

НОООЦ



**National Organization of
Persons with Disabilities of Serbia**

The President's Foreword

The National Organization of Persons with Disabilities of Serbia (NOOIS) was established in Belgrade on June 22nd, 2007 based on many years of experience of the Coordination Board, that is, the Community of Disabled People's Organizations, Serbia. The establishment of this umbrella organization of persons with disabilities of Serbia was stimulated by the projects realized in partnership with the European Disability Forum (EDF) and the examples from the European Union countries. Connecting in a formal legal sense the republic disabled people's organizations which have the greatest number of members and realize most various forms of programmes for the well-being of persons with disabilities, aimed at more organized, united and effective fight for improving the status of persons with disabilities, establishing real partnership with decision-makers of particular importance for persons with disabilities in Serbia and establishing adequate cooperation with international and national organizations of persons with disabilities in Europe and the World in general.



To this point, the set goals have been realized considerably and relevant cooperation with numerous state authorities and institutions, business and non-governmental sectors has been established. The partnership between NOOIS and the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy, that is the Sector for Protection of Persons with Disabilities, is especially relevant.

Improved cooperation especially positively influenced the adoption of new laws and other regulations of particular importance for the lives of persons with disabilities in Serbia and to determining the disability policy as well as its implementation in practice to some extent. The ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol to the Convention, as well as the fact that many laws and regulations in our country have been harmonized with this Convention and other World and European disability standards, are of special importance. Unfortunately, the changes in a normative sphere have not been reflected on the everyday life of persons with disabilities adequately. Accordingly, NOOIS and especially the competent state authorities and institutions as well as other social community stakeholders will have to continue to be engaged in this in future. The state authorities' material and other support to NOOIS, its members and other disabled people's organizations is also relevant but it is considerably smaller than the real needs of these associations and their members. The economic crisis we face to some point justifies the state organs for not providing greater material support to organizations of persons with disabilities. We believe that adopting the special Law on Organizations of Persons with Disabilities would improve their status and, more importantly, the lives of persons with disabilities whose interests these organizations advocate and protect.

In the meantime, NOOIS has established significant cooperation with international and national organizations of persons with disabilities, especially with EDF. NOOIS is also an associate member of EDF. The development of international cooperation directly or indirectly positively reflected on the work of NOOIS and action of the disability movement in Serbia and in general.

With its current work and results, NOOIS has undoubtedly secured a leading position in the disability movement in Serbia. However, it can preserve this position in future only by truly protecting the interests and rights of persons with disabilities, if it has a role of a partner in cooperation with important decision-makers in our country and if it constantly innovates various forms and contents of work for the well-being of persons with disabilities in Serbia.

Milan Stosic, NOOIS President

About NOOIS

When was it established? Whom does it represent?

The National Organization of Persons with Disabilities of Serbia (NOOIS) was established on June 22nd, 2007. Accordingly, the informal network of republic disabled people's organizations, which had existed for years, evolved into NOOIS, as an umbrella organization with a legal status, similar to many organizations in Europe.

NOOIS represents over 800.000 persons with disabilities and their legal representatives involved in:

- The associations of organizations of persons with individual types of disabilities
- The organizations of legal representatives of persons with disabilities and
- The interest organizations gathering persons with various types of disabilities (cross-disability)

Why was it established?

- To represent the united movement of persons with disabilities, speak in the name of most persons with disabilities and their legal representatives and represents the most important political strength in advocating their mutual interests and needs.
- The role of the National Organization is not to replace the individual organizations of persons with disabilities (Associations and other organizations) but to focus on mutual actions, initiatives and issues of general interest

The mission of NOOIS

Increasing inclusion of persons with disabilities in society, full respect of human rights and non-discrimination on the basis of disability by creating partnership between the united disability rights movement and the state in terms of adopting and implementing disability laws and other documents in compliance with international standards and documents.

