greece was implementing the national action plan for gender equality 2016-2020.  Since 2010, it had been implementing the national programme for preventing and combatting violence against women.  Both had a national scope and included the objectives of protecting the rights of vulnerable women, including refugees and migrants.

A network of more than 60 structures that provided free-of-charge services to victims of violence against women had been established and were accessible to women with disabilities.  Shelters also facilitated access to health services and the enrolment of children in schools.  A public awareness campaign, fully accessible to persons with disabilities, was being implemented.

Since 2019, all persons with disabilities over the age of 18, regardless of the type of impairment, could access supported living homes.  This was a change to the 2007 regulations, which allowed access to persons with intellectual disabilities only.  All persons with disabilities were admitted upon their own application or that of their parents or guardians.  In the homes, the focus was on developing the skills and abilities of persons with disabilities to the maximum possible with the view to increase their ability to live independently.  Greece was working on the adoption of a legal framework on personal assistants and independent living.

The deinstitutionalization process in Greece was in its early stage, the delegation said.  The Government was currently establishing a number of supported living homes that would accommodate persons with disabilities, while short-term accommodation for children with disabilities would also be established, alongside the early intervention programmes and mobile units for family support.

On the use of restraints in institutions, the delegation said that this represented the very last resort and that the safety of individuals was primordial.  Greece was committed to stopping all behaviour against the freedom and dignity of persons with disabilities still living in institutions.

Responding to questions on the excessive use of involuntary committals of persons with psychosocial disabilities, the delegation said that out of 21,500 such individuals 8,300 had been involuntarily committed, which was indeed high but compared to the general population and the rates in a number of other European countries, it was not excessive.  According to the 2018 circular, a public prosecutor had to be informed about all cases of injuries in psychiatric institutions inflicted either by the patients or the staff.

Explaining the situation of persons with disabilities in the criminal justice system, the delegation said that all persons with disabilities in detention accessed health services in hospitals.  Sentenced prisoners with disabilities were entitled to early release.  The provisions of the Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure guaranteed the same rights to a person with intellectual disabilities accused of committing a crime, including to be informed of charges in a language he or she understood; to defend himself or herself in court, providing that he had not been put under judicial support and was capable of carrying out legal transactions; and to choose a defence lawyer.

The Civil Code contained provisions and conditions under which a person over the age of 18 could be placed under judicial support.  A person could be declared completely unable to carry out any or certain legal transactions or could be placed under judicial support for a period of time; either of the decisions could be revisited by the courts.

As far as the refugee and migrant crisis was concerned, the delegation explained that Greece had presented its report to the Committee in 2014, when there was no crisis on the horizon, which explained the scarce reference to refugees and migrants.  The situation had dramatically changed in 2015 and 2016 when more than one million people had entered Greece.  Together with the European Union and other partners, Greece had done its utmost to address this situation.  A delegate stressed that no country could stand alone and manage this kind of pressure, adding that, while the number of arrivals had significantly decreased, the number of arrivals to the islands had lately considerably increased.  
   
As far as asylum procedures were concerned, persons with disabilities were given priority and were placed under special guarantees during the examination of the application.  Refugees and migrants with disabilities were given priority in moving from reception and identification centres in islands to the mainland.  The Greek asylum service and the Hellenic Coast Guard constantly trained their staff to identify vulnerable migrants and those in need of special protection, both among asylum seekers and those trying to cross the external border.

Greece recognized that natural or man-made disasters created a higher risk for persons with disabilities who were two to four times more likely to die in an emergency than the rest of the population.  The Secretariat for Civil Protection had issued a manual for emergency response which included, inter alia, the requirement to develop personal evacuation plans for persons with disabilities.

The Constitution provided for the establishment of the Greek Ombudsman, an institution that was not submitted to any control by any governmental organ or administrative service and was protected from consequences of any opinions expressed or acts committed in the exercise of her or his competences.  The Ombudsman reported to the Greek Parliament on an annual basis.

**Questions from the Experts**  
  
In the final series of questions, the delegation was asked to explain the efforts to ensure that persons with disabilities could access public information via all modes and means of communication and to guarantee the accessibility of websites in line with European Union directive 2016/2012.

The Committee noted with concern the recent increase in the number of new special schools and asked why this was happening and how special schools served to support inclusive education.  Were the so-called social cooperatives established to employ persons with disabilities or were they intended to support their access to work in an open labour market?

Did persons with intellectual disabilities have the right to vote and how were they supported in exercising this right?

MARKUS SCHEFER, Committee Co-Rapporteur for Greece, urged the delegation, in their answers, to focus on the situation on the ground and the actual living conditions of persons with disabilities.  In this vein, he requested information about the lived experiences of refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities on the islands and specific measures taken to make shelters for victims of violence fully accessible.

LÁSZLO GÁBOR LOVASZY, Committee Co-Rapporteur for Greece, asked the delegation to explain how it collected and analysed data on the labour market and whether it would apply the Washington Group of Questions within its national statistics system.

**Responses by the Delegation**  
  
Concerning disability assessment, the delegation said that it was conducted by a committee of medical doctors who assigned percentage to different impairments in a mathematical formula, on the basis of which the final disability percentage was reached.

The 2019 law on the operation of social cooperatives provided for two specific types of organizations, social care social cooperatives and integration social cooperative enterprises.  The former provided persons with disabilities with services while the latter integrated vulnerable groups of people.

A help line was available to victims of domestic violence which could also be reported to the police by a third person.  According to Eurostat, 2.3 per cent of the population had been inactive in 2018 due to disability or illness, a level similar to the previous year; at the European level, the corresponding figure for 2018 was 4 per cent.

To improve the employment of persons with disabilities, the law of 2018 provided for the compulsory job placement of persons with disabilities and their relatives.  Vocational training to adult persons with disabilities was also available.  The Government was working with the National Confederation of Disabled People of Greece on developing a plan for the integration of 3,000 youth with disabilities in the labour market

The only citizens deprived from the right to vote were those in full legal guardianship under the Civil Code and those deprived of the right to vote because they had committed a crime.

A series of legal steps had been taken to modernize legislation on the accessibility of media and online services, including the 2018 ministerial decision that included the procedure and a range of means of accessibility.  Directives by the Greek National Council for Radio and Television requested that at least three per cent of the national programmes had to be broadcast in Greek sign language and at least three per cent of the weekly foreign language programmes had to include subtitles in Greek.  The media broadcasters had an obligation to broadcast at least four hours of programmes in accessible formats.

**Concluding Remarks**

MATTHILDI CHATZIPANAGIOTOU, Special Advisor to the Minister of State of Greece, in concluding remarks, thanked the Committee for the constructive and open interactive dialogue.  Greece concurred with the Experts on the need to take further measures and steps in the areas of deinstitutionalization, violence against women and girls with disability, protection of refugees and migrants with disability, enrichment of the legal framework on independent living, expanding the participation of persons with disabilities in public and political life, and working towards the full adoption of the human rights based model of disability.

JUN ISHIKAWA, Committee Vice-Chair, in his concluding remarks thanked the delegation for the productive and constructive dialogue.