

# The right to vote and stand for elections

Easy-to-read

Easy-to-read is information

that is written in a simple way   
so that people with intellectual disabilities   
and all people can understand it.  
You can find more information about easy-to-read

at [www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read](http://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read).

## Who we are

We are the European Disability Forum.

We are an organisation

of people with disabilities in Europe.

In short, we are called ‘EDF’.

At EDF, we work to protect the rights

of all people with disabilities in Europe.

We think that people with disabilities

should have the same chances in life

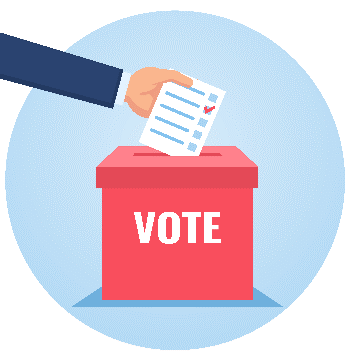
as everyone else.

We also think that people with disabilities

should make their own choices.

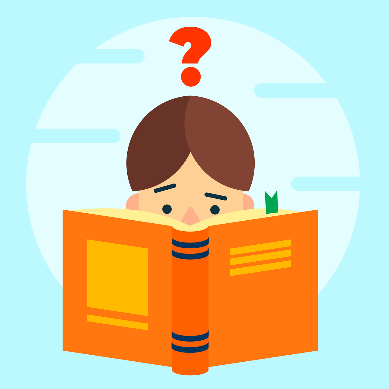
Nothing should be decided about us without us!

## What this booklet is about

We made this booklet to talk about   
the right of people with disabilities

to vote and stand for elections.

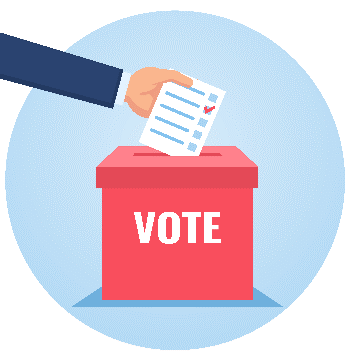
Reading this booklet will help you   
to know more about:

1. What does it mean to vote   
   and stand for elections?
2. How is the situation in Europe?
3. What problems   
   do people with disabilities face   
   to vote and stand for elections?
4. How do countries try to help  
    people with disabilities to vote?
5. What can be done better?

All the difficult words in the text   
are marked in **bold**   
and you can find their explanation

at the end of this booklet.

## What does it mean to vote and stand for elections?

To vote in the elections means

you can choose which people

will represent you

and make decisions and laws in Europe.

To stand for elections means

you ask people to vote for you

so that you can represent them

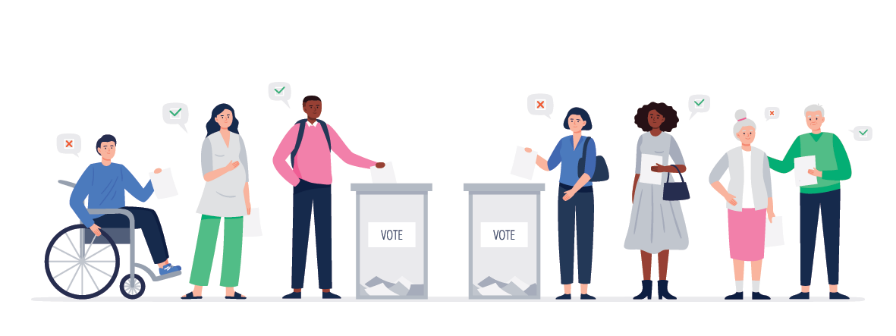
and make decisions and laws in Europe.

The right to vote and stand for elections

is very important for all people.

People with disabilities   
should have the right to vote   
and stand for elections too.

Their voice counts like everyone else’s!



