

Guidelines for accessible elections in Europe

France/Czech Republic/United Kingdom (Scotland) – Inclusion Europe

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

The Accommodating Diversity for Active Participation in European Elections (ADAP) project tries to overcome the voting obstacles faced by people with intellectual disabilities and older people by raising awareness about this problem at both the national and European level. The project outcomes include developing recommendations for accessible elections in Europe – in both regular and easy-to-read versions in 21 languages – covering legislation on legal capacity, accessible information, training, support for decision-making in voting, and access to the voting process.

“For us, persons with intellectual disabilities, exercising the right to vote means that we are citizens, that we belong to our country, and that we can give our opinions on who runs the country and what they should do”

—Corinne Clermont, Vice President, Nous Aussi (France)

FACTS & FIGURES

- Three publications have been developed and widely disseminated (in 21 languages) as well as a collection of good practices for accessible elections from 27 European countries (in 3 languages). Overall, 5,000 hard copies of the publications have been distributed and are also available online.
- Partners have met with 11 members of Parliament as well as several national-level politicians in France, Scotland, and the Czech Republic. They have also participated in EU-level conferences and cooperated with intergovernmental bodies

PROBLEMS TARGETED

People with intellectual, sensory, or physical disabilities as well as older people are often excluded from voting processes due to a lack of accessibility. Moreover, through targeted questionnaires, Inclusion Europe discovered that this is a problem, of which many European politicians are unaware, and thus take no steps in addressing. Furthermore, these groups lacked the knowledge and means to advocate for their voting rights, or did not understand the value of political participation.

SOLUTION AND METHODOLOGY

A first phase analysed the situation within EU member states, focusing specifically on the European elections of June 2009. A second phase provided information, good practices, and civic education to politicians, NGOs, and people with disabilities or older persons in order to break down the barriers to their participation in the election processes.

Project partners identified three target groups when implementing the two phases: 1) political parties, 2) national electoral bodies organizing the elections, and 3) European Union citizens at risk of encountering problems when attempting to participate in elections. All project deliverables were developed in consultation with the persons at risk, and people with intellectual disabilities from three countries tested all materials to ensure accessibility.

OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

The **ADAP** project has been followed-up by both Inclusion Europe (IE) and by project partners. IE has further disseminated ADAP publications on its new “voting-for-all.eu” website, and has included ADAP project outcomes in a manifesto for the 2014 European Parliament elections. French partner and member Nous Aussi has published a poster explaining how to vote, which has been placed in the area of Dunquerque for the 2014 city council and European elections. French members Nous Aussi and Unapei have participated in an official hearing for a report commissioned by the French Prime Minister on how to make elections more accessible, where they further referred to and mentioned the ADAP publications. The International Foundation for Electoral Systems has also requested the collaboration of Inclusion Europe on accessibility of elections and disability issues. The project could easily be copied and reproduced throughout the European Union.

Photo: Yes

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