



Institute for Development  
of Freedom of Information

## Data Analysis on Persons with Disabilities Living in Georgia



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Government of the Netherlands

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## Key Findings

- The government is still not able to produce and collect statistical data on persons with disabilities, despite the country having an obligation under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWD).
- The 2014 census showed that there were 100,113 registered persons with disabilities in Georgia, while the Social Service Agency had registered 118,651 persons with disabilities receiving social assistance as of March 1, 2015, and 125,104 in 2017.
- According to the 2014 national census, there are 5,172 children with disabilities in Georgia, whereas 2017 data from the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs suggests that there are 10,052 children with disabilities receiving social assistance.
- As of 2014, of the 96,102 persons with disabilities in Georgia at the age of 15 years and older 34.4% (33,027 persons) were employed.
- 86.2% of employed persons with disabilities were self-employed, while the same figure for the rest of the employed population was 53.6%.
- As of 2014, only 4.8% - 4,571 persons were hired (as contracted employees) out of 96,102 persons with disabilities in the age group of 15 years and older.
- The employment rate for persons with disabilities declines with the status of disability. For example, only 3.8% persons with disabilities (15 and above) were employed in Group I (pronounced disability), 4.8% in Group II (considerable disability), and 7.8% in Group III (moderate disability).
- As of 2014, average PwD employment rate in EU countries is 33.6%, which is 7 times higher than in Georgia.
- Tbilisi City Hall and municipal administrations often do not keep separate budget records on the expenses incurred on infrastructure adaptation for PwDs.
- In 2017, there was a significant rise in the number of driving licenses and vehicle identification marks for PwDs.

## Introduction

Persons with disabilities (PwD) are one of the largest groups in the world among the minorities who are neglected and discriminated against by the public or the state. States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD), which Georgia has ratified in 2013, are committed to providing and facilitating the full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms by persons with disabilities without any discrimination arising from their disability. This Convention also obligates States to collect statistical and research data on PwDs.

The data requested and received by IDFI from various Georgian state agencies by the end of 2017, as well as latest reports <sup>1</sup> of the Public Defender's Office clearly indicate that the state is still unable to collect comprehensive statistical data on PwDs. For example, significant problems are observed in terms of data collection related to functional limitation of PwDs, adaptation of infrastructure and employment.

Below, IDFI presents an analysis of the existing data received from state agencies, which reflects the number of PwDs according to the regions and their status. The study also provides analysis of statistical data on the employment of PwDs, the cost of adaptation of PwD related infrastructure, driving licenses issued to PwDs and special identification marks issued to their vehicles.

## Statistics on Persons with Disabilities Living in Georgia

Statistics on PwDs living in Georgia are gathered by the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat) within the framework of the general census of the population, and the Social Service Agency based on social assistance provided to PwDs.

The PwD status in the population census is determined based on information provided by the respondent – based on self-assessment. As a result, this data is less informative and its reliability is based only on the level of awareness and willingness of census respondents to provide the state with information on their disability or that of a family member.

According to the latest 2014 census results from Geostat, there are 100,113 PwDs in Georgia, which amounts to around 2.7% of the total population. It should be noted that according to Geostat data, about 82,000 persons did not specify their status or refused to provide an answer. This means that the real number of PwDs in the country is, most likely, much higher.

According to the 2014 census, most PwDs - 58,255 (58.2%) belong to Group II, <sup>2</sup> which includes people with significant disabilities (see Figure #1). According to Geostat, the total number of children with disabilities is 5,172.

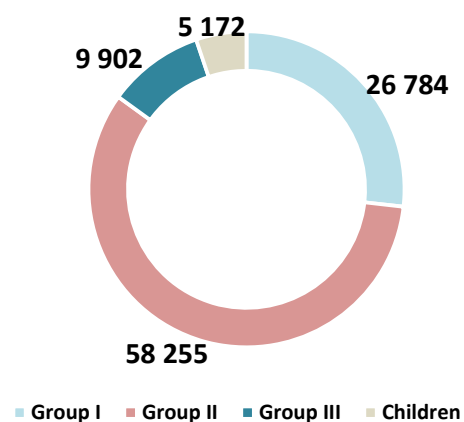
The largest number of persons with disabilities (23,511) are registered in Tbilisi, but their share in the city's population is the lowest after Kvemo Kartli region and is - 2.12%. Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti - 5.8%, Imereti - 3.64%, Guria - 3.47%, Shida Kartli - 3.29% (see Figures #2 and #3).

