**DPO involvement**

Indicators on political participation

of persons with disabilities

2014

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**Are disabled persons’ organisations consulted and involved in the development of laws and policies?**

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| **EUMS** | **Source and supporting information** |
| AT | The Federal Disability Act (*BundesbehindertenG*) in § 8 lays down the installation of a *Federal Disability Advisory Board* as a consultative body, which has an advisory function in all disability-related law- and policy-making. The Board comprises seven representatives of non-governmental organisations representing persons with disabilities and the Disability Ombudsman and has to be consulted by the Federal Minister of Labour, Social  Affairs and Consumer Protection onfundamental matters concerning disability.  An amendment of the Federal Disability Act which would enlarge the body by one representative was proposed by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (BMASK) in April 2014**[[1]](#footnote-1)**. The admission of self-advocates with a learning disability in the Federal Disability Board was foreseen as a measure in the National Action Plan on Disability**[[2]](#footnote-2)**.  §13 of the Federal Disability Act[[3]](#footnote-3) regulates the installation of a monitoring committee (*Monitoringausschuss)*. According to § 13(2) the Committee might make comments to the Federal Disability Advisory Board (*Bundesbehindertenbeirat)* regarding topics dealing with implementation of the CRPD. Direct consultation of the Committee when drafting new laws is not foreseen.  The Committee is in charge of monitoring the implementation of the CRPD in the Austrian legislation. The committee gets selected by the Federal Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection with regard of recommendations by the Austrian National Council of Disabled Persons (ÖAR) which is an umbrella organisation of DPOs. According to §13(1) of the Federal Disability Act [[4]](#footnote-4) the monitoring committee must include four representatives of DPOs, one representative of an approved non-profit NGO active in the human rights area, one representative of an approved non-profit NGO active in the area development cooperation and one scientific expert.  An important element in drawing up the action plan was the involvement of the organizations of persons with disabilities and civil society.  The supervision of the NAP is carried out by a supervisory group which involves the Disability Ombudsman and the Monitoring Committee on the implementation of the CRPD in Austria as well as the representatives of people with disabilities and civil society.[[5]](#footnote-5)  On 31 July 2013 the Monitoring Committee issued a statement on barrier free elections.[[6]](#footnote-6) |
| BE | A Working Group has been established by the Ministry of Interior to discuss on issues including the political participation of persons with disabilities, to which the National High Council for Persons with Disabilities ([*Conseil Supérieur National des Personnes Handicapées*](http://ph.belgium.be/fr/csnph.html) *- Nationale Hoge Raad voor Personen met een Handicap*) takes part.  In addition, while they are no specific mechanisms for the development of laws and policies in electoral matters, the mechanisms below are fora that can be used to discuss issues related to the inclusion of persons with disabilities under which falls the right to political participation:  - In Flanders, organisations representing persons with disabilities are involved in the preparation and implementation of policies (such as the Advisory Committee of the [VAPH](http://www.vaph.be/vlafo/view/nl/) (Vlaams Agentschap voor Personen met een Handicap) and associations of persons with disabilities, etc.).  - In Wallonia, the participation of persons with disabilities in policies affecting them is ensured via two mechanisms; [AWIPH](http://www.awiph.be/) (Agence Wallone pour l’Intégration des Personnes Handicapées) and the Walloon Commission of Persons with Disabilities ( [Commission Wallonne des Personnes Handicapées](http://www.awiph.be/AWIPH/missions_fonctionnement/CCWPH/CCWPH.html)), which aim to promote the full participation of persons with disabilities in social and economic life. With regard to AWIPH (the Agency of the inclusion of persons with disabilities), its Management Committee includes out of its thirteen members four members representing associations of persons with disabilities or their families. Moreover, AWIPH has 13 sub-regional coordination committees mainly comprised of people with disabilities or their representatives (associations). The Walloon Commission for Persons with Disabilities is also composed of representatives of associations representing people with disabilities and their families. It is a consultative body that gives advice and / or reports to the Walloon Council for social action and health matters.  - In the Brussels-Capital Region, the participation of French-speaking persons with disabilities is ensured via two mechanisms : the French-speaking Disability Service (Service bruxellois francophone des personnes handicapées, [PHARE](http://phare.irisnet.be/a-propos-de-nous/le-service-phare/)), which is a service of the French Community Commission (Commission communautaire française) and the Disability Section of the French-speaking Health and Care Advisory Council (Conseil consultatif bruxellois francophone de l'aide aux personnes et de la santé, Section Personnes handicapées).  -In the German-speaking Community, the Board of Directors of the [DPB](http://www.dpb.be/) (Office for Persons with Disabilities - Dienststelle für Personen mit einer Behinderung) includes representatives of persons with disabilities.[[7]](#footnote-7) |
| BG | The National Council for the Integration of Disabled People[[8]](#footnote-8) functioning as a part of the Council of Ministers’ administration is composed of representatives of the government and NGOs. Its main function is to ensure that there is cooperation during the development and implementation of policies for disabled people.  The council has published only one report from its meetings for 2013 and electoral matters have not been discussed in it.  The National Assembly has a Permanent Commission for Interaction with Civic Organizations and Movements.[[9]](#footnote-9)  Involvement and collaboration with organizations of and for people with disabilities is supported by the National Council for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities, which is an advisory body to the Council of Ministers. It includes representatives of the state, as well as national representative organizations of and for people with disabilities. |
| CY | The Consultation process between the Government and other Services for issues concerning Persons with Disabilities Law of 2006 (L.143 (I) / 2006)[[10]](#footnote-10), defines the Cyprus Confederation of Organizations of the Disabled as the social partner of the state and provides that each Public Service/Department consults with the Confederation on decisions that directly or indirectly affect persons with disabilities. The confederation has nine disabled people’s organizations (DPOs) as members , such as the Pancyprian Blind People Organization, Pancyprian Organization for the Rehabilitation of Disabled People, Cyprus Paraplegic Association etc.[[11]](#footnote-11)  Furthermore, aiming at the implementation of Article 33 of the Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which was ratified in the national law in 2011, three mechanisms responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the Convention were set up after the Council of Ministers decision on 9/5/12[[12]](#footnote-12):   1. The Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities was designated as the focal point within the government for matters relating to the implementation of the Convention. 2. The Pancyprian Council for Persons with Disabilities is the coordination mechanism within the government to facilitate related actions in different sectors and at different levels for the implementation of the Convention. 3. The Ombudsman and Commissioner for the Protection of Human Rights - Equality Authority has been nominated as the independent mechanism for the promotion, protection and monitoring of the implementation of the Convention.[[13]](#footnote-13)   Τhe Persons with Disabilities Law provides that members of the Pancyprian Council for Persons with Disabilities (coordination mechanism within the government to facilitate related actions in different sectors for the implementation of the Convention) shall be , inter alia, composed of four representatives of disabled people’s organisations[[14]](#footnote-14),[[15]](#footnote-15). |
