

Including persons with disabilities in emergency preparedness and response

March 2026

A regional overview across European Union Member States and Participating States of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and Kosovo*

**This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.*



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Table of contents

Table of contents	2
Acknowledgements	3
Disclaimer	3
List of tables, figures and text boxes	5
Acronyms	6
Executive summary	7
Introduction	14
About this report	16
Scope and objective	16
Geographic coverage.....	16
Analytical framework.....	16
Methodology	17
Limitations.....	18
Use of annexes.....	19
Governance	20
Disability and DRR in policy frameworks	20
Meaningful participation.....	27
Investments in disability-inclusive DRR.....	30
Risk knowledge	32
Disability-disaggregated data	32
Risk awareness, information, and communication	36
Preparedness	39
Individual and household preparedness	39
Preparedness and protection in institutional settings	41
Early warning systems	42
Emergency and crisis communication	44
Preparedness guidance and operational tools	49
Response.....	51
Accessibility of emergency response systems	51
Emergency response – lived experience.....	53
Recommendations	55
Strategic recommendations (EU and UCPM level).....	55
Operational recommendations (national and local levels)	60
Implications for future guidance, training, and support	63
Bibliography (key EU- and regional-level sources)	64
Annexes	68

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The European Disability Forum

The European Disability Forum (EDF) is an independent NGO that advocates for the rights of 100 million Europeans with disabilities. EDF is a unique platform which brings together representative organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) from across Europe. EDF is run by persons with disabilities and their families. We are a strong, united voice of persons with disabilities in Europe.

Established in 1996, we aim to ensure that decisions at the European level, including those on international cooperation and humanitarian action, are made with and by people with disabilities. We have regular channels of advocacy with European institutions including the European Parliament, the European Commission (EC), and the Council of the European Union (EU).

As such, today EDF plays an active role in ensuring that persons with disabilities and OPDs are meaningfully included in all EU activities, including in all international cooperation and humanitarian action activities. Through strategic partnerships and advocacy, EDF works to advance disability rights worldwide, ensuring that EU external action policies, programmes, and initiatives are truly inclusive.

List of tables, figures and text boxes

Table 1. Disability inclusion in national DRR policies.....	21
Table 2. DRR in national disability policies	24
Figure 1. OPD perspective on engagement in emergency preparedness and response	27
Figure 2. DRM authorities' perspective on engagement with OPDs	28
Text box 1. Disability inclusion in national DRR and resilience strategies: selected good practice examples from Germany and Albania	22
Text box 2. DRR in national disability strategies: good practice examples from Austria, Czechia, Finland, and Malta	25
Text box 3. DRR in national disability strategies: good practice examples from the Netherlands, Romania, and Ukraine	26
Text box 4. Good practices of meaningful participation of OPDs in emergency preparedness.....	29
Text box 5. Disability-disaggregated data for preparedness and response: emerging good practices.....	35
Text box 6. Inclusive risk awareness, information, and communication: emerging good practices	38
Text box 7. Emerging good practices in individual and household preparedness	40
Text box 8. Inclusive and accessible early warning systems: good practices from Denmark and the Netherlands.....	42
Text box 9. Emergency and crisis communication: selected good practice examples from Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, and Lithuania	47
Text box 10. Emergency and crisis communication: selected good practice examples from Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and Ukraine	48
Text box 11. Institutionalising inclusive preparedness through operational guidance: selected good practice from Serbia	49
Text box 12. Inclusive civil protection exercises: selected good practice from Greece.....	52

Acronyms

CEN	European Committee for Standardization
CER	Critical Entity Resilience
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DG ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EDF	European Disability Forum
EFDRR	European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction
EN	European Standard (Norme Européenne)
EU	European Union
GFDRR	Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPD	Organisation of Persons with Disabilities
PRAF	Peer Review Assessment Framework
PSAP	Public Safety Answering Point
RTT	Real-Time Text
TAFF	Technical Assistance Financing Facility
UCPM	Union Civil Protection Mechanism
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
VRS	Video Relay Service(s)
WCAG	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

Executive summary

Europe is facing an increasingly complex and interconnected risk landscape, shaped by climate change, technological hazards, pandemics, and conflicts. Strengthening emergency preparedness and response has therefore become a central priority of the European Union (EU), as reflected in the [Preparedness Union Strategy](#) and the evolving framework of the [Union Civil Protection Mechanism](#) (UCPM). Preparedness systems that are inclusive, accessible, and people-centred are essential to ensuring that no one is left behind when crises occur.

Persons with disabilities represent a significant share of the population across the EU and participating states of the UCPM. They face heightened risks during emergencies not because of disability itself, but because preparedness, early warning, communication, evacuation, sheltering, and response systems are often not designed to be accessible or inclusive. These systemic barriers undermine both the effectiveness of emergency management and the commitments under the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (CRPD) and the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030](#).¹

At the same time, progress over the past five years has been considerable and clearly evident. Compared with the first [regional review of disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction policy and practice](#) conducted by the European Disability Forum (EDF) across Europe and Central Asia, there is increased awareness, stronger policy signals, and a growing number of emerging practices across multiple countries.

In this context, the Preparedness Union Strategy emphasises that preparedness must be inclusive and enable all people to contribute to resilience.

“A prepared society is a society where nobody is left behind and has the opportunity to contribute.”

— Hans Das, Deputy Director-General, DG ECHO, European Commission

Building on this policy direction, this diagnostic examines whether and how persons with disabilities are meaningfully included in emergency preparedness and response across UCPM Member and

¹ The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) is a global agreement adopted by UN member states to substantially reduce disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods, health, and assets by preventing new risks, reducing existing ones, and increasing resilience to hazards, working with other 2030 Agenda goals like the SDGs. It provides a roadmap with 4 [Priorities for Action](#) and 7 [Global Targets](#) to guide countries and stakeholders in building resilience through integrated measures, emphasizing shared responsibility between governments, local authorities, and the private sector.

Participating States and Kosovo², and whether current systems enable them not only to be protected, but also to contribute their knowledge, experience, and capacities to collective resilience.

Purpose and scope

The report presents a regional diagnostic of disability-inclusive emergency preparedness and response across 38 countries. It assesses the extent to which disability inclusion is embedded in legal and policy frameworks, governance arrangements, financing, data systems, risk communication, preparedness measures, and response operations.

The diagnostic draws on an extensive desk review, online surveys with organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) and disaster risk management (DRM) authorities, and a multi-stakeholder consultative workshop held on 17 December 2025.

The analysis is grounded in a rights-based framework, aligned with the CRPD and the Sendai Framework, and, where possible, structured in line with the [Peer Review programme - European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations](#).³

Key findings

The diagnostic finds that disability inclusion in emergency preparedness and response across Europe remains uneven, fragmented, and largely discretionary.

At the **policy level**, many countries reference persons with disabilities in either disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies or disability strategies, but fewer do so consistently across both. References are often general, framed in terms of “vulnerable groups,” and lack operational detail. Only a small number of countries demonstrate strong alignment with the [CRPD Article 11](#) through explicit, rights-based provisions addressing preparedness, communication, evacuation, sheltering, and response.

At the **governance level**, participation of OPDs is recognised in principle but remains limited in practice. While over half of DRM authorities report some form of engagement with OPDs, regular and formalised participation, such as through memoranda of understanding, remains

² This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

³ The Disaster Risk Management Peer Review Assessment Framework (DRM PRAF) covers seven thematic areas: (i) disaster risk governance, (ii) risk assessment, (iii) disaster risk management planning, (iv) prevention, (v) preparedness, (vi) emergency response, and (vii) recovery and lessons learnt.

rare. Engagement is often consultative, ad hoc, and dependent on personal relationships rather than formal mechanisms. Both OPDs and authorities cite similar barriers: lack of guidance, insufficient resources, limited staff capacity, and inaccessible consultation processes.

Financing for disability-inclusive DRR is one of the weakest areas identified. Most countries lack dedicated or ring-fenced budget lines for accessibility, reasonable accommodation, or OPD participation within civil protection and DRM budgets. Inclusion measures are frequently unfunded or dependent on short-term projects.

Disability-disaggregated data is widely recognised as essential but rarely integrated into preparedness and response systems. Data is fragmented across institutions, inconsistently collected, and often inaccessible to DRM authorities. Concerns around data protection and unclear legal mandates further limit operational use. As a result, risk assessments, evacuation planning, early warning, and response decisions are frequently made without reliable information on the requirements of persons with disabilities.

Risk awareness, early warning, and emergency communication show partial progress but persistent gaps. Accessible formats—such as sign language, captioning, easy-to-read information, and non-auditory alerts—are applied inconsistently and are rarely treated as standard practice. Emergency communication systems, including access to the 112-emergency number, remain largely designed for hearing users. Operational readiness to provide equivalent access for Deaf and hard-of-hearing people is particularly limited, despite existing EU legal obligations.

Preparedness at individual, household, and institutional levels is insufficiently addressed. Most persons with disabilities do not have personal preparedness plans and are not involved in preparedness planning. Institutional settings present especially high risks, with repeated evidence of inadequate evacuation planning, inaccessible warning systems, and reliance on staff-dependent procedures. Between 2015 and 2022, at least 48 persons with disabilities died in institutional settings due to fires and floods across six European countries, underscoring serious concerns related to the right to life and safety⁴.

⁴ Between 2015 and 2022, six fire incidents in Spain, Bulgaria, Czechia, Greece, and Slovakia resulted in 36 deaths and dozens of injuries (including 17 people hospitalized in Spain and 30 injured in Czechia). Floods in Germany caused 12 deaths. See European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) (2022). *Shadow Report on the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the European Union*, available at: https://enil.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ShadowReport_EU_Final_140222.pdf

During **emergency response**, inclusive practices are possible and have been demonstrated in specific contexts, including EU-supported evacuations and targeted assistance. However, lived experience reported by OPDs highlights persistent barriers in communication, evacuation, shelter accessibility, and continuity of support. In many cases, OPDs themselves step in to fill gaps when public systems fail, underscoring both their critical role and the fragility of current arrangements.

It is also important to reflect the **diversity of disability experiences**. Preparedness and response measures need to account for physical, sensory, cognitive, and psychosocial needs, as each group faces distinct challenges during emergencies. Inclusive planning must be responsive to this diversity.

Overall assessment

Taken together, the findings point to a structural gap between policy commitments and their implementation in practice. Disability inclusion is widely acknowledged as important, but it is not yet embedded as a core requirement of emergency preparedness and response systems. Progress is often driven by individual initiatives, projects, or advocacy efforts rather than by enforceable rules, stable financing, and institutional accountability.

At the same time, the diagnostic identifies a growing foundation on which to build. Recent EU-level developments—including the [Preparedness Union Strategy](#) with its [Action 33](#) on disability-inclusive preparedness and the [Union Disaster Resilience Goals](#)—create a clear opportunity to move from ad hoc practice to systemic change.

Implications for action

The recommendations from this diagnostic are structured across three mutually reinforcing levels: strategic action at EU and UCPM level; operational measures at national and local level; and guidance, training, and support.

Across all levels, the central message is consistent: advancing disability-inclusive emergency preparedness and response requires a shift from commitment to meaningful action, from voluntary guidance to enforceable standards, and from viewing persons with disabilities as “vulnerable” recipients to recognising them as rights-holders and active contributors to resilience.

Inclusive preparedness is not an optional add-on but should be a core part of disaster risk management. It is a condition for effective

emergency management, social cohesion, and public trust. A society that is truly prepared is one that ensures everyone can understand risks, act early, access support, and contribute to collective safety—before, during, and after crises.

Priority actions for disability-inclusive preparedness and response

To support immediate uptake by decision-makers, the diagnostic highlights ten priority actions that can be initiated in the short term, many of which represent low-hanging opportunities to strengthen inclusive preparedness while laying the foundation for longer-term system change.

Top 10 priority actions for disability-inclusive preparedness and response

(Immediate to short-term focus – from policy to practice)

Priority Action	What this means in practice
1 Anchor disability inclusion in policy	Review and update legal frameworks to explicitly include disability-inclusive preparedness and response, aligned with CRPD obligations, the Sendai Framework and EU priorities.
2 Use EU and UCPM funding as a lever	Promote disability inclusion, accessibility, and OPD participation as a recommended evaluation criteria for preparedness, response, and recovery funding, while preserving flexibility for implementation. Ensure disability inclusion is systematically integrated across relevant actions of the EU Preparedness Union Strategy, including Action 28 on 72-hour population self-sufficiency guidance.
3 Strengthen coordination and participation	Formalise inclusive coordination mechanisms with OPDs within civil protection and DRM structures; this can be initiated immediately and delivers rapid gains.

