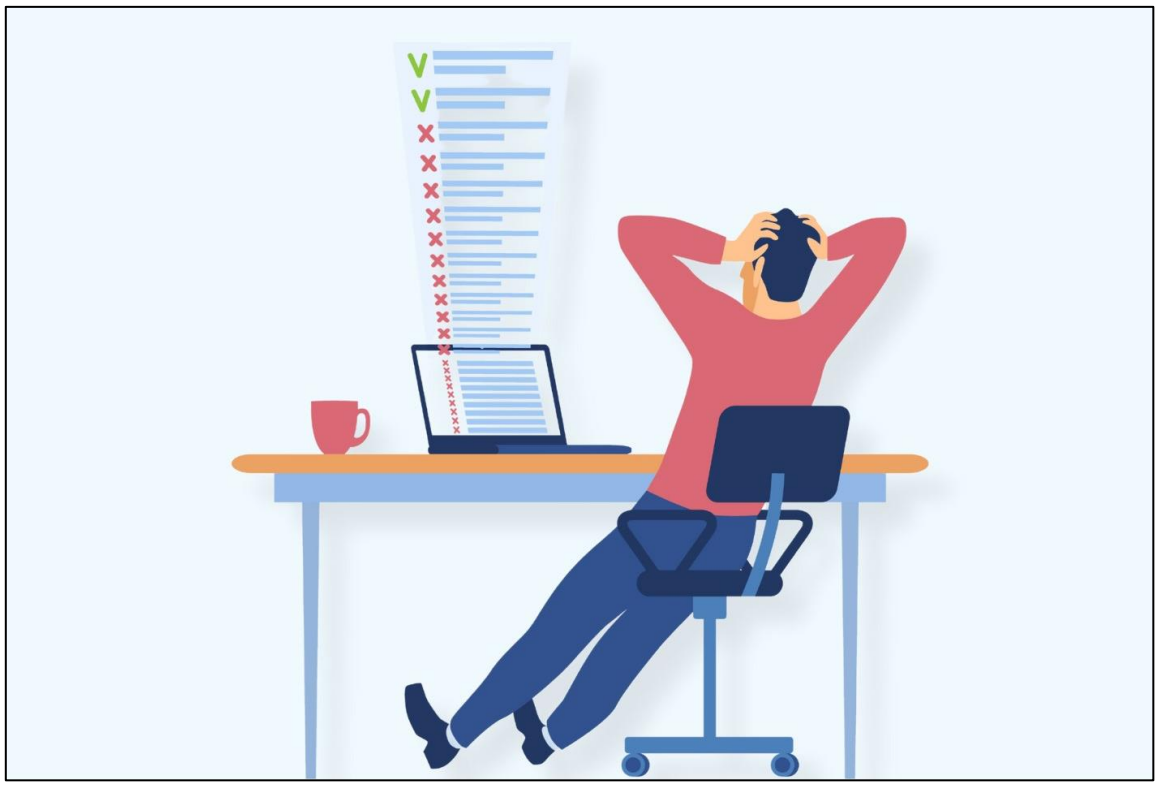

Access Denied

The (in)accessibility of European Political Party websites

This study is a collaboration between:

EUROPEAN DISABILITY FORUM

Funka Foundation

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Authors: Funka Foundation - Malin Hammarberg, Péter Kemény and Susanna Laurin.

Editor: André Felix, Communications Manager – European Disability Forum

Proofreader: Ciara Kristensen, Communications and Campaigns Officer - European Disability Forum

Cover Image: Natalia Suarez, Senior Communications Officer European Disability Forum

Contact: André Felix, EDF Communications Manager : info@edf-feph.org

Press contact: press@edf-feph.org

The European Disability Forum

7 – 8 Avenue des Arts

1210 Brussels, Belgium

info@edf-feph.org

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Scope

A website needs to work for everyone, no matter their abilities.

A full accessibility analysis of a website requires hundreds of hours of testing with end users as well as experts. In this report, we relied on a set number of "spot checks". We chose these spot checks based on the harmonised European standard EN 201 549, which is used to conform with EU legislation such as the Web Accessibility Directive[1]. The spot checks cover desktop and mobile interfaces and with:

- A selection of requirements where inaccessibility risks fully excluding groups of users.
- Requirements that support diverse users: users who are blind, users with low vision, users who are hard of hearing, users with motor impairments, speech impairments or cognitive impairments.
- Analysis of important sections of the website, including the start page, the page with a manifesto or what the party stands for, the accessibility statement, contact information, and a sample of multimedia contents and documents.

