The right to political participation of persons with disabilities ahead of the 2024 European Parliament elections

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1. Data on persons with disabilities exercising their right to political participation

Table 1

| Indicator | Answer(Choose one of the answers provided below) | Source and brief description/assessment  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Do national disability strategies include political participation? | National disability strategies specifically address political participation  | Source: - The National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities “An equitable Romania”, 2022-2027 ([*Strategia națională privind drepturile persoanelor cu dizabilități "O Românie echitabilă" 2022-2027*](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/254256)), approved through the Government Decision no. 490/2022 ([*Hotărârea Guvernului nr. 490/2022*](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/254203)) from 6 April 2022.- Official English translation of [The National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities “An equitable Romania”, 2022-2027](https://anpd.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/The-National-Strategy-for-the-Rights-of-Persons-with-Disabilities-An-equitable-Romania-2022-2027.pdf) is available on the website of the National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (*Autoritatea Națională pentru Protecția Drepturilor Persoanelor cu Dizabilități*).Section 9.8. of the Strategy, *Political and public participation*, sets the general objective to “ensure the active participation ofpersons with disabilities, as full and equal members of society, with equal rights.” One of the four listed dimensions is “Persons with disabilities also need to be encouraged to vote and run for public office and not face barriers in these respects”, with the specific objective to “increase access of persons with disabilities to the electoral process” |
| Can persons deprived of legal capacity vote?  | Exclusion | Sources:- [Romanian Constitution](https://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site.page?id=339&idl=2) ([*Constituția României*](https://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site.page?id=339))- Law no. 33/2007 regarding the organization and conduct of elections for the European Parliament ([*Lege nr. 33/2007 privind organizarea şi desfăşurarea alegerilor pentru Parlamentul European*](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/78622)) – [unofficial translation](https://www.roaep.ro/legislatie/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Law-33-2007.pdf)- Law no. 115/2015 for the election of local public administrationAuthorities ([*Lege nr. 115/2015 pentru alegerea autorităților administrației publice locale, pentru modificarea Legii administrației publice locale nr. 215/2001, precum și pentru modificarea și completarea Legii nr. 393/2004 privind Statutul aleșilor locali*](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/168136)) – [unofficial translation](https://www.roaep.ro/legislatie/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Law-115-2015.pdf)Art. 36 para. (2) of the Constitution is stating that “The mentally deficient or alienated persons, laid under interdiction, as well as the persons disenfranchised by a final decision of the court cannot vote.”Art. 5 para. (6) of the Law no. 33/2007 and Art. 6 para. (1) of the Law 115/2015 mirror the constitutional provisions. |
| Is there a requirement under law to register to vote? | Yes, for non-nationals  | Sources:- Law no. 33/2007 regarding the organization and conduct of elections for the European Parliament ([*Lege nr. 33/2007 privind organizarea şi desfăşurarea alegerilor pentru Parlamentul European*](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/78622)) – [unofficial translation](https://www.roaep.ro/legislatie/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Law-33-2007.pdf)- Law no. 115/2015 for the election of local public administrationAuthorities ([*Lege nr. 115/2015 pentru alegerea autorităților administrației publice locale, pentru modificarea Legii administrației publice locale nr. 215/2001, precum și pentru modificarea și completarea Legii nr. 393/2004 privind Statutul aleșilor locali*](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/168136)) – [unofficial translation](https://www.roaep.ro/legislatie/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Law-115-2015.pdf)EU citizens residing in Romania, who choose to vote in Romania for the European Elections, are required to register at the Mayor Office in their locality, with at least 60 days before elections (Law no. 33/2007, Art. 9 para. (3)).For local election, EU citizens residing in Romania are automatically registered (Law no. 115/2015, Art. 22).  |
| Are alternative ways of voting available to persons with disabilities? | Yes, disability-specific alternatives  | Sources:- Law no. 33/2007 regarding the organization and conduct of elections for the European Parliament ([*Lege nr. 33/2007 privind organizarea şi desfăşurarea alegerilor pentru Parlamentul European*](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/78622)) – [unofficial translation](https://www.roaep.ro/legislatie/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Law-33-2007.pdf)- Law no. 115/2015 for the election of local public administrationAuthorities ([*Lege nr. 115/2015 pentru alegerea autorităților administrației publice locale, pentru modificarea Legii administrației publice locale nr. 215/2001, precum și pentru modificarea și completarea Legii nr. 393/2004 privind Statutul aleșilor locali*](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/168136)) – [unofficial translation](https://www.roaep.ro/legislatie/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Law-115-2015.pdf)- Law no. 208/2015 regarding the election of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies ([Lege nr. 208/2015 privind alegerea Senatului și a Camerei Deputaților, precum și pentru organizarea și funcționarea Autorității Electorale Permanente](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/170037)) – [unofficial translation](https://www.roaep.ro/legislatie/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Law-no.