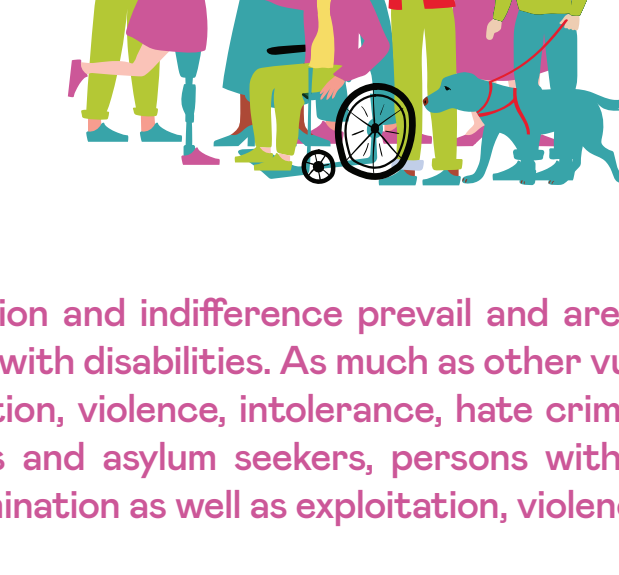




BLOCK THE HATRED AGAINST PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. SHARE EQUALITY.
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HATE AT A GLANCE



Stereotypes, discrimination and indifference prevail and are further reinforced by hate speech towards persons with disabilities. As much as other vulnerable groups in societies, in addition to discrimination, violence, intolerance, hate crime and hate speech faced by many migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, persons with disabilities are exposed to different forms of discrimination as well as exploitation, violence and abuse.

"Institutional care for persons with disabilities is still prevalent in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The deprivation of legal capacity is still widely used in practice... This is a gross violation of human rights and we need to move away from this as much as possible and establish more humane, inclusive forms of care, such as community living with support or decision making with support."

Sanja Lepić, project manager of People in Need

"Unfortunately, discrimination against persons with disabilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina is still widespread... I say this as an MA student, as a citizen of this country, and as a person with hearing loss fighting for her rights and the rights of all marginalised groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Awareness of sign language is very low and therefore the information around us is not adapted to this group. That is why I actively advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities, for raising awareness of the sign language, as well as for the equal inclusion of persons with disabilities in society."

Alma Mujanović, president and co-founder of the Sign for a Word Association and a member of the Youth Advisory Group at the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

"We have very segregated laws concerning persons with disabilities. Persons with autism, Down syndrome and intellectual disabilities are not supported by any law."

Ilirjana Geci, head of the developing projects department at Kosovo Disability Forum, KDF, an umbrella organisation that unites seven disability-focused NGOs in Kosovo*

"The only difference between us and people with Down syndrome is one extra chromosome... People with disabilities are reluctant to go outside both because of access issues but also because of the cultural view of disability. They are seen as problems, instead of assets, to society."

Engin Avoi, project manager who oversees a jam production service provided by Down Syndrome Kosova

