

## Annex EU elections

### Concept note: Accessible elections

#### Key message

Voting is a right, and duty, in many European Countries. However, in practice, many persons with disabilities cannot vote due to **lack of accessible voting practices** – braille ballots, polling places and polls not suitable for wheelchair users; lack of easy to read information – election guides, party manifestos, instructions to vote; and lack of accessible debates – for example, no sign language in candidates' debates.

This will be the focus of our Elections campaign – that persons with disabilities can effectively vote in 2019.

#### Main Audiences

- National governments and policymakers
- National electoral commissions
- Citizens

#### Important to Note

While the European Parliament and Commission stated their support for accessible elections, most of the actual responsibility lies with National Governments: **the act of voting, legal capacity, ensuring the ballots, built environment are accessible, and that ensuring information on how to vote is accessible. Also much of the information** about the election campaigns are handled by the national parties.

**For this campaign to be successful, it is essential that national members are very involved.**

#### Campaign Actions

##### Voters of Europe

We need to make the issues real and relatable to the citizens of Europe. To do so, the campaign will collect stories of persons with disabilities that were not able to vote, or to whom the voting process was made needlessly complicated. The campaign will showcase these real stories and explain how they can be avoided.

**Eg** The campaign would showcase a picture of a blind person and a quote from them explaining how they could not vote due to the lack of ballots in braille.

We expect to have two stories a week.

Actions	Additional comments	Timeline	Results
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**Commenté [DV1]:** BDF / PAS DE REMARQUE  
En BE, certaines assoc font des évaluations régulières de l'accessibilité des élections, surtout axées accessibilité bureaux de vote et accès au vote ( capacité juridique) . la question de l'accès à l'information sur les programmes politiques n'est pas évaluée. Intéressant à retenir.....

Prepare framework for stories and two examples		End of July	Framework – questions for interview. 2 examples
Collection of Stories		Ongoing	
Official Launch of the campaign	The launch will be marked by a press release presenting the campaign, the manifesto and some stories	Board meeting in November	

## Good practices & checklist

As part of the campaign, we will collect and develop checklists and good practices for accessible elections. The aim is that local policymakers, National Election Commissions and other officials that are responsible to actually make elections happen have an easy list to follow.

**Target audience:** national policymakers and electoral commissions

Actions	Additional comments	Timeline	Results
Develop the checklists		30 October	Checklist for physical accessibility, for access to information on voting procedures, for access to political information (debates, manifestos, etc).
Send to National Councils		1 November	National Councils distribute the lists with governments and among their members.
Optional: receive translated versions		30 November	If National Councils translate the lists, we can add all versions in the website.
Send to Permanent Representations		December	We would send the translated versions to Permanent Representations to reinforce the point made by the National Councils.

**Commenté [DV2]:** Le CSNPH a rédigé une note de position et interrogé ses membres à l'occasion des élections communales sur l'accessibilité au vote (capacité juridique) et aux bureaux (accessibilité physique) : on n'a pas le temps matériel de faire un inventaire de bonnes pratiques

## Mass Media

We aim to have pieces in major media publications (print, audiovisual, online) publicizing the European Elections Manifesto launched during the 4th European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities. The secretariat will focus on cooperation with members most active on the EU election. We aim as well to have pieces in specialised magazines and in all EU.

Actions	Additional comments	Timeline	Results
Contact National Councils		Mid November at and following the EDF board	Prepare personalised plan for each country.
Publication of opinion pieces		December 2018 through March 2019	More than 5 opinion pieces.

## The website

We will create a simple, accessible webpage in EDF's website to gather all the information.

The webpage will count with 7 sections:

**Manifesto – The Manifesto prepared during the 4<sup>th</sup> European Parliament of Persons with disabilities will figure in the home page and on a dedicated section.**

Voters of Europe – all stories will be showcased here. We will also had personal testimonies and blog articles.

Good practices – This will include the checklists and examples of good voting practices

Your vote counts - Here we will have the know your rights leaflet and 5 reasons to vote. We will also add testimonials of persons with disabilities

Press – Here, we will host the articles that are published about accessible voting: we will aim to have a diverse selection, featuring as many countries as possible.

**Petition – The section will present and have a link to the petition.**

News – Here, we will post updates, blog articles and more miscellaneous news about the campaign, that don't fit in the other sections.

Actions	Additional comments	Timeline	Results
Launch of the webpage	The webpage will be part of the EDF website	September	7 sections with first results of the campaign
Update		n/a	Continuous updating.

## Election Monitoring

Crowdsource election monitoring – hashtag during election day where people can say what/where went well and bad.

## The petition “Fully accessible European Elections 2019”

We will launch an online petition directed to Heads of State, asking them to create fully accessible elections. This will allow for engagement from every citizen in Europe and not only from policymakers and Disabled People Organisations.

We will use the website <https://act.wemove.eu> to host the petition. The petition will be simple: Half a page calling for: accessible ballots, accessible polling places, accessible information and fully accessible debates.

It will be designed to appeal to the widest possible audience, therefore we should not go in detail.

We will aim to have 500,000 people.

**Deliverables:** How the EU helps you? leaflet

**Target Audience:** All and then Heads of State – we will coordinate delivery with our national councils.

Actions	Additional comments	Timeline	Results
Drafting of the petition		September	Short petition, that includes main points
Launching of petition	We will issue a press release to EU-media and encourage national councils and other organisations to share it.	Board Meeting November	The petition will be formally launched during the board meeting (it will be online before), and the campaign for signature will start.

## Text of the petition

### European elections for all

To:

Heads of Government in the European Union

Electoral Commission in the EU

### Petition

Millions of Europeans with disabilities are deprived of their right of voting. We want them to have it by May 2019. Adopt laws and binding guidelines that assure that 80 million Europeans are able to have their private vote!

## Why is this important?

Next May, voters of Europe will be able to choose the next European Parliament.

All of them? No. Persons with disabilities are still left behind.

Alexandra will not be allowed to vote because she has an intellectual disability.

Marco will not be able to get in the voting station because it is not wheelchair accessible.

Olga will not understand the voting process because it's too complicated.

Millions of Europeans won't be able to vote next May due to inaccessible elections. They should have their say. There are easy solutions to fix it. Governments need to implement it.

We will deliver this petition together with our checklists:

- Elections Manifesto
- Good practices in accessible elections campaign
- Guidelines for complete physical accessible
- Guidelines for voting and election information