Needs of persons with disabilities

The analysis focused on 10 elements that websites need to have to ensure persons with diverse types of disabilities can interact without spending more time and effort than others:

- Description of Non-text content: ensuring that buttons, icon links, video and audio only content include appropriate description to ensure access to persons that cannot access visual information.
- Captions: ensuring captioning is provided in audio and video content.
- Clear Contrast: text and images need to have an appropriate contrast ratio for visual perception.
- Keyboard navigation: ensure websites can be navigated using only the keyboard.
- Pause, Stop, Hide: Ensuring automatically moving content (videos, animations) can be paused, stopped, or hidden by the user.
- Visible indicator when focusing on page elements: ensuring that users navigating with keyboard can understand which element they are selecting.
- Error identification: there are precise instructions on how and where to fix errors when filling out forms.

[1] European standards EN 301 549 v 3.2.1

The table below shows how each element interacts with diverse user needs. “Primary” means that having that element is essential for a user with a specific impairment be able to interact with the website at all. Secondary means the element being correctly implemented will help the user interact on an equal basis with the website.

	Vision	Hearing	Speech	Motor	Cognition
Non-text content	Primary	Primary	-	-	Secondary
Captions (pre-recorded)	-	Primary	-	-	Secondary
Contrast (minimum)	Primary	-	-	-	Secondary
Keyboard	Primary	-	Secondary	Primary	-
Meaningful sequence	Primary	-	-	-	Secondary
Pause, stop, hide	Primary	Primary	-	Primary	Primary
Focus visible	Primary	-	Secondary	Primary	Primary
Error identification	Primary	-	-	-	Primary
Tagged	Primary	-	Secondary	Primary	Primary
Bookmarks	Primary	-	Secondary	Primary	Primary

Pages and channels analysed

The table below shows which specific pages, channels and documents we analysed.

Party	Start page	Manifesto	Contact	Multimedia YouTube
EPP	https://www.epp.eu	/commitments	/contact	@EPPtv
ECR Party	https://ecrparty.eu	-	/contact	@ecrparty6021
PES	https://pes.eu	/policies	/contact	@pes_pse
ALDE Party	https://www.aldeparty.eu	/vision	/contact	@aldeparty
European Greens	https://europeangreens.eu	/vision	/contact	@europeangreens
European Left	https://www.european-left.org	/manifesto2023	/contact-us	@europeanleftparty
ID Party	https://id-party.eu/	/program	/contact	@identitydemocracyparty6303

To check the accessibility of the documents published on the websites, we chose two files on each website where available. We aimed to choose consistently:

- the most recent “publication style” document (typically a Manifesto or a Bulletin);
- the most recent simple, informative document.

Documents analysed

For documents, the PDF/UA standard was considered, and we also checked whether the documents are tagged and have bookmarks. If a document is tagged correctly, users of assistive technology can read and navigate the content. Tagged and Bookmarks are not a legal requirement, but as they are crucial for many users, we therefore include them in document testing. Instead of Keyboard on documents we tested Meaningful sequence.

Party	Document name/URL	Document type
EPP	EPP Manifesto 2024	Design: Manifesto
EPP	Emergency resolution Nr. 6 adopted at the EPP Congress, Bucharest (Romania), 6th – 7th March 2024	Simple: Resolution

Party	Document name/URL	Document type
ECR Party	Publication of accounts 2016	Complex: Financial report
ECR Party	Publication of accounts 2017	Complex: Financial report
PES	PES Manifesto 2024	Design: Manifesto
PES	Energy affordability and energy security are EU imperatives	Simple: Presidency declaration
ALDE Party	ALDE Party Liberal Bulletin 02/2023	Design: Bulletin
ALDE Party	Air Travel and Passengers With Disabilities	Simple: Resolution
European Greens	The social dimension of the Green New Deal	Simple: Manifesto
European Greens	Green transformation of EU trade policy	Simple: Resolution
European Left	European elections manifesto	Design: Manifesto
European Left	Statutes of the Party of European Left	Simple: Statutes
ID Party	Appel d'offres : location d'une salle pour un meeting public à Paris	Simple: Call for tender

Selected EN 301 549 and other requirements

	Website reference	Document reference
Non-text content	9.1.1.1	10.1.1.1
Captions (pre-recorded)	9.1.2.2	Not applicable
Contrast (minimum)	9.1.4.3	10.1.4.3
Keyboard	9.2.1.1	Not tested
Meaningful sequence	Not tested	10.1.3.2
Pause, stop, hide	9.2.2.2	Not applicable
Focus visible	9.2.4.7	Not applicable
Error identification	9.3.3.1	Not tested
Tagged	Not applicable	Not in EN 301 549
Bookmarks	Not applicable	Not in EN 301 549