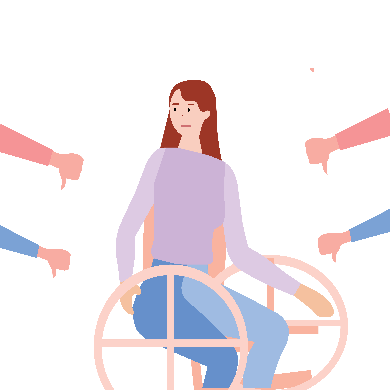
## How is the situation in Europe?

Every 5 years, there are European elections.

This means that people in Europe vote   
and choose who will make decisions and laws   
in Europe.

The last European elections took place in 2019.

The next European elections will be in 2024.

Sadly, it is hard or impossible

for many people with disabilities in Europe

to vote or stand for elections.

Things are even harder   
for women with disabilities

as they are at higher risk of being left out.

Not being able to vote or stand for elections

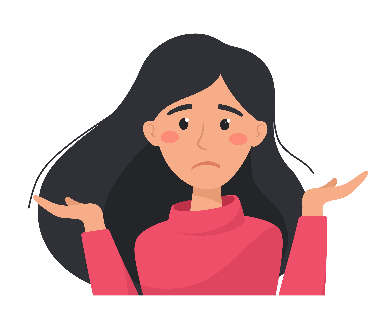
means that your voice is not heard.

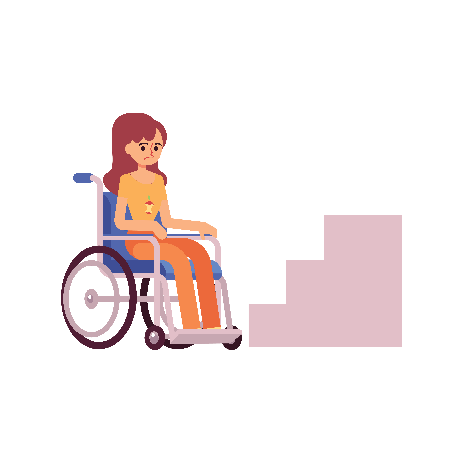
This is unfair.

## What problems do people with disabilities face to vote and stand for elections?

People with disabilities may not be able to vote   
or stand for elections because:

* Elections are not **accessible** for them

For example,   
if information is not easy-to-read,   
people with intellectual disabilities   
may not be able to understand   
how to vote.

Or if the buildings  
where the elections take place   
do not have ramps,   
people in wheelchairs   
will not be able to go vote.

* Some countries do not allow   
  people with disabilities   
  to make their own choices in life.   
  They do not allow them to vote either.
* Most countries do not give   
  people with disabilities   
  the support they need   
  to be able to vote   
  or stand for elections.

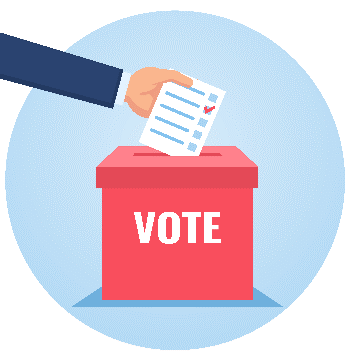
## How do countries try to help people with disabilities to vote?

The **European Union** and all its countries

have signed the **UN Convention**.

That means they agreed to protect the rights

of all people with disabilities.

Amongst others,

the UN Convention says

that all people with disabilities   
have the right to vote   
and stand for elections.

So the European Union and its countries

should work to make sure that  
all people with disabilities can enjoy this right.

Most countries in the European Union

have taken action to make it easier

for people with disabilities

to vote in the European elections.

For example,

some countries allow people with disabilities to:



* Send their vote by post.
* Choose where they want to vote   
  based on their needs.
* Vote earlier than the election day   
  in a calmer way.
* Ask a person they trust to vote   
  on their behalf.
* Get information in accessible formats   
  like easy-to-read.