The goals of National Organization of Persons with Disabilities of Serbia

- Unified advocacy of the interests of persons with disabilities in Serbia
- Protection and promotion of basic human rights
- Advancing the status of persons with disabilities by applying national strategies, disability laws and policy and the reform of national legislation
- Fight against: prejudice and discrimination based on disability and full participation, equality and social inclusion
- Empowering the cooperation among the organization–members of the National organization and the support to their individual capacity development
- Acceptance of international and European disability standards, principles and documents and their implementation in Serbia
- Developing the cooperation and participation in the international disability rights movement

The values of NOOIS

- The application of the European and UN disability standards
- Non-discrimination
- Equal opportunities for persons with disabilities
- Promoting accessibility in the fields of physical environment, transportation, information and communication
- Independence and representativeness
- Mutual cooperation
- Responsibility
- Democratic structure and connections with organizations/members

Membership in international organizations

NOOIS is also active in the International Disability Rights Movement. Since its establishment, NOOIS is a member of the two greatest and most important European umbrella organizations – it is an associate member of EDF (European Disability Forum) and a member of Disabled People's International Europe (DPI Europe).

The structure of NOOIS

The structure of NOOIS consists of the Assembly, Executive and Supervisory Boards as well as the President and two Vice-Presidents and the Executive Director.

The President of NOOIS is Milan Stosic, the Vice-presidents are Svetlana Vlahovic i Mihailo Pajevic and the Executive Director is Ivanka Jovanovic.

Three categories of membership

The Statute prescribes three categories of membership: the representative or full membership, associate membership and supporting membership. At this point the National Organization consists of 15 organizations at national level but it is open to expanding its membership.

Full members

In order to become full members the organizations have to fulfill the following conditions:

- Accept as members or represent most or the most persons with individual types of disabilities and organizations gathering persons with different types of disabilities in order to deal with specific issues,
- Have at least 500 regular members, persons with disabilities, except for organizations that accept members and represent persons with very rare diseases (such as RETT syndrome),
- Have the network of at least 5 local and regional organizations,
- Act on the territory of the Republic of Serbia or at least on its greater part and
- Have existed and worked for at least five years.

Associate members

In order to become associate members the organizations have to fulfill the following conditions:

- Deal with certain specific issues of interests for persons with disabilities,
- Act on the territory of the Republic of Serbia or at least on its greater part,
- Have at least 50 persons with disabilities among their members and
- Have existed and worked for at least five years.

Supporting members

Natural and legal persons contributing to the realization of goals of the National Organization by its work or donations can become its supporting members.



Organizations/members of NOOIS

Full member organizations are:

- Deaf Union of Serbia (130.000 members)
- Union of the Blind of Serbia (12.000 members)
- Muscular Dystrophy Association of Serbia (1.800 members)
- Association of Paraplegics and Quadriplegics of Serbia (1.300 members)
- Union of Associations for Assistance to Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (92.000 members and their family members)
- Association of Labor Disabled Workers of Serbia (450.000 members)
- Association of Cerebral Paralysis and Polio of Serbia (4.000 members)
- Multiple Sclerosis Association of Serbia (5.000 members)
- Association for Assistance to Persons with Autism of Serbia (4.000 members and their family members)
- Association for Assistance to Persons with Down syndrome (1.000 members)
- Center for Independent Living Serbia (cross-disability organization)

Associate members of NOOIS are:

- RETT (100 members)
- Association of Serbia and Union of Associations of Kidney Patients of Serbia (6.000 members)
- Union of Association of Persons with Amputate and Limbs (1.000 members)
- Network... Out of Circle - Serbia (organization for rights protect and support women with disabilities)



The basic activities of NOOIS

- **Legislation and advocacy** – NOOIS participates in the preparation and amendments to regulations, suggest amendments to relevant Parliamentary Boards, actively participates in the adoption of new laws and by-laws, strategic documents, as well as in working groups for creating various regulations (for instance, the Law on Social Protection and its by-laws, Law on the Use of the Serbian Sign Language, Law on Rehabilitation and Employment, Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, National Disability Strategy etc.)
- **Monitoring the implementation of regulations and cooperation with state institutions and independent bodies** – NOOIS continuously monitors the implementation of adopted regulations, reacts and reminds relevant institutions when the provisions of a law are not implemented, asks for the interpretation of certain regulations, participates in the work of the Council for Persons with Disabilities of the Republic of Serbia as well as the Council for Persons with Disabilities of the Ombudsman's Office.
- **Reactions to violating human rights and the cases of discrimination** - NOOIS reacts to discriminatory behaviour or statements, addresses the public, sends complaints in cases of discrimination to the Commissioner for Protection of Equality and Ombudsman's office.
- **Publishing and educational activities - publications (publishers and co-publishers):**
 - The Guide through the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
 - The Strategy of Development and Promotion of Socially Responsible Business in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2010-2015.
 - The fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (proceedings)
 - Writing project proposals in accordance with EU rules
 - The Proceedings of the Summer School - The Prohibition of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities
 - General Comments 1 and 3 of the Committee for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities



- **The media activities of NOOIS and activities aimed at informing the public about the status and rights of persons with disabilities and raising disability awareness** - NOOIS is present in both electronic and print media continuously, in compliance with our events we publish statements and press releases, our representatives participates in various expert gatherings on regular basis, we publish information on the NOOIS official web site.



- **International activities** - NOOIS participates in the meetings organized by EDF, as well as in various international researches, intensively cooperates and exchanges information with DPI, ad hoc cooperates and participates in international conferences and meetings organized by UN, the Council of Europe, European Commission etc. In addition to this, NOOIS intensively develops and supports regional cooperation - with umbrella organizations in Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia and also participates in various regional gatherings.

Some of the most important results in our work to date

- One of the most important activities of NOOIS is advocacy, that is continuously monitoring the implementation of regulations, amendments to the existing and/or adoption of new regulations, sending proposed amendments to relevant Parliamentary Boards, cooperation with the Members of the National Parliament, active participation in adopting new laws and by-laws, strategic documents, participation in working groups. Since its establishment, NOOIS has become an indispensable partner to the relevant ministry - the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy, Sector for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities, as well as to other ministries and Parliamentary Boards. In cooperation with them, NOOIS has submitted hundreds of proposed amendments to a



great number of laws through advocacy. Many of them have become part of legislation and practice. We especially emphasize the participation of NOOIS representatives in adopting the following laws: The Law on Ratification of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination (both special and general laws), Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment, Law on Social Policy and corresponding by-laws, Law on Social Housing, Law on Planning and Construction and creation of the new By-law on Accessibility Standards, Lottery Law, Law on Health Care, Law on Pension-disability Insurance etc. NOOIS has endeavored to incorporate the elements of nondiscrimination based on disability in all regulations, including the general, systematic ones which are of immediate importance for persons with disabilities as well as all other regulations.

- NOOIS has successfully conducted a practice of signing the Protocol on Cooperation with all interested political parties participating in Parliamentary elections since 2008. The result of this action is good cooperation with the Parliament and Ministries of the Government of Serbia for the last seven years. This has also reflected on adopting or amending a number of laws important for persons with disabilities, along with consultative cooperation with the representatives of these organizations. As a nonpartisan organization dealing with advocacy of improving the status of persons with disabilities, this form of activities during pre-election campaigns is believed to be the most effective form of long-term cooperation with future holders of political positions as well as the creation of a foundation for persons with disabilities to realize their right to vote with a full respect of their political will and right to different orientation due to the fact that the Parliament of Serbia is one of the key institutions of creating policy and legislation norms which should provide rights and full social inclusion to persons with disabilities in Serbia.



- Participation in different researches in cooperation with national and international organizations.
- Participation of NOOIS representatives in various working groups - for creating the National Anti-discrimination Strategy, National Disability Strategy, Law on the Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, for creating the Initial Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities etc.

The partners and associates of NOOIS

- Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy, Sector for Protection of Persons with Disabilities
- Other Ministries
- The National Parliament of RS and relevant Parliamentary Boards
- The Members of the National Parliament
- The Republic Ombudsman's Office
- Commissioner for Protection of Equality and Ombudsman's office.
- National non-governmental organizations dealing with the protection of human rights
- Other organizations of persons with disabilities
- International organizations





National Organization of Persons with Disabilities of Serbia - NOOIS

Address: Mutapova 12, 11 000 Belgrade, Serbia

Phone: +381.11.24.14.328

E-mail: nacionalnaorg@open.telekom.rs

Web-site: www.noois.rs