Priority Action

What this means in practice

4 **Designate disability inclusion focal points**

Appoint disability inclusion focal points within civil protection authorities with clear mandates, authority, and access to decision-making.

5 **Update preparedness strategies, plans, and tools**

Ensure preparedness guidance, contingency plans, and tools are co-created with OPDs and operational, accessible, and usable by persons with disabilities with different support, communication, and access requirements.

6 **Upgrade early warning and emergency communication**

Ensure alerts are accessible, understandable, and actionable for people with different sensory, cognitive, and communication requirements, including non-auditory alerts, sign language, captioning, and multiple back-up communication channels during outages.

7 **Strengthen training for emergency staff**

Integrate disability inclusion into mandatory training for civil protection authorities, responders, and crisis managers, and enable and encourage persons with disabilities to participate as trained volunteers within neighbourhood response mechanisms and civil protection teams.

8 **Improve disability-disaggregated data systems**

Strengthen the collection, integration, and operational use of disability-related data across preparedness and response systems, including, where feasible, disaggregation by disability type and analysis in combination with other grounds such as gender, age, and ethnicity, with appropriate safeguards for consent, privacy, and data protection.

9 **Apply universal design to**

Review and retrofit shelters, evacuation centres, and temporary accommodation to ensure accessibility and safe use by all persons with disabilities. Ensure

Priority Action

What this means in practice

**emergency
infrastructure**

designated points of contact for these shelters are trained to host and communicate with persons with disabilities using their facilities.

**10 Conduct rapid risk
reviews of high-
risk settings**

Prioritise institutions such as residential care facilities and older persons' homes for rapid assessments of evacuation planning, warning systems, and accessibility.

These priority actions are drawn from the full set of recommendations presented in this report and are intended to support immediate action while enabling sustained system transformation.

Introduction

Europe is facing an increasingly complex risk landscape shaped by climate change, conflicts, technological hazards, and cascading emergencies. Strengthening emergency preparedness and response has therefore become a central priority of the European Union. Preparedness systems must be inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the rights and requirements of all people, including persons with disabilities, to build resilient societies and uphold the principle of leaving no one behind.

Persons with disabilities are often described as “vulnerable” in emergencies. Disability itself does not create vulnerability.

Disproportionate impacts—such as higher mortality, injury, and exclusion from life-saving assistance—are driven by systemic barriers in early warning systems, evacuation procedures, shelters, communication, and essential services, as well as by limited participation in preparedness planning. These risks are often compounded by poverty, institutionalisation, and intersecting forms of discrimination affecting women, children, older persons, and other marginalised groups of persons with disabilities.

At the same time, persons with disabilities and their representative organisations bring critical knowledge and lived experience that can strengthen preparedness and response for everyone. Their meaningful participation is both a human rights obligation under the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (CRPD) and a practical requirement for effective disaster risk management.

This approach is grounded in international and regional commitments. All UCPM participating states, as well as the European Union itself, have ratified the CRPD and are legally bound by [Article 11](#) to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including emergencies and disasters. The [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030](#) emphasises understanding disaster risk, strengthening disaster risk governance, and enhancing preparedness, while explicitly calling for the empowerment, leadership, and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities, as well as the collection and use of disability-disaggregated data. All Member States of the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction (EFDRR) have committed to these principles, including through the [EFDRR Roadmap 2021-2030](#).

Recent EU-level policy developments reinforce this imperative. The [Niinistö Report](#) highlights that resilience depends on ensuring that all

people can contribute to and benefit from preparedness and response efforts.

In 2024, approximately one in four people aged 16 and over in the European Union lived with a disability—around **107 million people**, underscoring that disability inclusion is not a marginal concern but a core dimension of emergency preparedness.⁵

Reflecting this reality, the Preparedness Union Strategy places people at the centre of preparedness and promotes a whole-of-society approach to resilience.⁶ Disability inclusion is recognised as integral to effective emergency management, in line with the Union Disaster Resilience Goals, which call for people-centred preparedness systems, including early warning that is understandable to all.

Within this framework, Action 33 of the Preparedness Union Strategy commits the European Union to strengthening disability-inclusive preparedness by developing guidance on emergency actions adapted to different disability-related requirements and by reinforcing training for first responders, including through dedicated e-training.

This diagnostic supports ongoing efforts to strengthen disability-inclusive emergency preparedness and response across Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) Member and Participating States and Kosovo⁷. It is intended to inform policy dialogue, technical cooperation, and future guidance at EU, national, and local levels, building on earlier regional work by the European Disability Forum, including the [Review of Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and Practice across Europe and Central Asia](#), and supporting implementation of the Preparedness Union Strategy.⁸

⁵ *Disability in the EU: facts and figures*, last accessed on 19 January 2026, available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/disability-eu-facts-figures/>

⁶ The EU's Preparedness Union Strategy is a comprehensive plan launched in 2025 to boost Europe's ability to anticipate, prevent, and respond to crises (such as cyberattacks, climate events, health threats, disinformation) by taking a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach, focusing on coordination, resilience, foresight, and strengthening civilian and military capabilities through actions like improving public-private cooperation, enhancing foresight, and preparing citizens.

⁷ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

⁸ To learn more about TAFF's regional knowledge and capacity-building activities, under which this diagnostic was carried out, please see the [TAFF Project Fiche](#) (Component 2).

About this report

This section of the report explains **what the diagnostic covers, how it was conducted, and how the findings should be read**. It outlines the scope, objectives, analytical framework, methodology, and limitations of the study.

Scope and objective

The diagnostic collected and analysed data on disaster risk reduction (DRR) and disability-related policies and practices at national and EU/regional levels. Its objective is to assess the state of disability-inclusive emergency preparedness and response UCPM Member and Participating States and Kosovo, and to identify key gaps, emerging good practices, and priority actions for relevant stakeholders.

Geographic coverage

The study covered all EU Member States and Participating States and Kosovo⁹ (38 countries): Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Türkiye, Ukraine, and Kosovo.

A regional assessment examined **EU-level policies and frameworks** relevant to disability-inclusive emergency preparedness and response.

Analytical framework

The diagnostic applied a **rights-based analytical framework**, grounded in the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#) and the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#).

Disability inclusion in DRR policy and practice was assessed using **five core inclusion criteria**:

1. **Meaningful participation** of persons with disabilities through their representative organisations
2. **Accessibility**, including universal design and reasonable accommodation

⁹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

3. **Individual and household preparedness**
4. **Disability-disaggregated data**
5. **Investment** in disability-inclusive DRR

The findings are structured in line with the [Peer Review programme - European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations](#), covering the following key thematic areas: risk governance, risk assessment, risk management planning, prevention, preparedness, and response.

Methodology

Desk review

Approximately **700 DRR- and disability-related documents** were screened. Of these, **425 documents were reviewed in depth**, including 50 regional/EU-level and 375 national-level documents. Findings are presented thematically and synthesise evidence across sources; individual documents are not cited exhaustively.

The review covered **five types of documents**:

1. DRR policies (e.g. preparedness, response, civil protection, crisis management)
2. Disability policies (active strategies and action plans)
3. DRR reporting (including [Sendai Framework Midterm Reviews](#) and [EU civil protection peer reviews](#))
4. Disability reporting ([CRPD State Party reports](#), OPD alternative reports or "shadow reports"¹⁰, [country situation analyses](#))
5. Other relevant materials (cross-cutting legislation, accessibility laws, workshop outputs, etc.)

Online surveys

Two online surveys were conducted with **OPDs** and **DRM authorities** (see **Annex 1**). Both surveys were open from late November to mid-December 2025. The OPD survey was disseminated through the EDF networks. The DRM authorities survey was distributed via DG ECHO

¹⁰ OPD alternative reports, often called "shadow reports," are independent reports submitted by Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) to UN treaty bodies (such as the CRPD Committee) to provide firsthand accounts of a government's implementation of human rights treaties, supplementing official state reports with real-world experiences and highlighting gaps or failures, ensuring a more complete picture of disability rights for global monitoring. These reports are crucial for accountability, often detailing issues missed in government reports and advocating for better policy, legislation, and budgetary inclusion, making them vital tools for the disability rights movement.

channels, including the [Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network](#), in support of **Action 33 of the Preparedness Union Strategy**.

- The OPD survey received **23 responses from 13 countries** (one response from Kenya was excluded, as it fell out of the geographic scope of this diagnostic). Responses reflected a mix of umbrella organisations, national and local OPDs, and a small number of other disability-focused bodies.
- The DRM authorities survey received **33 responses from 25 countries**, mainly from national-level authorities.

Overall, **29 of 38 countries** participated in at least one survey, representing a **76 per cent response rate**.

Consultative workshop

A consultative workshop was held on 17 December 2025, convened by EDF in collaboration with the World Bank and supported by DG ECHO. **Sixty-five participants** from 22 countries attended, including OPDs, DRM authorities, and other stakeholders.

Accessibility measures included **real-time captioning and International Sign interpretation**. Discussions focused on barriers, good practices, recommendations, and implementation needs. **All inputs were integrated into the diagnostic**.

Written consultations

Written consultations on the draft report took place between **26 January and 9 February 2026**. Feedback has informed the final version.

Limitations

The desk review focused primarily on English-language documents. Selected materials in other languages were translated using online tools.¹¹ Due to time and resource constraints, full verification and professional translation were not possible, which may affect the completeness or precision of some findings.

¹¹ The materials selected for translation were those specifically identified by OPDs or DRM authorities through the online survey, the consultative workshop, or direct email engagement. When participants referred to particular national policies or strategies available only in local languages, these documents were retrieved and translated using online tools for review. All non-English materials that were identified and accessible were translated using online tools. However, without knowledge of the local language, it was not always possible to systematically locate all relevant national-level documents, particularly those not indexed in English or not easily discoverable through English-language searches. This limitation is acknowledged as part of the methodological constraints of the desk review.

Use of annexes

Given the **volume and level of detail** of the material reviewed, the annexes are an integral part of this diagnostic. They complement the main report by providing **more detailed, operational, and country-specific information**, while keeping the core narrative more concise.

Readers are **strongly encouraged to consult the annexes**, in particular:

- **Annex 2 – Thematic overview of good and promising practices.** It includes a dedicated section on **preparedness guidance, operational tools, and capacity-building for responders**, relevant to Action 33 of the Preparedness Union Strategy.
- **Annex 3 – Country-by-country overview of good and promising practices**, supporting peer learning and cross-country exchange.
- **Annex 4 – Stakeholder map**, identifying key institutions, coordination platforms, and OPDs at national and regional levels for supporting stronger participation and coordination in future preparedness and response.

Disability and DRR in policy frameworks

Disability in DRR policies

A review was conducted across 38 countries to assess how disability is reflected in national and regional/EU-level DRR policies. In **34 countries**, a policy was available in English and could be reviewed. In **4 countries**,¹³ relevant policies could not be identified or verified through English-language desk research and online translation. While such policies may exist in national languages, they were not identified through survey responses, and the scope of the diagnostic did not allow for additional country-specific follow-up.

Policies were assessed using a **three-point scale**:

- **Score 0** – No reference to disability.
- **Score 1** – Limited reference to disability and/or references not aligned with a rights-based approach.
- **Score 1.5** – Some reference to disability, with partial alignment to a rights-based approach (for example, mention of accessibility, protection, or participation), but without systematic integration or explicit alignment with the CRPD and the Sendai Framework.
- **Score 2** – Multiple and consistent references to disability, clearly aligned with the CRPD and the Sendai Framework.

Overall, most national policies do not yet integrate disability in a systematic, rights-based way. While many policies include references to disability, these are often descriptive rather than operational and rarely translate into concrete preparedness or response measures. Only a small number demonstrate consistent and stronger approaches.

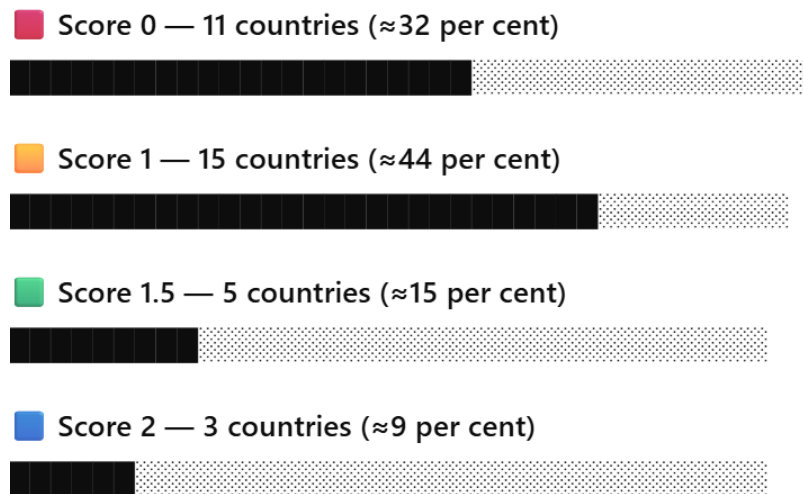
Table 1 presents the results.