| CZ | DPOs are a part of the Government Board for People with Disabilities [*Vládní výbor pro zdravotně postižené občany*], which is a permanent coordinating, initiating and consulting authority of the Government of the Czech Republic on the issue of the support for disabled citizens. This commission was established by a decision no. 151 of the government of the Czech Republic on May 5th, 1991. The activities of the commission do not specifically aim issues involving political participation and elections, but more generally the “creation of equal opportunities for disabled citizens in all areas of life and society”.[[16]](#footnote-16) |
| DE | -On the federal level, Section 47 of the Common Rules of Procedure for Federal Ministries (*Gemeinsamen Geschäftsordnung der Bundesministerien*, GGO)[[17]](#footnote-17) provides that concerned associations have to be consulted in law-making procedures or processes to develop political strategies. This includes associations of persons with disabilities and is usually carried out through consultations, expert hearings and the submission of written statements.[[18]](#footnote-18) Section 21 GGO stipulates that the federal government has to consult the Federal Government Commissioner for Matters relating to Disabled Persons in matters concerning people with disabilities, who himself consults DPOs.[[19]](#footnote-19) The consultation however is up to the Commissioner’s discretion.  -Similar processes apply on the *Länder* level. Most states described the possibility of DPOs being consulted within the procedure of the consultation of associations if proposed legislation directly concerns persons with disabilities. Almost all states also stated to consult the State commissioner for matters relating to disabled persons if the interests of this group are concerned. Additionally, the advisory board of persons with disabilities can be consulted depending on the state. |
| DK | The Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs) in Denmark (*Danske Handicaporganisationer*) are consulted and involved in the development of laws and policies in electoral matters.  A framework consisting of the Danish Institute for Human Rights, the Central Disability Council (*Det Centrale Handicapråd*), representing DPOs, and the Ombudsman has been set up to promote, protect and monitor the implementation of the CRDP. There is a continuing dialogue on digital possibilities, accessibility for disabled people to polling stations, the right to vote for people under guardianship etc.  In addition, the Danish Institute for Human Rights also ensures that disability organizations are closely involved in the work of the Institute. Danish Disabled Persons’ Organisation and other disability organizations are represented in the Council and the Board of the Danish Institute for Human Rights. In addition, the Institute has held round-table meetings on the mandate of the Institute to which all disability organizations were invited.[[20]](#footnote-20)  The consultation and participation of NGOs in the conduct of public affairs has been formalised with the creation of disability councils in all local councils and at central State level. They act as an advisor to the local council in disability policy matters and communicate points of view between citizens and the local council in local policy issues regarding persons with disabilities The local councils are responsible for administering social, labour market and educational legislation. The disability council consists of representatives of local political parties, business interests, employers and employees ’organisations and disability organisations. Disability organisations receive annual financial assistance from a central pool for running the associations. They are not involved in decision-making in individual cases, but will be asked to comment on general policies, including of course the disability policies of the local councils. At the central level, the Central Disability Council (dch.dk) seeks to influence the Parliament and government to adopt laws and policies which will help to ensure equal opportunities of persons with disabilities.  Following the OHCHR, insufficient studies have been made of representation of persons with disabilities in political representative bodies.[[21]](#footnote-21) |
| EE | 1. On the 13th of December 2012, the Estonian Government approved the Methodology of Impact Assessment (*Mõju hindamise metoodika*). It does not require, but recommends, consultation with relevant civil society organisations including DPOs if officials consider it necessary.[[22]](#footnote-22)  In this document the importance of assessing and considering how the new or adjustable laws are influencing the environment, different social groups etc. is established.  2. There is a mechanism called Good Engagement Code of Practice (*Hea kaasamise tava*) which establishes that government authorities have to include interest groups who will be affected by planned laws, (disabled people might be among them), into the law and policy making process. During this process, the planned law will be sent to the affected interest/social groups, who are welcomed to express their opinion regarding provisions affecting them. However, the recommendations made by interest/social groups are not binding.[[23]](#footnote-23)  3. On the 30th of March 2012, the Memorandum of cooperation principles between the Estonian Government and the representative body of disabled people (Estonian Chamber of the Disabled People) was signed.[[24]](#footnote-24)  Among other things, the purpose of the Memorandum is to promote the participation of disabled people in the decision-making process at the national and local level. The government, ministries and other public institutions are cooperating and consulting with the Estonian Chamber of the Disabled People, which is an umbrella organisation for approximately 410 organisations in Estonia.[[25]](#footnote-25)  4. The Estonian Government is developing the guide for the authors of development plans, which foresees five priority areas when compiling plans. Among these priorities, one foresees more consultations with disabled people.[[26]](#footnote-26) |
| EL | Article 5 of the Law 4048/2012 on Regulatory Governance: Principles, procedures and means of Better Regulation (*Ρυθμιστική Διακυβέρνηση: Αρχές, Διαδικασίες και Μέσα Καλής Νομοθέτησης,* OG A 34/12.2.2012)[[27]](#footnote-27), acknowledges consultation as one of the means of better regulation. Article 6 regulates a two-phase consultation procedure for all planned legislation but does not impose obligations with regard to who should be consulted. Therefore, the law does not require obligatory consultation with civil society or specific interest groups. There are no special provisions for consultation with people with disabilities or consultation regarding electoral legislation. |