-208.pdf)For the voters who cannot be transported to the premises of the polling station due to an illness or disability, the president of the electoral bureau of the polling station may approve, upon their written request, accompanied by copies of documents attesting the respective medical condition or disability, that a team composed of at least 2 members of the electoral bureau should go with a special ballot box and the materials needed for voting.(Law no. 208/2015, Art. 87, also applicable for the European elections, and Law no. 115/2015, Art. 91).  |
| Is there legislation regulating how people living in long-term institutions may vote? | Yes, as part of legislation on alternative forms of voting  | The special ballot box provisions (see the previous row) apply. The written request can be also made by the head of the institution.  |
| Is there a legal duty to provide assistance in voting to persons with disabilities? | Yes, for all persons with disabilities | Sources:- Law no. 33/2007 regarding the organization and conduct of elections for the European Parliament ([*Lege nr. 33/2007 privind organizarea şi desfăşurarea alegerilor pentru Parlamentul European*](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/78622)) – [unofficial translation](https://www.roaep.ro/legislatie/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Law-33-2007.pdf)- Law no. 115/2015 for the election of local public administrationAuthorities ([*Lege nr. 115/2015 pentru alegerea autorităților administrației publice locale, pentru modificarea Legii administrației publice locale nr. 215/2001, precum și pentru modificarea și completarea Legii nr. 393/2004 privind Statutul aleșilor locali*](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/168136)) – [unofficial translation](https://www.roaep.ro/legislatie/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Law-115-2015.pdf)Law no. 33/2007, Art. 46 para. (8) and Law no. 115/2015, Art. 41 para. (21):The presence of any other person except the one who votes in the polling booth shall be forbidden. The voter who, on solid grounds, ascertained by the president of the electoral bureau of the polling station, cannot vote alone shall be entitled to call an attendant chosen by him/her to the booth, in order to helphim/her. The attendant shall neither be part of the group of observers, nor of the members of the electoral bureau of the polling station. |
| Are all persons with disabilities legally able to access complaints mechanisms if they have not been able to exercise the right to political participation? | No, only persons with legal capacity | Sources:- [Romanian Constitution](https://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site.page?id=339&idl=2) ([*Constituția României*](https://www.cdep.ro/pls/dic/site.page?id=339))- Law no. 33/2007 regarding the organization and conduct of elections for the European Parliament ([*Lege nr. 33/2007 privind organizarea şi desfăşurarea alegerilor pentru Parlamentul European*](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/78622)) – [unofficial translation](https://www.roaep.ro/legislatie/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Law-33-2007.pdf)- Law no. 115/2015 for the election of local public administrationAuthorities ([*Lege nr. 115/2015 pentru alegerea autorităților administrației publice locale, pentru modificarea Legii administrației publice locale nr. 215/2001, precum și pentru modificarea și completarea Legii nr. 393/2004 privind Statutul aleșilor locali*](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/168136)) – [unofficial translation](https://www.roaep.ro/legislatie/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Law-115-2015.pdf)Persons deprived of legal capacity do not have the right to vote (see first row), thus they don’t have the right to complain.  |
| Is information on complaints mechanisms regarding political participation accessible to persons with disabilities? | No  | Sources:- website of the Permanent Electoral Authority (*Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă)*, [www.roaep.ro](http://www.roaep.ro)- website of the Central Electoral Bureau (*Biroul Electoral Central*) for the 2019 European elections - [europarlamentare2019.bec.ro](https://europarlamentare2019.bec.ro/) Between elections, general information on the electoral process is available on the Permanent Electoral Authority website. During electoral periods, for each election, a separate website of the Central Electoral Bureau is setup. Neither of these website are EN 301 549 compliant, and neither provide materials in alternative formats (checked on 3 December 2023). |
| Have national courts considered cases related to the right to political participation of persons with disabilities? | No, no cases identified  | Source:- Rejust - the jurisprudence portal of Superior Council of Magistracy (*Consiliul Superior al Magistraturii*), [www.rejust.ro](http://www.rejust.ro) The Rejust database includes 43,516,378 entries, from 2011-2023. Queried on 3 December 2023, the database has not provided any relevant case. |
| Have non-judicial complaints mechanisms considered cases related to the right to political participation of persons with disabilities? | No, no cases identified  | Source:- website of the Central Electoral Bureau (*Biroul Electoral Central*) for the 2019 European elections - [europarlamentare2019.bec.ro](https://europarlamentare2019.bec.ro/) None of the complaints received by the Central Electoral Bureau during the 2019 European elections were related to the right to political participation of persons with disabilities. |
