



## STATEMENT

### **Legal discrimination among disability groups**

The legal situation of different categories of disability has always been of concern with regards to some of the disability groups which are isolated and treated differently than other disability groups, creating a legal discrimination, which, consequently, is reflected in all areas of life, rights and benefits.

The Coalition for Disability and Development (DDCA), from 2006 onwards has brought to the attention of institutions this really disturbing situation for the communities of the most disadvantaged such as: people with intellectual disabilities and mental health problems, people with hearing impairments and sensorial disabilities, people with autism, people with amputations, hemiplegia and other diagnosis, who due to 'very rigid' laws and due to lack of specific laws, are left with insufficient payments and services in comparison to other categories. The Coalition notes that the benefits of categories with special legal status and those without such statuses are different even though the needs are the same, very similar and often even greater. As an example, DDCA brings to your attention, reimbursements of electricity bills or telephone, reduction of tuition fees and other reductions or exemptions from taxes and various payments that apply only to persons who benefit from specific laws and not to those belonging the abovementioned groups, who are persons with disabilities only according to the Law on Social Services and Economic Assistance.

The Law on Inclusion and Accessibility in *Article 20 'Changes in legislation 'sets that institutions undertake gradual changes in laws and regulations applicable to adapt the reformulation of terms, the intent and purpose of the model and the contemporary image of disability, particularly the autonomy and the right of persons with disabilities to independent living and inclusion in all spheres of life, on equal terms with others.*



The law addresses in this way the existing discrimination among groups through this article, bringing *a fundamental change, the assessment of disability based on needs and not based on specific legal statuses*. This means that the assessment under this law will be guided by the needs of people with disabilities and services will be provided based on the needs identified and in a scale system.

The Coalition for Disability and Development (DDCA), urges relevant institutions, especially the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, but all other ministries to start as soon as possible the review and initial assessment of laws and regulations in force to pursue further changes of their compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Coalition, on the eve of elections notes that persons with disabilities that are discriminated against legally, make up of more than 55 thousand (referred to the National Action Plan on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020), half or more of the total number of persons with disabilities in Albania, and if we count a minimum of 2 members of their families with the right to vote, their potential to influence through voting in the decision-making mechanism is high.

**For more information, please contact:**

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