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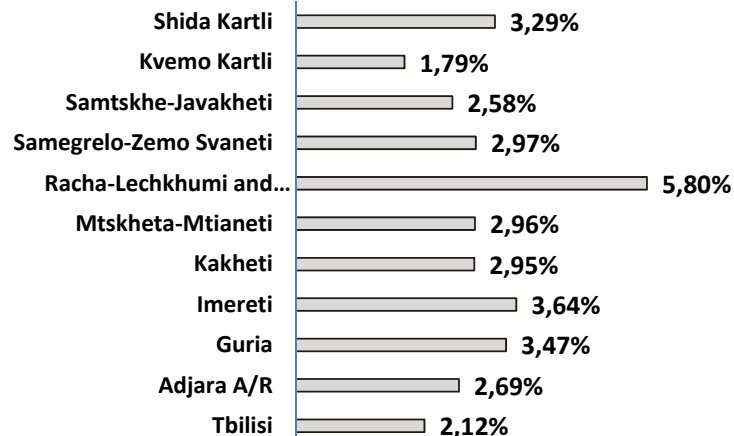
<sup>1</sup> The Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Georgia, Public Defender of Georgia, 2016, p. 15

<sup>2</sup> On Approval of the Regulation on the Rule of Determining the Status of Disability Permit, - Decree of the Minister of Health, January 13, 2003

**Figure #1 - Persons with Disabilities by Status of Disability**



**Figure #2 - Share of Persons with Disabilities in the Population (by region)**



**Image#3 - Population Distribution by Regions and Status of Persons with Disabilities**

	Total Population	No Groups	I Group (Acute)	II Group (Considerable)	III Group (Moderate)	Children with Disabilities	Refusal to Specify	Not Indicated
<b>Georgia</b>	<b>3,713,804</b>	<b>3,531,642</b>	<b>26,784</b>	<b>58,255</b>	<b>9,902</b>	<b>5,172</b>	<b>5,382</b>	<b>76,667</b>
Tbilisi	1,108,717	1,058,813	6,455	13,459	2,187	1,410	1,221	25,172
Autonomous Republic of Adjara	333,953	315,366	2,515	4,845	1,063	566	693	8,905
Guria	113,350	106,148	1,044	2,337	327	225	678	2,591
Imereti	533,906	505,448	5,101	11,836	1,708	779	125	8,909
Kakheti	318,583	303,396	2,494	5,561	878	450	769	5,035
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	94,573	89,425	722	1,692	279	102	215	2,138
Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti	32,089	29,721	462	1,181	179	39	31	476
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti	330,761	314,116	2,546	5,794	1,031	453	201	6,620
Samtskhe-Javakheti	160,504	154,050	1,121	2,301	540	181	77	2,234
Kvemo Kartli	423,986	405,485	2,138	4,018	884	554	1,305	9,602
Shida Kartli	263,382	249,674	2,186	5,231	826	413	67	4,985

**Source:** National Statistics Office of Georgia

PwD statistics are also collected by the Social Service Agency of Georgia, but only in case of those persons with disabilities who are receiving social or other state assistance. This data also contains only the total number of PwDs, disaggregated by regions and groups corresponding to status of disability. According to Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs, as of November 1, 2017, the number of persons with disabilities receiving social assistance was 125,104 (see Figure #4). According to similar information [received](#) from the Ministry in 2015, there were 118,651 persons with disabilities registered in Georgia. Thus, over the last two years, the number of persons with disabilities has increased to some extent.

**Figure #4 - Persons with Disabilities Receiving Social Assistance (2017)**

Region	Total	I Group (Acute)	II Group (Considerable)	III Group (Moderate)	Children with Disabilities	Gained the PwD Status
<b>Georgia Total</b>	<b>125,104</b>	<b>26,568</b>	<b>75,268</b>	<b>5,836</b>	<b>10,052</b>	<b>7,380</b>
Tbilisi	29,203	6,536	16,513	1,593	3,005	1,556
Imereti	23,699	4,972	15,157	818	1,439	1,313