| Are persons with disabilities members of the current national parliament? | No data identified | The official data provided by the two Chambers of the Parliament does not include information on the potential disability status of the members of the national Parliament. |
| Is data available on the number of members of municipal/regional governments who have a disability? | No data available | The database of local elected officials is maintained by the Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration (*Ministerul Dezvoltării, Lucrărilor Publice și Administrației*). The database is not public but the researcher had access to the data, on 19 September 2023, following a FOIA request. The data does not include information on the disability status of members of municipal or regional public administration. |
| Is training for election authorities and officials on non-discrimination on the grounds of disability, accessibility and accommodation required by law? | No training required by law/No information  | Sources:- Law no. 208/2015 regarding the election of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies ([Lege nr. 208/2015 privind alegerea Senatului și a Camerei Deputaților, precum și pentru organizarea și funcționarea Autorității Electorale Permanente](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/170037)) – [unofficial translation](https://www.roaep.ro/legislatie/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Law-no.-208.pdf)- Law no. 448/2006 regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of people with handicap, republished ([Lege nr. 448/2006, republished, privind protecţia şi promovarea drepturilor persoanelor cu handicap](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/77815))- website of the Permanent Electoral Authority (*Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă)*, [www.roaep.ro](http://www.roaep.ro)According to the Title II of the Law 2018/2015, the Permanent Electoral Authority is responsible for the training of election officials. The Law does not mention specific training components. Law no. 448/2006 does not have any specific provisions on this topic, either. The training materials are publicly available on the [dedicated section](https://www.roaep.ro/instruire/corpul-expertilor-electorali/) of the Authority’s website. None of the norms covers aspects related to non-discrimination on the grounds of disability, accessibility and accommodation. |
| Are there mechanisms in place to ensure consultation and involvement of DPOs in the development of laws and policies which affect them? | Yes, mechanisms established by law  | Sources:- Law no. 448/2006 regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of people with handicap, republished ([Lege nr. 448/2006, republished, privind protecţia şi promovarea drepturilor persoanelor cu handicap](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/77815))- Permanent Electoral Authority (*Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă)*, Comparative study on the practices and technical tools used by other states to make electoral processes accessible for people with disabilities ([*Studiu comparativ privind practicile și instrumentele tehnice utilizate de către alte state pentru accesibilizarea proceselor electorale pentru persoanele cu dizabilități*](https://sgg.gov.ro/1/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/INFORMARE.pdf)), 2023The Law no. 448/2006 (Art. 92) is establishing the Disability Review Board (*Consiliul de analiză a problemelor persoanelor cu handicap*), a consultative body of the National Authority for Persons with Disabilities (Autoritatea Națională pentru Persoanele cu Dizabilități). The Disability Review Board includes two DPOs representatives, including the head of the National Disability Council of Romania (*Consiliul Național al Dizabilității din România*), the national federation of DPOs. The Board issues advisory opinions regarding draft normative acts that have as their object the protection of persons with disabilities and it analyses the issue of the protection of people with disabilities and proposes measures to improve their living conditions.According to the Report published in 2023, the Permanent Electoral Authority, in partnership with DPOs, organized a consultation on the access to voting of the persons with disabilities. The consultation included discussions with relevant organizations and a questionnaire-based online survey. The results will be used by the Authority to propose improved mechanisms in 2024.  |
| Do national authorities provide guidelines on how to make polling stations accessible? | Yes, detailed guidance available /  | Sources:- Permanent Electoral Authority (*Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă)*, Decision no. 44/2016 regarding the set of minimum conditions that must be met by the locations where the polling stations operate, as well as their minimum equipment ([Hotărâre nr. 44/2016 privind setul de condiții minimale pe care trebuie să le îndeplinească locațiile în care funcționează secțiile de votare, precum și dotarea minimală a acestora](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/183591))- Law no. 448/2006 regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of people with handicap, republished ([Lege nr. 448/2006, republished, privind protecţia şi promovarea drepturilor persoanelor cu handicap](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/77815))- Permanent Electoral Authority (*Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă),* Report on the centralized situation of polling stations that can ensure access for voters with reduced mobility([*Raport privind situația centralizată a secțiilor de votare care pot asigura accesul alegătorilor cu mobilitate redusă*](https://www.roaep.ro/management-electoral/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/RAPORT-MOBILITATE-REDUSA-23-11-2019.pdf)), 2019The Decision of the Permanent Electoral Authority sets the accessibility standards for polling station at the same level as the one for public institutions, established by Law. The local authorities have to carry on the decision when organizing the polling stations.The Report of the Authority, published in 2019 – the year of the latest European elections – shows that 86% of the polling stations were respecting the accessibility standard.   |
