



○ Grupi për Qasje në Zgjedhje
○ Grupa za Pristup Izborima.
○ Election Access Group

MANUAL

**FOR INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
IN ELECTORAL AND POLITICAL PROCESSES**

June
2016





Manual for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Electoral and Political Processes
Copyright © 2016 Election Access Group.
All rights reserved.

This manual has been produced from the Election Access Group, supported by International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The content of this manual is the sole responsibility of Election Access Group (EAG), and cannot be regarded as reflecting the position of the IFES or the position of the USAID.

Permission Statement: No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system without the written permission of EAG.



This guide aims to provide a practical aid to public institutions, political entities and civil society in Kosovo, in relation to the best ways of inclusion of persons with disabilities in electoral and political processes. In addition, the guide provides data on legal requirements related to access of persons with disabilities to public buildings. The users of this guide will be able to identify forms and ways of inclusion of persons with disabilities in Kosovo in electoral processes, in various capacities, and in political life.

Table of Contents

Introduction to the Election Access Group	6
Section I: Guide to Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Electoral and Political Processes	7
Introduction	8
Why is it important to include persons with disabilities in electoral and political processes?	9
Definitions and the legal framework	9
What can the Assembly of Kosovo do?	10
What can political entities do?	12
What can civil society organizations do?	16
What can the Central Election Commission (CEC) do?	19
What can the Election Complaints and Appeals Panel (ECAP) do?	21
What can associations of persons with disabilities do?	22
What can the Ombudsperson do?	24
What can the Government do?	26
What can the private sector do?	26
Section II: Persons with disabilities as leaders	29
Argentina	30
Australia	30
Belgium	30
Canada	30
Ecuador	30
Fiji	30
Greece	31
Indonesia	31
New Zealand	31
United Kingdom	31
United States of America	31
Section III: Basic accessibility standards	33
Buildings with obligatory access as per the Administrative Instruction	34
How is access granted?	39

Introduction to the Election Access Group

The Election Access Group (EAG) is a multi-stakeholder working group that aims to ensure full participation of persons with disabilities in the electoral processes and public life. It is composed of representatives from organizations representing four types of disability (Mr. Afrim Maliqi, HandiKOS, Ms. Rukije Gashi, Kosovo's Association of the Deaf, Mr. Daut Tishuki, Kosovo's Association of the Blind, and Ms. Sebahate Beqiri, Down Syndrome Kosova), two members of Kosovo's National Assembly (Ms. Ganimete Musliu and Mr. Salih Morina), two representatives from the Central Election Commission of Kosovo (Mr. Florian Dushi¹ and Mr. Nexhmedin Hyseni), one representative of the Election Complaint and Appeals Panel (Ms. Valbona Millaku), two representatives from state institutions (Ms. Luljeta Kabashi, Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, and Mr. Qazim Gashi, Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare). The EAG is chaired by Mr. Afrim Maliqi and co-chaired by Ms. Ganimete Musliu.

The group welcomes the contribution of all the stakeholders to promote the approaches for persons with disabilities in the election process and public life.

¹During the development of this guidebook, Mr. Florian Dushi was a Member of the Central Election Commission and a Co-chair and member of Election Access Group.

SECTION 1

Guide to Inclusion of Persons
with Disabilities in Electoral
and Political Processes

Introduction

This guide provides information to the representatives of public institutions, political entities and civil society on the most appropriate ways of including persons with disabilities. The document describes what needs to be considered for various groups of persons with disabilities, in order for them to contribute actively to the electoral processes and political sector in Kosovo.

The guide was drafted taking into account the demands and needs of persons with disabilities themselves, documents and strategies of the Election Access Group, laws and administrative instructions. The guide provides practical advice to public institutions, political entities, civil society, electoral management bodies and associations of persons of disabilities. It also addresses the problems and challenges which are encountered by the community of persons with disabilities so as to improve the conditions and environment for participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life.

On the basis of World Health Organization estimates that persons with disabilities comprise around 15% of a country's population, the number of persons with disabilities in Kosovo is estimated to be between 150,000 and 200,000. While the number of these persons is high, there are various types of disabilities, consequently, the specific needs of such groups to be included in public life vary. Such a high number of individuals is significant because it represents a considerable potential for the political process. Moreover, the benefits of the inclusion of persons with disabilities would be dual. On one hand political entities, for instance, would increase the number of voters, and the numbers of their members and volunteers. On the other hand, persons with disabilities would benefit from greater engagement in political life, and would develop their skills with the opportunities provided to them by political entities of Kosovo. By using this guide, all these stakeholder groups will find it easier to include persons with disabilities within their structures.

Why is it important to include persons with disabilities in electoral and political processes?

Inclusion of persons with disabilities is guaranteed by international and domestic legislation as a basic human right. Persons with disabilities represent a social potential that could be used as a political and economic advantage. On the other hand, the non-inclusion of such persons would turn them into a social burden. Persons with disabilities are an added value for the society and as such they can give a precious contribution in

diversifying the political spectrum and social development. Furthermore, they can contribute to electoral processes in Kosovo by helping in organizing and managing electoral processes. . Public institutions, political entities and civil society itself would benefit from the inclusion of persons with disabilities and at the same time would meet the legal requirements in place.

Definitions and the legal framework

According to the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), “[p]ersons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”² Persons with temporary incapacity cannot be considered as persons with disabilities. Nevertheless, depending on national legislation, a disability in one country may not be considered as such in another country.

In Kosovo, the law states that “disability is a limited ability to carry out ordinary activities in the everyday life of a person, as a consequence of physical, sensory or mental damage, which impairs the participation in ordinary everyday activities.”³ The applicable legislation of Kosovo is to a great extent aligned to the definition stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Political entities, civil society and other stakeholder groups can undertake a number of measures

²United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 1. 2006

³Law No. 03/L-019 of the Republic of Kosovo on Vocational ability, rehabilitation and employment of people with disabilities, 2009.

and activities in order to ensure the access and inclusion of persons with disabilities, based on their specific needs. Participation barriers should be carefully analyzed by every stakeholder group based on the specific circumstances of the location, culture and other circumstances that make difficult or hinder the participation of persons with disabilities in electoral and political life.

What can the Assembly of Kosovo do ?

As the highest democratic institution in the country, the Assembly of Kosovo has an extensive role in the improvement of the social position of all marginalized groups of citizens, including persons with disabilities. Through its legislative power, it can effectively help persons with disabilities integrate into electoral and political processes, In this regard the EAG recommends that the Assembly:

- 1** Transforms into Law the Administrative Instruction on Technical Conditions of Construction Buildings for Access of Persons with Disabilities;
- 2** Further supplements the legal basis for protection and empowerment of persons with disabilities;
- 3** In cooperation with parliamentary groups and political entities, includes persons with disabilities in public consultation processes;
- 4** Includes issues relating to persons with disabilities within the scope of the responsibilities of the Committee on Human Rights. Together with persons with disabilities and their associations, the Committee should review all legislation from a disability lens, in order to make recommendations to plenary sessions of the Assembly.

