

Perspectives and Challenges on E-
accessibility (Internet and digital
television) for blind people and people
with visual impairment problems in the
Republic of Bulgaria - legal and practical
aspects



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Brief Content

- 1. Legislative, strategic and other documents**
- 2. Projects - realized and in process of realization**
- 3. Events**



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National legislation

Law on Integration of People with Disabilities

Law on Protection from Discrimination

Personal Data Protection Act

Electronic Communications Act

Employment Promotion Act

Radio and Television Act

Access to Public Information Act



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Law on Integration of People with Disabilities

Article 4: Integration of people with disabilities is carried out (implemented) through:

1. medical and social rehabilitation
2. education and professional training
3. employment and professional realization
4. accessible living and architectural environment
5. Social Services
6. socio-economic protection
7. **accessible information**



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Law on Integration of People with Disabilities (2)

Article 39, para. 1. Bulgarian National Television, Bulgarian National Radio and Bulgarian Telegraph Agency provide information accessible to people with disabilities.



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Law on Protection from Discrimination

- provides to all persons (including people with disabilities) the right to equality before the law, equality of treatment and opportunities for participation in public life;
- defines the direct and indirect discrimination, victimization, inducement to discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and racial segregation;



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Law on Protection from Discrimination (2)

- provides exceptions where different treatment of persons not considered as discrimination;
- contains an explicit provision that the employer is obliged to adapt the workplace to the needs of a person with disabilities in its recruitment or when disability occurs after his hiring, except where costs are unreasonably high and would seriously burden the employer.



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Electronic Communications Act

Article 4. (1) The purposes of this Act are:

1. creation of the conditions necessary for the promotion of competition in the implementation of electronic communications by:

(a) ensuring that users, including persons with disabilities, elderly persons and persons with special social needs, derive maximum benefit from the choice, price and quality of electronic communications;

3. promotion of the interests of citizens by:

(e) supporting the interests of specific social groups, and in particular persons with disabilities, of elderly persons and persons with special social needs;



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Electronic Communications Act (2)

Article 49c. (1) The Commission may impose conveyance obligations on undertakings providing electronic communications networks for distribution of radio and television programme services in case the said networks are used by a significant number of end-users, including end-users with disabilities, as their principal means to receive radio and television programme services.



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Electronic Communications Act (3)

Article 237b. The Commission may set requirements to the undertakings providing public electronic communications services to ensure to end-users with disabilities:

1. access to electronic communications services, including emergency call services and services of social value accessible under the "116" numbering range, equivalent to the access provided to the majority of end-users, and
2. taking advantage of the choice of undertaking and services available to the majority of end-users.



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Other Documents

Updated Strategy for Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Disabled People 2008-2015

Main Goal: aims to ensure effective implementation of the Bulgarian government policy directed at improving the quality of life of people with disabilities, non-discrimination on the grounds of “disability” also ensuring equal opportunities, full and active participation in all fields of public life.



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Updated Strategy for Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Disabled People 2008-2015 (2)

Concrete measures: psychological, educational, social, cultural, professional, financial and architectural

The Strategy was **adopted in pursuance of the implementation of:**

- the recommendations of the Council of Europe; the best practices of Member States of the European Union;
- the principles in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- UN The Standard Rules Equalization of Opportunities for People with Disabilities;
- Convention on the Rights of the Child and others.



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Goal 1 of the Updated Strategy for Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Disabled People 2008-2015

Create environment adapted to the needs of people with disabilities

- accessible environment for people with disabilities

- physical access to transport infrastructure and its technical elements, buildings, and facilities for public services;
- accessible transport.



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Goal 1 of the Updated Strategy for Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Disabled People 2008-2015 (2)

Create environment adapted to the needs of people with disabilities

- accessible information and communications

- developed state strategy for accessibility of information services and documentation for different groups of people with disabilities;
- effective legislative base, obliging any media to provide some information adequately and appropriately for people with different disabilities;



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Goal 1 of the Updated Strategy for Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Disabled People 2008-2015 (3)

Create environment adapted to the needs of people with disabilities

- accessible information and communications

- access to all types of media;
- accessibility of telecommunications equipment and facilities;
- accessibility of web space, adequate, accessible on-line content and services, implementation of job opportunities in the field of information technology by providing appropriate training, promoting of distance working and on-line recruiting;



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Goal 1 of the Updated Strategy for Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Disabled People 2008-2015 (4)

Create environment adapted to the needs of people with disabilities

- accessible information and communications

- access at all stages to all information pertaining to the rights and obligations of persons with disabilities, provided services and programs.



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Goal 1 of the Updated Strategy for Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Disabled People 2008-2015 (5)

Create environment adapted to the needs of people with disabilities

- training to interested individuals and institutions on the problems of accessibility on the above mentioned fields affecting people with disabilities;
- development of applied research activities in order to develop products, services and equipment and facilities with universal design within the meaning of the definition of Art. 2 of the Convention, which with minimal modification and investments to adapt to the specific needs of people with disabilities.



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ITU European regional initiative “E-accessibility in Central and Eastern Europe (Internet and digital television) for blind people and people with visual impairment problems”

Projects in Bulgaria on e-Accessibility in Central and Eastern Europe

Project 1:

School for children with visual impairment problems “Louis Braille” in Sofia

School for children with impaired vision problems “Prof. Dr. Ivan Shishmanov” in Varna



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Project 1: School for children with visual impairment problems “Louis Braille” in Sofia



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Project 1: School for children with visual impairment problems “Prof. Dr. Ivan Shishmanov” in Varna



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Project 2: Home for Elderly People with Visual Impairment Problems in the town of Dobrich



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ITU European Regional Initiative EUR3: Ensuring access to telecommunications/ICT, in particular for persons (people) with disabilities

Project in the process of realization

- the town of Zlatograd - 7000 inhabitants;
- the wi-fi facilities are expected to be used by around 100 people in need;
- to set up a new wi-fi public access site - through the provision of specialised software for two-thirds of municipalities in border regions;
- to create equal opportunities for elderly people with impaired vision/hearing and with low incomes in border regions for accessing appropriate telecommunication/ICT facilities



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ITU European Regional Initiative EUR3: Ensuring access to telecommunications/ICT, in particular for persons (people) with disabilities (2)

Financing

- the municipality of Zlatograd/”Bulgarian Posts” will bear the costs i.e. the project includes costs sharing between the Bulgarian side and the Telecommunications Development Bureau, ITU.



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ITU European Regional Initiative EUR3: Ensuring access to telecommunications/ICT, in particular for persons (people) with disabilities (3)

Outcomes for elderly people with visual/hearing impairments and with low incomes

- to make an equivalent choice to information, documents and digital products;
- to maintain easier cross-border communications and relations;
- to achieve a better quality of life through facilitating the deployment of solutions for e-accessibility, including television/ICT applications for people with disabilities and with low incomes etc.



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ITU European Regional Initiative EUR3: Ensuring access to telecommunications/ICT, in particular for persons (people) with disabilities (4)

- In Bulgaria

- A trend of continuous aging of the population (by 2020 almost 40 % of the EU population will be older than 65).
- Many of those people have but limited computer skills and thus they remain digitally excluded.



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The first Bulgarian postage stamp by drawing of a blind child is on philately market



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Thank you

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