



Elections and People with Disabilities in North Macedonia



Easy-to-Understand Information

What is this paper about?



This paper is about **elections** in North Macedonia.

An **election** is when a group of people votes.



Some organizations worked together to write this paper.

The organizations did **research**.
Research collects information.



This information tells us how people with disabilities take part in elections in North Macedonia.

This information tells us how elections are run in North Macedonia.



This paper gives ideas about ways to make sure people with disabilities can better take part in elections in North Macedonia.

What helped the research?



Other documents helped our research. Some of these documents come from the **OSCE** and **ODIHR** organization.



The **CRPD** also helped our research. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is called the **CRPD** for short.



The **CRPD** tries to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights as all other people.



North Macedonia made the CRPD part of their **law** in 2011.

The **law** means the rules of a country.

What we did?



We did **interviews** with 46 **experts**.

An **interview** is a meeting with an expert.

These **experts** know a lot about:

- elections
- people with disabilities
- North Macedonia



100 election workers did 2 **surveys** each.

A **survey** is a list of questions.



We met 11 **focus groups**.

A **focus group** is a small group of people.

The focus group tells people doing research about what they know and how they feel about a topic.



People with disabilities were part of the focus groups.

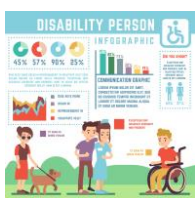
Organizations of people with disabilities were part of the focus groups.

What did we learn?



It is difficult for people with disabilities to take part in elections.

People with disabilities feel embarrassed and angry about this.



The National Disability Strategy is old.

A **strategy** is a plan of action.

There is not enough information collected about people with disabilities.



People still think about disability using the **medical and charity models of disability**.



The **medical model** says that a person's disability is the reason they cannot take part fully in society.

The **charity model** says people with disabilities need help and cannot do things themselves.

What did we learn?



People who **run** elections do not know enough about the CRPD.

People who **take part** in elections do not know enough about the CRPD.



Information about elections is not always **accessible**.

Accessible information means that people with disabilities can get information and understand it.



People cannot always get to election places to vote.



Women with disabilities face a lot more **barriers** to take part in elections.

A **barrier** makes it difficult for people with disabilities to take part in elections.

What did we learn?



People with disabilities from **non-majority ethnic communities** face a lot of barriers to take part in elections.



Ethnic communities include people who share the same culture, language and traditions.



A political party is a group of politicians who work together because they have the same **priorities** and ideas.

Priorities are the most important issues.



Political parties make it difficult for people with disabilities to:

- take part in elections
- to get information about elections

What did we learn?



There are not enough people with disabilities in the media talking about elections.



There is not enough information about disability issues in the media.

Information in the media is not always accessible.



Organizations of people with disabilities are called **OPDs** for short.

OPDs are organizations made up mostly of people with disabilities.



OPDs are not always asked for their opinions about elections in North Macedonia.

The State Election Commission of North Macedonia



The State Election Commission of North Macedonia is called **SEC** for short.



The SEC is in charge of elections in North Macedonia.



The SEC did some good work to help people with disabilities take part in elections.



The SEC made information about elections more accessible.

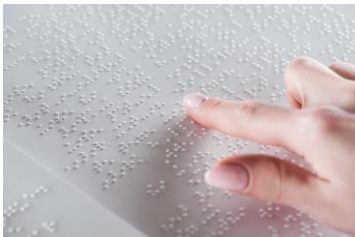
The State Election Commission of North Macedonia



Here are some ways the SEC made it easier for people with disabilities to vote on election day:

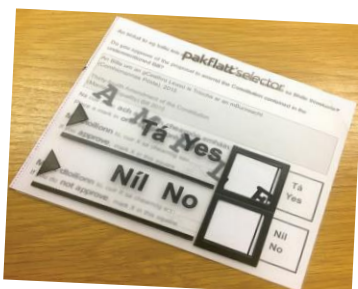


Ballot means a secret vote.



Braille is raised letters on a page.

A person who is blind can feel the letters so they can read.



Braille ballot frames help people who are blind to vote.

The State Election Commission of North Macedonia



Special **polling booths** help people with disabilities to vote.

Polling booths are the places people vote.



A **ballot box** is a locked box.

After voting, a person puts their vote in the **ballot box**.



Ballot boxes put at a lower height help some people with disabilities to vote.



The SEC must keep doing this work.

The SEC must also do some new things to help people with disabilities take part in elections.

Ideas for the future



The SEC should write a **policy** about ways to help people with disabilities take part in elections.



A **policy** is a set of rules to help an organization make decisions.



The CRPD and ODIHR guidelines will help the SEC to write this policy.

It is important to get the opinions of OPDs.



The SEC should give:

- more accessible information about elections
- education for people with disabilities about voting
- information to the public about people with disabilities taking part in elections.

Ideas for the future



The SEC should continue their good work on election days.



The SEC should explore ways for people with disabilities to vote from their group homes.



More **polling stations** should be accessible.

Polling stations are the places people go to vote.



Accessible polling stations are places that people with different disabilities can get to and vote.

Ideas for the future



Political parties and relevant institutions should write **policies** about the topic of people with disabilities and elections.



Political parties must look at ways to make sure people with disabilities can have senior jobs in political parties.



Political parties and relevant institutions should make sure:

- people with disabilities can take part in elections
- information is accessible
- meeting places and offices are accessible.



North Macedonia needs to make sure their law about elections says the same things as the CRPD.

OPDs must always be part of discussions.

What happens next?



This research says there are better ways to run elections.

This will help people with disabilities take part in elections.



The researchers will help the SEC and others to do the things we talk about in this research.



This research will help people in North Macedonia to talk about:

- the way elections are run
- people with disabilities taking part in elections

Who did this research?



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