But not all the countries in the European Union

offer these choices

to help people with disabilities to vote.

Many people with disabilities

are still left out from the European elections.

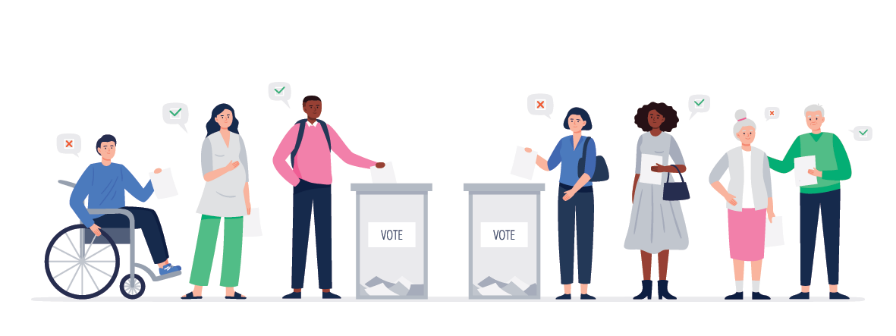
This should change!

## What things can be done better?

At EDF, we believe that all people with disabilities

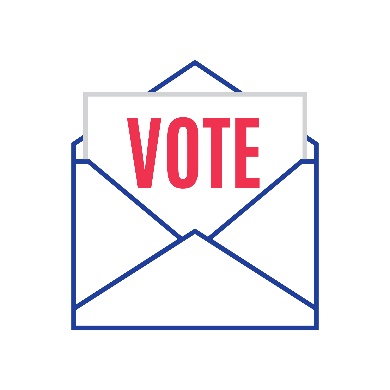
should have the chance to vote and stand for elections

like everyone else.

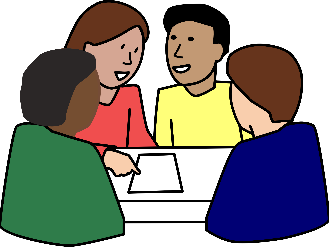


For that to happen,   
the **European Union** and all its countries should:



* Take into account the rights   
  in the **UN Convention**   
  when they make laws and decisions   
  about the elections.
* Recognise the right   
  of all people with disabilities   
  to vote and stand for elections.
* Make sure people with disabilities can vote   
  in ways that fit their needs.   
  For example, sending their vote by post   
  and not having to vote in person.
* Make the European elections **accessible**   
  so that all people with disabilities   
  can vote and stand for elections   
  without problems.
* Allow people with disabilities to choose   
  the support they need   
  to be able to vote and stand for elections.



* Make all the material and information   
  of the European elections   
  accessible to people with disabilities.   
  For example,   
  leaflets should be available in easy-to-read   
  so that people with intellectual disabilities   
  can understand them.   
  Or the news on television   
  should be in sign language too   
  so that deaf people can be informed as well.
* Talk with organisations   
  of people with disabilities   
  and listen to their needs.

We hope that more people with disabilities

will be able to vote and stand for elections

in the next European elections in 2024.

## More information

To know more about our work,

you can check our website at:

[www.edf-feph.org](http://www.edf-feph.org)

If you have any questions,

you can send us an email at:

[info@edf-feph.org](mailto:info@edf-feph.org).

## Explanation of difficult words

### European Union

The European Union is a group of 27 countries in Europe   
that work together to make things better for their people.



### UN Convention

The UN Convention

on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

is an agreement that says

what rights people with disabilities have   
and how countries should protect these rights.

In short, we call it ‘the UN Convention’.

Many countries in the world

have signed the UN Convention

and agreed to work to protect

the rights of all people with disabilities.

### Accessible

Things are accessible   
when they are easy to use   
for people with disabilities and all people.

For example, when buildings have ramps   
that people in wheelchairs can use to get in.   
Or when information is easy to read   
and people with intellectual disabilities   
can understand it.