**National MPs with a disability**

Indicators on political participation

of persons with disabilities

2014

DISCLAIMER: The background country information reports contain background material for the comparative report on *The right to political participation for persons with disabilities: human rights indicators* by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). The bulk of the information in the background country information reports comes from ad hoc information reports prepared under contract by the FRA’s research network FRANET. The views expressed in the background country information reports do not necessarily reflect the views or the official position of the FRA. These reports are made publicly available for information purposes only and do not constitute legal advice or legal opinion.

**Are persons with disabilities members of the current national parliament?**

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| **EUMS** | **Source and supporting information** |
| AT | There are two members of the current national parliament who identify themselves with having a disability.[[1]](#footnote-1) |
| BE | This data is not collected. No records are available on the number of members of the Parliament with a disability. |
| BG | There is no official information on how many members of the current parliament identify as having a disability[[2]](#footnote-2). The only available data is the registered number of people with disabilities in Bulgaria for the year 2011, provided by the National Statistical Institute after the census from 2011[[3]](#footnote-3). |
| CY | No current members identify as having a disability.[[4]](#footnote-4) |
| CZ | No data is available. The office of the upper and lower chamber of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, The Czech Statistical Office and the Government Board for People with Disabilities were consulted. |
| DE | No information obtained/recorded.[[5]](#footnote-5) |
| DK | This data does not exist in Denmark.  The National Parliament, the Danish National Centre for Social Research and the University of Copenhagen have been consulted. |
| EE | This kind of data (being sensitive personal data) is not collected in Estonia.[[6]](#footnote-6) |
| EL | The Hellenic Parliament does not maintain data on members of Parliament with disabilities. In 2010, a special provision was included in the Standing Orders of the Parliament (Part B, art. 1 par. 4) establishing the obligation of the Speaker to facilitate the exercise of parliamentary work of MPs with special needs[[7]](#footnote-7). Despite the lack of official data in the parliamentary periods from 22/9/1996 - today two MPs have requested accommodation measures due to disability. Only one of them is a member of the current Parliament. |
| ES | Mr. Francisco Vañó, a Member of the Spanish Parliament with a disability and a member of the Committee on Comprehensive Disability Policies of Congress, stated that in none of both houses of parliament a register is kept of persons with disabilities and that he is the only current MP who publicly stated to have a disability. |
| FI | There is no available data about how many members of parliament identify as having a disability. The National Council on Disability, VANE (*Valtakunnallinen vammaisneuvosto 2013-2015, VANE/Riksomfattande handikapprådet, VANE*) has estimated that disabled persons are underrepresented in national political bodies.[[8]](#footnote-8) |
| FR | One MP identify as having a disability since 2012[[9]](#footnote-9) |
| HR | According to the Croatian Parliament, there are 151 active mandates in the current 7th assembly. However, the data on disability status is only available for 135 representatives who are employees of the Parliament. Of those 135, 7 have declared a disability status.[[10]](#footnote-10) |
| HU | Due to the Hungarian data protection rules, the number of MPs living with disabilities is not registered officially.  However, based on media sources and DPO submissions some MPs have a disability, such as Dr. Gergely Tapolczai [[11]](#footnote-11) , President of the SINOSZ[[12]](#footnote-12); Ferenc Hirt [[13]](#footnote-13) who gave an interview (titled “The first wheelchair user MP in the Hungarian Parliament”)[[14]](#footnote-14) and dr. Katalin Szili who gave an interview in 2005 (titled “Katalin Szili first spoke about her disability”).[[15]](#footnote-15) She often served as keynote speaker or host of events related to disability issues, e.g. the “Parliament Day of Persons with Disabilities”.[[16]](#footnote-16) |
| IE | Data not available. One current Senator (member of the upper house of national parliament) has identified himself has having substantial sight loss.[[17]](#footnote-17) One TD and Minister of State of the last Government (2007-2011) was a wheelchair user.[[18]](#footnote-18) |
| IT | **No official information and data about members of current national parliament with disabilities from both Houses – the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate - are available. Three members of the current Parliament elected in 2013 seem to identify as having a disability.[[19]](#footnote-19) In 2008, following the election of two MPs with physical disabilities, architectural barriers were removed and other instruments to enable MPs with disabilities to fully participate in the activities of the assemblies and to vote were introduced[[20]](#footnote-20). Prior to 2008, the House of Parliament was not accessible to people with disabilities.** |
| LT | CEC does not have data about how many members of the current national parliament identify as having a disability. Electoral laws do not require candidates to provide such information, and candidates themselves do not indicate such information within their freely given answers.[[21]](#footnote-21) |
| LU | No official data exist regarding members of the current national parliament identifying as having a disability.  According to different actors such as Nemme mat eis, Info-handicap, the respective department of the Ministry of family and integration, among the 60 deputies, none identifies as having a disability. |