| Does the website which provides instructions for voting and information on candidates meet accessibility standards? | No/No data identified | Source:- website of the Central Electoral Bureau (*Biroul Electoral Central*) for the 2019 European elections - [europarlamentare2019.bec.ro](https://europarlamentare2019.bec.ro/) During electoral periods, for each election, a separate website of the Central Electoral Bureau is setup. The website for the latest European elections (2019) was not EN 301 549 compliant, and it did not provide materials in alternative formats (checked on 3 December 2023). |
| Are some television programmes providing instructions for voting and information on candidates subtitled? | Not available | We could not identify any relevant study, research or report on this topic.Observing the major television channels, including the public television, subtitling is very rarely used, so the answer is likely that key programmes are not subtitled. However, there is no data to substantiate this observation. |
| Do some television programmes providing instructions for voting and information on candidates have national sign language interpretation? | No information | We could not identify any relevant study, research or report on this topic.Observing the major television channels, including the public television, the main news programmes often have sign language interpretation, so it is likely that key information programmes on elections will have sign language. However, there is no data to substantiate this observation. |
| Are some television programmes providing instructions for voting and information on candidates audio described? | No information | We could not identify any relevant study, research or report on this topic.Observing the major television channels, including the public television, the programmes very rarely audio described, so the answer is likely that key programmes will not be audio described. However, there is no data to substantiate this observation. |
| Were some political party manifestos provided in accessible formats during the most recent elections? | No political parties provided accessible manifestos  | The most recent and relevant elections were the local elections held in 2020 and the European elections held in 2019. We’ve checked the manifestos of the first five parties in these elections, and we couldn’t identify any material provided in accessible formats.However, we cannot completely exclude that some other, smaller parties, may have published accessible materials. |
| Are there legal accessibility standards for public and private providers of internet and web-based public information? | Yes, covering public only | Source:- Government Emergency Ordinance no. 112/2018 on the accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies ([*Ordonanță de Urgență nr. 112/2018 privind accesibilitatea site-urilor web și a aplicațiilor mobile ale organismelor din sectorul public*](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/209421))The GED no. 112/2018 applies only to public institutions, and it is explicitly exempting the public radio and television services (Art. 1 para. (3a)). |
| Are there legal accessibility standards for public and private providers of media? | No | Source:- Government Emergency Ordinance no 112/2018 on the accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies ([*Ordonanță de Urgență nr. 112/2018 privind accesibilitatea site-urilor web și a aplicațiilor mobile ale organismelor din sectorul public*](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/209421))The GED no. 112/2018 applies only to public institutions, and it is explicitly exempting the public radio and television services (Art. 1 para. (3a)). |
| Are there mandatory accessibility standards for national and local authority buildings in the election context? | Partially  | Sources:- Law no. 448/2006 regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of people with handicap, republished ([Lege nr. 448/2006, republished, privind protecţia şi promovarea drepturilor persoanelor cu handicap](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/77815))- Order of the Minister of Regional Development and Public Administration no. 189/2013 for the approval of the technical regulation "Regulation on the adaptation of civil buildings and urban space to the individual needs of people with handicap, reference NP 051-2012 - Revision NP 051/2000" ([Ordin nr. 189/2013 pentru aprobarea reglementării tehnice "Normativ privind adaptarea clădirilor civile şi spaţiului urban la nevoile individuale ale persoanelor cu handicap, indicativ NP 051-2012 - Revizuire NP 051/2000"](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/145914))Official buildings of interest in the election context – such as offices of various national, regional and local bodies – are located in public buildings, thus they have to comply with the standards set by the relevant legislation. Offices and venues of political parties, when located in private buildings, do not need to comply with the same standards. |