The Assembly has the responsibility to provide access to persons with disabilities to enable them to serve their community as elected representatives or Ministers, to be present as informants to Assembly and Assembly Committee deliberations and to witness and monitor the performance of their representatives in the Assembly. Municipal Assemblies have the same obligations.

The EAG recommends that the National Assembly (and Municipal Assemblies) provide:

- 5** Physical access sufficient for persons with disabilities to all public and representatives' areas of Assembly buildings;
- 6** Supporting facilities such as appropriately skilled additional staff and equipment to enable representatives with disabilities to fulfil their responsibilities effectively;
- 7** Materials relating to Assembly activities in formats accessible to representatives, witnesses and monitors with disabilities, such as Braille, large format print or audio.
- 8** Access to information and interaction with representatives of the Assembly through sign language by providing interpreters.

Each public institution must have the following basic accessibility components:

- **A ramp or elevator suitable for wheelchair and other physical disability access;**
- **Sufficiently wide doorways for wheelchair access;**
- **Sufficient space in corridors and rooms for wheelchairs to maneuver;**
- **Floor coverings that are not slippery and no protruding low hanging objects on walls;**
- **Toilets that are fully accessible to persons with physical disabilities, including appropriate height of fixtures, sufficient room to maneuver a wheelchair and ramps.**

Figure 1: Basic accessibility components

Within its constitutional and legal authorities, the Assembly also elects and appoints incumbents to the most important positions within the state administration. In this regard, the EAG recommends that the Assembly:

- 9 Appoints persons with disabilities to the boards of independent agencies and other similar positions.

As part of its oversight authority, in relation to the implementation of legislation and the work of the institutions which report to the Assembly of Kosovo, the EAG recommends that the Assembly:

- 10 Monitors the implementation of laws that regulate issues related to persons with disabilities;
- 11 Summons for questioning and holds accountable ministers and leaders of other state agencies who fail to implement the legal provisions relating to persons with disabilities.

What can political entities do ?

Political entities in Kosovo can undertake several actions that would enable the inclusion of persons with disabilities. These include technical matters, such as physical access to buildings and other working places as well as promoting active participation by persons with disabilities in political entity affairs, including internal party elections and as candidates for municipal and national elections.

General physical access

Persons with disabilities need full access at all levels of the party organization, such as sub-branches, branches and other centers of political entities. Physical obstacles include but are not limited to stairways, high thresholds, obstructions, slippery floor coverings, narrow passages and toilets inaccessible to persons with disabilities. Lack of ramp access is highly discouraging to persons with physical disabilities: they have to be carried by other persons to enter and exit the building.

Many political entity offices in Kosovo are currently not accessible to persons with disabilities. Even where an attempt has been made to provide access, in some cases the facilities do not meet the minimum legal requirements, for example the inclination of ramps is too steep or toilets are too narrow. Such physical obstacles are just the first step to be addressed in including persons with disabilities.

The EAG recommends that political entities ensure that all their offices and campaign venues, meet the basic accessibility components listed in Figure 1.

Initiatives of political entities for inclusion of persons with disabilities

The engagement of political entities with the inclusion of persons with disabilities does not end with the modification of buildings and ensuring physical access. In Kosovo, there has been little encouragement for persons with disabilities to be involved in politics. There are a small number of persons with disabilities who have been active members of political entities and who have been candidates for public office or for internal party elections.

The EAG recommends that political entities promote inclusion of persons with disabilities in their activities by:

- 1** Actively cooperating with persons with disabilities who have been past candidates in internal or public office elections to build a dialogue and relationships with the community of persons with disabilities;
- 2** Providing sign language interpretation for all audio visual political entity program materials and events;
- 3** Creating links with organizations and forums of persons with disabilities;
- 4** Including persons with disabilities in all their activities, campaigns and events;
- 5** Encouraging persons with disabilities to stand as candidates in internal party elections at the sub-branch, branch and central levels;
- 6** Including persons with disabilities in the candidate lists for municipal and national Assembly elections and as candidates for mayor;
- 7** Appointing persons with disabilities to positions within the political entity, for example as electoral campaign staff, and as observers;
- 8** Nominating persons with disabilities as members of Municipal Election Commissions and Polling Station Commissions;
- 9** Including persons with disabilities in campaign events and rallies.

Mainstreaming disability in political entity policies and platforms

The inclusion of persons with disabilities in the development of political entity policies and platforms can ensure that their needs are reflected in these documents.

The EAG recommends that political entities:

- 10** Consult with persons with disabilities and their organizations while drafting their programs, policies and platforms;
- 11** Involve persons with disabilities in the team drafting programs, policies and platforms;
- 12** Use accessible formats for policy and platform documents and campaign materials, for example using large format print and Braille for printed materials and sign language on TV spots.

Establishment of forums of persons with disabilities

Political entities should ensure that there is a continual and structured dialogue with persons with disabilities. The establishment of party forums for persons with disabilities, similar to those for youth and women is one way in which political entities can ensure representation of persons with disabilities within their structures.

Even though such forums would create a sense of 'separateness' of persons with disabilities from the mainstream structures and organs of the political entity, this positive discrimination could provide a transitional solution until there is higher participation by persons with disabilities in the general activities of the political entity. In addition, through this channel persons with disabilities will have the opportunity to show their skills and knowledge, after which the political entity will want to include them for their own interest. It can also be used as an entry point for representation of persons with disabilities in the highest management bodies of the political entities.

The EAG recommends that political entities:

- 13** Create a forum for persons with disabilities within the political entity's structure, as a transitional measure to promote dialogue with persons with disabilities and to ensure representation of persons with disabilities in the management bodies of the entity.

Appointment of a representative within parliamentary caucuses

A structure for cooperation between parliamentary caucuses and organizations of persons with disabilities will assist persons with disabilities to draw attention to their concerns and needs.

These assembly members would be expected to engage in educating their parliamentary colleagues, Ministers and citizens in general, raising their awareness of disability issues. They can summon ministers and other members of the Government to discuss issues of concern for persons with disabilities. They can also exert pressure on the Assembly to ensure persons with disabilities and their associations are invited to all public hearings and other events where their rights are being discussed, and that the Assembly's materials are provided in formats accessible to persons with disabilities.

The EAG recommends that political entities represented in the Assembly of Kosovo and in municipal assemblies:

- 14** Appoint one member within each parliamentary caucus who would be a focal point for dealing with the concerns and needs of persons with disabilities.

Inclusion of persons with disabilities in candidate lists

There are two reasons why it is in political entities' own interest to include persons with disabilities in their lists of candidates for elections. By connecting in this way with the disability community, on one hand the political entity would increase its number of votes by targeting a segment of the population which is poorly represented in institutions. On the other hand, it would likely increase the overall voter turnout and increase the legitimacy of elected institutions in general.