¹² Disaster risk governance refers to the laws, policies, institutions, and coordination mechanisms through which responsibilities for disaster risk reduction, preparedness, response, and recovery are defined, implemented, and overseen. It determines who makes decisions, how risks are identified and managed across sectors and levels of government, how resources are allocated, and how accountability is ensured to reduce disaster risk and build resilience over time.

¹³ France, Greece, Poland, and Türkiye.

Table 1. Disability inclusion in national DRR policies

Score distribution (34 countries)



At national level, **good examples** include Germany’s [Strategy for Strengthening Resilience to Disasters 2022–2030](#), Albania’s [National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy 2023–2030](#), and Lithuania’s Crisis Management and Civil Protection Law, and Civil Protection Strengthening and Development Programme¹⁴, among others (for full list and details please refer to **Annex 2**. Thematic overview of good and promising practices).

At **EU and regional levels**, disability inclusion is articulated more consistently. Persons with disabilities are recognised as disproportionately affected by crises, and several frameworks introduce **explicit accessibility and inclusion requirements**, although expectations for implementation remain uneven.

EU Preparedness Union Strategy frames disability within a whole-of-society approach and explicitly links preparedness to accessibility of information and services. It highlights that preparedness is undermined when emergency information is not accessible and calls for inclusive risk and crisis communication across the EU. **Action 33** specifically calls for emergency guidance adapted to different accessibility and support requirements, and for training first responders to recognise and respond appropriately.

The [Commission Recommendation on Union Disaster Resilience Goals](#) integrates disability within its horizontal principles, requiring disaster-risk

¹⁴ Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania (2024). Civil Protection Strengthening and Development Programme, No. XIV-2946.

information, early warning systems, and prevention measures to be **accessible and tailored**, in line with CRPD obligations.

Text box 1. Disability inclusion in national DRR and resilience strategies: selected good practice examples from Germany and Albania

Germany's [Strategy for Strengthening Resilience to Disasters](#) (2022) includes multiple references to persons with disabilities, disability-inclusive DRR, and accessible risk information and early warning, in line with the guiding principles of the Sendai Framework. While persons with disabilities are at times grouped under broader "vulnerable" populations, the strategy also recognises their active role in disaster risk reduction rather than treating them solely as recipients of assistance. Compared with other policies reviewed, it represents one of the more advanced approaches to disability inclusion in DRR, while still leaving scope for more consistently rights-based language.

Albania's [National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy \(NDRRS 2023–2030\)](#) similarly integrates disability across its objectives. It acknowledges that persons with disabilities often face discrimination, exclusion, and barriers to information, services, and support that heighten risk during disasters. The strategy calls for inclusive, accessible, and non-discriminatory participation across all phases of DRM, emphasises early engagement of disability networks, and explicitly recognises that disability does not inherently create vulnerability. Developed in line with the Sendai Framework, it stands out as another strong example of disability-inclusive DRR policy in the region.

The [EFDRR Roadmap 2021–2030](#) provides the most comprehensive regional framing. It highlights **disproportionate impacts**, persistent **data gaps**, fragmented understanding of disability-related risk, and ongoing challenges in engaging organisations of persons with disabilities in governance. It firmly anchors inclusive disaster risk reduction in the CRPD and calls for disability expertise across risk analysis, preparedness, and evidence generation.

In humanitarian contexts, [DG ECHO's operational guidance](#) on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in EU-funded Humanitarian Aid Operations and the European Parliament's resolutions reinforce these commitments, requiring **consultations with OPDs**, alignment with the CRPD and the [IASC Guidelines](#) on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action, and systematic disability-disaggregated data collection.

Survey findings show that 39 per cent of OPDs said policies include references to disability, while 17 per cent said they do not. Among DRM authorities, 55 per cent said policies include references, with fewer noting gaps. Survey responses reflect self-reported knowledge of policy content and were not matched at country level with desk review scores.

Differences may therefore reflect variations in access, capacity, or institutional roles, rather than perception alone.

DRR in disability policies

The review also assessed how safety and protection of persons with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies ([CRPD Article 11](#)) is addressed in national disability policies across the same 38 countries. In **23 countries**, a relevant policy was available in English. In **15 countries**,¹⁵ no English-language version was publicly available, and relevant policies could not be identified or confirmed through English-language searches and online translation. This does not mean that such policies do not exist, but rather that they could not be located or verified within the scope of the desk review.

Policies were assessed using a similar scale:

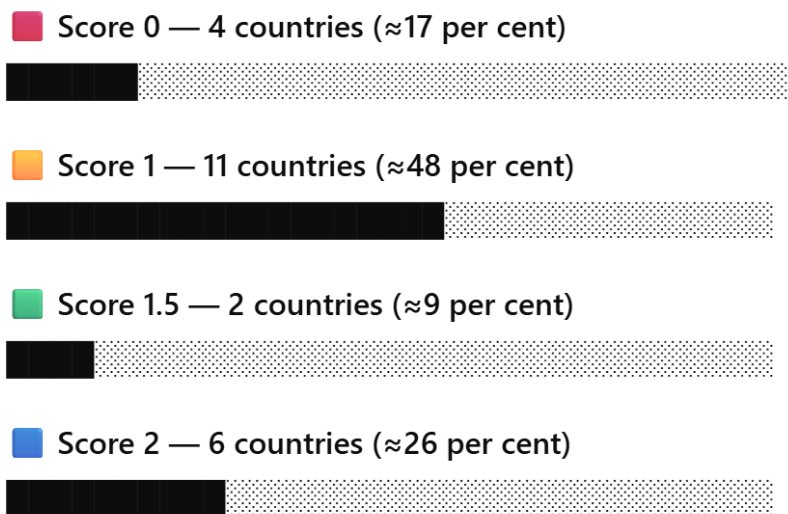
- **Score 0** – No reference to disasters, emergencies, or CRPD Article 11.
- **Score 1** – Limited references to disasters or emergencies, with little or no alignment to CRPD Article 11 or the Sendai Framework.
- **Score 1.5** – Some reference to disasters or emergencies, with partial alignment to CRPD Article 11 and/or the Sendai Framework, but without a dedicated section, clear operational measures, or systematic integration.
- **Score 2** – A dedicated section and/or multiple references clearly aligned with CRPD Article 11 and the Sendai Framework.

Table 2 presents the results.

¹⁵ Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Türkiye.

Table 2. DRR in national disability policies

Score distribution (23 countries)



National-level **good examples** include Austria’s [National Action Plan on Disability 2022–2030](#), Czechia’s [National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities](#), Finland’s [National Action Plan on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), Malta’s [National Disability Strategy 2021–2030](#), Romania’s [National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2022–2027](#), and the Netherlands’ [National Disability Strategy](#) and related [work agenda](#).

Text box 2. DRR in national disability strategies: good practice examples from Austria, Czechia, Finland, and Malta

Austria's [*National Action Plan on Disability 2022–2030 \(NAP II\)*](#) includes a dedicated chapter on crisis situations, explicitly referencing obligations under CRPD Article 11. The plan sets out commitments to improving data systems at municipal level, ensuring equal access to essential services during crises, strengthening accessible crisis communication, involving OPDs in disaster risk governance, and establishing multi-modal emergency calling systems. However, the NAP is a policy framework and not a legally binding instrument, and implementation of its measures depends on political prioritisation, institutional follow-up, and available resources. While cooperation with responsible authorities is constructive, several measures remain outstanding, and budgetary constraints raise concerns regarding the full and timely realisation of planned actions.

Czechia's [*National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2021–2025*](#) contains a specific section on emergencies and critical situations. It highlights barriers related to inaccessible information, lack of disability-inclusive crisis planning, and insufficient training of responders. The plan sets concrete objectives to improve accessible emergency information, adapt crisis management plans, train rescue services, and raise preparedness awareness among persons with disabilities. It also commits to accessible emergency calling through two-way text communication. An updated version of the plan for the period 2026–2030 is being prepared and will be submitted to the Czech government for approval.

Finland's [*National Action Plan on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2023–2027*](#) addresses safety and hazardous situations as a cross-cutting issue. It places obligations on safety authorities to act in line with non-discrimination and human rights principles and requires care and supported housing providers to ensure evacuation safety through advance planning, inspections, and compliance with updated regulations.

Malta's [*National Strategy on the Rights of Disabled Persons 2021–2030*](#) integrates DRR and emergency preparedness throughout the strategy. It calls for institutionalising disability inclusion within disaster governance, revising the national emergency plan to incorporate a disability perspective, ensuring accessible emergency services, continuing disability equality training for responders, and strengthening early warning and risk communication using a multi-hazard, inclusive approach.

Text box 3. DRR in national disability strategies: good practice examples from the Netherlands, Romania, and Ukraine

The Netherlands' [National Disability Strategy](#) and [Work Agenda 2025–2030](#) embeds disability inclusion within national crisis and safety policy, with a focus on building knowledge and awareness of inclusive, accessible, and understandable crisis communication among safety organisations, media actors, and regional and local governments, alongside engagement with disability representative organisations.

Romania's [National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2022–2027](#) recognises heightened risks faced by persons with disabilities during disasters due to structural barriers and limited support networks. The strategy sets measurable targets to improve evacuation capacity, strengthen responder training, and expand awareness of accessible emergency communication tools, including SMS-based emergency calling.

One of the objectives of the [National Strategy for Creating a Barrier-Free Environment in Ukraine until 2030](#) is to ensure that the rights and interests of persons with disabilities and other low-mobility groups are taken into account during evacuation, access to shelters, water and hygiene facilities, and access to health and social services in situations of military action.

In the area of evacuation, this objective is operationalised through the [Methodology for Planning Evacuation Measures](#). Section V of the Methodology defines specific requirements for planning evacuation measures for persons with disabilities and other low-mobility groups, including provisions related to transport, boarding and disembarking points, assembly and intermediate points, reception points and transit evacuation centres, evacuation routes, notification procedures, and life-support arrangements during evacuation and in safe areas. These considerations are reflected in dedicated sections of evacuation plans addressing the planning, reception and accommodation of evacuated persons with disabilities and other low-mobility groups.

Regarding access to shelters, the objective is further implemented through the [Recommendations on Adapting Civil Protection Facilities to the Needs of Persons with Disabilities and Other Low-Mobility Groups](#), which provide guidance on improving accessibility of civil protection infrastructure.

At EU level, disability-rights frameworks increasingly recognise that **disasters and emergencies exacerbate inequality**. The [EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030](#) highlights persistent accessibility gaps in emergency planning and calls for improved awareness, training, preparedness, and meaningful participation.

EU legislation such as the [European Accessibility Act](#) strengthens the enabling environment for accessible emergency communication, even though it does not directly regulate disaster risk reduction. Recent European Parliament resolutions further call for disability inclusion across

emergency communication, civil protection, humanitarian action, and the Preparedness Union agenda.

Survey results show low and uneven awareness of emergency provisions within disability policies. Among OPDs, **22 per cent** said such provisions are included, while many were unsure. Authorities reported slightly higher inclusion, but uncertainty remained high. These findings should be interpreted with caution, as differences may reflect varying levels of familiarity with policy documents rather than policy content alone.

Desk review findings indicate that, overall, disability policies reference emergencies more consistently than disaster policies reference disability. This reflects the CRPD’s explicit focus on situations of risk under Article 11. By contrast, disaster policies remain largely hazard- and system-focused, with disability often treated as a secondary or cross-cutting issue rather than a core requirement.

Meaningful participation

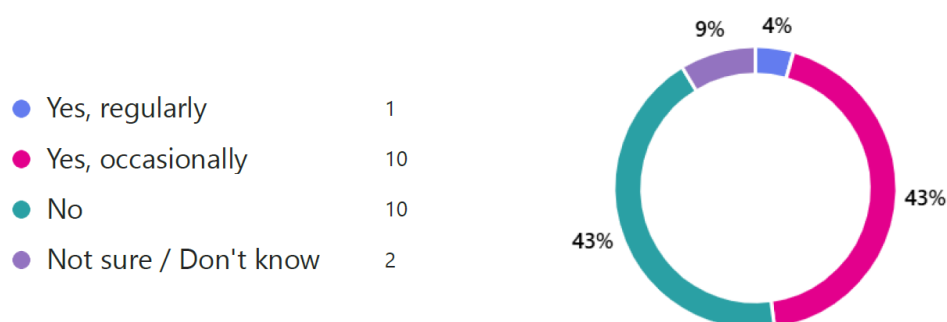
Findings from both surveys point to partial but uneven participation of OPDs in emergency preparedness and response.