| LV | No official information is available. None of the current MPs has openly declared himself/herself as having a disability.  Additionally, article 2 of the Personal Data Protection Law considers information about the health of the person as sensitive personal data and restricts gathering and processing such information.[[22]](#footnote-22) |
| MT | One member of parliament has recently publicly identified himself as having mental health issues. No other MP has identified as a person with disability. [[23]](#footnote-23) |
| NL | This information is not centrally recorded.  The central information service of the parliament, as well as the parliamentary documentation Centre for information were consulted. According to them, there are two members of the current parliament who identify as having a disability. Also, one state secretary identifies as having a disability.[[24]](#footnote-24) |
| PL | Out of 560 MPs and senators there are 3 who identify themselves as having a disability[[25]](#footnote-25). |
| PT | According to a reply in writing, following an ad-hoc request for information, one member of the Parliament pays a reduced Personal Income Tax *(Imposto sobre o Rendimento das Pessoas Singulares -* IRS*)* due to disability (recognised incapacity equal or over 60%). Source: Technical Support and Secretarial Services Directorate of the Assembly of the Republic (*Direção de Serviços de Apoio Técnico e de Secretariado (*DSATS*) da Assembleia da República*)[[26]](#footnote-26). |
| RO | There is no available data on how many members of the current national parliament identify as having a disability. The state does not collect such data and NGOs have not made any such statistic. In 2012, for the first time a person in a wheelchair, who talked openly about his disability, ran and lost in a Bucharest circumscription for a place in the Senate[[27]](#footnote-27) |
| SE | According to the Justice Department (*Justititiedepartementet*), there is no official statistics about how many members of the current national parliament identify as having a disability.[[28]](#footnote-28)  Also according to the disability movement's alternative report to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[[29]](#footnote-29), there are no national statistics on the proportion of elected representatives in Sweden with a disability.[[30]](#footnote-30) It is further noted in the report that no political party has, as yet, shown any interest in using disability quotas.[[31]](#footnote-31)  An e-mail sent to all the political parties who participated in the most recent general elections to the *Riksdag*, local governments and to the European Parliament, was answered by all the political parties saying that they don’t collect such information about elected officials or members according to Article 13 of The Personal Data Act (*Personuppgiftslagen*), which prohibits registration of sensitive information such as health, which includes disability.[[32]](#footnote-32)  According to the Liberal Party (*Folkpartiet*), they have several political representatives with disabilities[[33]](#footnote-33). |
| SI | The National Assembly does not collect these data.[[34]](#footnote-34) |
| SK | This type of statistics is not kept in the SR. Yet, it is well-known that in the election term 2006–2010 there was an MP with a disability. He was wheelchair user.[[35]](#footnote-35) |
| UK | Following a Freedom of Information request made to the House of Commons Information Office, the following response was received on 23 July 2013:  “*It is difficult to find statistics for disabled MPs because Members do not have to specify that they have a disability (i.e. it is down to Members themselves rather than it being a mandatory requirement). Currently, David Blunkett MP (Labour) is the only blind MP; Anne Begg MP (Labour) is a wheelchair user and Paul Maynard MP (Conservative) has cerebral palsy*.”[[36]](#footnote-36)  The above statement supports the written response from the government to a consultation on *Access to Elected Office for Disabled People: A Consultation* (February 2011) which suggested that:  “*The number of MPs who have declared themselves as disabled is very low compared to the proportion of disabled people in the population as a whole. To be representative of the population, we might expect 65 MPs to be disabled.”[[37]](#footnote-37)*  An information request sent to the FRA UK National Liaison Officer came to similar conclusions.  *“The number of (declared) disabled MPs is not known, but very low: indeed to be representative of the entire UK population we might expect to see about 100 MPs of 650, or 65 disabled MPs to representative of the working age population. There is no quantitative data for the number of disabled people who failed to be selected as candidates and/or elected, but there is anecdotal evidence about the misperceptions and discrimination that disabled people can face in seeking elected office.*  *A major obstacle faced by some disabled people, which non-disabled people would not face when seeking election, are the additional costs they can incur in order to campaign effectively, e.g. support with transport costs (including for carers too) or British Sign Language interpretation for hearing impaired people. The Government’s pilot Access to Elected Office for Disabled People Fund provides grants to address these barriers, so that disabled people can compete for election on a level playing field with other candidates.”*  In relation to the number of Lords who identified themselves as having a disability, following a request for information made to the House of Lords Information Office, the following response was received on 29 July 2013:  *“The House of Lords Administration neither appoints nor employs Members of the House of Lords.  It does not collect information concerning Members’ disabilities i.e. sensitive personal data.”* |

