

Medvedev Signs Law Ratifying UN Convention on Rights of Disabled

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Over 9 percent of Russia's population is disabled. **Denis Grishkin**

Outgoing President Dmitry Medvedev on Thursday signed into law a bill ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People, exactly four years after the convention came into force.

The Convention asserts that "persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms" and identifies specific actions for upholding those rights, including those of accessibility to public facilities, equal employment opportunities, and participation in political life.

Around the world, 110 countries have joined the Convention, which Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov signed in September 2008, RIA-Novosti reported. In March, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin ordered the government to introduce changes in legislation to implement the provisions of the Convention.

The Convention first came into force on May 3, 2008, after being adopted by the UN General

Assembly in December 2006, according to the UN website.

There are more than 13 million disabled people in Russia, or 9.2 percent of the population, Health and Social Development Minister Tatyana Golikova said in February, Interfax reported.

Several instances of apparent discrimination against disabled people have drawn national media attention in recent weeks. Last week, the mother of an autistic child said a Moscow aquarium refused to arrange a tour on a regular working day for a group of autistic students, drawing outcry on social networks and from human rights advocates. Aquarium officials said they were looking out for the well-being of the children by offering to give them a tour on a day when the facility would normally be closed.

And airline Vladivostok Air came under fire last week for barring a disabled 18-year-old girl from boarding a cross-country flight after saying certain documents were needed to certify it was safe for her to fly. Prosecutors said they were investigating the incident.

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