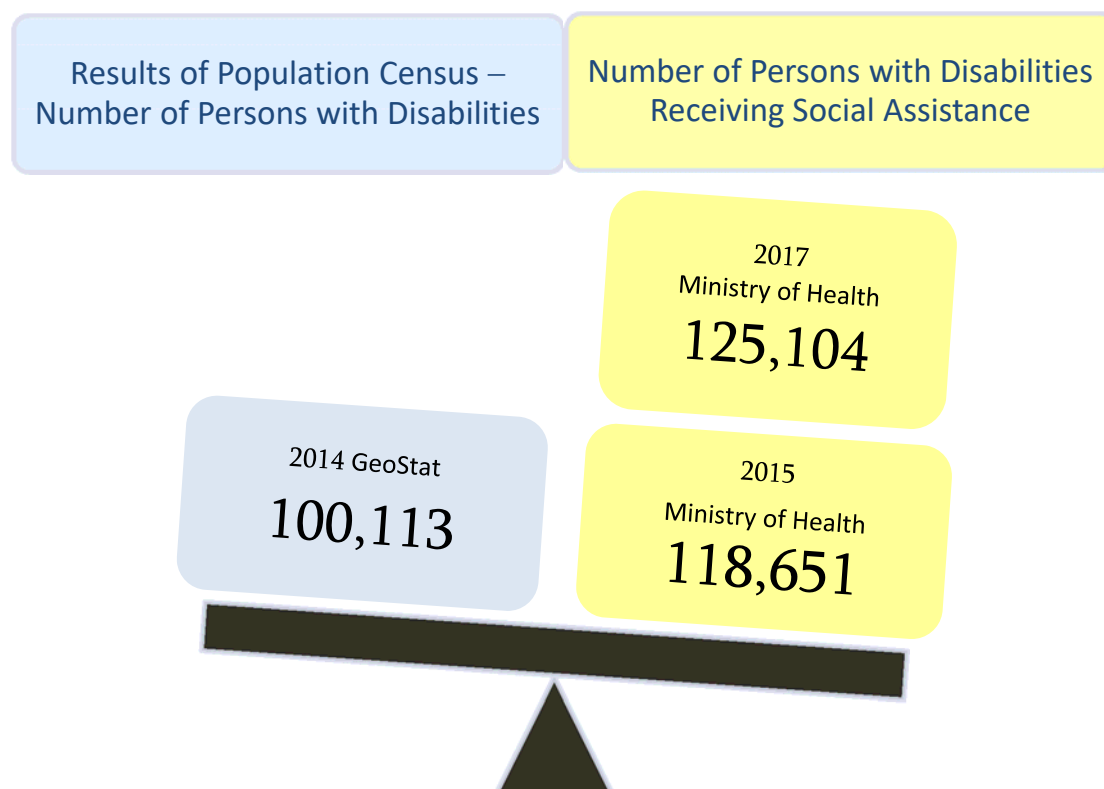
Adjara A/R	14,529	3,230	8,541	673	1,249	836
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti	12,765	2,619	8,047	386	905	808
Kakheti	10,931	2,104	6,855	567	798	607
Kvemo Kartli	10,239	2,369	5,743	591	1,053	483
Shida Kartli	10,010	1,870	5,982	574	647	937
Samtskhe–Javakheti	4,754	1,005	2,861	220	338	330
Guria	4,681	949	2,962	192	363	215
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	2,788	601	1,631	184	193	179
Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti	1,505	313	976	38	62	116

**Source:** Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Affairs of Georgia

Neither the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat) nor the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Affairs keep complete statistics on persons with disabilities. The number of persons with disabilities determined by the 2014 population census (conducted by Geostat) raises considerable concern about the accuracy of data, according to which, there are a total of 100,113 persons with disabilities. However, according to the Social Service Agency there were 118,651 persons with disabilities registered as recipients of social assistance by March 1, 2015, and 125,104 in 2017 (see Figure #5).

The discrepancy between different sources of data is especially significant in case of children with disabilities. According to the population census, there are 5,172 children with disabilities in Georgia. However, according to the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Affairs of Georgia, in 2017, there were twice as many children with disabilities registered recipients of social assistance. This incompatibility of statistical data clearly shows that during the population census there were many cases when respondents did not provide proper information about disabilities (their own and/or that of family members), which indicates lack of awareness of the public about the significance of this information.