From the perspective of OPDs, **47 per cent** reported some engagement in preparedness planning. However, **only 4 per cent** described this engagement as regular. Where participation occurred, it most often involved **providing feedback on policies or plans**, participating in training, drills, or exercises, identifying risks faced by persons with disabilities, and advising on accessibility or early warning systems.

Engagement was mainly consultative and task-specific, rather than embedded in decision-making structures.

Figure 1 presents OPD perspectives on engagement in emergency preparedness and response.

Figure 1. OPD perspective on engagement in emergency preparedness and response



Survey question: *Is your organisation consulted by authorities on emergency preparedness and response?*

Participation during emergencies was more limited. **Only 29 per cent** of OPDs reported being involved or contacted during response. Where engagement occurred, it was most often linked to **accessible crisis communication**, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, when organisations supported the adaptation of public information. **Beyond communication, involvement in operational response was rare.**

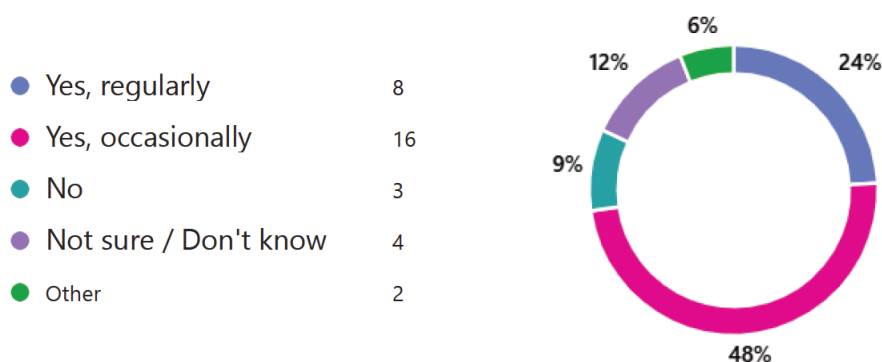
OPDs identified **structural barriers** to meaningful participation. These included the **absence of formal consultation mechanisms**, limited organisational capacity (staff time and funding), and **accessibility barriers** within engagement processes. Meetings were often inaccessible due to language barriers, lack of accessible formats of information, physical access constraints, and the absence of sign language interpretation. As a result, participation was frequently **irregular, informal, and dependent on personal relationships**, rather than institutionalised arrangements.

"Our involvement is rather ad hoc and occasional. We need to advocate very hard to get at the DRR tables. A formal position or seat at these tables would help us a lot." – OPD survey respondent

Responses from authorities broadly reflect this picture. **Fifty-five per cent** reported a formal requirement to engage organisations of persons with disabilities in preparedness or response planning. However, **only 24 per cent** reported regular engagement, while **48 per cent** engaged on an occasional basis.

Figure 2 presents authorities' perspectives on engagement.

Figure 2. DRM authorities' perspective on engagement with OPDs



Survey question: Does your authority engage or consult OPDs?

Text box 4. Good practices of meaningful participation of OPDs in emergency preparedness

Finland's National Sendai Network brings together ministries, authorities, NGOs, and OPDs as full members who contribute to preparedness planning, with a strong focus on accessible communication, evacuation, and safety. The network is being updated for 2026–2027, integrating lessons from recent crises.

In Italy, the *Able to Protect* initiative operates as an internal working group composed of persons with disabilities. It promotes co-creation of tools, development of volunteer and operator training, accessible communication, and collaboration with public authorities and civil society.

The Latvian umbrella body for disability organisations, SUSTENTO, is implementing the *In Safety Everyone* project to review and strengthen municipal civil protection plans in 36 districts. The project combines audits, focus groups, and training with municipalities, strengthening inclusive planning and local coordination.

In Lithuania, the Fire and Rescue Department has established a working group in the field of civil protection education that includes the Lithuanian Disability Organisations Forum (LNF). Persons with disabilities participate in national-level civil protection exercises as participants, evaluators, and contributors to lessons learned.

In the Netherlands, sustained cooperation between disability organisations, the Ministry of Justice and Security, and the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security has shaped inclusive crisis communication, early warning, and emergency access. OPDs, notably Ieder(in), were directly involved in the design and testing of NL-Alert app and the 112NL-app (which includes Real-Time Text), with a focus on accessibility and understandability. A new formalised network with representative organisations is under development.

In Poland, the emergency application *Alarm112*, intended for end-users with disabilities or persons who cannot make a voice call, was developed in cooperation with representative organisations of Deaf persons.

In Romania, the Department of Emergency Situations established formal collaboration protocols with four OPDs. These agreements strengthen government–civil society cooperation, providing clearer entry points for engagement and more predictable channels for dialogue.

In Serbia, the Sector for Emergency Management has cooperated continuously with the National Organisation of Persons with Disabilities (NOOIS) since 2016, organising workshops and round tables that strengthened the recognition of persons with disabilities in risk assessments, protection and rescue plans and strategic documents, supported their inclusion in policy development, and enhanced cooperation with emergency headquarters and local government units.

Where engagement took place, authorities most often involved organisations of persons with disabilities in **policy or plan development**, preparedness planning, risk communication, evacuation planning, drills or exercises, accessibility assessments, and the design of early warning systems. **These areas closely align with OPD-reported forms of engagement**, indicating shared recognition of OPD expertise and contributions.

Authorities also highlighted **system-level constraints** limiting participation, including limited staff time, lack of practical guidance on how to involve organisations of persons with disabilities, absence of formal mechanisms, and **insufficient budget**. These constraints mirror those identified by OPDs and point to **structural barriers rather than lack of willingness** to engage.

Both survey responses and qualitative inputs indicate that uneven participation is sometimes linked to **capacity gaps within OPDs**, particularly in relation to technical aspects of emergency preparedness and response. Even where organisations are formally included, some OPDs report feeling insufficiently equipped to engage on complex issues such as contingency planning, risk assessment methodologies, early warning systems, or emergency operations. These gaps are **not indicative of a lack of interest or legitimacy**, but rather reflect limited access to sustained funding, training, and opportunities to build specialised preparedness and response expertise. Addressing these capacity constraints—through targeted support, joint learning, and longer-term engagement—emerged as an important enabler of more effective and confident participation.

The diagnostic also identified examples of more structured and sustained engagement, which are presented in the text box below and illustrate how inclusive approaches can be translated into practice.

Investments in disability-inclusive DRR

Investments in disability-inclusive DRR remain limited. Most EU countries do not have specific budget lines for disability-inclusive DRR or civil protection. Accessibility, inclusive preparedness, and participation are often **unfunded**, with no clear financial commitments attached.

At EU level, humanitarian funding shows **partial progress**. Disability inclusion is tracked through tools such as the [OECD/DAC marker](#)¹⁶, but

¹⁶ In 2018, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) introduced the "disability policy marker" – a tool to

targeted investment in preparedness remains optional. Disability-disaggregated data and earmarked resources are not systematically required, reinforcing persistent data and funding gaps. Only a few national exceptions exist—such as **Lithuania**¹⁷, where funding has been allocated for inclusive preparedness and training—yet these remain isolated rather than part of a consistent EU-wide approach.

The desk review shows that **direct references to funding are limited and uneven.** Most policy documents rely on general financing language or recommendations, rather than specifying dedicated allocations. This pattern is echoed in official statements, where commitments to inclusive financing are often expressed at a high level, **without clarity on resources, timelines, or budget lines.** A small number of sources make **explicit calls for resourcing.** These include the [European Economic and Social Committee fact-finding mission to the Netherlands](#), which recommends allocating a specific national budget for disability-inclusive civil protection, and the [CRPD Committee’s concluding observations on Ukraine](#), which call for sufficient funding—through regular budgets and recovery programmes—to implement accessible warning systems, shelters, evacuation routes, and related measures.

Confirmed financing is more commonly found in project-based or EU-supported initiatives. Examples include [Germany’s Strategy for Strengthening Resilience to Disasters](#), where EU funding has been confirmed and a financial agreement signed, and the [Union of Equality Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030](#), which commits EU funding to awareness raising and continued support for training programmes, including preparedness projects and exercises that take account of disability. Some recent government statements refer to investments in **enabling conditions**, such as developing disability-disaggregated disaster risk data and integrating it into national risk assessments and local emergency planning. However, these references are rarely linked to **sustained or earmarked financing.**

With support from the European Commission through TAFF, Romania expanded national-level capacity-building for firefighters on adapted and appropriate interaction with persons with disabilities, with training

monitor how far Official Development Assistance (ODA) aims to be inclusive of persons with disabilities. The marker allows the DAC members to track their own projects in international cooperation and humanitarian action and see on a scale from 0 to 2 how much they target persons with disabilities.

¹⁷ European Disability Forum (2024). *Rights of persons with disabilities and climate action*, available at: <https://www.edf-feph.org/content/uploads/2024/11/EDFs-Disability-Inclusive-Climate-Action-Report-Final.pdf>

focusing on visual, hearing, and intellectual impairments.¹⁸ Croatia has also used DG ECHO funding to support training on disability inclusion.

DG ECHO has also provided **targeted operational and institutional support**. It co-funded 23 cross-border civil protection operations, with a total value of over €12 million, and awarded €1 million to EDF to strengthen disability inclusion within civil protection systems in the Baltic States.¹⁹ At the EU humanitarian level, disability inclusion is monitored through dedicated tools. In the previous year, disability inclusion was **mainstreamed in around 50 per cent** of EU-funded humanitarian projects, while **8 per cent were disability-focused**, indicating the scale of mainstreaming efforts alongside more limited targeted investment.²⁰

Other financing references relate mainly to **response and recovery**, rather than preparedness. Examples include Slovakia’s civil protection law enabling one-off financial assistance with attention to persons with severe disabilities. Several sources refer to financing only indirectly—through broad provisions for “vulnerable groups” or general references to “investment” and “financial planning”—**without specifying disability-targeted funding or dedicated budget lines**.

Risk knowledge²¹

Disability-disaggregated data

Survey responses highlight persistent gaps in the collection, access, and operational use of disability-disaggregated data for emergency preparedness and response.

¹⁸ GFDRR (2024). *Enabling inclusive emergency preparedness and response in Romania*, available at: <https://www.gfdr.org/en/feature-story/enabling-inclusive-emergency-preparedness-and-response-romania>

¹⁹ Statement by Hans Das, Deputy Director-General, DG ECHO, European Commission, at the European Day of Persons with Disabilities (EDPD), Panel 3: *Preparedness and crisis management inclusive of persons with disabilities*.

²⁰ *Disability inclusion in European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations*, available at: https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/humanitarian-aid/disability-inclusion_en#:~:text=In%202024%2C%20about%2050%25%20of,specifically%20targeted%20persons%20with%20disabilities.

²¹ Disaster risk knowledge is the understanding of potential losses from hazards, encompassing awareness of local hazards, exposure, vulnerability, and community capacity to cope, aiming to empower individuals and communities to reduce risks and build resilience through informed actions, planning, and preparedness. It is the foundation for disaster risk reduction and involves assessing risks, developing strategies, and shifting from reacting to preventing disasters.

Many DRM authorities report that they **do not have a formal mandate to collect or manage disability-related data**. Instead, they rely on information held by other institutions, such as ministries responsible for social affairs, health systems, pension funds, or education authorities. As a result, **disability data are fragmented, collected using different criteria and formats, and updated on uneven cycles**. In most countries, there is no centralised or interoperable data system accessible to civil protection actors. Where registries exist or are under development, they are often voluntary, incomplete, outdated, or not designed for preparedness, early warning, or response purposes.

Data protection and privacy concerns were frequently cited as constraints. Authorities described uncertainty about what data can be legally accessed, shared, or used operationally under the General Data Protection Regulation, leading to cautious approaches and underuse of available information. In some contexts, persons with disabilities may be reluctant to be included in local registries, particularly where such mechanisms are perceived as mandatory or insufficiently protected. This is especially sensitive for persons with stigmatized types of disability, such as psychosocial disabilities, given the risk that data may be used for control or restriction rather than support in case of emergencies.

Mandatory or multi-purpose registries pose significant human rights risks. Any use of registries must therefore be **voluntary**, based on **informed consent, clearly limited to DRR purposes**, and **designed in consultation with disability networks**.