| ES | Institutionally speaking, the organisation specifically created in 2004 to ensure collaboration in policy development between government and associations of people with disabilities and their families is an inter-Ministerial body called the National Council on Disability[[28]](#footnote-28).  Its legal basis is the Royal Decree 1855/2009 of the 4th of December, regulating the National Council on Disability.[[29]](#footnote-29) Article 6.1.b states that, apart from relevant civil servants and authorities from different ministries, the members of this Council are:  “Sixteen members representing the most representative non-profit associations on a national level whose members are the most representative organisations with regard to the different types of disabilities.”  No detailed information is available on the website on how the collaboration in policy development is carried out in practice, neither about the organizations being part of it.. After consultation of the Council and the Ministry of health, to which the Office is linked, following information was obtained:  The members of the Council representing the most representative non-profit disability organizations are:   * The President of CERMI ( Spanish National Council of Representatives of Persons with Disabilities) at the national level (also acting as 3rd Vice-President of the Council). * The President of the General Council of the National Organization of Spanish Blind People (*Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles*, ONCE). * The Vice-President of the ONCE Foundation. * The President of the Spanish Conference of Persons with Physical and Organic Disability (*Conferencia Española de Personas con Discapacidad Física y Orgánica*, COCEMFE). * The President of the Spanish Confederation for Persons with Intellectual Disability (*Confederación Española de Organizaciones a favor de las Personas con Discapacidad Intelectual*, FEAPS). * The President of the National Confederation of Deaf Persons (*Confederación Estatal de Personas Sordas*, CNSE). * The President of the Spanish Confederation of Relatives of Deaf Persons (*Confederación Española de Familias de Personas Sordas*, FIAPAS). * The President of the Spanish Confederation of Associations for the Care of Persons with Cerebral Palsy (*Confederación Española de Asociaciones de Atención a las Personas con Parálisis Cerebral*, ASPACE). * The President of the Spanish Confederation of Groupings of Relatives and Persons with Mental Illness (*Confederación Española de Agrupaciones de Familiares y Personas con Enfermedad Mental*, FEAFES). * The President of the Representative National Platform for the Physically Handicapped (*Plataforma Representativa Estatal de Discapacitados Físicos*, PREDIF). * The President of the Spanish Confederation for Autism (*Confederación Autismo España*). * The President of Down-Spain (*Down-España*). * The President of the Spanish Federation for Brain Damage (*Federación Española de Daño Cerebral*, FEDACE). * The President of the Spanish Federation for Rare Diseases (*Federación Española de Enfermedades Raras*, FEDER). * The President of the Business Association for Disability (*Asociación Empresarial de la Discapacidad* , AEDIS). * The President of the Spanish Federation for Autism (*Federación Española de Autismo*, FESPAU).   According to the Royal Decree 1855/2009, the tasks of this Council are:  “1. To promote the principles and main lines of the comprehensive policies regarding persons with disabilities within the competence of general state administration, including the principle of mainstreaming.  2. To present initiatives and make recommendations with regard to action plans or programmes.  3. To study and, where applicable, present initiatives on funding for programmes for persons with disability and the distribution criteria concerned.  4. To issue mandatory (though non-binding) opinions and reports on legislative proposals and other initiatives related to the Council’s field of activity that are submitted for its consideration and in particular regarding the development of legislation on equal opportunities, non-discrimination and universal accessibility.  5. To promote actions aimed at the compilation, analysis, elaboration and dissemination of information.  6. To stimulate activities in the field of investigation, training, innovation, ethics and quality regarding disability.  7. To analyze the policies, funding and programmes of the European Union and other international organisations and to be informed, where relevant, about Spanish positions and proposals in international forums.  8. To constitute the leading organ of the general state administration for the promotion, protection and monitoring in Spain of the international legal instruments regarding the human rights of persons with disabilities incoporated into the Spanish legal order.  9. Any other task within its sphere of competence that is attributed to the Council by any statutory or regulatory provision".  The Council reported that, apart from the listed tasks, it is also the advisory organ on institutional participation for the System for Autonomy and Dependency Care. In this context, it informs, advises and make proposals regarding matters that are of particular interest for the referred system.  Concerning the question on how this collaboration in policy development is carried out in practice, they informed that the National Council on Disability has a Plenary Assembly and a Permanent Committee. Both organs must hold at least two ordinary sessions a year.  The Council also performs tasks in the field of disability through the Permanent Specialized Office, which is part of the Directorate General for Disability Support of the Ministry of Health. During the plenary meetings, the minister of Health opens the meeting. Subsequently, all the points on the agenda are dealt with, which are commented first by the representative of the ministerial department or the organisation who proposed it, and finally by any interested member of the Council.  There is also the Spanish National Council of Representatives of Persons with Disabilities (CERMI).[[30]](#footnote-30) This is a private institution that represents more than 4,500 member organizations and 3.8 million disabled Spanish people. It also represents disabled people at the European level (European Disability Forum). They consider themselves exclusively a policy-action entity having representative character, a valid representative for this field and the leading disability entity in Spain.[[31]](#footnote-31)No information is available on its website on how this Council is involved and consulted in the development of laws and policies in electoral matters.  According to article 24.1 c) of the governmental Law 50/1997 of the 27th of November , when the Ministry of the Interior undertakes the drafting of an electoral regulation concerning accessibility and elections, the most representative associations of people with disabilities (i.e. CERMI, ONCE, FIAPAS etc.), as well as Autonomous Communities and Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP), are consulted.  According to the Royal Decrees 422/2011 and 1612/2007, the Ministry of the Interior (Electoral Management Body) elaborates evaluation reports on accesibility to the electoral processes. Disabled people organizations such as CERMI, ONCE, FIAPAS, FEAPS, CNSE, etc. send information to be included in these evaluation reports.  The report on the Parliamentary Elections (2008 and 2011), European Parliament Elections 2009, Local/Municipal Elections 2011 and Autonomous Communities’ Parliamentary Assemblies’ Elections 2009, 2011 and 2012, was sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Central Electoral Commission and to the Ministry of Health as well as it was presented in 2013 (March) at the Plenary Session of the National Council on Disability (Pleno del Consejo Nacional de la Discapacidad) (). This report includes all information available related to elections and accesibility (2008-2012), including complaints (filed before the Electoral Commissions, the Electoral Census Office, the Permanent Specialized Office, Ministry of the Interior, Oficina del Censo Electoral, Junta Electoral Central…), best practices etc. as well as a specific evaluation study on the implementation of the Royal Decree 1612/2007 (regarding complementary Braille documentation for blind of visually impaired voters). |