The EAG recommends that political entities:

- 15 Include persons with disabilities in their candidates lists for national and municipal assembly elections and as candidates for mayor.
- 16 Nominate persons with disabilities for government cabinet positions.

What can civil society organizations do ?

There are many ways through which civil society organizations can support inclusion of persons with disabilities in political and electoral processes, as well as public life. Aside from advocacy and monitoring, they can strengthen their influence in this matter, by becoming models of inclusion. This would include measures like: ensuring physical access to their buildings, employing persons with disabilities in their activities and staff, and mainstream disability in all the work they do.

Monitoring

Civil society organizations should be strong allies of persons with disabilities, as advocacy for disability issues falls within the natural commitment of these organizations to support the rights of all persons. Monitoring of the implementation of laws in Kosovo that relate to the rights of persons with disabilities would be a valuable contribution to the disability community.

Having monitoring reports from organizations that are not part of the disability community will provide an independent assessment, with broad public credibility. Civil society organizations can also partner with organizations of persons with disabilities in monitoring the implementation of the relevant laws. This would combine broad experience and perceived objectivity with specialist knowledge of disability issues.

The EAG recommends that civil society organizations:

- 1 Monitor the implementation of Kosovo laws in relation to the rights of persons with disabilities;
- 2 Where effective, form partnerships with organizations of persons with disabilities for this monitoring.

Education and advocacy campaigns can promote rights to representation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in public life, in the candidate lists of political entities, and in lists for observers and election staff. This could include civil society organizations exerting pressure on political entities, such as by promoting good examples of entities that show greater will for inclusion and provide more opportunities for persons with disabilities to join such entities. In addition, examples of entities that are less engaged in promoting and accepting persons with disabilities could also be publicized.

Civil society organizations can organize large-scale campaigns to promote inclusion of persons with disabilities in electoral processes and public life. This would be done by using traditional and new media with the aim to increase the targeted audience as much as possible and to increase the effectiveness of the campaign. Through such campaigns, general awareness of the public would be raised in relation to persons with disabilities, and issues such as stigmatization, stereotypes about persons with disabilities would be tackled, as well as exclusion from education and other issues of importance for persons with disabilities. Civil society organizations could also campaign against discriminatory terminology used in relation to persons with disabilities, using the EAG booklet 'Manual for Terminology and Correct Approach for Persons with Disabilities, 2016' as a guide.

The EAG recommends that civil society organizations:

- 3** Conduct education and advocacy campaigns to promote the rights of persons with disabilities for inclusion in electoral and political processes;
- 4** By publicizing good and bad examples of political entities' inclusion of persons with disabilities, place pressure on political entities to provide more opportunities for inclusion of persons with disabilities;
- 5** Campaign against the use of discriminatory terminology in relation to persons with disabilities.

Structuring of cooperation

Civil society organizations, in particular those with longer experience in the field of advocacy and democratization, can provide a valuable contribution to empowering persons with disabilities. These organizations can provide support in various forms, for example in relation to:

- Providing information on the rights of persons with disabilities and the services and access to facilities to which they are entitled;
- Consultation through informal and formal mechanisms to exchange information on the political environment;
- Advocacy for the rights of persons with disabilities and training in advocacy for persons with disabilities and their associations;
- Inclusion of persons with disabilities in civil society organizations' management and activities; and coordinated monitoring, and advising associations of persons with disabilities on monitoring, of the implementation of legal provisions for access for persons with disabilities, and of institutional policies and practices on disability access.

Each of these forms of cooperation can be structured through the establishment of informal groups or cooperation committees between civil society organizations and associations of persons with disabilities. This would help persons with disabilities and their representative associations get involved in monitoring of institutions and their performance, and in electoral processes.

The EAG recommends that civil society organizations:

- 6 Work with associations of persons with disabilities to form cooperative committees to advocate, inform, consult on and monitor issues related to electoral and political participation of persons with disabilities.

What can the Central Election Commission (CEC) do ?

As the institution that organizes and manages electoral processes, the CEC has a key role in promoting electoral participation of persons with disabilities. The CEC's role and duties intersect in a number of areas with issues important to persons with disabilities, including:

- Physical access to buildings used as polling centers and CEC central and municipal offices, and to the equipment and facilities used for electoral activities;
- Access to electoral administration materials and systems such as voting materials, voter registration related materials, recruitment forms and systems, election results;
- Accessible electoral information and education materials, for example for persons with vision or hearing disabilities;
- Review and amendment of regulations, instructions, procedures and training materials;
- Inclusive staffing of Municipal and Polling Station Election Commissions;
- Employment of persons with disabilities as permanent and temporary election staff.

Physical access to buildings used for electoral purpose and the CEC's electoral equipment and materials requires that the CEC takes measure to provide unhindered access to persons with disabilities so that they can fully participate as voters, election staff or election observers. Similarly, for persons with disabilities to be able to play fully informed roles as voters, election staff, candidates or observers, all electoral administration materials and electoral education and information materials need to be made available by the CEC in formats that can be understood by persons with disabilities, particularly those with visual, hearing or intellectual disabilities. These accessibility provisions should be clearly described in the CEC's regulations, instructions, policies, procedures and training materials.

Employment of qualified persons with disabilities as long or short term election staff serves as an example to encourage other persons with disabilities to express their interest in electoral processes. It also enables the

¹During the development of this guidebook, Mr. Florian Dushi was a Member of the Central Election Commission and a Co-chair and member of Election Access Group.

CEC to uphold the legal obligation⁴ and the commitment made in the memorandum of cooperation⁵ to employ at least one in fifty employees from the disability community.

The EAG recommends that the CEC:

- 1** Reviews and amends its regulations and other legal acts, in compliance with the Law on General Elections, so that accessibility standards that allow persons with disabilities to participate fully in all aspects of electoral processes have a legally obligatory foundation;
- 2** Reviews and amends its policies, procedures and training materials to include specific references to how the CEC will provide access for persons with disabilities to participate fully in all aspects of electoral processes;
- 3** Ensures that for CEC and Municipal Election Commission (MEC) offices, and in buildings used for electoral operations such as processing of out of country votes and counting and tabulating votes, that there is physical access for persons with disabilities to the premises, for example through ramps and elevators, accessible toilet facilities, removal of obstacles and sufficient room for wheelchair maneuverability;
- 4** Ensures that in polling centers:
 - a** There is physical access for persons with disabilities to the premises, for example through ramps and elevators, accessible toilet facilities, removal of obstacles and sufficient room for wheelchair maneuverability;
 - b** Voting screens are accessible to persons in wheelchairs;
 - c** Ballot boxes are placed so that the ballot paper slot can be reached by persons in wheelchairs;
 - d** Ballot papers templates in braille are available for each polling station.
- 5** Provides electoral administration materials and systems such as voting materials, voter registration related materials, recruitment forms and systems, and election results in formats that are understandable by and accessible to persons with visual, hearing and intellectual disabilities;
- 6** Provides all voter education and information materials in formats that are understandable by and accessible to persons with visual, hearing and intellectual disabilities. This includes ensuring that:

⁴Law No. 03/L-019 of the Republic of Kosovo on Vocational ability, rehabilitation and employment of people with disabilities. 2009. Article 12.2.