Respondents also identified methodological and capacity limitations. These include the absence of standardised disability indicators aligned with international frameworks, limited guidance on how to translate disability-related data into operational decisions, and insufficient analytical capacity, particularly at local level. Disability data are most often collected for administrative or service-delivery purposes, rather than for risk assessment, preparedness planning, or response. Limited coordination between institutions and inconsistent engagement with OPDs further affect data quality, validation, and practical use.

Improving disability data systems emerged as a high-priority need in both surveys. For DRM authorities, strengthening disability-related data ranked among the top support priorities to advance inclusive preparedness and response. For OPDs, it ranked even higher, reflecting the central role of data in enabling participation, informing planning, and supporting accountability.

At EU level, policy frameworks increasingly acknowledge disability inclusion, but rarely require disability-disaggregated data in DRR

or civil protection systems. Where data are referenced, this is usually indirect, optional, or framed under broad categories such as “vulnerable groups.” Although sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data are widely recognised as essential for understanding risk and informing decision-making, disability disaggregation is not embedded as a core evidence requirement in key EU monitoring and reporting tools, including Eurobarometer surveys²² and civil protection reporting mechanisms²³. As a result, disability data do not consistently shape preparedness, early warning, or response planning.

At regional level in Europe and Central Asia, disability-disaggregated data are more explicitly recognised as essential. The [EFDRR Roadmap 2021–2030](#) calls for disaggregation by disability as a basis for understanding risk and informing DRR planning. Regional reviews and country mappings consistently identify the absence of disability-disaggregated data as a structural gap, linking it directly to weaknesses in early warning systems, evacuation planning, shelter arrangements, and inclusive response.

A small number of countries are beginning to demonstrate more systematic approaches to disability-disaggregated data, as illustrated in the text box below, which may offer relevant learning.

²² See for example, European Commission (2023). EU Civil Protection (Special Eurobarometer 541), available at: <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2977> or European Commission (2024). Disaster risk awareness and preparedness of the EU population - Eurobarometer Report Summary (Special Eurobarometer 547), available at: <https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/disaster-risk-awareness-and-preparedness-eu-population>

²³ See for example, European Commission (2025). REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL Advancing risk management and resilience-building in Europe: First report on the implementation of the union disaster resilience goals Second update on preventing and managing disaster risk in Europe, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0561> or European Commission (2024). REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL on progress on implementation of article 6 of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (Decision No 1313/2013/EU): Preventing and managing disaster risk in Europe, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52024DC0130> or European Commission (2024). REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL on the effectiveness of the implementation of the single European emergency number '112', available at: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/2024-report-implementation-eu-emergency-number-112>

Text box 5. Disability-disaggregated data for preparedness and response: emerging good practices

Several countries are taking steps to strengthen the collection and operational use of disability-related data to support emergency preparedness and response.

In Austria, the Civil Defence Association operates a data platform for individualised emergency counselling, developed through consultative workshops with the Austrian Disability Council. The Council has stressed that both the development process and the web- and app-based platform must ensure full accessibility.

Croatia, through the SEE ME – Safe and Equal in EMERgencies project, introduced GIS-based mapping tools to identify the location of persons with disabilities and link disability-related support needs with emergency centres. This has strengthened tailored assistance, preparedness planning, and response coordination.

In Greece, at municipal level, Civil Protection authorities, in cooperation with Social Welfare services, are required to establish voluntary registries of vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, based on informed consent. These registries support timely notification and evacuation planning and include contact details, support needs and required means of transportation, in compliance with data protection requirements. They are annexed to Municipal Special Plans for Organised Preventive Evacuation, with provisions for additional support, including medical care, at evacuation destinations.

Lithuania collects disability-related data to inform preparedness planning, evacuations, and humanitarian response. A national registration platform for persons with disabilities has been established under the ENABLE-DMC project, allowing individuals to voluntarily indicate emergency-related support needs for preparedness and response planning.

Malta uses GIS systems within the Civil Protection Department to identify households where residents may require tailored evacuation support. Measures have also been taken to strengthen data exchange between disability authorities and emergency services to support anticipatory planning and response.

While these approaches vary in scope and maturity, they demonstrate how voluntary, rights-based disability data—when combined with clear governance, safeguards, and operational links—can support more inclusive preparedness and response.

Risk awareness, information, and communication

Risk awareness and public information systems are widely in place across countries, but their accessibility and usability for persons with disabilities remain uneven. Most countries share preparedness information through campaigns, official websites, brochures, or civil protection messaging. However, these systems are not consistently designed to ensure inclusive understanding.

Survey findings confirm this gap. Among OPDs, **57 per cent** assess public risk communication and preparedness materials as partly accessible, while **13 per cent** consider them fully accessible. At the same time, **22 per cent** report that materials are not accessible. Responses from authorities follow a similar pattern, though more positively: **48 per cent** describe public risk communication as partly accessible and **30 per cent** as fully accessible, while **12 per cent** report that it is not accessible. Taken together, these results show that **partial accessibility is the norm**, rather than systematic inclusion.

Preparedness information is most often produced in standard written formats. This assumes high literacy, familiarity with technical language, and the ability to process information quickly. OPDs consistently report that this **limits understanding** for Deaf persons, persons with intellectual disabilities, and others who rely on sign language, easy-to-read formats, pictograms, or alternative communication methods. While some countries provide accessible versions of materials, these are usually **exceptions**, developed as parallel outputs rather than embedded in core communication strategies.

Risk awareness efforts often prioritise information delivery over understanding and use. OPDs report that guidance is frequently **not co-created** and **not tailored to persons with disabilities**, lacking clear and practical instructions. As a result, information may exist but remains difficult to interpret and act on, especially in stressful or fast-moving situations.

Risk awareness efforts tend to focus on information delivery rather than understanding and use. Information may be available, but less attention is given to whether people can interpret it correctly and act on it. This is especially evident where guidance relies on abstract language, long text blocks, or unclear instructions. OPDs note that information is **often not co-created with them**, and therefore **not tailored to persons with disabilities or accompanied by specific, practical instructions**. As a result, even when information exists, it is not always understandable or actionable, particularly in stressful or fast-moving situations.

Accessible formats are applied inconsistently across channels and levels of governance. Sign language interpretation, captioning, easy-to-read materials, and visual supports are used unevenly. National campaigns are more likely to include accessible elements, while regional and local authorities often lack comparable provisions. Digital platforms tend to perform better than printed or broadcast materials, but they still rely heavily on text and are not always compatible with assistive technologies.

Two-way communication remains a major gap. Risk awareness systems are largely one-directional, focused on informing the public rather than enabling interaction. OPDs report **limited opportunities to ask questions, seek clarification, or provide feedback.** Engagement, where it occurs, is often ad hoc or project-based and rarely integrated into the design, testing, or review of risk communication strategies.

Despite these gaps, a small number of countries are beginning to demonstrate more systematic and inclusive approaches to risk awareness, information, and communication, illustrating how accessibility and usability can be strengthened when inclusion is embedded from the outset rather than treated as an add-on. Selected emerging good practices are highlighted in the text box below.

Text box 6. Inclusive risk awareness, information, and communication: emerging good practices

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the "*Just In Case – Be Prepared*" campaign promotes disaster preparedness among high-risk and marginalised groups, including persons with disabilities. It focuses on education and awareness-raising, particularly for children and youth, and aims to improve understanding of risks and practical preparedness actions.

Czechia has adapted its national safety education programme for adults with intellectual disabilities. Approximately 540 learners have received tailored risk awareness and preparedness education, strengthening inclusive preparedness beyond standard public information. In addition, the Ministry of the Interior, in cooperation with the Fire Rescue Service, has published sign language videos and audio materials as part of the 72 Hours campaign, addressing household safety for blind and Deaf persons, beyond fire safety alone, and promoting accessible communication through public guidance materials.

In Greece, accessible public awareness videos on emergency rights and actions have been developed and published online, covering a range of disability-related access and support requirements. The videos are available in [Greek](#) and [English](#), use international symbols, and provide clear, practical guidance on emergency actions.

Ireland's Broadcasting Authority Codes and Standards require emergency broadcasts to be spoken and subtitled, with sufficient time for comprehension. Where practicable, information must also be provided in Irish Sign Language, with interpreters clearly visible during Government emergency announcements, establishing a strong regulatory basis for accessible crisis communication.

In Italy, the Civil Protection Department has made its national public awareness campaign "*Io non rischio*" ("I do not risk") accessible in Italian Sign Language. Key materials are translated and disseminated through a dedicated video playlist, providing year-round, practical guidance on preparedness and behaviour before and during emergencies.

In Poland, the Government prepared a [Safety Handbook](#) to provide the public with clear guidance on how to prepare for and respond to crisis situations. The handbook is intended for the entire population, including persons with disabilities. It highlights that, during crises, older persons, people who are ill, or persons with disabilities may not be aware of an approaching threat, and therefore calls for sharing key information with them and explaining what actions to take. It also encourages people to check on and support older persons and persons with disabilities, ensure they are aware of alarms, and provide assistance where possible. The handbook was delivered to every household in Poland, is available digitally, produced in Braille, and accessible in multiple language versions [online](#).

Preparedness²⁴

Individual and household preparedness

Individual and household preparedness is not addressed systematically, particularly for persons with disabilities.

Preparedness measures tend to focus on general risk awareness, while disability-specific requirements are rarely integrated in a structured way. Where disability is referenced in policies or frameworks, this is often inconsistent and seldom explicitly linked to CRPD Article 11 on the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies.

Evidence shows **significant preparedness gaps**. According to the [UNDRR Global Survey Report on Persons with Disabilities and Disasters](#), **91 per cent** of persons with disabilities in Europe do not have a personal disaster preparedness plan, and **43 per cent** are unable to evacuate without assistance. When early warning systems are accessible, this figure drops to **22 per cent**, demonstrating the **critical role of accessible information** in enabling preparedness and early action. Despite this, only **10 per cent** receive disaster risk information in accessible formats, such as Braille, sign language, or easy-to-read materials. **88 per cent** report not being involved in disaster planning or decision-making, despite a clear willingness to participate.²⁵

National-level data reflect similar patterns. In Lithuania, **40 per cent** of persons with disabilities are unaware of emergency procedures, and only **15 per cent** report having a personal preparedness plan.²⁶ A majority (**64 per cent**) have not received emergency preparedness information, particularly for complex risks such as nuclear incidents or armed conflict. These **gaps are more pronounced for persons with psychosocial disabilities**, reflecting limited attention to psychosocial accessibility in preparedness communication, persistent stigma, and the disruption of

²⁴ Preparedness refers to the legal, institutional, operational, and societal capacities established in advance of disasters to ensure an effective, coordinated, and timely response. It includes contingency planning and continuity of vital societal functions, accessible early warning systems, trained response capacities, risk awareness among the population, and the administrative, financial, and technical resources required to act before, during, and immediately after crises.

²⁵ UNDRR (2023). *Global Survey Report on Persons with Disabilities and Disasters – Annex 5: Europe and Central Asia*, available at: <https://www.undrr.org/report/2023-global-survey-report-on-persons-with-disabilities-and-disasters>

²⁶ Ministry of the Interior and Department of Disability Affairs (2023). Survey on Emergency Preparedness among Persons with Disabilities in Lithuania.

mental health and social support services that are critical for effective preparedness and response.

Comparable findings emerged from a survey by the Finnish Disability Forum, with responses from approximately 300 persons with disabilities. Only **5 per cent** reported having a preparedness plan, while more than half reported fear during emergencies or concern that they would be left behind.²⁷ These findings prompted OPDs to **strengthen collaboration with authorities** to co-create practical preparedness solutions.

Text box 7. Emerging good practices in individual and household preparedness

In the Netherlands, national preparedness information is published in multiple accessible formats, including easy-to-read versions, sign language materials, screen-reader-accessible content, and adapted resources for persons with learning disabilities. These materials are developed with OPD input, and sign language interpretation is provided for national and regional emergency press conferences.

In North Macedonia, the City of Skopje has developed 200 household protection and rescue plans for persons with disabilities and other groups facing higher risk, alongside education activities on protection and self-protection involving at least 200 persons with disabilities.

Norway's Directorate for Civil Protection has issued self-preparedness guidance specifically for persons with disabilities, complementing general public guidance and addressing practical issues such as staying safely at home during disruptions, identifying personal support networks, and managing communication barriers.

In Romania, [OPD-led training supported by the World Bank and GFDRR](#) has strengthened first responders' capacity to interact effectively with persons with disabilities. More than 130 firefighters, police officers, and paramedics participated in training based on lived experience, with the programme now being scaled up nationally.