HATE IN NUMBERS

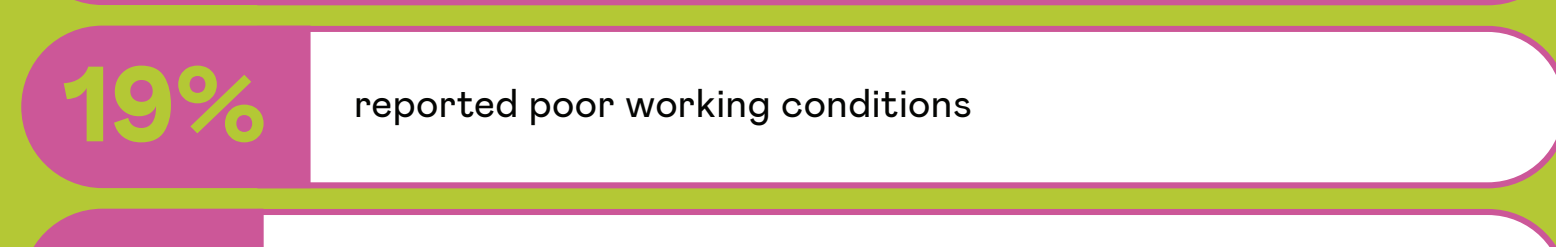
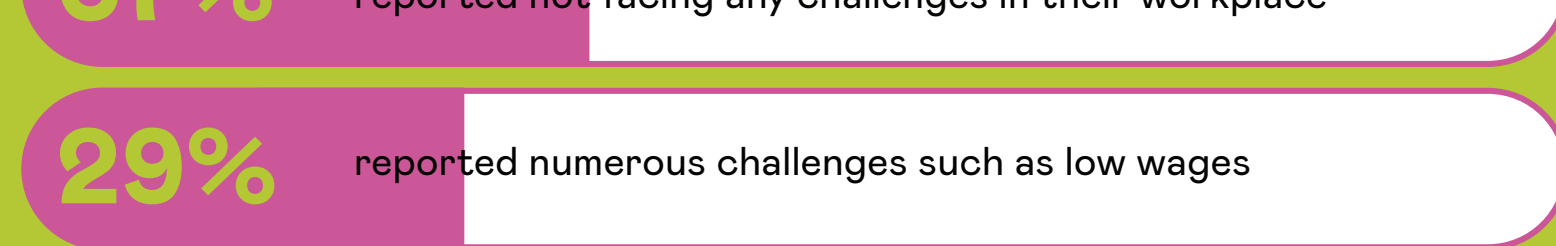
According to the official Government statistics, there are **70,636** officially registered persons with disabilities in **Albania**. (figures from 2021). As the **Albanian Disability Rights Foundation reported**, they experience high levels of unemployment, often lack access to basic medical and education opportunities, and suffer stigmatisation and isolation from society. Albanian legislation provides for protection of human rights, but this has done little to integrate persons with disabilities into Albanian society.

Results of the sample survey on the integration of persons with disabilities in Albania conducted in 2017:

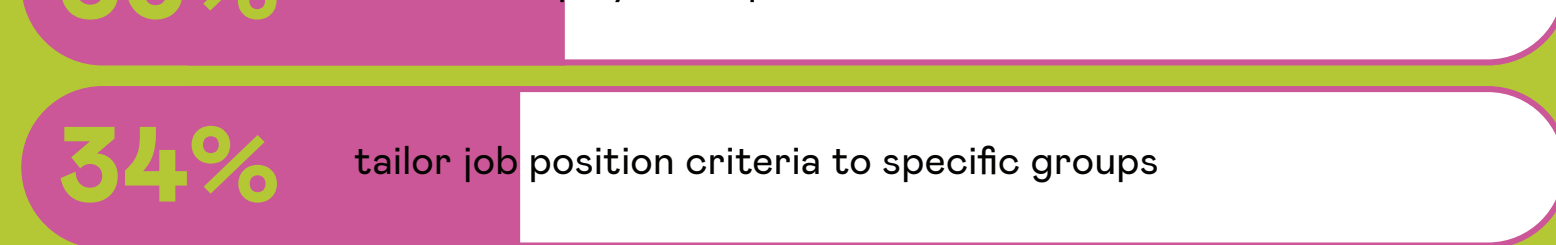
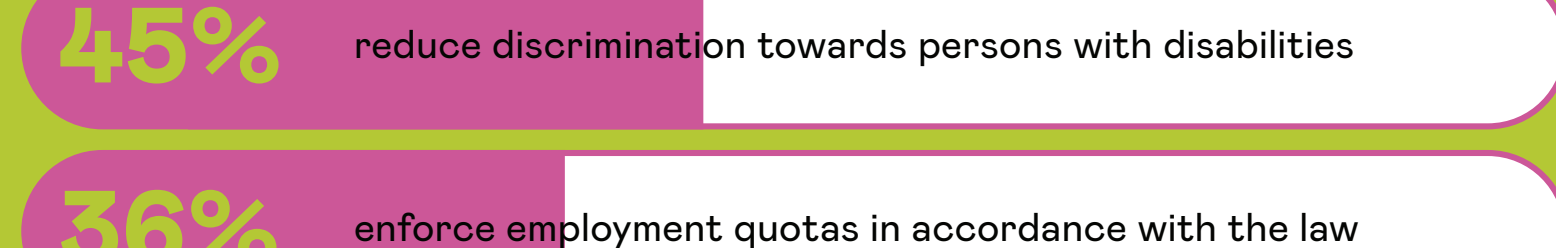
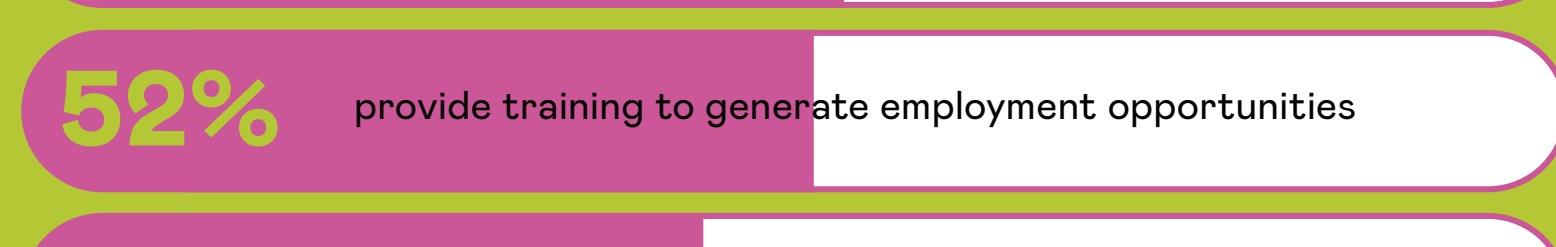
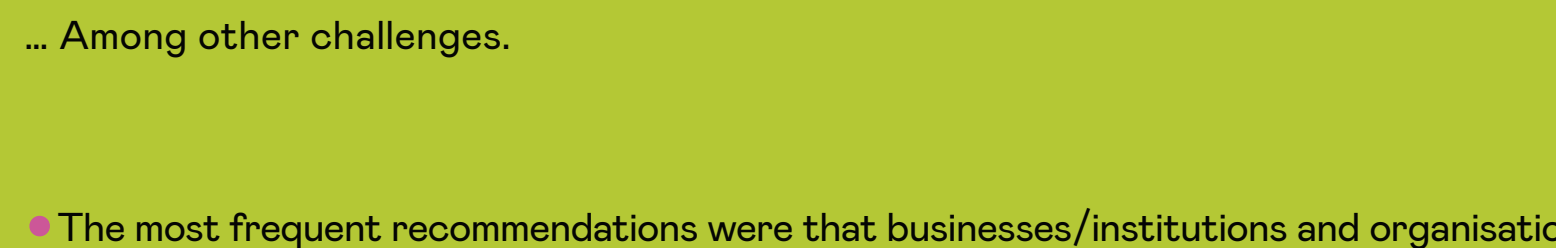
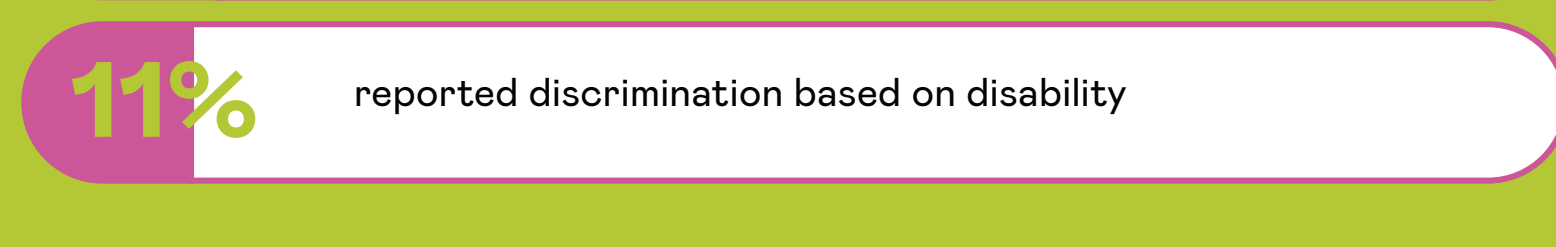
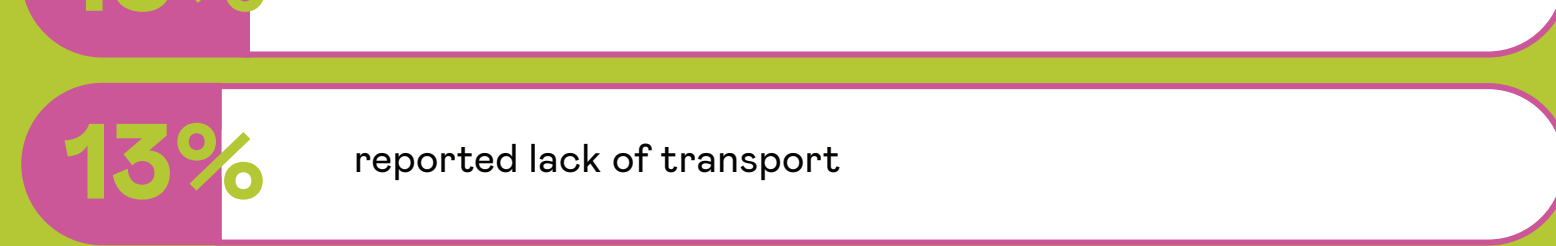
Education	Employment
2% integrated in preschool	1% work full-time
16% attend public schools, primarily as a listener	14% work part-time
2% attend special education	85% do not have any employment
2% attend secondary education	
2% attend higher education	

