

**Making sure
people with disabilities
take part in politics
and public life**



**Easy-to-Understand
Information**





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with disabilities
take part in politics
and public life**

**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>

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Introduction



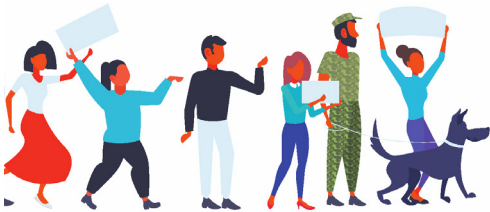
This document is about the best ways to make sure people with disabilities can take part in politics and public life.

People with disabilities can take part in **politics**.



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.



Some people with disabilities need support to take part in politics.



People with disabilities can take part in **public life**.

Public life means that lots of people know you and the work you do.

Taking part in politics or the government is a way to take part in public life.

Some people with disabilities might need support to take part in public life.

This document is about the best ways to make sure people with disabilities can take part in politics and public life.

What is 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 or hear.



A person with a **psychosocial disability** can feel unwell in their mind.

This means they might feel sad or have trouble talking with people.



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



People with disabilities are a **diverse** group.

Diverse means that people are different from each other.



In the past, we talked about helping people with disabilities with kindness and charity.



We now know that people with disabilities have the same rights as all people.

This is called **human rights**.



People with disabilities are not patients.



People with disabilities are equal members of their communities.



There is a document called the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** 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 same rights as all other people.



The CRPD says that a disability is a long-term **impairment** that a person has.

Impairment means that a part of your body or your brain does not work in the usual way.



The CRPD says that people with disabilities face **barriers**.

Barriers are things that make life difficult.

Barriers make it difficult for people with disabilities to take part in politics and public life.

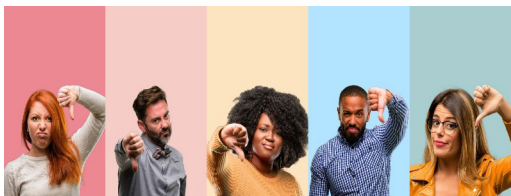
The words we use to talk about disability



The words we use to talk about people with disabilities are changing.

People don't always agree about the words to use.

Some words that people use about disability are out of date.



Some words that people use about disability can be negative.



It is a good idea to ask people with disabilities about the best words to use.



It is a good idea to ask **disabled people's organizations** about the best words to use.

Disabled People's Organizations are called **DPOs** for short.

DPOs speak up for people with disabilities.

Challenges



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



More people are thinking about disabilities in good and helpful ways.

But people with disabilities are still under-represented in politics and public life.



ODIHR spoke to people with disabilities and DPOs about this.



ODIHR found out that people with disabilities in OSCE countries face the same **barriers**.

Barriers make it difficult for people with disabilities to take part in politics and public life.



Legal barriers mean that the laws of a country make it too hard for a person with a disability to take part in politics and public life.



Sometimes people think that people with disabilities are not interested in taking part in politics and public life.

This is called a negative **stereotype**.

A **stereotype** is a belief about a group of people.

Stereotypes can often be wrong and harmful for these groups.

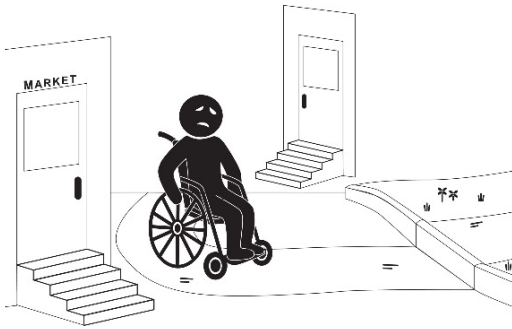
Negative stereotypes are barriers for people with disabilities



Information about taking part in politics and public life is not **accessible**.

Accessible means that people with different disabilities can reach places and understand information.

This is a barrier to people with disabilities.



There is not enough help for people with disabilities to take part in politics and public life.

This is a barrier for people with disabilities.



There is not enough **consultation** with people with disabilities.

Consultation means getting the opinions of people with disabilities.

Not enough consultation is a barrier for people with disabilities.



When people with disabilities are not consulted, the issues that are important to them can be forgotten.

Some groups face even more barriers:

- Women with disabilities
- Young people with disabilities

Legal and political promises



Many important documents agree that people with disabilities have the right to take part in politics.