1. Information provided by the Austrian Parliament *(Österreichisches Parlament)* on 3 July 2013 in a response to an information request. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Institute for Public Environment Development monitors the work of the Bulgarian Parliament for 4 years now, gathering information for all the deputies and presenting it to the Bulgarian public through the website [Open Parliament](http://www.openparliament.bg/). This is how the information was obtained. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Bulgaria, National Statistical Institute, available in Bulgarian at: <http://www.nsi.bg/EPDOCS/Census_Disability2011.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Information obtained from the Department for Social Inclusion of persons with disabilities, (Τμήμα Κοινωνικής Ενσωμάτωσης Ατόμων με Αναπηρίες). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The central administration office of the Federal parliament was consulted, following which this kind of information is not recorded. For the intention of the UN CRPD impairment of parliamentarians should not matter and therefore can’t be separately recorded. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Information obtained from the Chancellery of the Riigikogu [Riigikogu Kantselei]. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. GR, Standing Order of the Parliament, Part B, Code of the Organization of the services of the Parliament, personnel status and other provisions *(Κανονισμός της Βουλής, Μέρος Β`, Κώδικας Οργανώσεων των Υπηρεσιών της Βουλής, καταστάσεως του προσωπικού και άλλες διατάξεις)* [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Statement by the National Council on Disability, VANE (Valtakunnallinen vammaisneuvosto 2013-2015, VANE/Riksomfattande handikapprådet, VANE), 12.8.2011: *Issue: UN; Human right of disabled persons; the OHCHR questionnaire about the participation of disabled persons to political and public life* (Asia; YK; Vammaisten henkilöiden ihmisoikeudet; OHCHR:n kysely vammaisten henkilöiden osallistumista poliittiseen ja julkiseen elämään). Available at (accessed 29.7.2013): <http://www.vane.to/images/stories/OHCHR-kyselyHEL7852-23.doc> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. « Handicapé mais député comme les autres » (“Disabled but similar to any other deputy”), *Le Parisien*, 3 December 2012. Available at: [www.leparisien.fr/espace-premium/air-du-temps/handicape-mais-depute-comme-les-autres-03-12-2012-2374941.php](http://www.leparisien.fr/espace-premium/air-du-temps/handicape-mais-depute-comme-les-autres-03-12-2012-2374941.php). See also [www.nosdeputes.fr/damien-abad](http://www.nosdeputes.fr/damien-abad). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Information obtained from the Croatian Parliament (*Hrvatski sabor*) (2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Written information provided by the SINOSZ (19 July 2013); Hungary, <http://fidesz-eu.hu/nyomtat/siket_politikusokrol_keszult_dokumentumfilm>. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. See http://www.sinosz.hu/?q=node/2151 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Written information provided by the MEOSZ (8 July 2013); Hungary, [nol.hu](../../Lidia/Downloads/nol.hu) (4 May 2006) *Minden képviselőt kerekes székbe ültet*, [www.nol.hu/archivum/archiv-402707?ref=sso](http://www.nol.hu/archivum/archiv-402707?ref=sso). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. See “Az első kerekesszékes képviselő a Magyar Országgyűlésben”, available at: [www.mozgasserultek.abbcenter.com/?id=17073&cim=1](http://www.mozgasserultek.abbcenter.com/?id=17073&cim=1). Additionally, in June 2013, during the flood in Hungary, an article was published on the website of Fidesz party, reporting that Fidesz MP Ferenc Hirt participated personally in the flood defence works, “despite being a wheelchair user”. See Fidesz.hu (2013) “Hirt Ferenc kerekesszékes képviselő is részt vett az árvízi védekezésben”, June 10; available at: www.fidesz.hu/index.php?Cikk=192988 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See WebBulvar (2005) “Szili Katalin először beszélt fogyatékosságáról”, March 21, available at: http://webbulvar.hu/tart/rcikk/d/0/116226/1 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. See Közelkép (2008) “Fogyatékos Emberek Parlamenti Napja 2008”, August 3, available at: http://kozelkep.hu/index.php?option=com\_content&task=view&id=339&Itemid=102 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Profile of Senator Martin Conway <http://www.finegael.ie/our-people/senators/martin-conway/> (accessed on 9 January 2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. News article and profile of Sean Connick TD <http://www.independent.ie/regionals/newrossstandard/news/government-jet-available-but-there-could-be-wheelchair-access-issues-27495545.html> (accessed on 9 January 2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Information collected through media and web-based research Websites consulted: [www.matteodallosso.org](http://www.matteodallosso.org) and [www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2013/06/14/news/manconi\_io\_quasi\_cieco\_e\_la\_mia\_vita\_tra\_le\_ombre-61047640/](http://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2013/06/14/news/manconi_io_quasi_cieco_e_la_mia_vita_tra_le_ombre-61047640/); [www.ileanaargentin.it/](http://www.ileanaargentin.it/). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Ansa (2008), *Camera, tutto pronto per I deputati disabili* (Chamber of deputies, ready for member of parliament with disabilities), available at: [www.ansa.it/opencms/export/site/notizie/rubriche/daassociare/visualizza\_new.html\_69644848.html](http://www.ansa.it/opencms/export/site/notizie/rubriche/daassociare/visualizza_new.html_69644848.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Central Electoral Commission, written answer of the 10 July, 2013 (No. 2-517 (1.5) to the request of NFP-Lithuania. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Latvia, Personal Data Protection Law (Fizisko personu datu aizsardzības likums), 23 March 2000, available in Latvian at: <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=4042> , published in Latvian Herald (*Latvijas Vēstnesis*) 123/124 (2034/2035), 06.04.2000, available in Latvian at: www.vestnesis.lv/?menu=doc&id=4042 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Reply received in writing from the National Commission Persons with Disability, 29 July 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Information obtained from the Central Information Service of the House of Representatives (*Centraal Informatiepunt*), 3/4 July 2013; Information obtained from the Parliamentary documentation centre (*Parlementair documentatiecentrum*), 17 July 2013; Information obtained from ProDemos Knowledge Centre for Democracy and the Rule of Law, 19 July 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. According to the official Sejm and Senat’s web sites: www.sejm.gov.pl , and wwwsenat.gov.pl [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. [www.en.parlamento.pt/ManagmentParliament/index.html#Serv](http://www.en.parlamento.pt/ManagmentParliament/index.html#Serv) [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. The Economist (2012) *Romania’s elections. An uneven fight,* 05.12.2012, available at: <http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2012/12/romanias-elections> [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. E-mail received by the Justice Department, Democracy section (*Justititiedepartementet),* 19 September 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Swedish Disability Federation (*Funktionshinderorganisationerna*), The Swedish Alternative report to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ( *Funktionshinderorganisationernas alternativrapport till FN:s kommitté för rättigheter för personer med funktionsnedsättning* (2011), p. 108, available at: [www.hso.se/Global/Projekt/M%c3%a4nskliga%20r%c3%a4ttigheter/Alternativrapporten/Funktionshindersr%c3%b6relsens%20Alternativrapport%202011.pdf](http://www.hso.se/Global/Projekt/M%c3%a4nskliga%20r%c3%a4ttigheter/Alternativrapporten/Funktionshindersr%c3%b6relsens%20Alternativrapport%202011.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Swedish Disability Federation (*Handikappförbunden*), The Swedish Alternative report to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (*Funktionshinderorganisationernas alternativrapport till FN:s kommitté för rättigheter för personer med funktionsnedsättning*) (2011), p. 108, available at: [www.hso.se/Global/Projekt/M%c3%a4nskliga%20r%c3%a4ttigheter/Alternativrapporten/Funktionshindersr%c3%b6relsens%20Alternativrapport%202011.pdf](http://www.hso.se/Global/Projekt/M%c3%a4nskliga%20r%c3%a4ttigheter/Alternativrapporten/Funktionshindersr%c3%b6relsens%20Alternativrapport%202011.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Swedish Disability Federation (*Handikappförbunden*), The Swedish Disability Movement`s alternative report on UN International Covenant on Civil and Political rights (2007), p. 108, available at: [www.hso.se/Global/Projekt/M%c3%a4nskliga%20r%c3%a4ttigheter/Alternativrapporten/Funktionshindersr%c3%b6relsens%20Alternativrapport%202011.pdf](http://www.hso.se/Global/Projekt/M%c3%a4nskliga%20r%c3%a4ttigheter/Alternativrapporten/Funktionshindersr%c3%b6relsens%20Alternativrapport%202011.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Sweden, The Personal Data Act 1998:204 (*Personuppgiftslagen 1998:204*), available at: [www.government.se/content/1/c6/01/55/42/b451922d.pdf](http://www.government.se/content/1/c6/01/55/42/b451922d.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. E-mail received by the Liberal Party (*Folkpartiet)* 23 August 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Information provided by the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia (*Državni zbor Republike Slovenije*) upon request (written response of 23 July 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Information received based on mail communication with the Institute for Labour and Family Research dated 12 July 2013, and with Slovak Disability Council and Slovak Blind and Partially Sighted Union dated 17 July 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. [UK] Human Rights Law Centre (2013) Response to FOI Request received on 23 July 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. [UK] Home Office (2011) Access to Elected Office for Disabled People: A Consultation (February 2011), available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85501/consultation.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)