* According to the main findings of 2019 UNDP Survey on Labour Market Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Kosovo:

• Out of **404** persons interviewed:

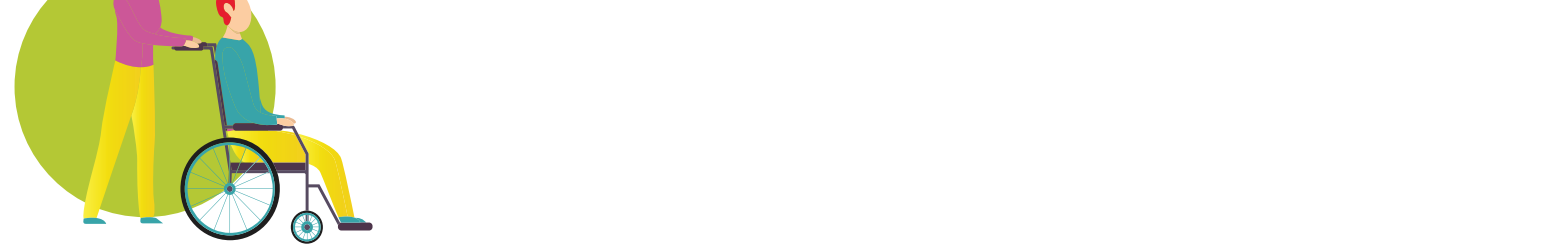
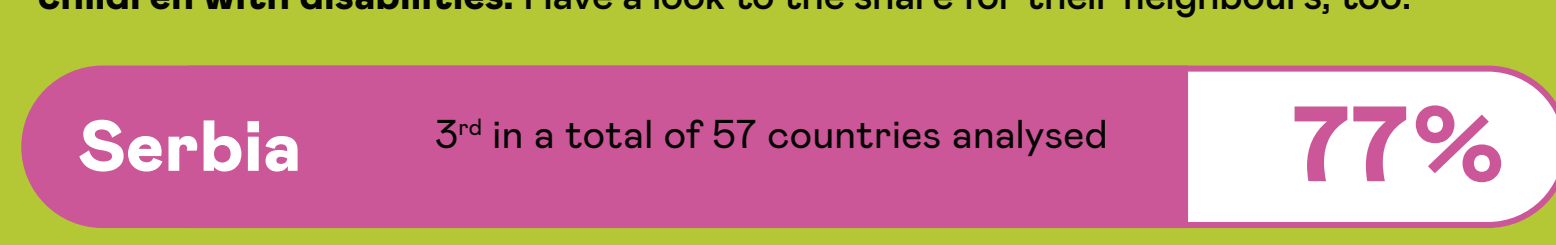


• Out of the employed:

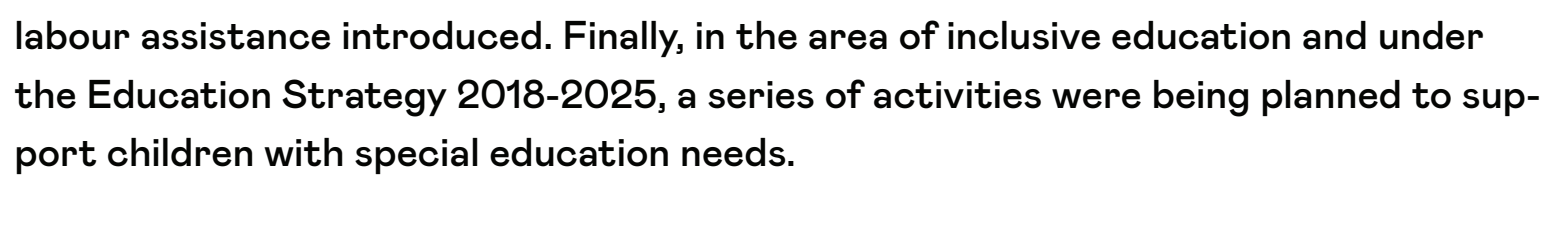
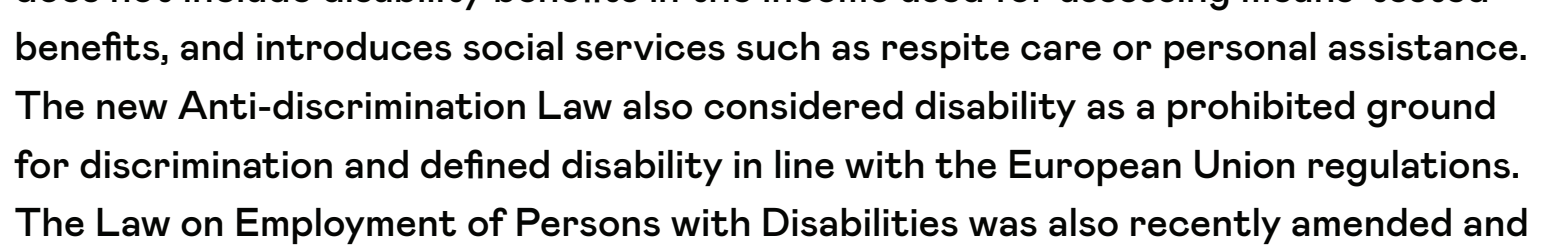
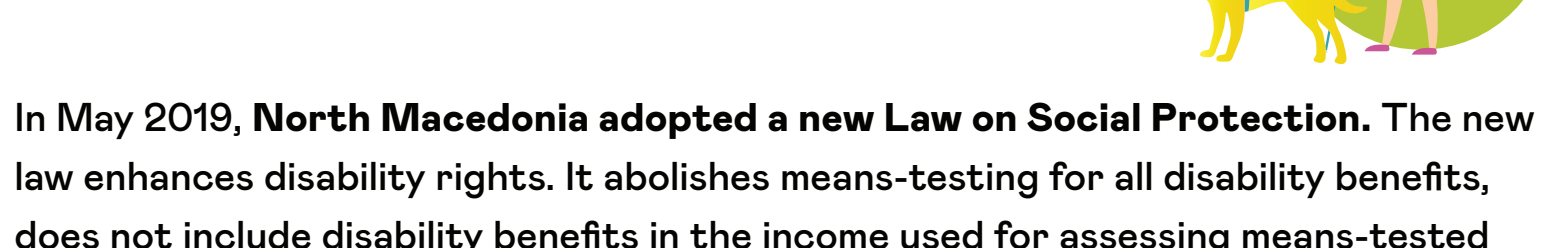


... Among other challenges.