The documents explain how countries promise to:

- Make sure that people with disabilities have an equal chance to take part in society
- Make sure that people with disabilities take part in decisions about issues that affect them.
- Make sure that people with disabilities have a real chance to take part in politics and public life.



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.

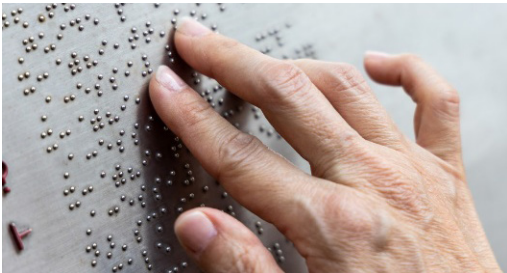
Supports



Accessible environments mean that people with different disabilities can reach places and understand information.

Information about taking part in politics and public information needs to be accessible for people with different disabilities,

Here are some examples of accessible information:



Tactile information is information you can touch.

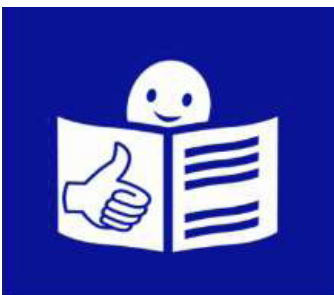
Braille is a type of tactile information.



Visual information is information you can see.

A poster is a type of visual information.

Large text makes visual information more accessible.



Easy-to-understand information is information that is written down in plain language.

Easy-to-understand information has pictures.



People with all types of disabilities should be given **reasonable accommodations**.

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

Reasonable accommodations are fair.

A personal assistant helping a person with a disability to work in parliament is a **reasonable accommodation**.



Collecting information helps us to understand more about ways people with disabilities can take part in politics and public life.

Collecting information means that we know the best ways to support people with different disabilities.



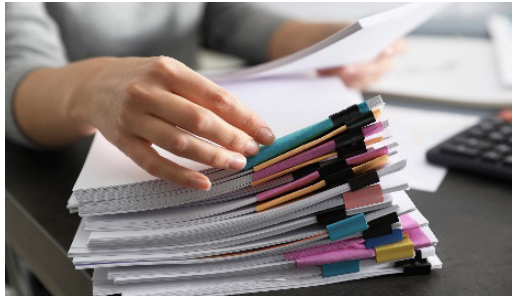
OSCE countries must consult with DPOs.

DPOs help parliaments understand disability issues and **priorities**.

Priorities are the most important things to work on.



OSCE countries must make sure people with disabilities taking part in politics and public life is part of the **national plan**.



The **national plan** is a written-down plan about all the things a parliament will talk about and work on.



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



Information about political parties must be accessible.

Political parties need to work with **DPOs**.

DPOs can show political parties how to help people with disabilities to take part in politics and public life.



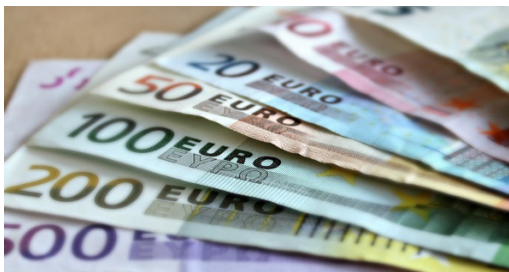
There are many accessible ways for parliaments to get the opinions from people with disabilities.

Information can be given in audio, tactile and visual formats.

Information can be given in an easy-to-understand format.

Meetings can be held in accessible places.

Information can be put on the Internet so that people who cannot travel are still included.



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



Different members of parliament working together will help people with disabilities to take part in politics and public life.

The OSCE and ODIHR



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 **ODIHR** for short.

ODIHR is a part of the OSCE.



The OSCE says it is important that people with disabilities take part in politics and public life.



OSCE countries say that human rights are best respected in countries where there is **democracy**.



Democracy means that the people in a country vote to choose their leaders.



People with disabilities are **under-represented** in politics and public life.

Under-represented here means that there are not enough people with disabilities taking part in politics and public life.

Topics that are important for people with disabilities are not talked about enough.

Topics that are important for people with disabilities might be forgotten.



Governments need to talk to under-represented groups about taking part in politics and public life.

Governments need to help under-represented groups to take part in politics and public life.

There is more fairness when people with disabilities take part in politics and public life.

