How to make your elections campaign accessible
for persons with disabilities and the general public

Contents

Introduction

Over 80 million persons with disabilities live in the European Union. However, most election campaigns do not take into account the accessibility needs of persons with physical, sensory, intellectual or psychosocial disabilities.

Persons with disabilities are deprived from their right to cast an informed ballot due to many accessibility hurdles: hard to understand information; lack of subtitles; printed materials with a small font or not in braille, etc.

This manual is intended to provide the staff of elections campaigns all across Europe with easy to implement tips to assure that their political message will reach every European with disabilities

The manual is divided into sections corresponding to different means of communication. This way, the reader can easily take steps to assure their materials can be accessed and understood by all persons.

1 -Everyone has the right to an informed vote

Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Apps

- Follow the [10 golden rules of web accessibility](#) (an overview)
  - Technical standard – follow the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1](#)
- Different levels of intervention for developers & editors
  - Coherent and simple structure (developers – how they code the web or the app)
  - Explain schemas and flowcharts (editors)
  - Use sans serif font (developers and editors)
  - Avoid interferences such as automatic videos, music, etc. (developers)
  - Include alt text (alternative text) on images that contain information and subtitles and sign language interpretation on videos(editors)
- Provide information in [easy to read](#) format. Mark it clearly both for the user and search engine.
- [Test tools exist](#) for web accessibility, but do not check all issues

# Accessibility of Social Media

- Alternative text on pictures.
  - [Learn how to do it on Twitter:](#)
  - [Learn how to do it on Facebook](#)
- Use Camel Case (capitalize first letter of every word) for hashtags. For example, #AccessibilityIsGood, and not #accessibilityisgood)

Accessibility of Audio

- Provide transcripts or sign language interpretation of radio programs and podcasts.

Accessibility of Videos

- Add subtitles and sign language interpretation to all your videos.
- It's better if the subtitles are closed captions (not incrusted in the video)
  - They are easy to make on YouTube ; they are auto-generated and just need revision and correction where inaccurate.
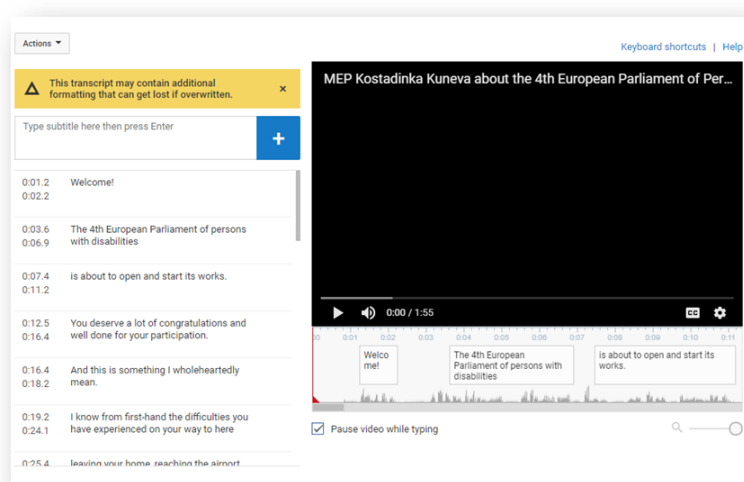
- Provide a transcript for the videos – a copy of the subtitles with clear marking of who is speaking and relevant background sounds.
- If the video is presented during an event, provide printed text description.
- If the video contains visual actions which are self-explanatory, you need to add audio description: Example of audio description
- All non-decorative visual information needs to be read out loud by the voice off in the video or by the audio description.

- Printed text in large print should be provided whenever shown during an event.
- Use easy to understand language in both the spoken information of the video and its subtitles.
- Ideally, provide a transcript of the video in easy-to-read format.

Accessibility of offline materials

- When outsourcing the production of a leaflet, promotional material or other, make sure to specify accessibility requirements in the contract and to check for those upon delivery:
    - Examples. Sans-serif font, contrast, size, large print, etc.
- Always provide an accessible digital version of the material.
- Provide material in easy-to-read format: evidence shows that easy-to-read materials also draw attention for more complex materials.
- Braille documents: Provide some copies of your materials in Braille during events and, ideally, upon request on your website.
- Large Print: provide some copies of your materials in Large Print (> 14 points) during events and, ideally, upon request on your website.

Accessibility of Events

- Clearly state that the event will have accessibility measures.
- Ensure the invitation is accessible and easy to understand.
- Ensure step-free access to the venue (ramps, lifts, etc).
- Ensure that there are spaces with no chairs and wide room of maneuver for wheelchair users, blind, deafblind and partially sighted persons – close to the exits is preferable.
- Ensure that a hearing loop is installed and working in the venue.
- Ensure that reserved seats are provided in the front for deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind participants.
- Provide real time captioning (subtitles done in real time).
    - This is essential for many deaf and hard of hearing people who don't use sign language.
    - It is also very useful for other people in the audience and reports after events.
- Provide interpretation in the national sign language. International sign language interpretation must be provided when there are participants who are deaf and come from different countries.
- Assure that you follow guidelines on positioning of sign language interpreters
- Ensure that graphics and important visuals are read aloud.
- Ensure the proceedings are clear and easy to follow.

Captioning at work

Accessibility of political manifestos

- Provide your manifesto and political programmes in national sign language(s) on your website.

- Provide your manifestos in easy-to-read format. They are are not only more downloaded, but also boost download rate of the accompanying document.

  - Example of easy-to-read manifesto
  - Contact a provider in your country

Easy to read documents usually have this logo

Accessibility of international events

- Real time captioning (subtitles in real time) is recommended in all events. The following two providers are used to work in international events: Global Real Time Captioning and VelotypeFollow the Sign Language Interpreter Guidelines For international/European level meetings (European Union of the Deaf)
    - If one or several deaf persons attend who use the same national sign language, interpretation from/into this national sign language should be preferred.
    - If there are participants using different national sign languages, International Sign interpretation should be preferred. List of International Sign interpreters
    - If the event lasts longer than one hour, at least two interpreters must be provided. Long conferences and workshops (full day or more) require at least three interpreters.
    - Interpreters must be given appropriate break times, as they are co-working at all times, supporting their colleague. Therefore, if the participants require interpretation during breaks (e.g. for networking), additional interpreters must be provided.

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Useful contacts

- [National disability organisations](#) will have lists of providers for sign language, braille, easy to read, real time captioning and others.
    - [Easy-to-read in your language](#):
    - [National associations of deaf persons](#) can provide contacts of real time captioning and sign language providers
    - [National sign language interpreters' associations](#)
    - For braille and large print contact [associations of Blind and partially sighted persons](#)

How to spread your accessible documents

- Your regular communication channels.
- Associations of persons with disabilities may share with their members very good accessible documents.
- Specialist magazines ([superando.it](#) , [handicap.fr](#), [servimedia.es](#) [pluralesingular.pt](#))

About EDF

The European Disability Forum is an independent NGO that defends the interests of 80 million Europeans with disabilities. We are a unique platform which brings together representative organisation of persons with disabilities from across Europe. We are run by persons with disabilities and their families. We are a strong, united voice of persons with disabilities in Europe.

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