**Figure #5 – Incomplete Statistical Information about Persons with Disabilities**

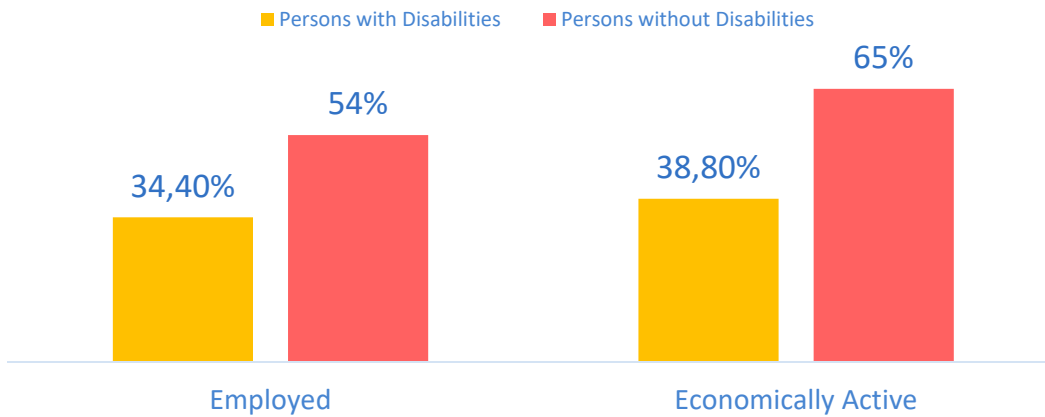


## Employment Statistics of Persons with Disabilities

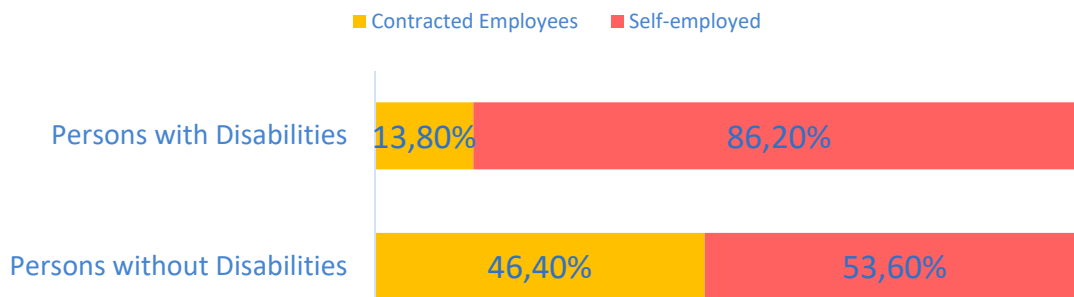
Unemployment is one of the most significant and severe problems in Georgia. Due to lack of adapted work environment, as well as negative stereotypes this problem is especially critical in case of persons with disabilities.

According to the 2014 population census, persons with disabilities lack opportunities for employment and self-realization. Out of 96,102 persons with disabilities aged 15 and older 34.4% were employed, while the same figure for the rest of the employed population was 54% (see Figure #6). In addition, 86.2% of employed persons with disabilities were self-employed, while the same figure for the rest of the employed population was 53.6% (see Figure #7). Finally, of the 96,102 persons with disabilities aged 15 and older only 4.8% – 4,571 persons were employed (contracted) in 2014.

**Figure #6 – Economic Activity and Employment Statistics on the Population of Georgia Aged 15 and Older**



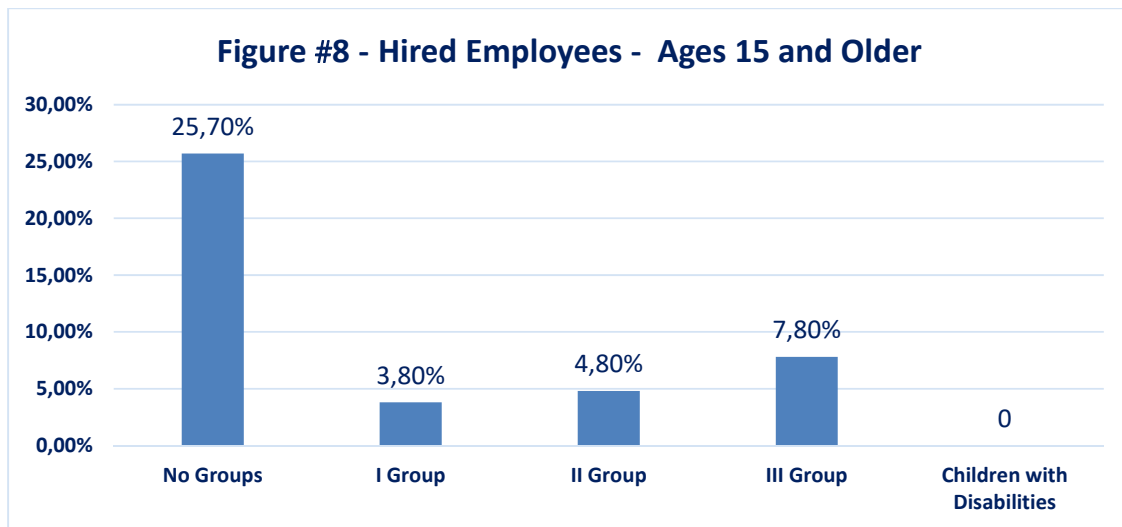
**Figure #7 – Employment Types by Disability Status**



According to the statistical data, the level of employment of persons with disabilities varies according to their status. For example, among persons (ages 15 and older) with acute disability (Group I) – only 3.8% were employed; among those with considerable disabilities (Group II) – 4.8%, and among those with moderate disabilities (Group III) – 7.8%. According to GeoStat, in case of 1,161 children with disabilities (ages 15-16) there are no more than 10 cases of their employment (see Figure #9).

The share of hired employees among the population not belonging to any groups with disabilities is approximately 25.7%, which is five times more than total share of employed persons with disabilities (see Figure #8).



