



# 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.

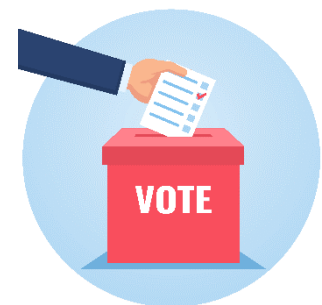
We also think that people with disabilities  
should make their own choices.

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?

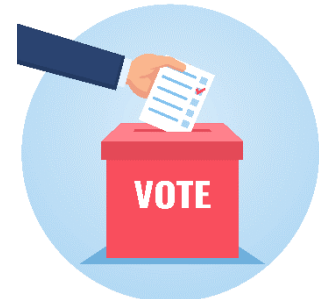
5. What can be done better?

All the difficult words in the text  
are marked in **bold**  
and you can find their explanation  
at the end of this booklet.



# 1. 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.



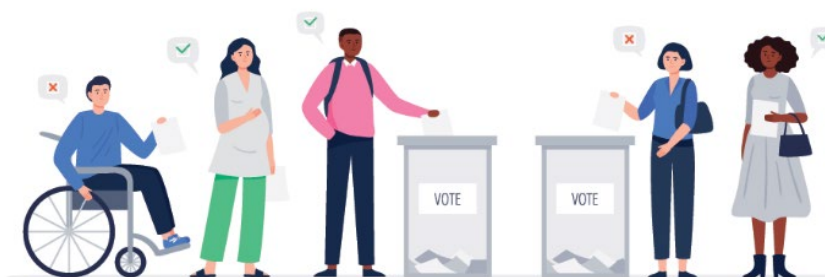
To stand for elections means you ask people to vote for you so that you can represent them and make decisions and laws in Europe.



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!



## 2. How is the situation in Europe?

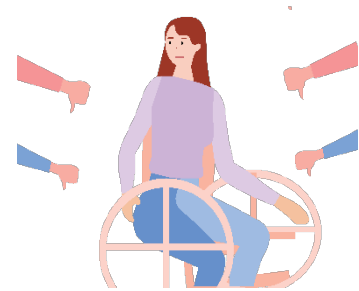
Every 5 years, there are European elections. This means that people in Europe vote and choose who will make decisions and laws in Europe.

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.

## 3. 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.



## 4. 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!



## 5. 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



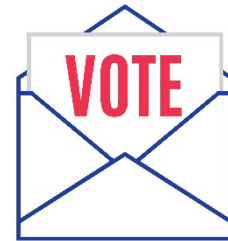
For that to happen, the **European Union** and all its countries should:

- 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.

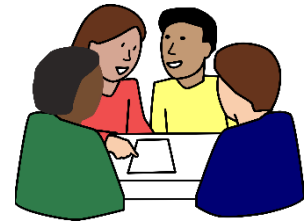


- Make the European elections **accessible** so that all people with disabilities can vote and stand for elections without problems.
- Allow people with disabilities to choose the support they need to be able to vote and stand for elections.

- 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

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



### UN Convention

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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

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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.