Serbia has developed and widely distributed accessible household-level preparedness materials, including the [Family Guide for Emergency Preparedness and Response](#) (2012), prepared by the Emergency Management Sector in cooperation with the OSCE Mission to Serbia and the National Organisation of Persons with Disabilities of the Republic of Serbia (NOOIS). The manual was produced in all minority languages and later adapted into audio and Braille formats. It has been distributed in hundreds of thousands of copies and is available online. The materials provide guidance on emergency response, including evacuation and protection of persons with disabilities. In addition, accessible school posters and short videos on fire, flood, and earthquake risks were developed with Caritas Serbia.

²⁷ Statement by Veera Florica-Rajala, President of the Finnish Disability Forum at the European Day of Persons with Disabilities (EDPD), Panel 3: *Preparedness and crisis management inclusive of persons with disabilities*.

Preparedness and protection in institutional settings

Preparedness frameworks rarely address the specific risks faced by persons with disabilities living in institutions, despite their heightened exposure to harm during emergencies. Evidence from OPDs, **State reporting and independent monitoring under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**²⁸, and recent incidents show that many institutional settings remain structurally unprepared for fires, floods, and other hazards.

Preparedness measures in institutions are typically **procedural and staff-dependent**, with limited attention to accessible early warning, individual evacuation requirements, or residents' ability to receive and understand risk information. Emergency plans are often generic or incomplete, evacuation drills are limited, and **accessible communication formats are rarely in place**. As a result, residents frequently depend entirely on staff action, with little scope for self-protection or informed decision-making.

The consequences are severe. Between 2015 and 2022, **at least 48 persons with disabilities died** in institutional settings due to fires and floods across several European countries.²⁹

These risks are compounded where **public funding continues to support institutional settings**, including through EU-funded programmes. OPDs and CRPD monitoring bodies have repeatedly raised concerns about ensuring that EU funds are **not used to reinforce institutions** that inherently and unnecessarily expose persons with disabilities to hazards.

In this context, preparedness **cannot be addressed through technical measures alone**. The [CRPD Guidelines on deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies](#) (2022), make clear that **institutionalisation itself is a driver of risk and rights violations**. Drawing on lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Guidelines show how institutional settings amplify exposure to harm, neglect, abuse, and life-threatening situations during crises. They underline that **deinstitutionalization is a core preparedness and risk-reduction measure**.

²⁸ States parties are required to submit an initial report within two years after acceding to the Convention. State parties to the Convention are then required to submit regular periodic reports on how rights are being implemented every 4 years.

²⁹ European Network on Independent Living (2022). *Shadow report on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the European Union*, available at: https://enil.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ShadowReport_EU_Final_140222.pdf

Taken together, the evidence highlights preparedness gaps that directly engage the **right to life under [CRPD Article 10](#)** and reinforce the obligation on States and the EU to align disaster preparedness, funding decisions, and civil protection planning with the **progressive realisation of independent living and inclusion in the community** as a foundation for reducing disaster risk.

Early warning systems

Early warning systems are in place in most countries, and mechanisms for detecting hazards and issuing alerts are generally well established within civil protection structures. However, **accessibility is rarely treated as a core system requirement** and is more often addressed on an ad hoc basis rather than embedded in system design.

Text box 8. Inclusive and accessible early warning systems: good practices from Denmark and the Netherlands

Denmark issues emergency alerts through multiple, complementary channels, including sirens, television, radio, official websites, social media, and SMS alerts for Deaf and hard of hearing people. This multi-channel approach reduces reliance on acoustic warnings alone and increases the likelihood that alerts reach people with different communication requirements. The Danish Emergency Management Agency operates the *Mobile Alert* app, which delivers emergency notifications directly to smartphones. The app is compatible with screen readers and voice programmes, enabling access for blind users, and provides non-acoustic alerts suitable for Deaf and hard of hearing people.

In the Netherlands, advocacy by disability organisations after accessibility barriers were identified, led to involvement of persons with disabilities in the further development of the national NL-Alert app. The app now operates via cell broadcast and a dedicated mobile application, applying inclusive design principles to improve accessibility and comprehensibility. The redesigned NL-Alert app includes accessibility solutions for blind, partially sighted, Deaf, and hard of hearing people, with further steps underway to introduce alerts in national sign language. This illustrates how structured engagement with OPDs can directly improve the accessibility and effectiveness of early warning systems.

Survey findings from OPDs and DRM authorities show a **consistent pattern of partial accessibility**. Among OPDs, **70 per cent** describe early warning systems as partly accessible, while **22 per cent** report that they are not accessible. Only **4 per cent** assess them as fully accessible. Authorities report similar trends, with **64 per cent** indicating partial accessibility, **18 per cent** no accessibility, and **9 per cent** full accessibility. Taken together, these findings show that early warning

systems are **more often adapted after the fact than designed to be inclusive from the outset**.

OPDs report that early warning alerts rely primarily on **sound-based signals or text-only messages**, with limited adaptation for different sensory, cognitive, or communication requirements. **National sign languages are not systematically integrated**, and no country currently provides fully accessible early warning across all channels in national sign languages. This limitation is also evident at EU level: while an ongoing EU project is developing early warning messages in the **24 official spoken languages of the EU**, it **does not include the 29 national sign languages**, illustrating a lack of an inclusive approach in the development of EU-based early warning tools for Member States.

Evidence consistently shows that **timely and accessible warnings enable early action**. When given sufficient time and warning, 78 per cent of survey respondents from Europe reported having no difficulty or some difficulty in evacuating.³⁰ However, only **10 per cent** of respondents reported that risk information is disseminated in accessible formats, and 30 per cent reported partial dissemination. When alerts are not understandable or actionable, **early warning does not translate into early action**.

"A major barrier is that, at present, there is no clear information on what measures are planned at the national level to alert and protect the diverse groups of persons with disabilities in the event of an emergency." – OPD survey respondent

Early warning systems are generally linked to response structures, but **preparedness guidance, evacuation information, and shelter instructions are rarely accessible**. Physical barriers, inaccessible transport, and **limited inclusive training** further reduce the effectiveness of warnings. OPDs also report **limited involvement in the design, testing, and evaluation** of early warning systems, which constrains learning, accountability, and system improvement.

³⁰ UNDRR (2023). *Global Survey Report on Persons with Disabilities and Disasters – Annex 5: Europe and Central Asia*, available at: <https://www.undrr.org/report/2023-global-survey-report-on-persons-with-disabilities-and-disasters>

Emergency and crisis communication

Emergency communication remains largely inaccessible to Deaf and hard of hearing people across Europe, despite existing EU legal and policy frameworks on accessibility.³¹

At EU level, the [revised European Electronic Communications Code](#) requires equivalent access to emergency services, including the single European emergency number 112, for persons with disabilities. The [European Accessibility Act](#) (EAA) further reinforces accessibility standards for emergency communication systems. Under the EAA, Member States may apply a derogation allowing certain accessibility obligations related to emergency communications to be implemented until 28 June 2027. While this transitional period is permitted within the legal framework, it may create a temporary protection gap for persons with disabilities who rely on accessible emergency communication during situations of risk. In addition, the **current requirement to provide Real-Time Text (RTT) alone may not fully meet the communication needs of Deaf persons who use sign language.** EU legislation provides for Total Conversation (combining video, voice, and text) when electronic communications services include video communication and where technically feasible. However, limiting Total Conversation to such cases may still restrict effective and equitable access to emergency services for sign language users.

The scale of the issue is significant. The emergency number 112 serves around 450 million people across the EU. Stakeholder data indicate that **up to 15 per cent of the EU population is Deaf or hard of hearing**, showing that inaccessible emergency communication affects a substantial share of the population.

Evidence from organisations representing Deaf and hard of hearing people highlights **systemic gaps in legal mandates and operational readiness.** Only 14 per cent of countries have a legal or regulatory

³¹ The analysis draws on a series of reports by the European Union of the Deaf (EUD) on the implementation of key EU accessibility frameworks, including the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, the European Electronic Communications Code, and the European Accessibility Act, which contain findings and recommendations relevant to accessible information and communication in emergency contexts. It also draws on *From recognition to officialisation*, EUD's analysis of legal frameworks for Deaf sign language users across the 27 EU Member States, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, available at: <https://eud.eu/eud-releases-report-on-the-implementation-of-the-audiovisual-media-services-directive/>; <https://eud.eu/euds-report-on-the-implementation-of-the-european-electronic-communications-code/>; <https://eud.eu/eud-publishes-new-report-on-the-implementation-of-the-european-accessibility-act/>; <https://eud.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/From-recognition-to-officialisation.pdf>

requirement for emergency broadcasts in national sign languages. As a result, most Deaf and hard of hearing people in Europe have **no guaranteed right** to receive emergency information in an accessible language.³²

Early warning remains particularly weak. **No country currently delivers early warning messages in national sign languages across warning channels**, and only 22 per cent guarantee 24/7 access to emergency services in national sign language. These gaps persist despite repeated commitments to equivalent access.

Survey findings reflect similar shortcomings. Among OPDs, emergency hotlines and on-demand information services are assessed as **partly accessible** (35 per cent) or **not accessible** (30 per cent), while only **22 per cent** consider them fully accessible. Authorities report higher levels of accessibility, but uncertainty remains about actual operational capacity. In addition, **relay services enabling communication between users of different modalities** (spoken and signed language) are **not available on a 24/7 basis in the majority of EU countries**, further limiting effective access to emergency communication systems.³³

Operational preparedness remains a critical concern. **At present, France is the only EU Member State operating a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for 112 that can handle Total Conversation calls**, with **Deaf operators working directly within the PSAP on a 24/7 basis**, rather than relying solely on external relay services. In most other countries, emergency services lack the operational capacity to serve Deaf and hard of hearing people in time-critical situations or without prior registration, particularly where access depends on limited-hours relay services.³⁴ Improving access therefore requires PSAPs to be **operationally capable of handling sign language, RTT, and Total Conversation**, whether through in-house capacity or guaranteed, fully integrated 24/7 relay solutions.

Cross-border situations further expose these gaps. Automated emergency alerts triggered during cross-border movement are typically designed for hearing users. Deaf travellers often receive **no accessible information**

³² European Union of the Deaf (2025). *From recognition to officialisation: An European evolution of sign language rights*, available at: <https://eud.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/SL-Rights-Ebook.pdf>, pp. 281-282

³³ European Union of the Deaf (2025). Report on the implementation of the European Electronic Communications Code, available at: <https://eud.eu/euds-report-on-the-implementation-of-the-european-electronic-communications-code/>

³⁴ Comparable models also exist outside the EU, including in Ukraine, where Deaf operators are integrated into emergency response services.

on the nature of the threat, required actions, or available support, and access without pre-registration remains inconsistent.

Accessibility gaps are also evident in broadcast and digital communication. Although EU rules require accessibility, minimum standards and timelines remain unclear. Live subtitling and sign language interpretation are frequently absent. OPD survey results show emergency communication via TV, radio, and digital platforms is **fully accessible for only 17 per cent** of respondents.

Beyond one-way communication, **interactive access remains limited.** Call centres are not consistently accessible, first responders often lack communication capacity, and contingency planning rarely addresses communication during network failures. Preparedness guidance frequently recommends **radio-based alerts as part of 72-hour preparedness kits,** yet **radios are not accessible to Deaf persons,** and **accessible alternatives are rarely identified or provided.** Responsibility for ensuring accessible communication during disruptions rests with **public authorities,** not with Deaf persons or their neighbours. This highlights the need for **accessible, non-audio-based solutions,** including prioritising the use of **EU satellite-based systems** to deliver emergency information in accessible formats during telecommunications outages.

Taken together, the evidence shows that **legal commitments have not translated into consistent operational accessibility.** Emergency and crisis communication systems remain largely designed for hearing users, placing Deaf and hard of hearing people at disproportionate risk and undermining the principle of equivalent access in EU law.

Taken together, the evidence shows that legal commitments have not translated into consistent operational accessibility. Emergency and crisis communication systems remain largely designed for hearing users, placing Deaf and hard of hearing people at disproportionate risk and undermining the principle of equivalent access under EU law. Nevertheless, several countries have introduced more accessible emergency and crisis communication systems that reduce reliance on voice-only channels and enable direct contact with emergency services, demonstrating that accessible emergency communication is both technically and operationally feasible—particularly when systems are designed in close collaboration with persons with disabilities through their representative organisations.

Text box 9. Emergency and crisis communication: selected good practice examples from Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, and Lithuania

Estonia operates SMS-112, allowing persons with hearing or speech impairments to contact emergency services in Estonian, Russian, and English, with integrated geolocation.