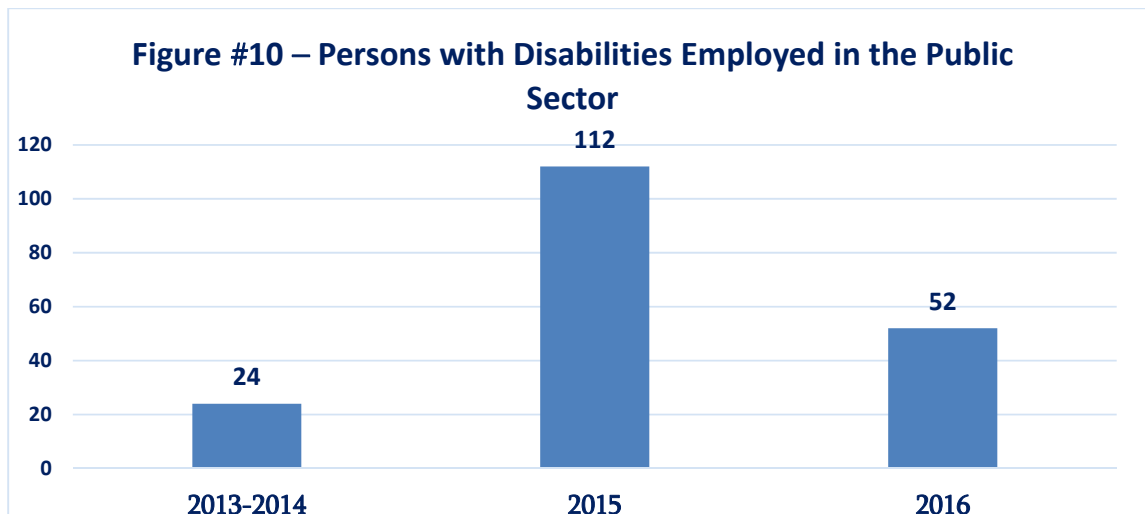


*Source: Information received from National Statistics Office of Georgia*

**Figure #9 – Distribution of the Population Aged 15 and Older by the Status of Disability and Employment**

	Total Population	Hired Workers
<b>In total</b>	<b>3,022,475</b>	<b>748,599</b>
None of the groups	2,860,207	733,794
Group I	26,784	1,016
Group II	58,255	2,778
Group III	9,902	777
Children with disabilities	1,161	...
Refused to answer	4,589	629
Not indicated	61,577	

According to the Civil Service Bureau, employment practices of people with disabilities are particularly limited in those public institutions where activities are considered as public service. More precisely, as it turns out, in 2014, the number of civil servants with disabilities in Georgia was only 24. This indicator increased to 112 in 2015, and in 2016 it nearly halved and decreased to 52 (see Figure #10).



**Source:** Civil Service Bureau

The majority of people with disabilities in the public sector are employed in local self-government bodies; accordingly, trends of the public sector in 2014-2016 are largely determined by the practice of employing people with disabilities in similar institutions. For example, in 2016, the number of people with disabilities employed in local self-government bodies decreased from 77 to 28 (63%).

As a result of restrictions being imposed on the number of staff and non-staff employees of in the public sector by amendments to the Local Self-Government Code in 2014, starting from 2015, the number of employees of local self-government bodies has been decreasing significantly. However, the level of overall decline falls significantly behind the decrease in the number of persons with disabilities employed in the public sector in 2016, which raises questions about the basis used to reduce the number of employees.

According to the Civil Service Bureau, in recent years, only a few cases of employing people with disabilities have taken place in public institutions, such as Administrations of the Government and the President of Georgia, courts, LEPLs (see Figure #11). There were no people with disabilities employed in the Parliament of Georgia. Unsuitable working conditions in public institutions may be considered as one of the reasons.

It is noteworthy, that in November 2017 the Parliament of Georgia, in cooperation with IDFI, presented [the adaptation plan](#) of the parliamentary building (Tbilisi).

<b>Figure #11 – People with Disabilities Employed in the Public Sector by Type of Institution</b>			
<b>Public Institution</b>	<b>2013-2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Administrations of the Government and the President of Georgia	-	1	1
Parliament of Georgia	-	0	0
Autonomous Republics of Adjara and Abkhazia	-	9	6
Administrations of the State Representatives – Governors' Administrations	0	0	0
Ministries and Staff of the State Ministers	5	22	13
Local Self-Government Bodies	18	77	28
Courts	-	1	1

Public Legal Entities	-	2	3
Other State Institutions	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>52</b>