| FI | The Constitution of Finland ([*Suomen Perustuslaki/Finlands Grundlag*) (731/1999)](http://www.finlex.fi/linkit/ajansd/19990731), section 14 entitled “Electoral and participatory rights”, stipulates that “the public authorities shall promote the opportunities for the individual to participate in societal activity and to influence the decisions that concern him or her.”  There are no specific mechanisms in place with regard to electoral matters and DPOs. However, citizens, NGOs and other civic groups are heard when government prepares draft decisions. Public bodies that ask for citizens’ views include ministries, central government agencies and municipal authorities. During a round of comments government circulates its draft decision for comments to selected experts and civic groups. For such preparatory work to be successful, it is important to ensure that comments are obtained from an adequate range of persons and organisations. An NGO often acts as an expert. For example, a DPO can comment on disability policies. An NGO can also use its own initiative to submit a comment without being invited to do so by government. In the drafting of legislation by ministries, citizens are primarily heard through the procedure, before obtaining any comments[[32]](#footnote-32)  The National Council on Disability, VANE is a co-operative organ for authorities, disability organisations and organisations for relatives of disabled people. It closely follows the decision-making in the society, gives statements and promotes the real implementation of human rights of disabled people. The Council is working in close connection with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.  The Council has for example given a statement to the Ministry of Justice on the disabled persons’ right to secrecy of their vote (*Vammaisten ihmisten oikeus äänestyssalaisuuden säilyttämiseen*) on the 14th of May 2012.[[33]](#footnote-33)The statement concludes that the needs of the disabled voters should be considered in the development of electronic voting in order to enhance their possibilities to independent voting. |
| FR | There is a National Consultative Committee for People with Disabilities (*Comité national consultatif des personnes handicapées*, CNCPH)[[34]](#footnote-34) which only formulates opinions about planned laws. It is a public body composed partly of associations dealing with people with disabilities and of Parliament representatives, specialised establishments representatives, employee’s unions, employer’s unions and social welfare agencies. Attached to the minister responsible for disability policy, the CNCPH must be consulted for any law relating to disability.  For example, the documentation provided by the Interior Ministry on its website, i.e. the three practical guides to adapt elections to people with a disability, were approved by the CNCPH. These guidesprovide guidelines to implement legal provisions: a 'Practical guide for election organisers and citizens' (*'Guide pratique à l’usage des organisateurs des scrutins et de tous les citoyens concernés'*); a 'Practical guide for candidates and citizens' ('G*uide pratique à l’usage des candidats aux elections de tous les citoyens concernés*'); and a 'Practical guide for news media and citizens' ('*Guide pratique à l’usage des médias d’information et de tous les citoyens concernés'*)[[35]](#footnote-35).  Furthermore, the Law No. 2005-102 of 11 February 2005 on equal rights and equal opportunities, and the participation and citizenship of persons with disabilities amended the law of 1986 which deals with audio visual communication (Law No. 86-1067), introducing certain articles (in particular, art. 81) which provide for the consultation of the National consultative council for people with disabilities to specify obligations on programme providers regarding subtitles and sign language. The consultation is also provided for any possible derogation. The consultation is organised by the CSA or the Government, depending on the public or private status of the programme provider.  For further information, see:  <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Disability/PoliticalParticipation/States/ResponseFrance.pdf> |
| HR | In Croatia, there are several mechanisms that allow for consultation of interested public in the development of laws and policies, including DPOs. These include public debates, internet consultations, participation of civil society representatives in working groups drafting legislation, regulatory impact assessment etc. There is no obligation to consult DPOs in electoral matters. |
| HU | Act CXXXI of 2010 on Social Participation in Preparing Laws[[36]](#footnote-36) provides for public consultation about laws before their submission to the Parliament.  However, according to Article 1, the above law shall be applied only to draft Bills and decrees prepared by the Ministers, i.e. ministerial and Government Bills, thus Bills of Members of Parliament and parliamentary committees are not covered.  According to Article 5 (3), in case of certain issues – e.g. draft Bills on the central budget and its implementation or on establishing a new institution or body – involving the public is not obligatory and under Article 5 (4) the drafts shall not be consulted upon if that would “endanger” various interests of the country. A further exception is included in Article 5 (5), which stated that if adopting a law in an urgent manner is of particular public interest, consultation is not obligatory either.  Under Article 8 (1)-(2), consultation shall always include publishing the draft Bills on the web, allowing for the submission of any opinion via e-mail (“general consultation”), which option is available for everyone, including DPOs. Another form of public consultation is targeted (“direct”) consultation, which includes setting up strategic partnership with NGOs, churches, universities, etc. (The law does not contain any list as to the acts which require targeted consultation, thus the use of targeted consultation is discretionary. Strategic partnership agreements shall contain the issues regarding which the given strategic partner shall be consulted.[[37]](#footnote-37))  However, the available list of strategic partners, listing 47 stakeholders, does not include any DPOs.[[38]](#footnote-38) It may be added at this point that under the current government the pace of legislation has been very fast, and deadlines set for commenting in the framework of “general consultation” were often very tight, sometimes only a few days, which meant that the limited time sometimes restricted the possibilities of the consultation[[39]](#footnote-39).  This was possible because Article 10 (1) of Act CXXXI of 2010 on Social Participation in Preparing Laws only says that the draft Bills shall be published in a way that there is “adequate time” to assess the draft, to express related opinions and to assess the opinions submitted. Furthermore, the number of Bills submitted by MPs or parliamentary committees, which are, as pointed out above, not subject to mandatory consultation process, has significantly risen under the current government, and e.g. the new constitution and several “cardinal” laws (laws requiring a 2/3 majority) were tabled as Bills of individual MPs.[[40]](#footnote-40)  The Hungarian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (*Siketek és Nagyothallók Országos Szövetsége*, SINOSZ) submitted that they did not participate in the legislative processes before 2009, but they were consulted regarding the election procedure after the (local and national) elections in 2010 and also commented on the draft of the Election Procedure Act.[[41]](#footnote-41)  The Hungarian Federation of the Blind and Partially Sighted (*Magyar Vakok és Gyengénlátók Országos Szövetsége,* MVGYOSZ) submitted that, according to their knowledge, there has been no public consultation regarding the political participation of persons with disabilities since 2008, and they have not commented on related draft legislation.[[42]](#footnote-42)  According to the information provided by the National Federation of Disabled Persons’ Associations (*Mozgáskorlátozottak Egyesületeinek Országos Szövetsége,* MEOSZ), who is also the co-chair of the National Disability Council (*Országos Fogyatékosügyi Tanács*), within the framework of the National Disability Council they commented on information materials regarding the (local and national) elections in 2010, and were consulted regarding accessibility requirements in 2009.  Under the former government (between 2006 and 2010) consultations took place in order to grant voting rights to mentally disabled persons having limited legal capacity, but under the new government (since 2010) these consultations stopped and no results were achieved. They also submitted that they did not comment on the draft of the Election Procedure Act and that the current government does not maintain any consultation mechanisms with DPOs, neither directly, neither through the National Disability Council.[[43]](#footnote-43) |