⁵Memorandum of Cooperation between the Central Election Commission and HandiKOS, Kosovo's Association of the Blind, Kosovo's Association of the Deaf, and Down Syndrome Kosova. October 16,2015.

- a** print, television and electronic materials use high contrast colors;
 - b** these materials contain simple and clear information;
 - c** television, web and social media based materials present messages in audio and in sign language; and
 - d** printed materials are available in formats that can be understood by persons with visual disabilities, including braille;
- 7** Employs persons with disabilities in its permanent staff and temporary election staff, at least at the level required by Kosovo law.

What can the Election Complaints and Appeals Panel (ECAP) do ?

As the body that deals with all complaints and appeals about the electoral process, and CEC decisions, it is important that ECAP's operations are accessible to persons with disabilities. This includes not only physical access to ECAP locations, but also access to information about ECAP's operations and the laws it enforces and to methods of lodging complaints and appeals and their supporting documents.

The EAG recommends that ECAP:

- 1** Reviews and amends its regulations and other legal acts so that accessibility standards that allow persons with disabilities to lodge and monitor the progress of election complaints and appeals have a legally obligatory foundation;
- 2** Reviews and amends its policies, procedures and training materials to include specific references to how ECAP will provide access for persons with disabilities to lodge and monitor the progress of election complaints and appeals;
- 3** Ensures that there is physical access for persons with disabilities to ECAP office premises, for example through ramps and elevators, accessible toilet facilities, removal of obstacles and sufficient room for wheelchair maneuverability. ECAP should consider placing an information and complaint lodgment desk on the ground floor of its current headquarters during the election period;

- 4 Where allowed by law, provide facilities for lodging election complaints and appeals in an electronic format, to assist persons with disabilities to meet the tight legal deadlines;
- 5 Ensures that a sign language interpreter is available at its office for the periods during which election complaints and appeals can be lodged and are processed and determined;
- 6 Provides its administration materials and systems in formats that are understandable by and accessible to persons with visual, hearing and intellectual disabilities;
- 7 Provides all education and information materials about its operations in formats that are understandable by and accessible to persons with visual, hearing and intellectual disabilities. This includes ensuring that:
 - a print, television and electronic materials use high contrast colors;
 - b these materials contain simple and clear information;
 - c television, web and social media based materials present messages in audio and in sign language; and
 - d printed materials are available in formats that can be understood by persons with visual disabilities, including Braille;
- 8 Employs persons with disabilities among its staff, at least at the level required by Kosovo law.

What can associations of persons with disabilities do?



Associations of persons with disabilities play a critical role in advocating for and monitoring the implementation of electoral and political rights of person with disabilities. To implement this role effectively, these associations need to ensure that they are effective in mobilizing their membership and potential members, and in coordinating their advocacy for and services to persons with disabilities. They need to take care that their multiple roles as advocates, and as implementers for, service providers to and monitors of the performance of government agencies does not give rise to any potential conflicts of interest.

The EAG recommends that associations of persons with disabilities:

- 1** Mobilize persons with disabilities to participate in elections;
- 2** Organize public education campaigns on electoral and political processes for persons with disabilities;
- 3** Train and build capacities of persons with disabilities to stand as candidates for elections;
- 4** Urge and support persons with disabilities to seek permanent or temporary employment in election management bodies;
- 5** Educate and inform state institutions on the electoral and political rights of persons with disabilities;
- 6** Engage in joint advocacy efforts to political entities, through creating a joint platform of associations of persons with disabilities;
- 7** Monitor CEC commitments for employment of persons with disabilities and ECAP adherence to legal requirements for employment of persons with disabilities;
- 8** Enhance cooperation with the Assembly of Kosovo Committee on Human Rights in order to analyze draft laws from the perspective of persons with disabilities;
- 9** Provide expertise and assistance to the government and Assembly of Kosovo, and municipal administrations and assemblies in the drafting of legislation;
- 10** Increase cooperation with other civil society organizations in order to enhance the effectiveness of advocacy;
- 11** Assist persons with disabilities to change the polling center at which they vote, where needed.

What can the Ombudsperson do ?

As an institution specialized in the promotion and protection of human rights, the Ombudsperson should pay increased attention to problems of persons with disabilities. This is because persons with disabilities are more exposed to violations of basic human rights including their electoral and political rights.

The EAG recommends that the Ombudsperson:

- 1** Designates a Deputy Ombudsperson to deal exclusively with the rights of persons with disabilities;
- 2** Monitors implementation of relevant legislation as well as issue recommendations to institutions that do not implement it or implement it partially;
- 3** Investigates and follows up individual or collective violations against persons with disabilities;
- 4** Provides recommendations on the drafting of public policies and legislation related to persons with disabilities, in order to increase their participation in elections and in public life.
- 5** Provides access to information and materials. This includes ensuring that:
 - a** print, television and electronic materials use high contrast colors;
 - b** these materials contain simple and clear information;
 - c** television, web and social media based materials present messages in audio and in sign language; and
 - d** printed materials are available in formats that can be understood by persons with visual disabilities, including braille;
 - e** direct interaction with representatives of the Ombudsperson is provided by ensuring interpreters.



○ Grupi për Qasje në Zgjedhje
○ Grupa za Pristup Izborima.
○ Election Access Group

What can the Government do ?

The Government of Kosovo, as the executive branch, has the responsibility to implement the laws adopted by the Assembly and the bylaws issued by the Government. The Government of Kosovo is by far the largest budgetary organization and is the main pillar of the state administration. Therefore, the direct and indirect engagement of the Government of Kosovo in inclusion of persons with disabilities in electoral and political processes is of key importance. Through its relevant ministries, the Government can help in reaching majority of the objectives that ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in electoral and political processes.

The EAG recommends that the Government of Kosovo:

- 1 Ensures the full implementation of the legislation on employment of persons with disabilities in public institutions;
- 2 Ensures the full implementation of the Administrative Instruction on Technical Conditions of Construction Buildings for Access of Persons with Disabilities;
- 3 Sponsors draft laws in the Assembly that promote and improve the participation of persons with disabilities in electoral and political processes;
- 4 Cooperates with the CEC in order to ensure full access for persons with disabilities to all polling centers;
- 5 Cooperates with the CEC and ECAP to ensure full access for persons with disabilities to all locations used for electoral operations, such as CEC and MEC offices and vote tabulation centers, and to facilities for lodging election complaints.

