



# Helping People with Disabilities to take part in Politics



## Easy-to-Understand Information



# Helping People with Disabilities to take part in Politics

## Easy-to-Understand Information



This book follows the European standards for making information easy to read and understand.

Learn more at: <https://easy-to-read.eu>

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Challenges</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Ways to help</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Political Parties</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Parliaments</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Contacts</b>	<b>34</b>

# Introduction



This is a document about the best ways to help people with disabilities to take part in politics.



About 1 billion people in the world have a **disability**.



People with **disabilities** have different needs.



A person with a **physical disability** finds it hard to move around.



A person with a physical disability might use a wheelchair.



A person with a **sensory disability** can find it hard to see.



A person with a **sensory disability** can find it hard to hear.



A person with a **psychosocial disability** can feel badly about themselves and the world around them. This means they might feel worried or sad.



A person with an **intellectual disability** can find it hard to learn things.



People with disabilities have the same rights as all other people. This is called **human rights**.



There is a document called the **Convention of Rights of Persons with a Disability**.

The Convention of Rights of Persons with a Disability is called the **CRPD** for short.

The **CRPD** is a legal document about human rights for people with disabilities.

The CRPD tells us that people with disabilities have the right to take part in politics and to vote.



Part of the CRPD called **Article 29** talks about people with disabilities taking part in politics and elections.



Part of the CRPD called **Article 12** talks about the law accepting the decisions that people with disabilities make. **Article 12** also talks about people with disabilities getting some help to make decisions.



You can take part in politics when you vote.



You can take part in politics when you learn about elections and politics.



You can take part in politics when you join a political party.



You can take part in politics when you work on an election campaign.



You can take part in politics when you are a **candidate for election**.

A **candidate for election** is a person who wants to work as a politician.

A candidate for election wants people to vote for them.

# Challenges

---

# STEREOTYPE

It can be difficult for people with disabilities to take part in politics. There are a few reasons for this. Information about politics can be hard to understand.

Sometimes people think that people with disabilities are not interested in politics.

This is called a **stereotype**.

A **stereotype** is a belief about a group of people. Stereotypes can often be wrong.



People with disabilities are often not included in politics.

This is called **discrimination**.

**Discrimination** is when a person or a group of people are not treated fairly.



There is not enough good education about politics for people with disabilities.



Sometimes the places of politics are inaccessible.

People who use wheelchairs or crutches may not be able to enter some places of politics.



People who need support to hear might not be able to hear well enough in places of politics.



People with disabilities can often be **unemployed**.

A person who is **unemployed** does not have a job.

A person with a disability may not have enough money to be a **candidate for election**.

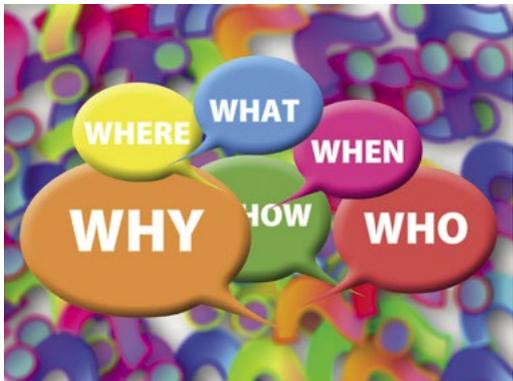
---

**Ways to help**



The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe is called the **OSCE** for short. The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights is called the **ODIHR** for short.

The ODIHR thinks it is important that people with disabilities have the chance to take part in politics.



This document explains how people with disabilities can take part in politics. This document explains how political parties and parliaments can make politics accessible to people with disabilities.



A **political party** is a group of people who have similar ideas about policies and laws.



The **parliament** of most countries is the group of people who make laws. The parliament also decides what policies the country should follow.

# Political Parties



Political parties can help people with disabilities to take part in politics.

Political parties need to work with other organisations who have information and experience about disability issues.



Political parties need to work with **Disabled People's Organizations.**

Disabled People's Organizations are called **DPOs** for short. DPOs can help political parties to understand what people with disabilities need.



Political parties need to work with Election Management Bodies.

An **Election Management Body** is called an EMB for short.

An **EMB** helps all political parties to make sure elections are run properly.



Political parties need to look at all the ways they can help people with disabilities have a fair chance to be part of politics.



This is called an **accessibility assessment**.

The ODIHR has made lists called checklists for political parties to use.



Political parties need to have an **accessibility policy**.

An **accessibility policy** means there is clear information about how to make places easy to get in.  
An **accessibility policy** means there is clear information about how to make information easy to understand.



This policy needs to talk about extra ways to help people with disabilities from other **underrepresented groups** to take part in politics.



One example of an underrepresented group is women with disabilities taking part in politics.



There are not enough women with disabilities taking part in politics.  
Women with disabilities are an underrepresented group in politics.  
Topics that are important for women with disabilities are not talked about enough.  
Topics that are important for women with disabilities might be forgotten.