| IE | The National Disability Strategy Implementation Group that oversees the implementation of the National Disability Strategy includes people with disabilities and representatives of disabled people’s organisations.[[44]](#footnote-44) Many Government departments and public bodies also have consultation groups that include disabled people’s organisations and people with disabilities themselves.  The National Disability Authority (NDA) is an independent statutory agency established under the aegis of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform by the [National Disability Authority Act 1999.](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1999/en/act/pub/0014/index.html) It is an independent state body providing expert advice on disability policy and practice to the Minister, and promoting universal design in Ireland. Section 20 (3) of the National Disability Authority Act 1999 sets out that “In appointing persons to be members of the Authority, the Minister shall have regard to— (a) the objective that a majority of the Authority would be persons with disabilities, their representatives, families or carers and, in the case of each member of the Authority, that he or she would have knowledge or experience, either directly or indirectly, of matters pertaining to disability or of any other subject which in the opinion of the Minister would be of assistance to the Authority in the performance of its functions”.[[45]](#footnote-45)  The NDA of Ireland has produced guidance on accessible voting centres and on communicating with voters with disabilities.[[46]](#footnote-46) It liaises with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in relation to accessible voting in this regard, and there is some evidence of the positive outcomes of such co-operation; for example, the NDA’s advice on accessible voting centres and on communicating with voters with disabilities was incorporated into an administrative circular issued by Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government to returning officers who are responsible for polling stations in elections. |
| IT | Law 104/1992 highlights the central role of non-profit organisations active in the field of protection of the rights of persons with disabilities in the formulation and implementation of policies. Mechanisms of participation through the creation of regional consultative bodies are established (articles 30 and 39), besides a national consultative assembly (art. 41), coordinated by the Ministry of Social Affairs, composed by Ministries, regional commissioners, local council representatives, trade unions and experts chosen by associations[[47]](#footnote-47). The National consultative body is not active at the moment while regional and local consultative bodies are active, especially in northern and central Italy[[48]](#footnote-48). |
| LT | There is no established practice yet of consulting with disabled people’s organisations (DPOs) and involving them in the development of laws and policies in all matters (including electoral matters).  On 8 December 2010 The Government Decision on the Resolution of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and implementation of its Optional Protocol (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės nutarimas dėl Jungtinių Tautų neįgaliųjų teisių konvencijos ir jos fakultatyvaus protokolo įgyvendinimo*)[[49]](#footnote-49) was adopted.  The Central Electoral Commission and the Lithuanian Association of Municipalities are the designated authorities for the implementation of the relevant provisions of Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the preparation of reports to the United Nations. The Decision does not specify what action these bodies should undertake in order to implement the Convention.  The main measures undertaken by CEC intended to enable participation of disabled people in elections, are ensuring that polling stations are accessible for persons with disabilities and making the information during election campaigns accessible to persons with sensory disabilities.[[50]](#footnote-50)  The Decision also tasks two bodies as the Art. 33 monitoring framework. While monitoring and controlling (protection) rights of persons with disabilities, promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities is not mentioned in the Decision. No concrete activities are described within the Decision with regards to realising monitoring and protection functions.  The Council for the Affairs of Disabled at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (*Neįgaliųjų reikalų taryba prie Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo miniterijos*) is appointed to carry out monitoring of the implementation of the CRPD, and provide recommendations for the Minister of Social Security and Labour on the implementation of CRPD. The council is composed of 14 members, 7 of whom are representing the major and most influential disability organisations, 7 come from different ministries from the governmental structure  The Office of the [Equality Ombudsperson](http://www.lygybe.lt) (*Lygių galimybių Kontrolieriaus tarnybas*) is tasked with monitoring the implementation of CRPD provisions related to securing equal opportunities[[51]](#footnote-51).  The Decision contains no provisions which would indicate an obligation to ensure meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in matters relating to the implementation of the CRPD. |
| LU | There is a long-standing and firmly anchored tradition to consult social partners (unions and employers’ organisations) including NGOs and also DPOs. Thus, normally draft bills have in some way been ‘accepted’ by NGOs / DPOs.  However, there is no legally defined obligation regarding NGOs’/DPOs participation, whilst Chambers (employers and unions) have to be consulted for each draft bill.[[52]](#footnote-52)  Furthermore, the Superior consultative body for disabled persons (*Conseil supérieur pour personnes handicapées)* provides a broad representation of numerous actors in this area, such as NGOs active for all types of disabilities as well as general support organisations like Info-Handicap. The consultative body is attached to the Ministry of family and Integration. Its mission is to advise the Minister and to provide opinions on drafts bills on the item of disability.[[53]](#footnote-53) |