What can the private sector do ?

The private sector can assist the aforementioned stakeholders in ensuring full access for persons with disabilities to electoral and political processes, by designating corporate social responsibility funds to address disability access issues. The private sector can particularly contribute to ensuring physical access to public buildings and in providing materials in accessible formats.

The EAG recommends that the private sector:

- 1 Contributes to ensuring full physical access to polling centers and other public institutions, by providing funding to build ramps, elevators, and the like;
- 2 Trains persons with disabilities in a variety of skills such as management skills and, computer skills, which will be useful for obtaining employment in electoral and political process activities;
- 3 Provides funding for producing information materials on electoral and political processes that are accessible to persons with disabilities, such as with sign language interpretations, in braille, and in other accessible formats.



○ Grupi për Qasje në Zgjedhje
○ Grupa za Pristup Izborima.
○ Election Access Group

SECTION 2

Persons with disabilities as leaders

Section two of this Guide lists some of the many persons with disabilities who have held political and electoral leadership positions in various countries, over the past 150 years.

Argentina

In 2015, Gabriela Michetti was elected Vice-President of Argentina. She was a Senator for Buenos Aires from 2013, and in 2007 was the first woman elected as Deputy Mayor of Buenos Aires. She has been a wheelchair user since a car accident in 1994.

Australia

Gregor McGregor was a Trade Union leader, president of the United Labor Party and member of the Legislative Council in South Australia in the late 19th century. In 1901 he was elected as Senator to the first Australian Parliament where he served until 1914 as a cabinet minister and parliamentary leader of his party. During his career he became blind.

Belgium

Helga Stevens is an elected member of the European Parliament where she holds the position of Deputy President of the Parliamentary Caucus of Conservatory and Reformist Euro-Skeptics. In 2004 she became member of Flemish Parliament, while in 2007 she was elected as member of the Senate. Helga was born deaf.

Canada

Diane Finley was first elected to the Canadian Parliament in 2004, and between 2006 and 2015 held various ministerial positions, including as Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, Minister of Public Works and Government Services, and Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. She is visually impaired as a result of Graves disease.

Ecuador

Lenín Voltaire Moreno Garcés served as Vice-President of Ecuador from 2007 to 2013. He had previously been a senior administrator in the tourism industry. He was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012 for his work with persons with disabilities. He has been a paraplegic since being shot during a robbery in 1998.

Fiji

Ilieasa Delana, has been Assistant Minister for Youth and Sports and an elected member of the Fiji Parliament since 2014. In 2012 he won a gold medal in the high jump at the Paralympics. When he was three years old he lost his left leg in an accident.

Greece

Panagiotis Kouroumbilis was appointed a Minister in the Greek Government in 2015, initially as Minister of Health and Social Solidarity and later as Minister of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction. He lost his sight at the age of ten. He is a founding member of the World Blind Union and was the first blind member of parliament and Minister in Greece.

Indonesia

Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) was President of Indonesia between 1999 and 2001. He was a senior religious figure, university Dean, the head of the mass organization Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) from 1984, became a leading critic of the regime of President Suharto and founded the National Awakening party (PKB). He was almost totally blind after a series of strokes in the 1990s.

New Zealand

Mojo Mathers was elected as the first deaf member of the New Zealand parliament in 2011, after long involvement in society as an environmental activist and as policy advisor to the Green Party. She was born deaf.

United Kingdom

Tanni Grey-Thomson, a member of the House of Lords, competed in five Paralympic games between 1988 and 2004, winning sixteen medals. She is a board member of a number of organizations, including Transport for London and the London Legacy Development Corporation, and as Chair of Women's Sports. She was born with spina bifida and is a wheelchair user.

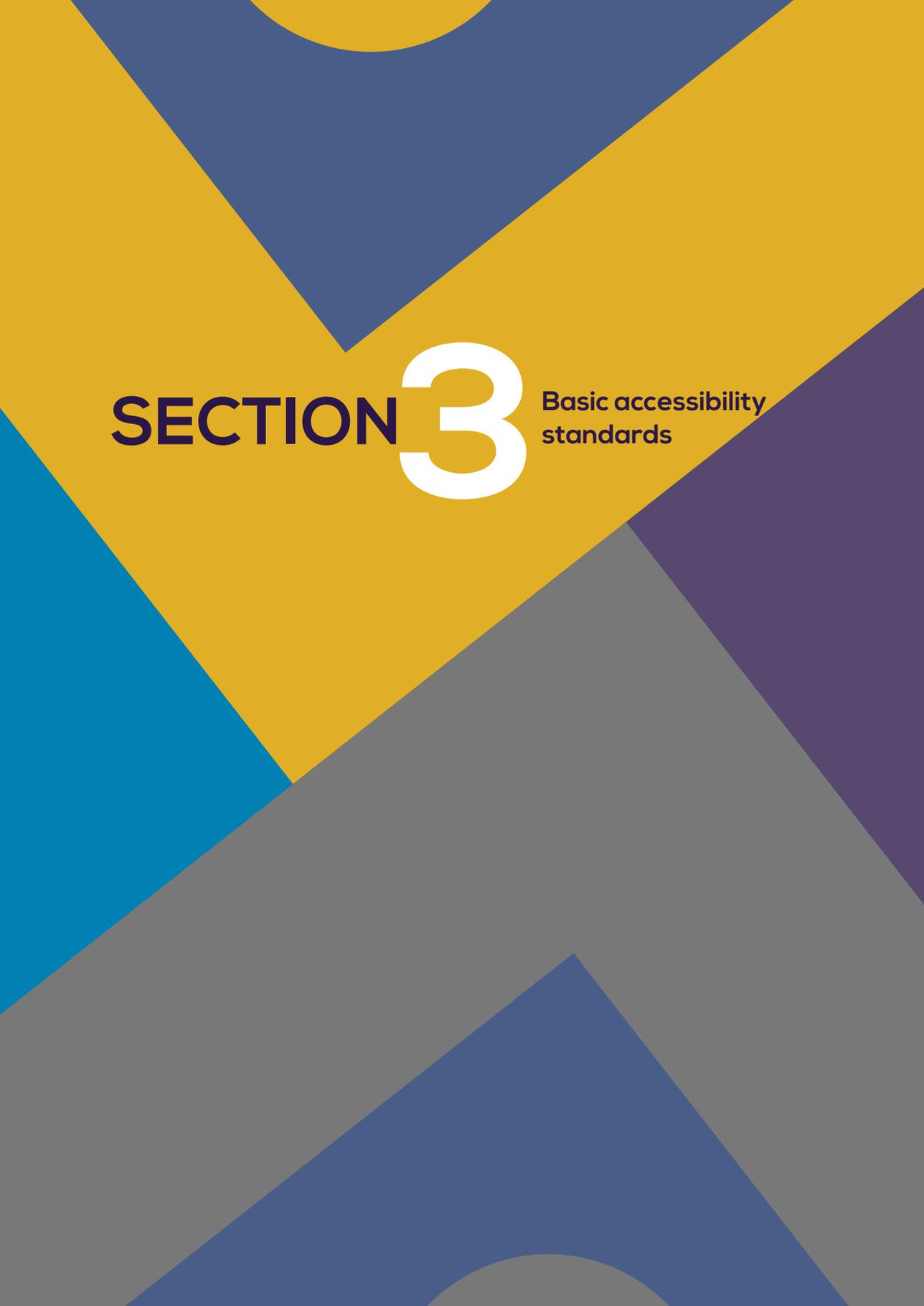
United States of America

Tony Coelho was a member of the House of Representatives of the United States between 1978 and 1989, representing a district in California. He was House Majority Whip from 1986 to 1988 and was regarded as the primary sponsor of the American With Disabilities Act. In 1963, he was diagnosed as having epilepsy.