*Source: Civil Service Bureau*

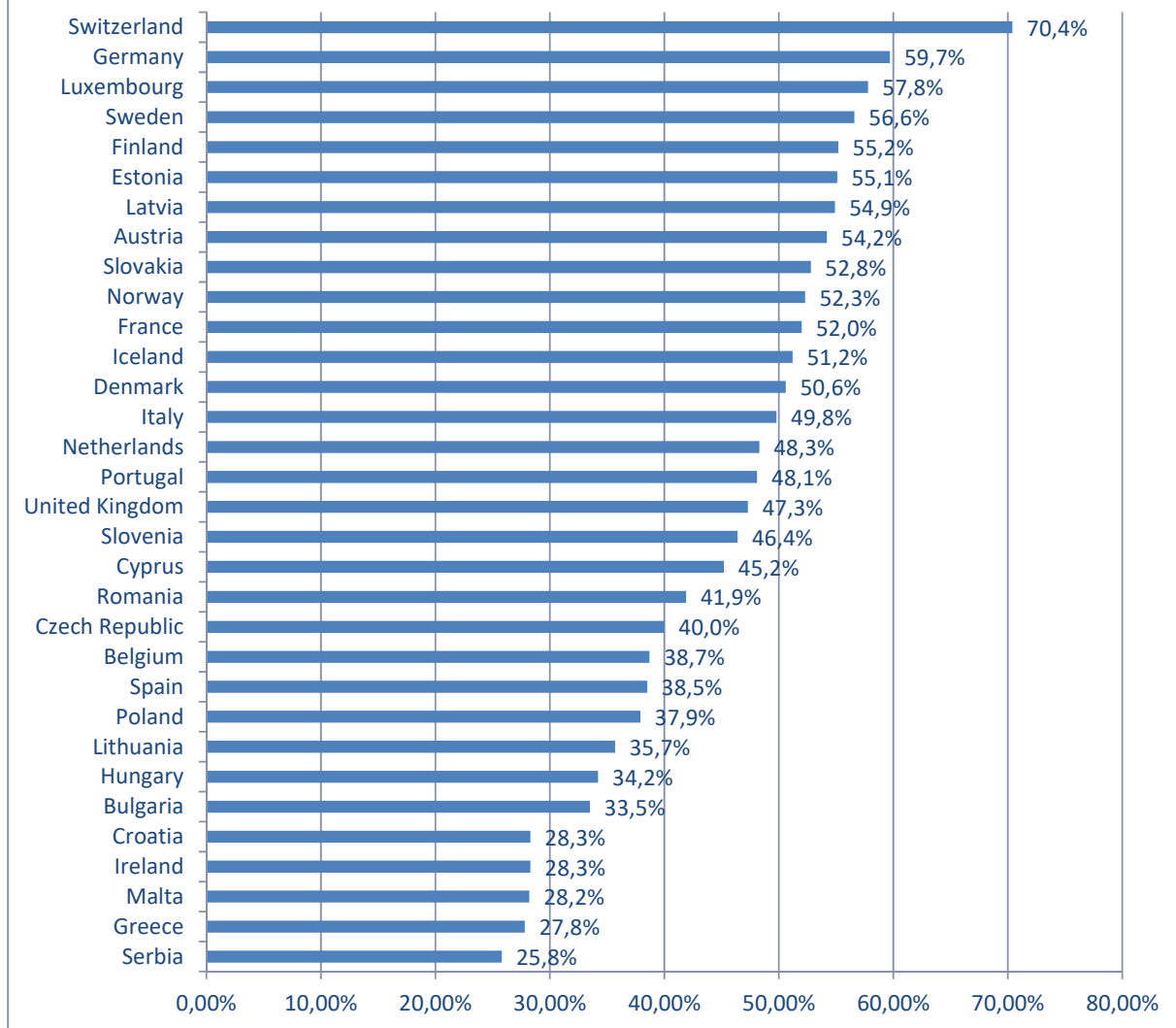
In order to better understand the employment problem of people with disabilities in Georgia, it is important to analyze similar data in European countries. In accordance with [the official statistical data](#) of the European Union, as of 2014, the average employment rate for people with disabilities in Europe was 48.7% (see Figure #12). The highest employment rates for people with disabilities are given in the following countries: Switzerland – 70.4%, Germany – 59.7%, Luxemburg – 57.8%, Sweden – 56.5%, Finland – 55.2%, and Estonia – 55.1%. The lowest rates are given in Greece – 27.8% and Serbia – 25.8%.<sup>3</sup>

In EU, an average of 69% of people with disabilities are hired employees. **Therefore, the employment rate for people with disabilities in EU countries averages in 33.6%, which is about 7 times higher than the same number for Georgia.**

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<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that the EU statistics are based on different classifications and age groups of people with disabilities, limiting the possibility of direct comparison between Georgia and EU.