| LV | One of the ways the disabled people's organisations are consulted and involved in the development of laws and policies in Latvia is through their participation in the work groups and parliamentary committees which develop draft laws and policy documents.  On the 15th of June 2005, the Cooperation Memorandum between non-governmental organizations and the Cabinet of Ministers was signed.[[54]](#footnote-54) By now 352 organisations have signed the Memorandum, including DPOs and organisations working with disability-related issues.  On the 30th of March 2006, the Saeima adopted the "Declaration about the development of a civil society in Latvia and cooperation with non-governmental organisations", aimed to ensure the development of a civil society in Latvia and to improve cooperation between the Saeima and NGOs on the basis of mutual understanding and support and to emphasise the importance of NGO activities in a democratic country. The Saeima has declared its decision to "involve, according to a specific procedure, representatives of NGOs in the work of the Saeima committees and, within the framework of these committees, hear the opinions and suggestions of NGOs and society about the issues within the competence of the relevant committee".[[55]](#footnote-55)  The Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No 300 "Rules of Procedure of the Cabinet of Ministers" adopted on the 7th of April 2009 envisages the involvement of NGOs in policy planning (paragraphs 11, 63.2, 145.15).[[56]](#footnote-56) Heads of NGOs have the right to submit a draft planning document, draft legal act or informative statement for consideration at the meeting of the respective Cabinet Committee or Cabinet sitting only via mediation of a Cabinet member who is politically responsible for the respective industry or branch (Paragraph 11). A representative of the Council for Implementation of the Cooperation Memorandum between Non-governmental Organizations and the Cabinet of Ministers can participate in the advisory capacity in the State Secretaries’ meetings (Paragraph 63.2) and in the Cabinet Committee’s Meetings (Paragraph 149.15).  According to information provided by the Parliamentary Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee, representatives of NGOs representing the interests of disabled people have taken part in the sitting of the Committee on 6 June 2012.[[57]](#footnote-57) The meeting was devoted specifically to cooperation with NGOs representing the interests of the disabled persons. The following NGOs participated in the meeting: the Resource Centre for people with mental disability "Zelda", the Union of disabled and their friends "Apeirons", Riga city society "Care Child" and Latvia's Paralympics Committee.[[58]](#footnote-58)  Futhermore, the National Disability Council established under the auspices of the Ministry of Welfare is a consultative body, which participates in the development of legal and policy documents pertaining to disability. The Council of Ministers approved the composition of the National Disability Council; among the members of the Council are the representatives of the relevant ministries, the Ombudsman’s Office and other relevant state bodies, as well as several NGOs representing the interests of the disabled[[59]](#footnote-59), such as  -Latvia’s Disability Association; the Union of the Deaf; the Association of the Blind; Association „Care Child"; the Union of disabled and their friends "Apeirons"; Paralympics Committee; the Resource Centre for people with mental disability "Zelda".  According to the information provided by the Resource Centre for people with mental disability "Zelda", the Ministry of Welfare (MoW) also regularly holds meetings with DPOs, informing them about topical issues, draft laws, and receives the feedback from DPOs. The MoW also invites NGOs to take part in various work groups on new policy documents. Besides, every NGO has an option to be proactive and to submit its opinion without invitation. The Resource Centre for people with mental disability "Zelda" has signed a cooperation agreement with the MoW and is also participates in the work groups with the MoW and the MoJ.[[60]](#footnote-60)  According to the Union of Disabled and their Friends "Apeirons", there is an obligation for the state institutions to consult relevant NGOs, yet in practice the true opinion of the NGOs is not reflected; the annotations to the draft laws or policy documents prepared by the state institutions may simply mention that “the consultations have taken place”, without actually reflecting the opinions.[[61]](#footnote-61) |
| MT | The Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act[[62]](#footnote-62) in Article 21provides for the establishment of the National Commission Persons with Disability (KNPD) , composed of 7 people deemed to represent the Ministries responsible for Social Policy, Labour, Health, Education, Housing and Economic Planning and another 7 appointed from amongst persons best represent voluntary organisations working in the field of disability issues.    Article 22 lays down the function of the KNPD which include the establishment of all national policies directly or indirectly related to disability issue, (that isdrafting, as well as consultation); ensuring that all government programmes are implemented in accordance with national policies for disability issues; identifying needs of persons with disabilities and proposing appropriate measures to cater to such needs; examining laws and draft laws for the purpose of ascertaining whether they are or would be inconsistent with or contrary to the objects of the law; and provide an independent mechanism to promote, protect and monitor the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability and its Optional Protocol.  However, one may point out that this is generally worded and not specifically in reference to laws and policies in electoral matters.  There is no specific mechanism of consultation with disabled people’s organisations (DPOs) in the development of laws and policies in electoral matters.  The KNPD informed us that discussions are currently being held between the Ministry for family and Social Solidarity (MFSS), KNPD and the electoral commission to explore the best way forward and policies regarding elections and persons with disabilities. The discussions are not public.  The NFP, having reviewed the respective laws, and media reports on consultations, and consulting KNPD, the Equal Partners Foundation, and the Malta Federation of Organizations for Persons with Disability, came to the conclusion that consultations are largely informal and ad hoc. |
| NL | There is no specific mechanism in place to ensure consultation of disabled people's organisations in the development of laws and policies. The main umbrella organisations representing people with disabilities at the national level are the Dutch Council of the Chronically ill and the Disabled (*CG-Raad*) and the Platform for Mentally Disabled Persons (*Platform VG*) which are in a process of merging.[[63]](#footnote-63) These organisations try to influence policy-making processes and represent disabled people's organisations and disabled people themselves in discussions with policy makers, but not in the framework of a formalised mechanism.[[64]](#footnote-64) Furthermore, the Social Support Act asks municipalities to involve citizens (with disabilities). Though it is not required, target groups are often involved in policy making. |
| PL | In Article 5 paragraph 1 of the Act on Activity in Public Benefit and Volunteering[[65]](#footnote-65) provides an obligation on the part of public administration bodies to co-operate with non-governmental organisations in performance of public tasks. The scope of public tasks is delineated in Article 4 of the Act[[66]](#footnote-66) and it includes activities for the benefit of persons with disabilities. Various forms of cooperation between NGOs and public administration bodies are listed in Article 5 paragraph 2 of the Act on Activity in Public Benefit and Volunteering.[[67]](#footnote-67) The list includes consultations of draft legal acts with non-governmental organisations.  