Tammy Duckworth in 2012 became the first woman with a disability elected as a Member of the House of Representatives of the United States. She was previously a senior bureaucrat in the Federal and Illinois State Departments of Veterans Affairs. She is a double amputee as a result of injuries received serving as a pilot in Iraq.



○ Grupi për Qasje në Zgjedhje
○ Grupa za Pristup Izborima.
○ Election Access Group



SECTION 3 Basic accessibility standards

The data provided below are based on the Administrative Instruction of the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning on Technical Conditions of Construction of Buildings for Access of Persons with Disabilities. The main purpose of this Instruction is to set out the standards of access for persons with disabilities to public buildings. The Administrative Instruction covers all public and private institutions that service a significant number of people.

According to this Instruction, the mandatory obligations for access are:

Facilities for access to levels with various heights, which include elevators, stairways, ramps, vertical platforms and folding platforms

Facilities for access for independent life

Facilities for access to public transport

Buildings with obligatory access as per the Administrative Instruction

Trading Facilities:

Shopping malls

Shopping centers and markets with a surface area of more than 400m²

Bars, cafés and restaurants with capacity of 80 or more persons;

Discos and night clubs with a surface area of more than 400m²

Tourist centers or tourist information offices and agencies with a surface area of more than 200m²

Hotels and associated facilities with capacity of more than 50 rooms

Restaurants adjacent to regional highways and motorways

Postal facilities and those designated for telecommunications

Post offices with three or more counters

Other public postal facilities with three or more counters

Financial institutions

Bank branches

Financial agencies

Branches of financial agencies with three or more counters

Administrative service facilities

Local and regional institutions

State administration

Government buildings

Parliament buildings

Courts;

Other facilities that provide public legal services

Healthcare, social and rehabilitation facilities

Offices for social-healthcare services

Pharmacies and shops selling orthopedic aid materials

Medical facilities, health centers, hospitals and rehabilitation centers

Medical pools, public baths, homes for the elderly or persons with disabilities with 20 or more rooms

Offices of social welfare and public health services, public catering facilities

Buildings mainly visited by persons with disabilities:

Buildings that accommodate societies, unions or associations of persons with disabilities

Educational, rehabilitation or housing institutions for persons with disabilities

Educational institutions:

Kindergartens and child day care

Schools

Universities

Student dormitories with a capacity of more than 50 rooms and other similar facilities

Buildings dedicated to culture:

University libraries

Cultural and congress centers

Museums, galleries and exhibition areas of more than 300m²

Cinemas, theatres and concert halls with 100 or more seats

Buildings designated for transport:

Bus or railway stations, railway gates

Airports

Public parking places

Rest places adjacent to highways

Public garages with a capacity of 300 or more vehicles

Petrol stations

Facilities designated for sports and recreation:

Sports halls for 100 or more persons

Sports fields

Buildings for religious services:

Ceremonial halls

Humanitarian centers

Facilities designated for entertainment:

Entertainment parks

Zoos

Botanic gardens.

Correctional institutions:

Prisons

Correctional houses

Rehabilitation institutions

Public areas:

Pedestrian squares

Streets

Walking paths in parks

Underground passages and over passages

Bridges for pedestrians and road passages

**Collective housing
buildings:**

Housing buildings with ten or more apartments

Others:

Fairs and exhibition centers

Public toilets

Morgues and crematoriums

Public shelters

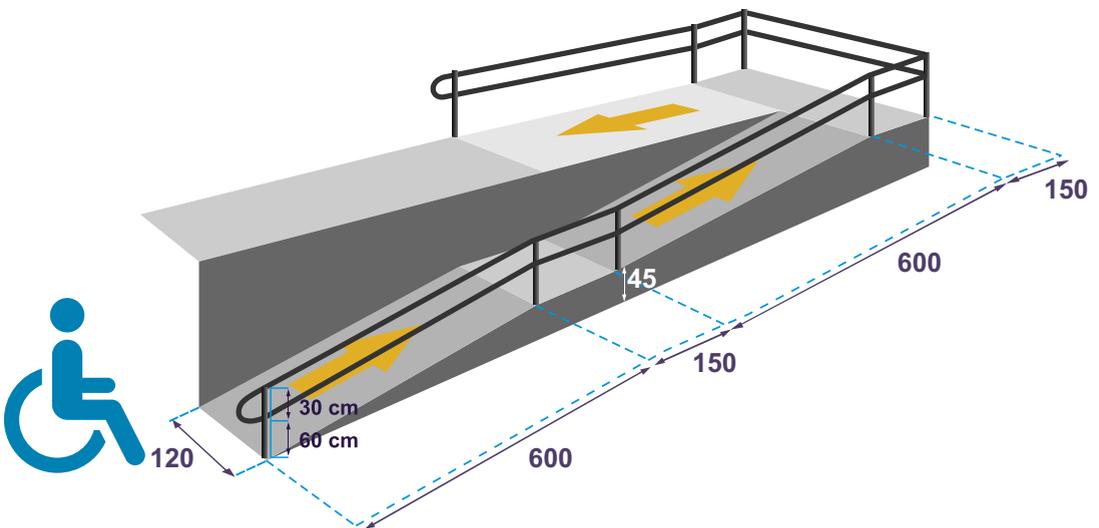
How is access granted?



The following specifications for physical access are provided in the Administrative Instruction.