**Figure #12 – Statistics of Employment of Persons with Disabilities  
in EU Member States**



## Costs of Infrastructure Adaptation

An important challenge for the country is the inadequate infrastructure for people with disabilities, which significantly complicates their full participation in public life. The Georgian Law on the Social Protection of Disabled Persons provides for the creation of appropriate conditions for uninterrupted use of infrastructure by people with disabilities. Moreover, the Law defines the obligation of considering demands of people with disabilities in design and construction of social infrastructure facilities.

According to information received from Tbilisi City Hall Improvement Service, which is responsible for maintaining city infrastructure, the City Hall always considers adapting its infrastructure projects to the needs of persons with disabilities at the implementation stage. However, the Improvement Service does not keep a separate record of expenditures related to the adaptation works. In addition, the Improvement Service provided IDFI with information only for 2015-2017:

**Figure #13 – Expenditures incurred by Tbilisi City Hall on Infrastructure Adaptation for Persons with Disabilities in 2015-2017**

Period	Project	Cost of Adaptation	Overall Project Cost
2015-2016	Ramps were built on more than 100 streets	-	-
2015	Homeless shelter construction works	-	1,650,000
2015	Rehabilitation and adaptation of the Lokomotiv Stadium	-	870,000
2016	Construction of a Mediathek in Kikvidze Park	-	More than 2,000,000
2016	Rehabilitation of Baratashvili and Gulia Bridges	-	-
2016	Overpass construction on Pushkin Street	-	4,289,479
2017	Tbiliservice Group Ltd. plans to fix PwD lifts installed in Vake and Tbilisi Opera underpasses.	-	-

Infrastructure adaptation works are also done by district administrations of Tbilisi. These district administrations do not follow a common approach of keeping record of expenditures related to PwDs. There also is not a common approach to how much funds should be allocated to infrastructure work. For example, no district administration provided us with information about infrastructure adaptations expenses for 2013; and only two administrations, that of Isani and Samgori, did so for 2014 (see Figure #14).

In 2015-2017, the most funds were spent by Gldani district administration – GEL 60.9 thousand was spent specifically on building ramps, while construction works worth a total of GEL 453 thousand included infrastructure adaptation for people with disabilities.

Apart from the data presented in the table below, the majority of Tbilisi district administrations state that PwD infrastructure adaptation works are included in the construction of sports playgrounds, squares and sidewalks, and that they do not keep a separate record for these types of expenses.

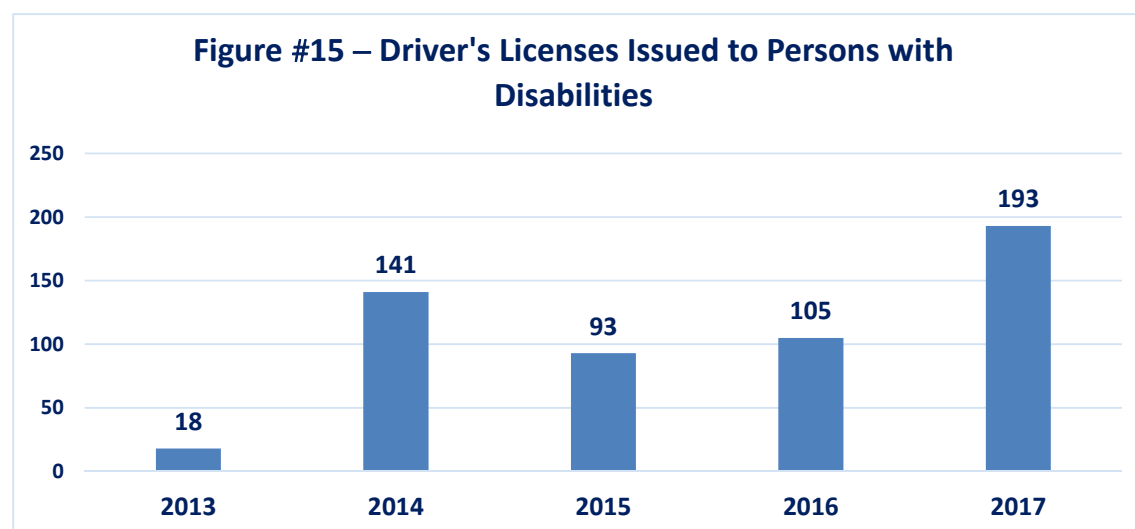
**Figure #14 – Expenditures on Infrastructure Adaptation for Persons with Disabilities**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Gldani District Administration</b>	0	0	331,688.6	112,862.8	69,376
<b>Didube District Administration</b>	-	-	46,525.7	-	-
<b>Vake District Administration</b>	-	-	816.2	-	-
<b>Isani District Administration</b>	-	20,118.8	1,579	11,404.6	8,644.7
<b>Mtatsminda District Administration</b>	-	-	-	-	31,847.3
<b>Nadzaladevi District Administration</b>	-	-	21,596	7,590.1	-
<b>Samgori District Administration</b>	-	36,984	-	21,033.9	-
<b>Chughureti District Administration</b>	-	-	-	51,944.3	5,208.3
<b>Saburtalo District Administration</b>			16,743		
<b>Krtsanisi District Administration</b>			6,959.7		