| Are there legal accessibility standards for polling stations in place? | Yes, for all polling stations  | Sources:- Permanent Electoral Authority (*Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă)*, Decision no. 44/2016 regarding the set of minimum conditions that must be met by the locations where the polling stations operate, as well as their minimum equipment ([Hotărâre nr. 44/2016 privind setul de condiții minimale pe care trebuie să le îndeplinească locațiile în care funcționează secțiile de votare, precum și dotarea minimală a acestora](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/183591))- Law no. 448/2006 regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of people with handicap, republished ([Lege nr. 448/2006, republished, privind protecţia şi promovarea drepturilor persoanelor cu handicap](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/77815))- Order of the Minister of Regional Development and Public Administration (*Ministerul Dezvoltării Regionale și Administrației Publice*) no. 189/2013 for the approval of the technical regulation "Regulation on the adaptation of civil buildings and urban space to the individual needs of people with handicap, reference NP 051-2012 - Revision NP 051/2000" ([Ordin nr. 189/2013 pentru aprobarea reglementării tehnice "Normativ privind adaptarea clădirilor civile şi spaţiului urban la nevoile individuale ale persoanelor cu handicap, indicativ NP 051-2012 - Revizuire NP 051/2000"](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/145914))The Decision of the Permanent Electoral Authority sets the accessibility standards for polling station at the same level as the one for public institutions, established by Law. The local authorities have to carry on the decision when organizing the polling stations. |
| Is data available on the proportion of polling stations that are accessible to persons with disabilities? | Some official data available  | Sources:- Permanent Electoral Authority (*Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă),* Report on the centralized situation of polling stations that can ensure access for voters with reduced mobility([*Raport privind situația centralizată a secțiilor de votare care pot asigura accesul alegătorilor cu mobilitate redusă*](https://www.roaep.ro/management-electoral/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/RAPORT-MOBILITATE-REDUSA-23-11-2019.pdf)), 2019- Permanent Electoral Authority (*Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă)*, Comparative study on the practices and technical tools used by other states to make electoral processes accessible for people with disabilities ([*Studiu comparativ privind practicile și instrumentele tehnice utilizate de către alte state pentru accesibilizarea proceselor electorale pentru persoanele cu dizabilități*](https://sgg.gov.ro/1/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/INFORMARE.pdf)), 2023The Report of the Authority, published in 2019 – the year of the latest European elections – shows that 86% of the polling stations were respecting the accessibility standard. The Study of the Authority, published in 2023, mentions the intention to raise the percentage of accessible polling station to 100%, for the elections in 2024.  |
| Is data available on the proportion of public buildings that are accessible for persons with disabilities? | No data identified | Sources:- Law no. 448/2006 regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of people with handicap, republished ([Lege nr. 448/2006, republished, privind protecţia şi promovarea drepturilor persoanelor cu handicap](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/77815))- Order of the Minister of Regional Development and Public Administration (*Ministerul Dezvoltării Regionale și Administrației Publice*) no. 189/2013 for the approval of the technical regulation "Regulation on the adaptation of civil buildings and urban space to the individual needs of people with handicap, reference NP 051-2012 - Revision NP 051/2000" ([Ordin nr. 189/2013 pentru aprobarea reglementării tehnice "Normativ privind adaptarea clădirilor civile şi spaţiului urban la nevoile individuale ale persoanelor cu handicap, indicativ NP 051-2012 - Revizuire NP 051/2000"](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/145914))- National Agency for Payments and Social Inspection (*Agenția Națională pentru Plăți și Inspecție Socială*), [thematic control reports](https://www.mmanpis.ro/inspectie-sociala/rezultatele-campaniilor-de-control/)The National Agency for Payments and Social Inspection is responsible with monitoring how the public institutions comply with the accessibility standards. The Agency is conducting yearly thematic controls, focusing on one type of institution or another. The reports are published on the Agency’s website, in PDF documents that are not machine-readable. The Agency does not publish any structured data or updates.The latest available report ([2022](https://www.mmanpis.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Raport-tematic-national-privind-rezultatele-campaniei-tematice-ACC-2022.pdf)) shows that only 9.44% of the cultural institutions (museums and concert halls) were accessible. A more comprehensive report ([2020](https://www.mmanpis.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Raport-national-privind-asigurarea-accesului-la-mediul-fizic-informational-si-comunicational.pdf)) presents the results of an evaluation of a sample of 1,441 public buildings:* On the physical dimension, only 3% of the buildings are fully accessible (the percentage is higher if the access to toilets is excluded).
* On the information dimension, only 0.27% of the institutions respect the standard;
* On the communication dimension, only 7% of the institutions respect the standard.