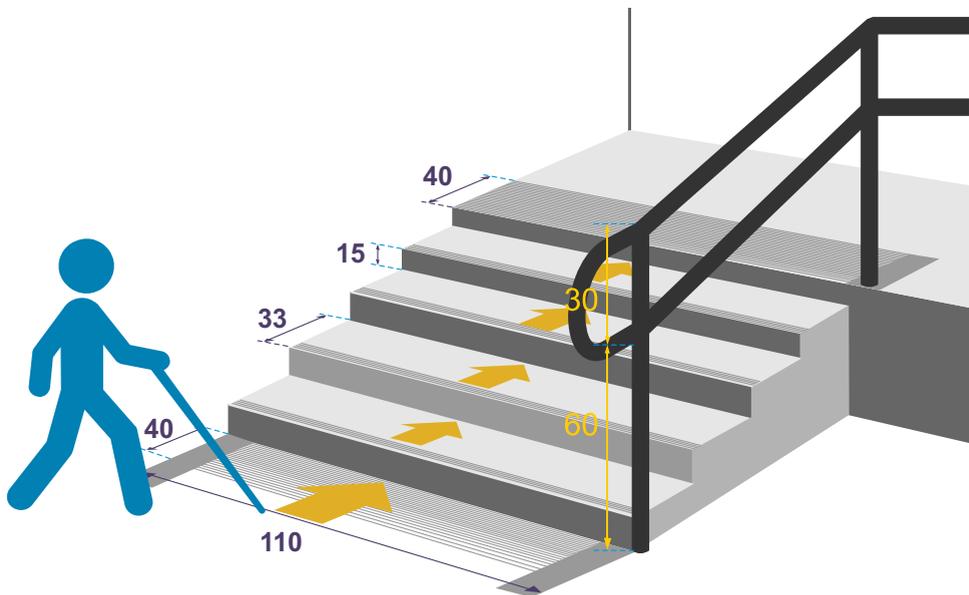
Ramps

- Ramp inclination: 5% (1:20)
- Width of the ramp: 120 cm from the outside, minimum 90 cm from the inside
- Length of each section of the ramp should be no more than 6 meters, with a 150cm flat area between each section
- Support rail: 4 cm in diameter, installed two heights of 60 cm and 90 cm



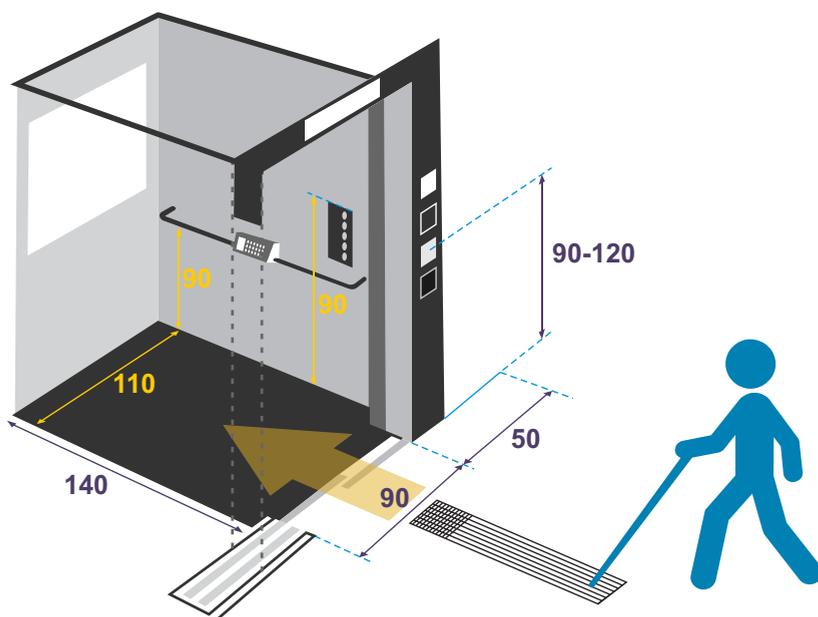
Stairways

- Stair height: up to 15 cm
- Depth of step surface: not less than 33 cm
- Width of step: 110 cm in internal locations and 120 cm in external locations



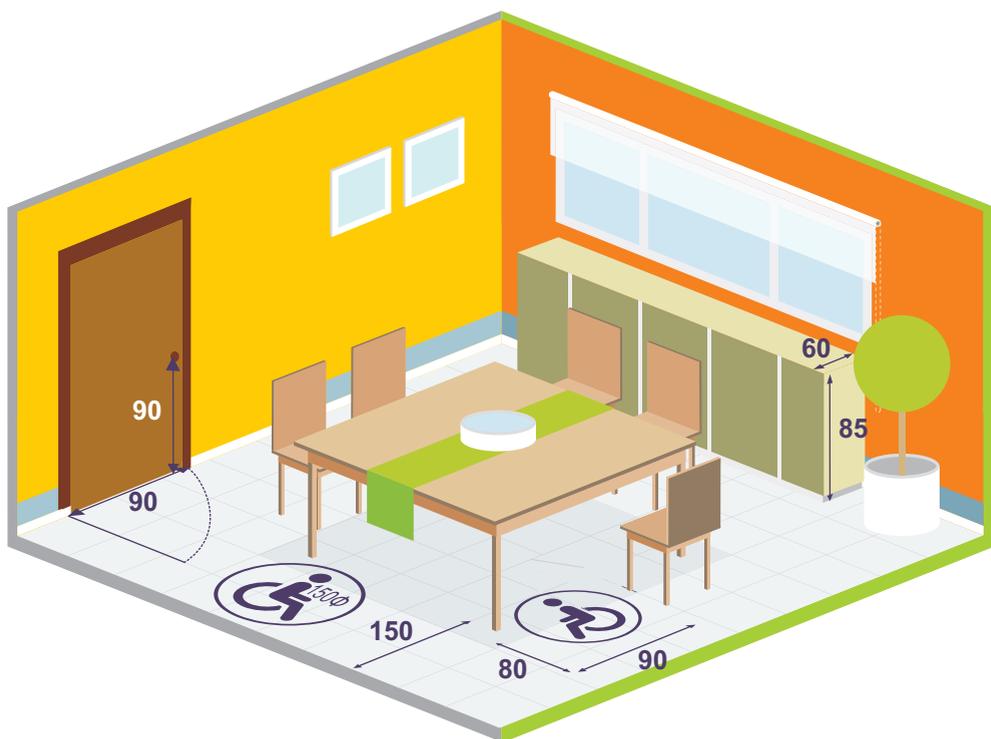
Elevators

- Internal dimensions of the elevator cabin: 110cm x140 cm
- Width of elevators cabin door: at least 90 cm
- Width of the lift shaft door: 90 cm