Finland operates an emergency SMS service with integrated geolocation, allowing Deaf, hard-of-hearing, and speech-impaired users to contact emergency services by text without prior registration. Between 2021 and 2023, the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela) and the Emergency Response Centre Agency implemented a joint pilot enabling emergency calls in Finnish Sign Language through the 112 Suomi application. The pilot ended when the funding period concluded. Public warnings are also distributed via the 112 Suomi application. In addition, a Real-Time Text service is under development, which will allow users to send emergency text messages to 112 with integrated geolocation.

France operates the 114-emergency service, providing Total Conversation access for Deaf sign language users. The service is staffed by Deaf sign language users employed within public safety answering points, enabling direct communication without reliance on third-party relay services. Nationwide video relay services further support accessible emergency communication.

Germany provides comprehensive VRS coverage, enabling accessible emergency communication for Deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

Iceland offers long-standing text-to-112 services and operates the *112 Deaf* mobile application, developed with the Association of the Deaf, allowing direct text communication, photo sharing, and location transmission to emergency services.

Latvia operates the *112 Latvija* mobile application, enabling text-based emergency contact with automatic GPS location sharing for persons with hearing or speech impairments.

Lithuania's emergency preparedness website (www.lt72.lt) includes a [dedicated section](#) for persons with disabilities, providing information in sign language and disability-specific guidance, including easy-to-understand content for persons with mobility disabilities. Public warnings in Lithuania are disseminated through multiple channels, including warning sirens and a cell broadcast-based alert system that delivers text messages with vibration and sound to mobile phones. Emergency assistance can be requested via the 112-emergency number, including through the GPIS 112 mobile application, which enables text-based emergency communication for persons with hearing impairments.

Text box 10. Emergency and crisis communication: selected good practice examples from Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and Ukraine

Malta is updating its 112-emergency applications based on input from persons with disabilities and in line with the European Accessibility Act. SMS-based emergency contact and geolocation functions support accessible early contact with emergency services.

In the Netherlands, persons who cannot use voice calls can access emergency services through the 112NL application, which supports RTT in line with requirements under the European Electronic Communications Code (EECC). In addition, an eSMS service to 112 is available for registered users. Together, these options provide multiple accessible pathways for contacting emergency services, although they rely on different access conditions (RTT via the app and prior registration for eSMS). An overview of accessible emergency communication options in the Netherlands is available via [this link](#).

Norway operates an Emergency SMS service (*Nød-tekst*), allowing Deaf, hard-of-hearing, and speech-impaired users to contact emergency services via text after registration.

In Poland, the Alarm112 mobile application allows users to report emergencies without voice communication using text-based messages and pictograms. Users can exchange messages with a PSAP operator, and alerts are handled using the same procedures as voice calls to 112. The interface was developed with the involvement of Deaf people and emergency call takers and is designed for all users, including persons with disabilities. Location can be shared via predefined options, manual entry, or GPS. The Ministry of the Interior and Administration is working to replace SMS-based communication with internet-based transmission, enabling future features such as multimedia messaging and real-time text communication.

Spain has comprehensive national coverage of video relay services, supporting accessible emergency communication for Deaf and hard-of-hearing people in time-critical situations.

Sweden operates a national crisis information application and maintains full VRS coverage. However, reliance on electricity-dependent channels remains a challenge during power outages, particularly for hard-of-hearing people.

Ukraine employs Deaf sign language interpreters directly within emergency call centres, providing 24/7 access to emergency services for Deaf sign language users through in-house call handling.

Preparedness guidance and operational tools

The review identified a growing number of good and promising practices related to disability-inclusive preparedness guidance and operational tools across Europe. Annex 2 provides a detailed thematic overview of these examples, drawing on desk review findings, survey responses, and stakeholder consultations.

Across countries, disability-inclusive guidance is disseminated through a mix of national civil protection frameworks, operational tools, public awareness campaigns, and project-based outputs. In some cases, guidance is embedded within civil protection systems.

In other contexts, guidance is primarily disseminated through practical tools and public-facing materials. For example, Czechia uses emergency communication cards and responder guidance on adapted communication. Croatia provides disability-specific brochures addressing fires, earthquakes, and floods. In Italy, disability-related preparedness is promoted through the *Io non rischio* campaign and the *Abili, a proteggere* working group within the Civil Protection Department.

Text box 11. Institutionalising inclusive preparedness through operational guidance: selected good practice from Serbia

In 2025, the Ministry of Interior (Emergency Situations Sector), in cooperation with UNDP Serbia and the national umbrella OPD NOOIS, developed the *Guide on Inclusive Procedures for Disaster Risk Reduction*, aligned with the CRPD and the Sendai Framework.

The Guide establishes formal mechanisms for cooperation between local emergency headquarters and OPDs across preparedness, response and recovery phases.

It supports the development of personalised evacuation plans (PEPs) and emergency kits (GO-BAGs), while strengthening inclusive procedures and competencies within emergency structures. A key feature is the formal inclusion of OPD representatives in local expert-operational teams, enabling direct participation in planning and decision-making.

Complementing this, a Guide for fire and rescue units on inclusive emergency response was developed, alongside the film *Inclusive Response – Safety for All*, strengthening first responders' capacity to provide timely and dignified assistance to persons with disabilities.

Public preparedness campaigns also contribute. Sweden distributed a national preparedness brochure to all households. In the Netherlands, the *Denk Vooruit* campaign included both a printed brochure, delivered to approximately 8.5 million households, and a highly accessible digital version. However, preparedness information still needs to be

systematically adapted so that persons with disabilities can access it, understand it, and act on it, recognising that people have different access and support requirements.

In several countries, guidance has emerged through **time-bound projects or pilot initiatives**, such as [Lithuania's ENABLE-DMC](#) recommendations covering all disaster phases. In Montenegro and Austria, work related to disability and emergency preparedness is emerging, though available information is limited. In Austria, this currently relates primarily to the development of a data platform for individualised emergency counselling. More broadly, disability-related considerations appear more likely to be integrated into existing emergency guidance rather than developed as a standalone disability-specific framework.

Despite these examples, the overall picture remains **uneven and fragmented**. Survey findings point to limited and unclear guidance in many countries. Among OPDs, **47 per cent report that guidance exists**, while the remainder indicate it is absent or unclear. Among authorities, only **21 per cent report the existence of clear guidance** specifically targeting persons with disabilities and first responders.

Accessibility remains a persistent gap. Guidance is often not accessible to people with disabilities who rely on sign language, captioning, easy-to-read formats, or alternative communication channels. As a result, guidance that exists is not always usable in practice. This is reflected in OPD assessments of community preparedness training, rated as not accessible by 30 per cent and fully accessible by only 13 per cent.

In many countries, guidance remains **project-based, partial, or difficult to locate**, with limited evidence of systematic dissemination or uptake. OPDs report reliance on online materials or crisis-related messaging rather than structured, widely promoted preparedness tools. There is also limited evidence that guidance is routinely tested, updated, or co-created with OPDs.

Survey responses from both OPDs and authorities confirm that **guidance and training are priority needs**. OPDs prioritise training for authorities on disability inclusion, capacity-building for OPDs, and access to practical tools to support engagement. Authorities prioritise training for first responders, internal guidelines, staff training, and stronger coordination with OPDs. Preparedness training is assessed as partly accessible by 55 per cent of authorities and fully accessible by only 12 per cent.

Taken together, the findings show that while **promising practices exist and are expanding**, disability-inclusive preparedness guidance is not yet

systematic, accessible, or embedded as a standard component of civil protection and preparedness systems across Europe.

Response³⁵

Accessibility of emergency response systems

Evacuation, shelters, transportation, and emergency services

Survey findings from OPDs and authorities show persistent accessibility gaps across core emergency response components, particularly evacuation, shelters, transportation, and emergency services.

Evacuation remains uneven and fragile. Among OPDs, 30 per cent report evacuation as not accessible and 30 per cent as partly accessible, while only 13 per cent consider it fully accessible. A further 26 per cent are unsure, reflecting limited clarity and predictability. Authorities report higher accessibility, but gaps remain: 45 per cent describe evacuation as partly accessible, 18 per cent as not accessible, and 24 per cent as fully accessible. This divergence suggests that **procedures may exist but are not consistently accessible in practice.**

Shelters and safe spaces represent the most critical gap. Among OPDs, 39 per cent report shelters as not accessible and only 9 per cent as fully accessible; 30 per cent are unsure. Authorities also report challenges, with just **12 per cent** assessing shelters as fully accessible and 18 per cent reporting them as fully inaccessible. Barriers include physical inaccessibility, lack of adapted facilities, and limited preparedness to support persons with different requirements.

At EU level, the [rescEU shelter project](#) represents an important positive development. Coordinated by the European Commission with Member States, it aims to ensure emergency shelter capacity accounts for the requirements of persons with disabilities and other groups facing higher risk. **Fifteen per cent of all shelter units are intended to be accessible**, with practical solutions such as ramps, adapted beds, mobility-friendly layouts, and accessible hygiene facilities. The project

³⁵ Emergency response refers to the actions and measures taken immediately before, during, and after an emergency to save lives, reduce harm, and meet urgent needs. It includes the rapid activation of coordination mechanisms, emergency communication, needs and impact assessments, and response operations, supported by clear legal mandates, defined roles and responsibilities, and the capacity to scale up assistance in a timely, inclusive, and effective manner.

promotes peer learning across Member States. However, **survey findings indicate that accessibility is not yet systematically reflected** in national and local shelter provision during emergencies.

Emergency transportation shows slightly better results but remains unreliable. Among OPDs, 35 per cent describe transport as partly accessible and 17 per cent as fully accessible, while 35 per cent are unsure, indicating uncertainty about availability when needed. Authorities report higher partial accessibility (55 per cent), but gaps persist.

Emergency health and social services perform better relative to other areas, yet accessibility remains uneven. Among OPDs, 39 per cent report partial accessibility and 22 per cent report inaccessibility. Authorities report stronger coverage, but continued uncertainty points to inconsistent preparedness for disability-specific support.

Text box 12. Inclusive civil protection exercises: selected good practice from Greece

Two civil protection exercises in Greece were conducted with the participation of persons with disabilities. In 2025, the HEPHAESTUS II evacuation exercise was jointly organised by the European Forest Fire Center (under the GSCP), the Ministry of Climate Crisis and Civil Protection, ESAMEA / IN-ESAMEA, and the Hellenic Fire Service, building on a 2023 inclusive tabletop exercise in Athens. The exercise, implemented under the “Resilience4ALL” initiative, focused on accessible evacuation planning, multi-agency coordination, and practical application of accessibility and universal design.

Key lessons included the need for practical disability-inclusive guidelines for first responders, early engagement of representatives of different disability groups, development of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs), strengthened training on disability management techniques, and systematic inclusion of persons with disabilities in evacuation exercises.

All civil protection exercises addressing natural and technological hazards now include disability-related risk scenarios, in cooperation with municipalities and regional authorities, to assess preparedness and operational readiness.

Emergency response – lived experience

At EU operational level, **disability-inclusive response has been demonstrated in practice**. The [Emergency Response Coordination Centre](#) has supported evacuations from Ukraine and Gaza that included persons with disabilities, and DG ECHO has prioritised disability-inclusive support, including psychosocial support services and strengthened referral pathways. These examples show that **inclusive response is feasible when coordination, resources, and mandates are in place**.

However, OPD accounts indicate that such practices are **not yet consistently reflected at national and local levels**. Thirty-nine per cent of OPDs reported that their members faced barriers during emergency response, while over half were unsure, pointing to limited visibility of response arrangements.

Communication and evacuation were the most frequently reported barriers. Emergency information is often not accessible, limiting awareness of procedures, available support, and changes during evolving situations. These gaps were particularly visible during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Evacuation practices raised serious concerns. OPDs described situations where **wheelchair users were instructed to remain behind** or placed in “relative safety” areas, while responders lacked training on safe and appropriate assistance.

Deaf persons and Deaf sign language users are systematically underserved due to limited access to **sign language interpretation, captioning, real-time text, and assistive hearing systems**. For example, in Ukraine, OPDs reported severe barriers to accessible emergency communication. In the absence of adequate public provision, the **Ukrainian Federation of the Deaf**, together with European and global Deaf organisations, established **24/7 accessible emergency communication**, translating alerts into national sign language and disseminating them through a coordinated peer-to-peer network reaching over 1,000 Deaf people. While this response helped mitigate immediate risks, it underscores a systemic failure rather than a good practice: ensuring accessible emergency communication is a core responsibility of public authorities, and reliance on OPD-led emergency measures reflects gaps in state-led preparedness and response.

Deafblind persons and persons with intellectual disabilities face compounded barriers, linked to the absence of tactile communication, easy-to-read information, and tailored assistance. Persons with physical and visual impairments face barriers related to inaccessible buildings,

evacuation routes, shelters, and wayfinding. Respondents also highlighted heightened risks for people with invisible disabilities, those living alone, and those dependent on electricity or medical devices, alongside intersecting risks affecting older persons, women and girls, migrants, and people reliant on third-party support.

