# Checklist to ensure accessibility

## Digital accessibility

* Adding alt text descriptions to images (applied for social media: Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
* Using sufficient color contrast
* Captioning video files and include a transcript
* Allowing the option to turn off animation, which can affect people with seizure disorders
* Designing to support simple navigation and logical site structure

## Accessible meetings

*Put together by the European Disability Forum*

### Before the meeting

* Make sure website or online registration form for the event is accessible.
* Registration form should ask for contact information and further information about accessibility needs
* Personal assistant (e.g. for some meetings the assistant might need to register as
* well to get access to the venue)
* Interpretation needs, including sign language, speech-to-text (captioning), or audio description
* Accessible parking space
* Provision of documents in accessible formats (such as large print, braille, easy to-read versions, or accessible electronic format)
* Make sure there is an accessible route (without steps or with ramps/ lifts etc.) from special parking spaces to the accessible entrance.
* Try to make sure the venue has a silent room available
* Ensure there are enough places reserved for persons with disabilities at the front of the room, aisle seats, near the exit and for wheelchair users

**Programme**

* Organise the programme so that breaks are scheduled at appropriate times.
* Breaks should last at least 20 minutes along, and should be taken approximately

every 90 minutes.

* The organiser should ensure that times are adhered to.
* Since many persons with disabilities need to plan, for example, transport to and

from events, resting times, or take medication with food, sticking to the schedule

is important and respectful.

* Distribute the programme in accessible formats, ideally ahead of time.
* Allow sufficient time for discussion and questions as well as for interpretation.

**Documents**

* Send meeting documents and practical details in advance.
* Includes: Venue of the meeting (mention the accessible entrance when this one differs

from the principal entrance), Transport information (public transport schedules, adapted transport schedules/contact details), Location of reserved parking places, Prepare spare copies in braille, large print, and in accessible electronic format.

* If there is a change of programme on short notice, you can ask local blind persons’ organisation or library to print them if needed.

## During the Meeting

* One or two people should be available at arrival and departure to welcome and guide the participants to the conference room.
* During longer events it can be useful to have a help desk.
* Brief the security guards and staff of the venue about the needs of the participants with disabilities so that also they are ready to assist if required.
* When the person is there, address her or him directly and thereafter the person
* accompanying (personal assistant or sign language interpreter).
* Be as natural and polite as possible as you would be with any other person.
* Propose help, but wait until the offer for help is accepted before doing anything, and listen carefully.
* **People with reduced mobility**: Make sure beforehand that the corridors and the meeting room are free from obstructions and well lit, Be at the main entrance on time and offer help to open the doors and to get over the steps, Be informed about the location of accessible toilets and what the evacuation procedures are in the event of an emergency. Only push a person in a wheelchair if you have the person's permission, and avoid too sudden or quick manoeuvres.
* **People with visual impairments**: Always speak first. Introduce yourself and other persons clearly, explaining where they are in relation to the person. Say the person’s name when you start a conversation so that he or she knows that you are talking to him or her. Before shaking hands, let the person know that you are about to do so. Always advise the person that you are leaving, so that he or she is not left talking to an empty space. If the person wants you to assist him or her in getting around, guide rather than lead. Ask the person how he or she would prefer to be guided (e.g. by the elbow, shoulder, etc.). Let him or her know when you are approaching steps or obstacles. Try to make sure in advance that the corridors and the meeting room are free from any obstacles. Be ready to give a brief description of the ‘geography’ (shape, size and windows) and contents (furniture and people) of a room. Warn a blind person about possible dangers in a new environment, for example, very hot radiators. To help a person to sit down, just place his/her hand on the back of the chair. Explain where the toilets can be found. Always address the person directly, not the assistant.
* **People with hearing impairments** : Find out how the person prefers to communicate – signing, lip reading or captioning. In case of captioning with a screen, make sure that the screen is big enough and that people who need it can easily see it. Sign language interpreters should be in front of the people they interpret for or well visible to them. If the person prefers lip reading, face him or her (make sure he/she is looking at you) and speak in a normal, clear and steady way. Do not shout or exaggerate your mouth movements, but use your facial expressions to emphasise your meanings. Make sure your face is in the light and do not put your hands in front of your mouth. Be ready to repeat yourself or rephrase a sentence if necessary. Some words are more difficult to interpret and so it may be useful to try different words. Keep distractions such as background noise to a minimum (avoid

background music in the hall and in the conference room during breaks)

* **People with intellectual disabilities:** Avoid lengthy written instructions or plans and diagrams on paper. If possible, accompany the person to where he/she has to go. Write down your name and telephone number for the person. For completing forms, check if the person needs assistance. more than reading and writing, there might be an issue of understanding. Provide forms in multiple languages, since many people with intellectual

disabilities do not speak foreign languages. Try to break down complex information into chunks and keep language simple and logical. Keep distractions such as background noise to a minimum. Give the person time to react and reply. Speak to the person in a normal, natural way. Don't take offence at unusual attitudes or reactions of the person. Explain where the toilets can be found.