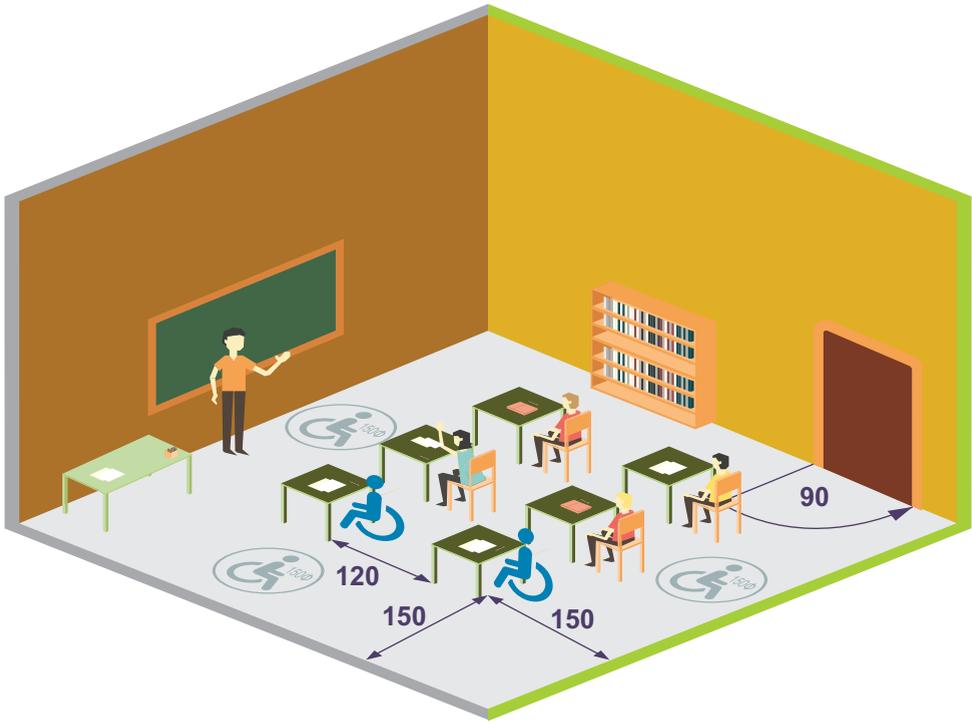
Kitchen

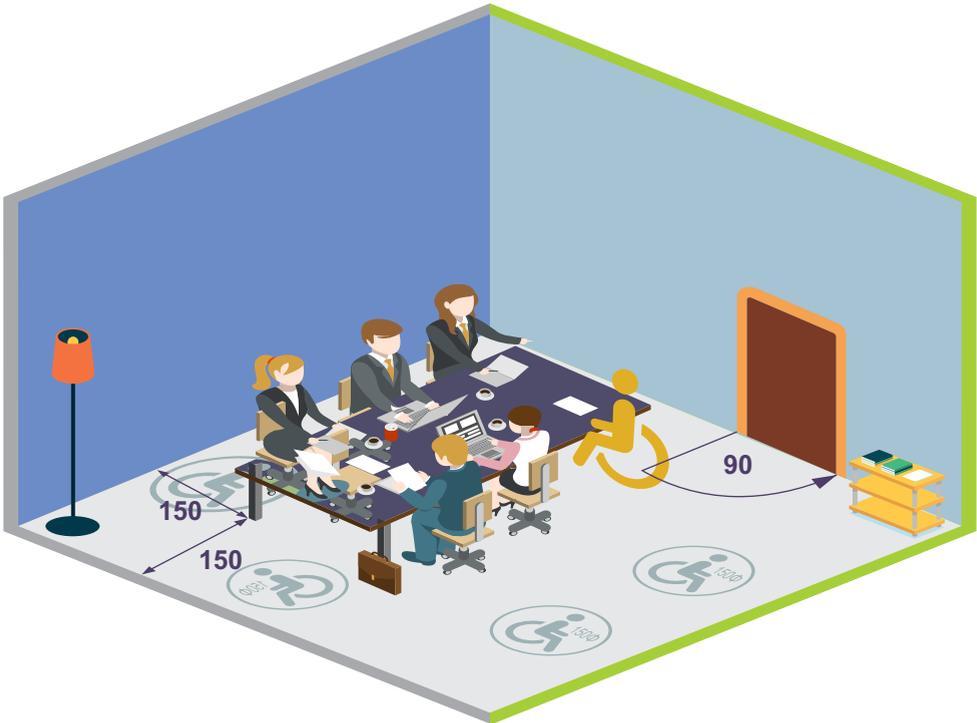
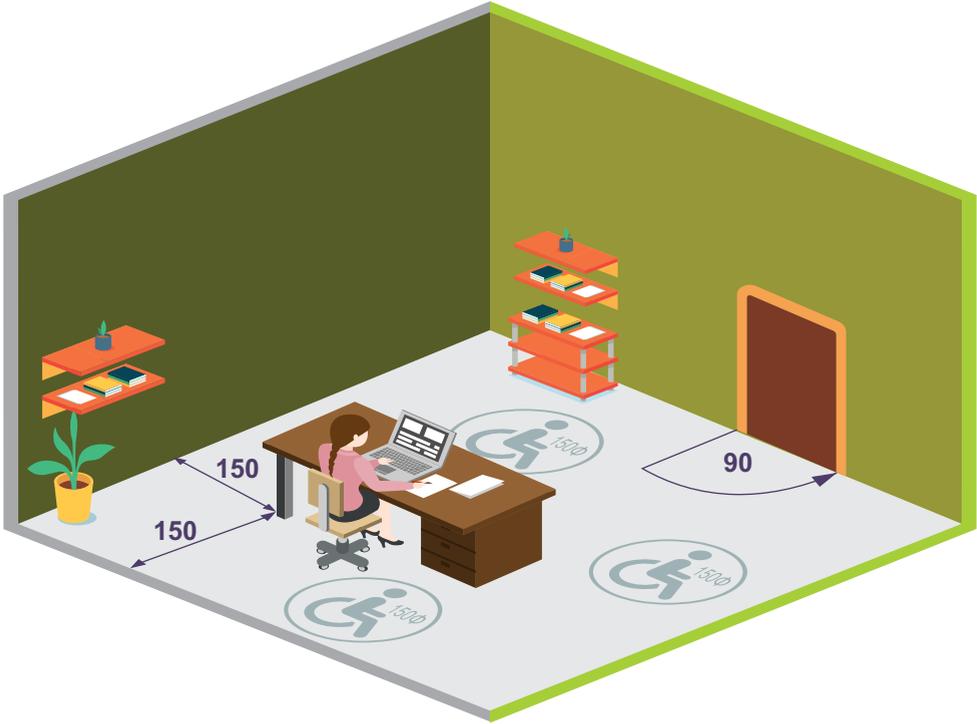
- Free area for movement with a wheelchair for persons with disabilities within internal area: at least 150 cm
- Area for movement around furniture: at least 120 cm



Rooms, classrooms, work areas

- Work table with console: upper surface should at most 85 cm above the floor, and depth at least 50 cm
- Access signs should be present
- Free area for movement with a wheelchair for persons with disabilities within internal area: at least 150 cm
- Standards for doors and windows as described under 'Toilets' above





MANUAL

**FOR INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
IN ELECTORAL AND POLITICAL PROCESSES**





USAID
NGA POPULLI AMERIKAN
OD AMERIČKOG NARODA