Governments and political parties may need to provide money to help a person with a disability to take part in politics.



A candidate for election may need reasonable accommodations like an assistant for sign language.



It is not ok to ask a person with a disability to pay for their own reasonable accommodations.



Political parties may need to have **mentors** who can help people with disabilities to take part in politics.

A **mentor** is a person who gives help and advice.



Political parties need to make sure that election materials are accessible.



Political parties need to make sure that the places they meet are accessible for people with physical disabilities.



Information about politics needs to be **audio** and **visual**.

**Audio information** is information you can hear. A podcast is a type of audio information.



**Visual information** is information you can see. A poster or an easy to understand document are types of visual information.



**Audio-visual information** contains information you can hear and see at the same time. A video is a type of audio visual information.



Political parties have an important job to make information about politics easy to understand. This helps to make sure that people with disabilities can make informed choices about politics.



A political party can decide to have a **quota** of people with disabilities for elections.

A **quota** is a set number of candidates with a disability from the political party.



Candidates with a disability do not need to talk about disability issues only.

It is important that candidates with a disability have support to talk about different issues too.



The staff working for a political party need disability training. Training can help staff to work well with people with disabilities. Training can help staff to understand how to make **reasonable accommodations** for people with disabilities.

**Reasonable accommodations** are the things that people can do to make it fair and easier for people with disabilities to take part in politics.

# Parliaments



**Democracy** is a very important part of **governance**.

**Democracy** means that the people in a country vote to choose the parliament or president.



**Governance** means that the parliament makes laws and policies for the country.



It is important that parliaments include all people in governance. It is important that parliaments include people with disabilities in governance.



Parliaments need to look at all the ways they can help people with disabilities have a fair chance to be part of governance. This is called an **accessibility assessment**.



The ODIHR has made lists called checklists for parliaments to use.



Parliaments need to work with DPOs. DPOs can help parliaments to understand the best ways to include people with disabilities.



Parliaments need to make sure that the laws look after the rights of people with disabilities.



Some people with disabilities need support to make decisions.

This is called **supported decision-making.**



Parliaments need to make sure that laws of the country don't take away a person's right to take part in politics.



**Article 12** of the CRPD tells us that parliaments need to support people with disabilities to vote.

**Article 29** of the CRPD also tells us that parliaments need to support people with disabilities to be candidates for election.



Parliaments need to train staff. Staff need to understand how to support people with disabilities to take part in politics.



Parliaments can employ an **accessibility advisor**.

An **accessibility advisor** is a person who makes sure that people from different groups get support to take part in politics.

An accessibility advisor has skills that will help people with disabilities and others to take part in politics.



Parliaments need to have documents to explain how they support people with disabilities.



Young people with disabilities and women with disabilities are two groups of people who may need extra help to take part in parliament.



It is important for different groups to have a voice in parliament.  
This means that different groups need to be represented in parliament.



When a group is represented in parliament, topics that are important to that group are more likely to be talked about.



**Article 4** of the CRPD tells us that parliaments need to get opinions from people with disabilities about disability topics. Parliaments also need to get opinions from people with disabilities about other topics. It is important to remember that people with disabilities are interested in lots of different topics.



There are many accessible ways to get the opinions from people with disabilities.



Information can be given in audio and visual formats.  
Information can be given in an easy to understand format.



Information can be given in accessible places.  
Information can be put on the internet so that people who cannot travel are still included.



Parliaments need to have an **accessibility budget**.



An **accessibility budget** is money that will be used to help people with disabilities to take part in politics.

# Conclusion



The CRPD talks about people with disabilities having a fair chance to take part in all parts of life.



Taking part in politics is an important part of life for people with disabilities.



ODIHR's book tells us that political parties and parliaments can do lots of things to help people with disabilities to take part in politics.



People with disabilities taking part in politics helps to make a world that is fairer and more accessible to all people.

# Contacts

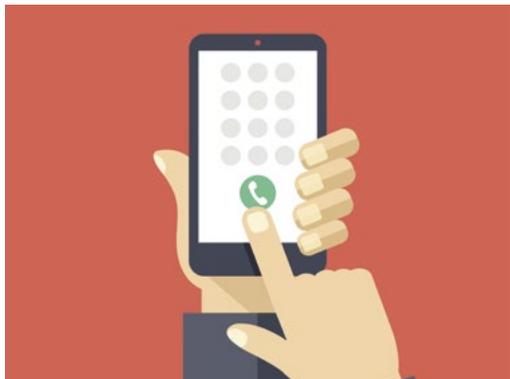


For more information visit  
**OSCE.org/ODIHR**

Or you can find out more by  
contacting us at:



Email:  
**office@odihr.pl**



Telephone:  
**+48 22 5200 600**



Mail:  
**OSCE/ODIHR**  
**ul. Miodowa 10**  
**00-251 Warsaw, Poland**