## Driver's Licenses and Vehicle Identification Marks Issued to Persons with Disabilities

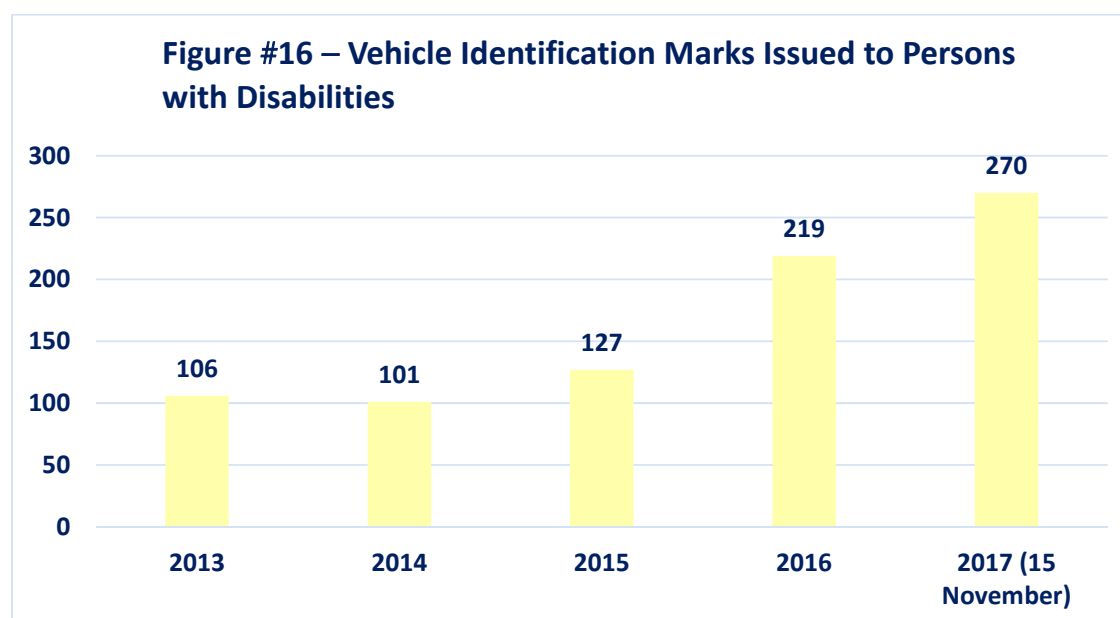
IDFI requested information about the number of driver's licenses being issued to PwDs by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and the number of vehicle identification marks issued by Tbilisi City Hall Transport Service. The received data suggests a marked increase in both cases in 2017.

According to the MIA Service Agency, driver's licenses were issued to 193 PwDs in 2017, which is twice more than in 2016 (see Figure #15). In 2013, driver's licenses were issued to only 18 persons with disabilities. One of the reasons for the increase in 2017 was the 2016 decision by the MIA to [provide](#) PwD adapted vehicles to license seekers. Prior to this, persons with disabilities had to [bring](#) an adapted vehicle on their own to take a driving test.



According to data received from the Tbilisi City Hall Transport Service, the number of issued PwD vehicle identification marks has been significantly increasing over the past 4 years, from 101 in 2014 to 270 in the 2017 (see Figure #16).

The positive trend in the number of issued PwD licenses places a greater moral responsibility on the public to refrain from using PwD parking spaces. In this regard, it is especially troubling that these parking spaces are frequently [used](#) even by city officials.



## Conclusion

Data analyzed in this document shows that Georgia has a long way to go in terms of keeping comprehensive statistics on persons with disabilities. Particularly troubling is the lack of information on functional limitations of PwDs, which greatly complicates the development and implementation of a state policy required to meet the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The data that does exist raises important questions about the effectiveness of the state's efforts to socially integrate PwDs and adapt the environment for their needs. A good indicator of this is the level of PwD employment, which, according to the 2014 population census is only 4.8%, 7 times lower than the EU average.

IDFI hopes that the Georgian government will start taking effective steps in the nearest future to start keeping more accurate and comprehensive statistics on persons with disabilities, and that it will increase efforts to resolve problems related to the integration of people with disabilities in public life and adapting the social and physical environment for their needs.