People with disabilities participate in the various evaluation and advisory bodies. For example, the representatives of people with disabilities are consulted within the framework of decision-making processes conducted with the participation of the following bodies established according to the provisions of the Act on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities:   * the National Consultative Council for Disabled People (on the national level), which is an advisory body of the Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled People and acts as a platform of cooperation to the benefit of persons with disabilities between bodies of national administration, bodies of territorial self-government and non-governmental organisations. The scope of activities of the Council includes the submission to the Plenipotentiary of proposals for actions aimed at meeting the needs of people with disabilities. It also includes the submission, upon the Plenipotentiary’s request, of opinions on the proposals for underlying principles of policy concerning employment and vocational and social rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and on legislative projects that can affect the situation of persons with disabilities, as well as informing on the need to establish or change the regulations in this respect;   the voluntary *voivodship* councils for persons with disabilities (on the regional level), which are consultative and advisory bodies serving the marshals of *voivodships*; their task is to inspire actions aimed at vocational and social rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and exercising the rights by persons with disabilities, to issue opinions on the voivodship programmes of action for the benefit of persons with disabilities, to evaluate their implementation as well as to advise on draft resolutions and programmes prepared for adoption by the voivodship parliament from the perspective of their impact on persons with disabilities;  the voluntary *powiat* (district) councils for persons with disabilities (on the local level), which are consultative and advisory bodies serving the starostas; the scope of their activity is powiat-wide and their tasks are similar to those of the voivodship councils.  In reference to public administration bodies responsible for elections, Article 160 § 3 of the Electoral Code[[68]](#footnote-68) provides that, within its scope of activities, the National Election Commission (*Państwowa Komisja Wyborcza*) co-operates with non-governmental organizations whose statutory goals include developing democracy and civil society, increasing voting activity and promoting civil rights.  By way of example, on 24 March 2009, the President and the Secretary of the National Election Commission met with representatives of the Coalition for Persons with Disabilities. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the legislative changes with respect to election participation of persons with disabilities. On 1 December 2009, the Secretary of the National Election Commission took part in a seminar of the Parliamentary Team for Persons with Disabilities, devoted to the presentation of the draft law on facilitation of election participation of persons with disabilities. The meeting was attended by the representatives of the Sejm, Senate (two chambers of the Polish parliament), Parliamentary commissions and teams, experts and NGOs representing persons with disabilities, including Friends of Integration Association and the Polish Association of Blind Persons. Similar meetings were held in other years[[69]](#footnote-69). The draft law was eventually turned into law and passed as the Act of 27 May 2011 Amending the Act-Electoral Code and the Act introducing the Act-Electoral Code.[[70]](#footnote-70) The law introduced a definition of the voter with disabilities, as well as regulations on the provision of information to persons with disabilities (current Chapter 5a of the Electoral Code), voting by proxy and remote voting (current Chapter 7a of the Electoral Code).  The Rules of procedure of Sejm[[71]](#footnote-71) and the Rules of procedures of Senat[[72]](#footnote-72) (two chambers of the Polish parliament) in provisions concerning public hearings or consultations concerning draft legal acts do not foresee any special regulations concerning consultations with disabled persons’ organisations with regard to the development of laws and policies in electoral matters. |
| PT | According to article 4 (2) of Law 37/2004 of 13 August that amended Law 12/99 of 20 August, Law of the Associations of Disabled People *(Lei da Associações das Pessoas Portadoras de Deficiência)* () disabled people’s associations enjoy the status of social partners in the Economic and Social Council (*Conselho Económico e Social,* CES), and in other advisory bodies which operate adjoined to bodies with competences in the domains of disability prevention, rehabilitation and equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities)[[73]](#footnote-73).  The National Confederation of Disabled Persons Organisations (*Confederação Nacional dos Organismos de Deficientes*, CNOD) is part of the CES, which is the consultation and social dialogue body in the area of economic and social policies. The CES it participates in the development of the major options and of the economic and social development plans. According to law, the CES gives its opinion on economic and social policies and namely has the right of initiative on all matters within its remit.[[74]](#footnote-74)  The former Coordination mechanism of the CRPD in Portugal, the National Council for the Rehabilitation and Integration of the People with Disabilities (*Conselho Nacional para a Reabilitação e Integração das Pessoas com Deficiência*) was extinct in 2011, by Decree-Law 126/2011 of 29 December (*Decreto-Lei nº 126/2011, de 29 de dezembro*) which provided for creation of the National Council for the Solidarity, Volunteering, Family, Rehabilitation and Social Security Policies. This new Council is not yet created. The Order 2178/2013 of 28 January, issued by the Office of the Secretary of State for Solidarity and Social Security (*Gabinete do Secretário de Estado da Solidariedade e da Segurança Social*) provides for the constitution of a Commission for Disability (*Comissão para a Deficiência*).  This Commission will be in force until the operationalization of the National Council for the Solidarity, Volunteering, Family, Rehabilitation and Social Security Policies. The Commission is composed by the Government member responsible for the area of disability and rehabilitation, who presides; the president of the Board of Directors of the National Institute for Rehabilitation (INR); and a representative of the following NGOs: Portuguese Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (*Associação de Cegos e Amblíopes de Portugal* , ACAPO); Humanitas - Portuguese Federation for Mental Disability (*Federação Portuguesa para a Deficiência Mental*); and Portuguese Association of Persons with Disabilities (*Associação Portuguesa de Deficientes,* APD).[[75]](#footnote-75) |
| RO | There are no legal mechanisms for consultations with DPO organizations specifically. The DPPD (Directorate for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities, *Direcţia Protecţia Persoanelor cu Dizabilităţi)* mentioned general legal transparency provisions.[[76]](#footnote-76) The AEP explicitly stated that there are no specific consultation mechanisms and also mentioned the general legal transparency provisions.[[77]](#footnote-77)  General mechanisms for policy adoption at central level provide for consultations with civil society organizations and other interested stakeholders. The consultations start at the stage of choosing the public policy option (out of various possible options) to be afterwards further documented and presented for general public debate[[78]](#footnote-78). General public transparency regulations provide for the publication of the proposed draft with at least 30 days before being forwarded for analysis, approval and adoption. The announcement must also mention the deadline (at least ten days) and the manner for submitting comments by those interested. Upon the request of an association or a public authority, the initiating institution must organize a public meeting in order to debate the draft.[[79]](#footnote-79) |