However, the report is unclear if the sampling is representative. |

1. Political participation of persons with disabilities in practice
	1. Positive and negative key development as regards political participation of persons with disabilities

**Positive development**

In April 2022, Romania adopted the National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities “An equitable Romania”, 2022-2027 (*Strategia naționale privind drepturile persoanelor cu dizabilități "O Românie echitabilă" 2022-2027*[[1]](#footnote-2)), the first such policy document which included a section on political and public participation. One of specific objectives is to increase access of persons with disabilities to the electoral process. Also for the first time, the Strategy is involving the Permanent Electoral Authority (*Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă)* as implementing body.

The Strategy is acknowledging that “the persons with limitations, particularly those with severe limitations, report facing barriers in exercising their right to vote to a much greater extent than persons without limitations” (p. 41) and that “the persons with disabilities are only rarely candidates in elections” (p. 42). The Strategy is proposing several measures to improve the situation (p. 111-113):

* Carry out an information campaign for persons with disabilities on participating in elections and referendums, in collaboration with organizations representing persons with disabilities.
* Ensure that the degree of accessibility of polling stations increases up to the level of covering the need, depending on the territorial distribution of the polling stations, by: (i) mapping the polling stations accessible for persons with disabilities, as well as developing, operationalizing and updating the online maps; (ii) improving the electoral logistics and distribution of polling stations that ensure the access to vote for persons with disabilities.
* Develop and send out to the Government and/or the specialized parliamentary committees: (i) a comparative study of the technical practices and tools used by other states for the vote of persons with disabilities; (ii) a legislative proposal on the accessibility of ballot papers and/or electoral procedures.
* Publish in accessible formats, including on the website, the procedure for submitting notifications, complaints or petitions regarding the exercise of electoral rights by persons with disabilities.
* Develop and send out to the Government and/or the specialized parliamentary committees a draft legal act for the amendment of the legislation on funding election campaigns, so that: (i) the list of allowed electoral expenses to include: a) expenses related to the specific needs generated by disability, as well as a sign language interpreter, personal assistant and/or certain access technologies and assistive devices; b) expenses related to the creation and distribution of electoral materials, in formats accessible for persons with disabilities; (ii) the percentage of votes validly expressed necessary for the reimbursement of electoral expenses to be decreased from 3% to 1% for expenses referred to in letter a).
* Regularly involve persons with disabilities and their representative organizations regarding the development and implementation of policies and programs to ensure the accessibility of elections and referendums.

**We have not identified any key negative developments**.

* 1. Political participation: Promising practices

In 2023, as part of its contribution to the National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Permanent Electoral Authority (*Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă)* undertook a comparative study on the practices and technical tools used to make electoral processes accessible for people with disabilities[[2]](#footnote-3). The study was developed in partnership with the National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (*Autoritatea Națională pentru Protecția Drepturilor Persoanelor cu Dizabilități*) and relevant DPOs.

The study included a component of consultations with Disabled People's Organisations and persons with disabilities. It is the first time that the DPOs are directly involved, from the very early stages, in shaping the electoral legislation. The consultation component of the study included qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (online survey) tools, covering an extended range of topics:

* participation in electoral processes;
* access to the voting station;
* accessibility of the polling station;
* sources of information regarding the electoral process;
* tools considered useful to facilitate the exercise of voting by voters with disabilities;
* information materials;
* ballot papers adapted to the needs of people with disabilities;
* alternative ways of exercising the right to vote;

The results of the study will be used to propose improved mechanisms for the 2024 electoral year. It is expected that, in 2024, the Permanent Electoral Authority will submit the proposal to the Parliament (for legislative measures) and the Government (for administrative measures).

1. The National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities “An equitable Romania”, 2022-2027 ([*Strategia naționale privind drepturile persoanelor cu dizabilități "O Românie echitabilă" 2022-2027*](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/254256)), approved through the Government Decision no. 490/2022 ([*Hotărârea Guvernului nr. 490/2022*](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/254203)) from 6 April 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Permanent Electoral Authority (*Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă)* (2023), Comparative study on the practices and technical tools used by other states to make electoral processes accessible for people with disabilities ([*Studiu comparativ privind practicile și instrumentele tehnice utilizate de către alte state pentru accesibilizarea proceselor electorale pentru persoanele cu dizabilități*](https://sgg.gov.ro/1/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/INFORMARE.pdf)), 2023 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)