* **Persons with speech impairments:** Be patient, give them the time to speak, and let them finish their sentences before replying. If you do not understand, do not pretend to, but tell them that you haven’t and ask them to repeat.
* **Persons with psychosocial disabilities:** Psychosocial disabilities, or mental health issues, as it more commonly known, are invisible and can affect anyone. These people may sometimes experience difficulties coping with daily life and the tasks and interactions it brings. Meetings can be a source of stress and can trigger panic, distress, or claustrophobia. Some persons may feel more comfortable being accompanied by a friend, family member or assistant for emotional support. If the person is distressed, respond to him/her in a calm and polite way – try to see the person and not just the problem. If a person mentions that he/she has a psychosocial disability, take it seriously and treat the person with respect. It may be difficult for them to open up about it. If the person mentions that he/she has a psychosocial disability or is experiencing mental ill-health, take it seriously and treat the person with respect. It might be difficult for them to open up about it, if they would like to do so. At the same time, some people might prefer not to share their experiences and should not be forced to do so. Offer assistance if the person seems confused, overwhelmed or distressed.

Calmly answer any questions the person might have; the information may be

important to reassure him/her.

***Note: Each person is different and cannot be categorised. The explanations above are for guidance only, please check with the participant directly what participants need or prefer.***

**Speakers**

* Inform speakers about the accessibility needs of the participants.
* It is important that speaking times and schedules are adhered to.
* Have speakers talk directly into the microphone.
* Have speakers read what it says on the slides and describe pictures.
* Check if the speaking arrangement is accessible. Speakers may need a ramp to get onto the stage, or the removal of a chair for a panel discussion.

**Presentations**

* All presentations should be in accessible formats and given to participants and sign language interpreters in advance.
* The content of the presentations should be clear, concrete, and easy to understand.
* Ensure basic accessibility of PowerPoint Presentations:

o Never use a picture as background for the text.

o Make sure text and background have sufficient contrast.

o Try to put one sentence on one line.

o Use a maximum of two fonts.

o Use a large font.

o Avoid block capitals and italics.

o Do not use animations.

* If videos are being used ensure that they are subtitled and give an audio description if no words are spoken in the video.

**Advice on how to ensure accessibility for everyone, including persons with intellectual disabilities:**

* Use simple, straightforward language.
* Avoid abstract concepts.
* Use short, everyday words.
* Avoid jargon.
* Address the reader in direct, personal and respectful ways.
* Use practical examples.
* Use short sentences that cover only one main idea each.
* Avoid negations.
* Use active verbs.
* Keep punctuation simple.
* Repeat words rather than finding complex synonyms.
* Do not assume your audience has previous knowledge about a topic.
* Try not to use metaphors or figures of speech.
* Avoid words from another language.
* Dialogues are more useful than traditional presentations.
* Leave time for questions.
* Allow for the use of Accessibility Cards:

o Audiences may show color-coded cards to the speaker to indicate that they

understand what is being said. The cards should be in different shapes for blind participants.

o Green cards = participants agree with what the speaker is saying.

o Yellow cards = speaker should slow down.

o Red card = participants do not understand what the speaker is saying, and

speaker should explain it again with simpler words.

* Let audience members introduce themselves briefly before asking a question.
* If a microphone is passed around, check whether the needs help holding the
* microphone.
* When a deaf sign language user takes the floor, remember to give the microphone to the interpreter and not the person who signs.

**Additional Requirements**

Breaks:

* For coffee breaks and lunches, make sure that low tables for wheelchair users

(not only standing tables) are provided, together with some seats/chairs to rest for

people that cannot stand for a long time.

Live captioning :

* an additional screen is required apart from the regular screen that displays the presentations. Make sure you check the space is big enough for two (or more) screens so that all participants can see both the presentations.

## Accessible Online Participation

*Put together by the*[*Swedish Disability Rights Federation*](https://funktionsratt.se/om-funktionsratt-sverige/in-english/)

### Before

* Always ask for accessibility and find partners, suppliers for cooperation to improve quality of services.
* Communicate information to participants well in advance, also about how to participate.
* Allow users to express requirements for remote participation at registration for the meeting.
* Include accessibility in the budget.
* Check and test that the communication tools are accessible.
* Make sure that staff and users can operate the tools before the meeting. Assign a special online moderator and technical support at the meeting.
* Provide training sessions to users, moderators and staff
* Provide instructions to presenters before the meeting.

### During

* Make time in the beginning of the meeting to make sure everybody is familiar with the meeting procedure.
* Describe the context, room and participants.
* Encourage online users to use chat to communicate any problems during the meeting.
* Stick to the structure of the agenda, make sure all participants say their names every time they speak.
* Summarize discussions and every decision before moving on to the next agenda item.

### After

* Communicate the real time text transcript from the meeting to all participants.
* Evaluate the accessibility by asking users.
* Share experiences on web and social media to increase knowledge and cooperation on how to improve the Right2Participation via Accessible Online meetings.