

Furor in Greece over pedophilia as a disability

January 9 2012, By NICHOLAS PAPHITIS , Associated Press

(AP) -- Greek disability groups expressed anger Monday at a government decision to expand a list of state-recognized disability categories to include pedophiles, exhibitionists and kleptomaniacs.

The National Confederation of Disabled People called the action "incomprehensible," and said pedophiles are now awarded a higher government disability pay than some people who have received [organ transplants](#).

The Labor Ministry said categories added to the expanded list - that also includes pyromaniacs, [compulsive gamblers](#), fetishists and sadomasochists - were included for purposes of medical assessment and used as a gauge for allocating financial assistance.

But NCDP leader Yiannis Vardakastanis, who is blind, warned the new list could create new difficulties for disabled Greeks who are already facing benefit cuts due to the country's financial crisis.

"What's happened is incomprehensible. I think there is some big mistake. The ministry should have a different policy on disability," Vardakastanis told the Associated Press. "The list contains major changes to disability quotients, which could effectively remove many people from access to benefits."

The new list gives pyromaniacs and pedophiles disability pay up to 35 percent, compared to 80 percent for [heart transplant recipients](#).

"It's really not serious to grant Peeping Toms a 20-30 percent disability rate, and 10 percent to diabetics, who have insulin shots four or five times a day," said Vardakastanis.

Greece has been fighting to avoid bankruptcy since 2009. Public spending on health and welfare programs has been sharply cut under austerity measures imposed as a condition for receiving emergency loans from the [International Monetary Fund](#) and other countries using the euro currency.

Independently run welfare programs that survived on state grants have been the hardest hit, leaving some disabled groups, including the deaf, facing sudden drops in their standard of care.

The government is also battling widespread abuse in the welfare system, forcing tens of thousands of disabled people to be reassessed.

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