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| Question 20-1/1: Access to telecommunication services and information and communication technologies (ICTs) by persons with disabilities | | |
| SOURCE | France | |
| TITLE | Contribution from France on Legal and Policy Frameworks to Promote ICT Access by Persons with Disabilities in France | |
| Revision to Document [N° RGQ 20-1/1/5](http://www.itu.int/md/D10-RGQ20.1.1-C-0005/en) | | |
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| Action required: | The Study Group is requested to consider this contribution for inclusion in the draft report of the Rapporteur for Question 20-1/1 | |

Abstract:

This contribution provides an update to the information relating to France as currently contained in the draft report on National Legal and Policy Frameworks to Promote ICT Access by Persons with Disabilities. Specifically, this contribution updates the information regarding measures implemented by France to facilitate accessibility in telecommunications for persons with disabilities.

Contact Point: Name/organization/entity: Ms Carole Liégois, Ministère de l'Economie, des Finances et de l'Industrie (France)

Phone number: +33 1 53449464

Email: [carole.liegois@finances.gouv.fr](mailto:carole.liegois@finances.gouv.fr)

**France**

In France, accessibility of telecommunications was achieved through the signing of a voluntary charter by service providers and disability organizations, which was facilitated by the French regulator, the Autorité de Régulation des Communications Électroniques et des Postes – ARCEP[[1]](#footnote-1). In 2005, the French government and the ARCEP, along with operators and disability organizations signed a voluntary charter for improving access to mobile telephony for disabled end users[[2]](#footnote-2) which laid down priorities such as the introduction of necessary and comfort features, innovation of new features and provision of analysis and market accessibility features for the service providers to work on .

In 2008, changes and improvements to the charter were made which included increasing usability, wider dissemination of information, targeted product development and setting up an information website to aid persons with disabilities to choose handsets. The charter further added objectives such as training for information vendors, eventual adoption of the charter at European level and using innovation to increase accessibility.[[3]](#footnote-3)

The charter has had a noticeable impact on the mobile telephony industry. By 2009, every operator in France was offering 10 to 20 accessible handsets, and operators provided bills in Braille or large print for the visually impaired as well as special text and multimedia message packages for the deaf. In addition, new services were launched with accessibility features such as sign language news, accessible information websites, etc.

On 9 June 2011, sector players sought to renew their involvement in this area by extending the charter to include all electronic communication services. The charter henceforth requires professionals to offer products and services that are accessible to disabled people, to inform the general public concerning offers accessible to disabled people, and to provide customer follow-up adapted to the requirements of disabled people.

Note should also be taken of the adoption, within the framework of the European Union's new 2009 telecoms package, of Directive 2009/136/EC, which requires Member States to ensure that disabled people have access to electronic communication services equivalent to that of other end-users. France is to transpose this directive into national legislation by guaranteeing in the national texts that disabled people have access equivalent to other end-users, at affordable rates, to electronic communication services and by improving disabled people's access to customer services.

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1. <http://www.arcep.fr/index.php?id=1&L=1> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.afom.fr/eclairages/lacces-des-personnes-handicapees-la-telephonie-mobile> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.gouvernement.fr/gouvernement/l-acces-des-personnes-handicapees-a-la-telephonie-mobile> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)