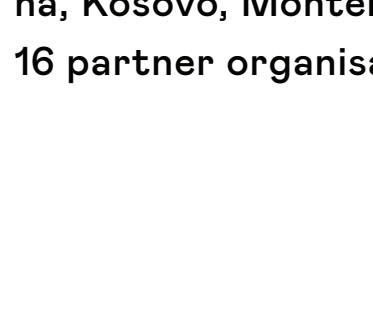
• The most frequent recommendations were that businesses/institutions and organisations should:



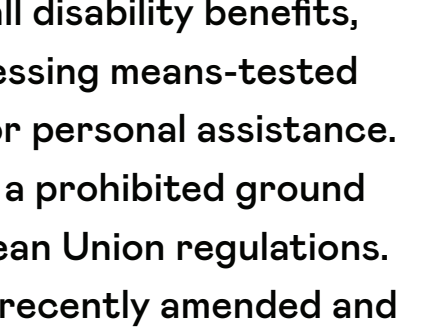
• According to the latest United Nations Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty, **more than three quarters of children living in state institutions in Serbia are children with disabilities**. Have a look to the share for their neighbours, too:



GOOD PRACTICES



During 2018-2019 and under the programme of support for regional and thematic networks of civil society organisations, **the EU-funded project SOCIETIES assisted civil society organisations in upgrading technical skills necessary to contribute to the social inclusion of persons with disabilities**. The project was implemented in five Western Balkan beneficiaries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia. The implementation of the project involved 16 partner organisations, including those targeting women with disabilities.



In May 2019, **North Macedonia adopted a new Law on Social Protection**. The new law enhances disability rights. It abolishes means-testing for all disability benefits, does not include disability benefits in the income used for assessing means-tested benefits, and introduces social services such as respite care or personal assistance. The new Anti-discrimination Law also considered disability as a prohibited ground for discrimination and defined disability in line with the European Union regulations. The Law on Employment of Persons with Disabilities was also recently amended and labour assistance introduced. Finally, in the area of inclusive education and under the Education Strategy 2018-2025, a series of activities were being planned to support children with special education needs.

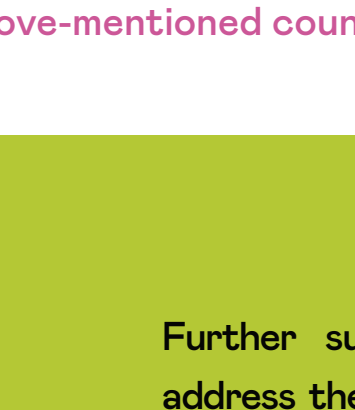
INTERNATIONAL LEGAL INSTRUMENTS



Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia have signed and ratified the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**. CRPD is the first international, legally binding treaty aimed at protecting the human rights of persons with disabilities. In addition, all the above-mentioned countries have signed and ratified the **Optional Protocol to the CRPD**. The Optional Protocol allows persons with disabilities whose rights have been violated to bring complaints to the Committee on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

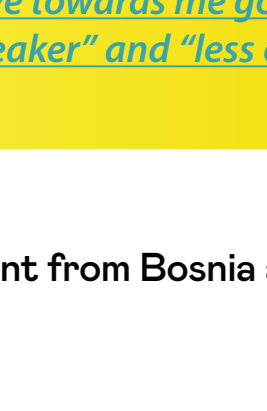
Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia are also state parties to the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** and to the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**. Both Conventions refer to protecting the rights of persons with disabilities to fair treatment, appropriate care and full participation in society.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK



Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia are members of the Council of Europe, which adopted its new **Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2017-2023** on 30 November 2016. Promoting and protecting human rights of all persons and upholding democracy and the respect of the rule of law is the core of Council of Europe work. The protection of rights, safeguarded and guaranteed under the **European Convention on Human Rights** and **European Social Charter**, applies to all, including persons with disabilities. The European Social Charter specifically recognises the right of persons with disabilities to social integration and participation in community life. The Convention and the Social Charter have been signed and ratified by all the above-mentioned countries.

WAYS FORWARD



Further sustained efforts are necessary to address the persistent shortcomings in upholding the human rights of persons with disabilities.

In order to improve the situation of persons with disabilities, the role and capacity of national authorities needs to be strengthened.



"As a person in a wheelchair, I think that these difficulties can be divided into the physical barriers disabled people face and the perception that society generally has towards the disabled. The physical barriers, such as the inability to enter a store, institution, theatre, museum, or library, are generally more obvious and disrupt our everyday lives. As far as the perception that others have towards me goes, this is a much more subtle difficulty. People in wheelchairs are seen as "weaker" and "less competent" than people who do not have any physical handicaps."

Merima, student from Bosnia and Herzegovina