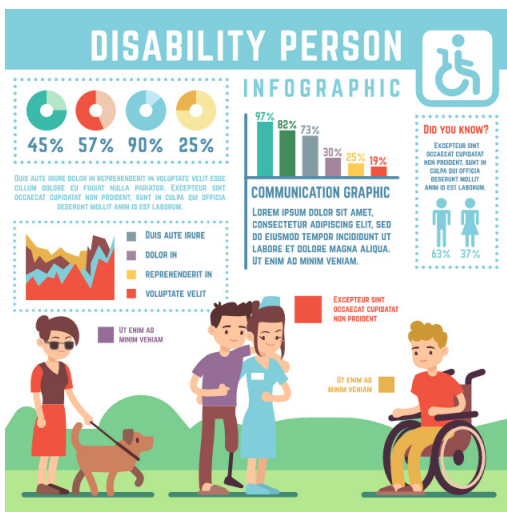


ODIHR works on many projects to teach different **stakeholders** about the ways to make sure people with disabilities take part in politics and public life.



Stakeholders are the people and groups who are interested in an issue.

Stakeholders are political parties, DPOs and parliaments.



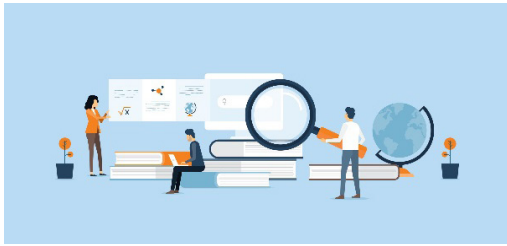
ODIHR prepares information about ways to make sure that people with disabilities take part in politics.



ODIHR makes sure that the information is easy-to-read and understand.



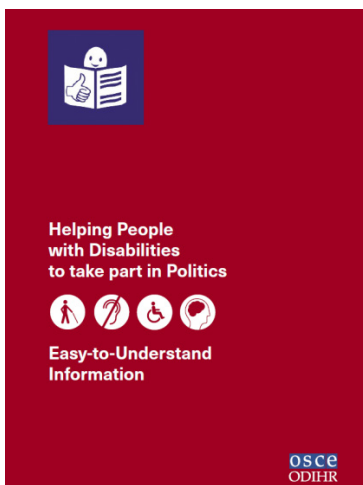
ODIHR gives training about ways to help people with disabilities take part in politics and public life.



ODIHR carries out **research**.

Research means collecting new information.

Research helps us to understand an issue.

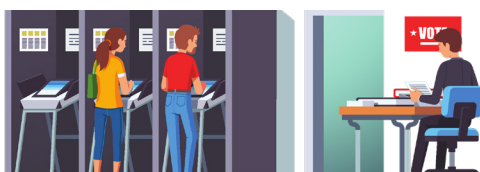


There is an easy-to-understand booklet called “**Helping people with disabilities to take part in politics**”.

ODIHR wrote this booklet.



People called **ODIHR observers** have the job of checking to see if elections follow international laws.



ODIHR observers have the job of checking to see if people with disabilities get the chance to take part in elections.



ODIHR made a booklet.

The booklet tells ODIHR observers about ways to help people with disabilities to take part in elections.

The booklet tells ODIHR observers about ways to check that people with disabilities get the chance to take part in elections.



ODIHR says it is important to talk about **disability hate crimes**.

Disability hate crimes are crimes that hurt people with disabilities because of who they are.

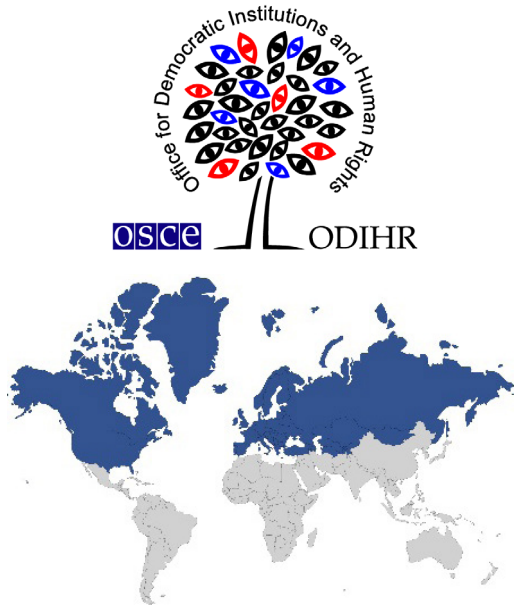


ODIHR gives training about disability hate crimes to police officers and lawyers.



ODIHR made a fact sheet about disability hate crime to help people understand more about it.

Conclusion



ODIHR works with OSCE countries to help people with disabilities to take part in politics and public life.