| SE | Consultations with organizations in Government matters have long been an important element in the Swedish policy-making process. Consultations with organisations and authorities are laid down in the Constitution. Chapter 7 Section 2 of the Instrument of Government (*Regeringsformen*)[[80]](#footnote-80) states that:  *In the preparation of Governmental matters, the necessary information and statements is required from the relevant authorities. Information and opinions shall also, to the extent required be obtained from local authorities. Even organisations and individuals should to the extent required be given an opportunity to express their views.*  *(Vid beredningen av regeringsärenden ska behövliga upplysningar och yttranden inhämtas från berörda myndigheter. Upplysningar och yttranden ska också i den omfattning som behövs inhämtas från kommuner. Även sammanslutningar och enskilda ska i den omfattning som behövs ges möjlighet att yttra sig.)*  The preparation requirement applies to both the National Executive Committee matters, Government Bills, regulations, etc. and administrative matters. The Swedish Disability Federation ([*Handikappförbunden*](http://www.hso.se/vi-ar-handikappforbunden/)) and Equally Unique - The Swedish Federation Human Rights for Persons with Disabilities ([*Lika Unika*](http://www.likaunika.org)) are the two large umbrella organizations in Sweden. The Swedish Disability Federation (*Handikappförbundet)* notes that the disability movement is always contacted to consider new legislative proposals[[81]](#footnote-81) However, it highlighted that the disability movement is not at all consulted in the drafting of directives to government inquiries. Neither are they consulted as experts or specialists in investigations.[[82]](#footnote-82) |
| SI | The Ministry of the Interior (*Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve*, MNZ), responsible for the field of public administration, provided information that it is not a competent institution to elaborate on this issue and referred to the National Electoral Commission.[[83]](#footnote-83)  In their response, the National Electoral Commission stated that the law does not provide the commission with the competence to held consultation with voters.[[84]](#footnote-84)  Under the Disabled People’s Organisations Act – Article 4, 25 and 26; the state has the duty to consult with the representative organisations of persons with disabilities in all things important to persons with disabilities. The National Council of Disabled People’s Organisation of Slovenia (NSIOS) appoints representatives of Persons with Disabilities in various different Commission, working groups, etc. |
| SK | Legal regulations and policies in electoral and other matters are consulted with these advisory government bodies: The Government Council for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality[[85]](#footnote-85), the Government Council for Non-Governmental Not-for-Profit Organisations[[86]](#footnote-86) and the Committee for Persons with a Disability[[87]](#footnote-87), which is a permanent advisory body of the Government Council for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality.  Consultation must take place Pursuant to Article 46 of Law No. 350/1996 Coll. on Standing Order of the National Council of the Slovak Republic (*Zákon č. 350/1996 Z. z. o rokovacom poriadku Národnej rady Slovenskej republiky*). This process is mandatory for committees of the National Council of the Slovak Republic.[[88]](#footnote-88)The vice-chairman of the Committee for Disabled Persons is a disabled person himself. Considering that the Committee for Persons with Disability covers all DPOs in Slovakia, we may assume that DPOs are consulted and involved in the development of laws and policies in electoral matters.  Pursuant to Article 46 of Law No. 350/1996 Coll. on Standing Order of the National Council of the Slovak Republic (*Zákon č.350/1996 Z. z. o rokovacom poriadku Národnej rady Slovenskej republiky*), *the committees of the National Council (3) submit their proposals, initiatives and positions to the National Council; they may also submit them to the chairman of the National Council.* Pursuant to Article 47 of the same law (2*), members of the cabinet and heads of other central state administration organs shall inform the committee within 30 days, if the committee has not stipulated a longer time limit, of the measures adopted in line with its recommendations; (3) If the committee has not received the required information within the time limit stipulated in compliance with Paragraph 2 or if the committee is not satisfied with it, it may submit its recommendation to the National Council.*  Organisations representing rights of persons with disability can also take part in a standard inter-ministerial comment procedure. The comments and amendments proposed by the general public are not legally binding for legislative organs, which are therefore not obliged to take them into account.  The Committee did not discuss electoral issues, as they were not included in the Committee’s agenda.[[89]](#footnote-89) |
| UK | The government does not have a legislative duty to consult DPOs such as Scope will be consulted by the government when there is a policy review affecting disabled people. In their response to a freedom of Information request dated 5 August 2013, they said:  *“We have engaged with the Cabinet Office in the development of the plans to introduce the new individual electoral registration system around the potential impact on disabled electors.”*  The Cabinet Office Guidance on Consultation Principles outlines the principles that Government departments and other public bodies should adopt for engaging stakeholders when developing policy and legislation. The Consultation Principles do not have legal force. Certain legislative frameworks will impose requirements for Government to consult with certain groups on certain issues.[[90]](#footnote-90)  The main mechanism by which DPOs are consulted and involved in the development of laws and policies in electoral matters in the UK would be the PSED imposed on all Public Authorities under the Equality Act 2010. The PESD requires Public Authorities to consider how their policy and decision making will impact on disabled persons. Therefore, there is no formal requirement to consult with disabled persons; however, failure to fulfil the aforementioned PSED could be challenged through an application for Judicial Review made by an individual or the Equality and Human Rights Commission. The decision not to consult falls within the remit of unfairness grounds, “Failing to consult those who the public body had a duty to consult, or those who had a “legitimate expectation” that they would be consulted before the decision was made, perhaps because they had been consulted in the past or because it would seem obvious that someone has an interest in a matter and should be consulted.”[[91]](#footnote-91)  The Office for Disability issues (ODI) advises that one of the ways that government departments can fulfil their PSED is by engaging with disabled persons when developing policies, strategies and services.[[92]](#footnote-92) The ODI suggests that this engagement may be best achieved by working in partnership with DPOs.[[93]](#footnote-93).  The ODI has produced guidance which provides an introduction to involving disabled persons in policy making.[[94]](#footnote-94)  In addition to consultation with DPOs, in 2005 the ODI established Equality 2025, an advisory non-departmental public body which ensures input from disabled people in the development of Government policy and strategy[[95]](#footnote-95). The advisory group was recently reviewed as part of the ODI’s new Action Plan Fulfilling Potential (published in August 2013)[[96]](#footnote-96). The Equality 2025 Review was published in July 2013, and affirmed the continuing need to engage with disabled persons[[97]](#footnote-97)  Following the 2010 General Elections, a group of disabled people’s organisations, headed by Scope (England and Wales) carried out a review of the accessibility for disabled voters to the relevant information.  In Scotland, the survey was supported by Capability Scotland and in Northern Ireland by the Disability Action Northern Ireland. The report *Polls Apart 5: Opening Elections to Disabled People* outlines the challenges that are still being faced and some of the models of good practice that exist.[[98]](#footnote-98) The government responded to this research (in parallel with other reports by the Electoral Commission, Association of Electoral Administrators and the Greater London Authority’s Elections Review Working group) in their report: The UK Government’s Response to Reports on the Administration of the 2010 UK Parliamentary General Election.[[99]](#footnote-99) |

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