Authorities broadly confirm these challenges. Forty-two per cent reported having assisted persons with disabilities during emergencies, while 39 per cent indicated assistance was only partial. The reported constraints relate mainly to gaps within authorities' own systems and capacities.

Authorities reported lacking reliable data on persons with disabilities and their support requirements, as well as clear guidance on how to engage with them and their representative organisations. They also highlighted limited responder training, inaccessible information and early warning systems, physical barriers in shelters and evacuation routes, and weak coordination with OPDs.

Overall, the findings reveal a persistent gap between policy commitments and lived experience. While inclusive response is achievable and has been demonstrated, it remains uneven and fragile—too often dependent on ad hoc measures or OPD intervention rather than being embedded as a standard feature of emergency response systems.

Recommendations

For ease of uptake by senior decision-makers, the Executive Summary highlights ten short-term priority actions drawn from the recommendations below. The full set of recommendations provides the detail required to support sustained system change.

These recommendations are grounded in what was heard, shared, and observed throughout the diagnostic. They reflect the depth of the desk review, the consultative workshop discussions, and engagement with OPDs and DRM authorities. Twenty-nine of the 38 countries covered by the study participated in at least one survey, indicating strong regional interest and readiness to strengthen disability-inclusive preparedness and response.

The recommendations are organised across three levels: strategic action at EU and UCPM level; operational measures at national and local level; and implications for future guidance, training, and support. Across all levels, recommendations are structured into **three priority levels** to support sequencing and implementation. All recommendations are essential; the tiering reflects logical progression rather than relative importance.

Disability inclusion in disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness is not discretionary. Under the CRPD—ratified by the EU and all UCPM Member and Participating States—States have a binding obligation to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including disasters, humanitarian emergencies, and armed conflict. The recommendations below support fulfilment of these obligations.

Strategic recommendations (EU and UCPM level)

The strategic recommendations below focus on EU- and UCPM-level action and are mutually reinforcing.

Disclaimer: The recommendations presented in this chapter reflect the analysis of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the European Commission, which funded this report.

Level 1 – Foundational enablers

(Legal, financial, and accountability conditions)

1. Strengthen governance and legal frameworks for disability-inclusive DRR

- Encourage systematic involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organisations, across all phases of disaster risk management in the implementation of EU legislation and policies.
- Operationalise CRPD Article 11 across EU civil protection, climate, humanitarian, and crisis-management frameworks through enforceable obligations rather than generic references.
- Encourage Member States to adopt disability-inclusive preparedness and response guidelines and to support their implementation through adequate resources.
- Encourage Member States to explicitly integrate disability inclusion in the implementation of the [EU Critical Entity Resilience \(CER\) Directive](#), including accessibility, continuity of support, and engagement of OPDs in risk assessments and resilience measures for essential services.³⁶

2. Establish accountability, oversight, and enforcement mechanisms

- Consider an EU-level mechanism to monitor, assess, and publicly report on implementation of disability-inclusive DRR commitments.
- Consider mechanisms for enforcement and corrective measures where inclusive plans are absent or not implemented.
- Consider compliance with disability inclusion requirements a condition for access to EU civil protection, DRR, climate adaptation, and humanitarian funding.

3. Ensure protected and obligatory financing for inclusion

³⁶ The implementation of the CER Directive provides a strategic opportunity to embed disability inclusion within national resilience frameworks for essential services. As Member States conduct national risk assessments and designate critical entities, disability-inclusive considerations should be systematically integrated, including accessibility of facilities, continuity of assistive technology and essential support services, and inclusive emergency communication for persons with disabilities. In practical terms:

- Risk assessments under the CER Directive should consider the differential impacts of service disruption on persons with disabilities, including reliance on electricity, digital services, health systems, transport, and communication networks.
- Resilience measures adopted by critical entities should include accessibility of infrastructure, inclusive emergency procedures, and continuity of disability-related services and supports.
- Incident reporting and response planning should ensure accessible communication and coordination with relevant authorities and representative organisations.
- National implementation guidance should encourage consultation with OPDs when defining resilience measures for sectors that are critical to independent living, health, and safety.

- Encourage obligatory, ring-fenced budget lines for accessibility and reasonable accommodation within DRR and civil protection budgets.
- Consider embedding mandatory disability-inclusion indicators across relevant EU funding instruments.
- Support OPD participation, training, and institutional capacity through EU-level financing mechanisms.

4. Institutionalise meaningful participation and cross-sectoral collaboration

- Enable permanent, resourced consultation mechanisms with OPDs at EU and Member State levels, including within UCPM governance.
- Ensure participation is accessible, continuous, and linked to decision-making authority.
- Promote structured collaboration between authorities, emergency professionals, researchers, and OPDs to co-create operational solutions.

5. Designate disability inclusion focal points within civil protection systems

- Encourage the UCPM Member State's disaster risk management and civil protection authorities to designate disability inclusion focal points, with clear mandates, authority, and accountability, supported by mandatory training and adequate resources to coordinate implementation across preparedness, response, and recovery.

Level 2 – System-strengthening measures

(Embedding inclusion across systems and standards)

6. Strengthen policy coherence across DRR, climate, humanitarian action, and conflict preparedness

- Systematically link DRR with climate adaptation, humanitarian action, crisis preparedness, and recovery and reconstruction to ensure coherent and inclusive risk governance across policy areas.
- Operationalise international commitments on the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including disasters, humanitarian emergencies, climate-related crises, and armed conflict, in line with the CRPD and United Nations Security Council Resolution 2475 (2019).
- Encourage recovery and reconstruction efforts to prioritise accessibility and alignment with the Sendai Framework and relevant EU strategies.

7. Advance European standardisation for inclusive emergency preparedness

- Explore development of a CEN management standard on inclusive emergency preparedness for statutory civil protection authorities.
- Consider standards address OPD involvement, evacuation requirements, person-centred risk assessment, personal emergency planning, and coordination across sectors.
- Encourage emergency infrastructure and facilities—such as shelters, evacuation centres, and temporary accommodation—to be designed and upgraded in line with universal design and accessibility standards, and to integrate disability-related support and assistance, including psychosocial support, into shelter operations. This is essential to enable safe, dignified, and independent use by all persons with disabilities and to prevent exclusion of those who require assistance during emergencies.

8. Invest in capacity building and leadership

- Provide systematic training for civil protection authorities, emergency responders, and public officials on disability-inclusive DRR.
- Strengthen OPD technical capacity for engagement in preparedness and response.
- Enable the European Disability Forum and other representative organisations of persons with disabilities to play a sustained strategic role.

9. Strengthen risk knowledge and disability-disaggregated data systems

- Consider the establishment of interoperable EU frameworks for disability-disaggregated data aligned with Sendai Framework Priority 1 on understanding disaster risk³⁷.
- Integrate disability data into existing risk assessments, preparedness, early warning, response, and recovery systems.
- Encourage voluntary, rights-compliant identification mechanisms with strong data protection safeguards.

³⁷ Sendai Priority 1 is the first of four core actions in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, focusing on Understanding Disaster Risk, which means comprehensively assessing vulnerabilities, capacities, hazards, and exposure to develop effective prevention, mitigation, preparedness, and response strategies for a more resilient future. It emphasizes using data and science, including geospatial tools, to create location-based risk information and maps for better decision-making.

Level 3 – Operational accelerators and thematic priorities

(Driving concrete change)

10. Ensure accessibility of emergency communication and early warning systems

- Encourage national systems to provide accessible, non-auditory alerts and sign-language access, including during power or network outages.
- Close gaps in EN 301 549³⁸ and align future standards with WCAG 2.2 Level AAA for vital information³⁹.
- Ensure emergency broadcasting, contact channels, and services provide 24/7 accessible access.
- Encourage Member States to mandate the provision of sign language interpretation and captioning for emergency communication and broadcasts, including live announcements and emergency updates, through binding legal or regulatory requirements.

11. Advance Deaf inclusion and linguistic accessibility

- Ensure officialisation of the 29 National Sign Languages at the EU level and ensure further implementation of the recognised national sign languages of each Member State (as well as recognition of the French Sign Language by France and the three Swiss Sign Languages in Switzerland).
- Guarantee inclusive access to the 112-emergency number through Total Conversation.
- Encourage PSAPs to be operationally capable of handling Total Conversation calls to 112, including appropriate staffing, training, and system readiness to serve Deaf and hard of hearing people without pre-registration.
- Establish and/or expand the availability and quality of video relay services in national sign languages in each country to ensure non-emergency communications are also accessible to Deaf persons.

12. Strengthen EU cooperation and mutual learning

³⁸ EN 301 549 is the EU accessibility standard that sets functional accessibility requirements for ICT products and services, including websites, mobile applications, and emergency communication systems used by public authorities.

³⁹ WCAG 2.2 Level AAA refers to the highest level of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, providing enhanced accessibility criteria to ensure critical digital information is perceivable, understandable, and usable by the widest range of users. Vital information means time-critical public information—such as emergency alerts, evacuation instructions, and safety guidance—where full accessibility is essential to protect life, health, and safety.

- Integrate inclusive risk communication and preparedness into platforms such as the [Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network](#), supported by tools and case studies.
- Strengthen structured cooperation with international and regional federations of OPDs to support peer exchange, provide technical guidance, and help translate EU-level disability inclusion commitments into operational practice across Member and Participating States.

13. Develop EU guidance on inclusive risk communication and engagement

- Develop EU guidance on identifying and engaging groups facing higher risk, emphasising accessible formats, multiple channels, and early OPD involvement.

14. Ensure continuity and access to assistive technology in emergencies

- Establish an EU framework to ensure assistive technology is available, accessible, and affordable during emergencies.
- Ensure continuity of essential medications and energy-dependent assistive and medical devices during power outages and prolonged crises.
- Protect assistive technology users from foreseeable risks and disruptions.

15. Address safety and protection risks linked to institutionalisation

- Embed disability inclusion in emergency protocols affecting institutions.
- Consider ways in which EU funding for institutions which expose persons with disabilities to heightened risk during emergencies and are not supportive of independent living is avoided.
- Favour investment toward community-based, inclusive services.

Operational recommendations (national and local levels)

The operational recommendations below apply the strategic priorities at national and local levels.

Level 1 – Foundational enablers

(Participation, financing, coordination, data)

1. Institutionalise meaningful participation of persons with disabilities

- Establish formal, permanent mechanisms for OPD participation across all phases of disaster management.
- Ensure participation is early, linked to decision-making, and adequately resourced.
- Monitor implementation of OPD inputs rather than treating participation as advisory.

2. Strengthen local coordination and community-based preparedness

- Promote structured collaboration between municipalities, responders, OPDs, and community actors.
- Embed disability-inclusive preparedness within local planning processes.
- Strengthen collaboration with community-based disability networks, including parent and carer associations, recognising their role in disseminating accessible information, supporting evacuation and continuity of care, and strengthening local preparedness.

3. Ensure protected and adequate financing for inclusive preparedness

- Establish ring-fenced budget lines for accessibility and reasonable accommodation.
- Condition preparedness funding on compliance with accessibility requirements.
- Support OPD capacity building, responder training, and accessibility upgrades.

4. Strengthen risk knowledge through disability-disaggregated data

- Integrate disability data into risk assessments, evacuation planning, and emergency protocols.
- Ensure identification mechanisms are voluntary, coordinated, and rights-based.

Level 2 – System-strengthening measures

(Preparedness systems, services, infrastructure)

5. Improve risk awareness and accessible communication

- Provide preparedness information in accessible formats and avoid contradictory messaging.

6. Strengthen individual and household preparedness

- Invest in joint training between persons with disabilities and responders.
- Remove physical barriers in shelters, evacuation routes, and transport systems.

7. Strengthen preparedness guidance, tools, and innovation

- Pilot inclusive guidance through drills and simulations with OPDs.
- Support innovation in universal design for evacuation and emergency access.
- Adapt existing preparedness tools, including 72-hour preparedness toolkits, so they are usable by persons with disabilities, with practical guidance on modifications and solutions developed in collaboration with representative organisations.
- Require preparedness guidance to address both components of preparedness: knowledge (access to clear, accessible information) and practical capacity (the ability to receive, understand, and act on that information in real-life emergency conditions).

8. Ensure accessible response, evacuation, and recovery

- Make accessible communication standard practice in emergency response.
- Retrofit shelters and public buildings used in emergencies with accessibility features.

Level 3 – Operational accelerators and thematic priorities

9. Ensure accessibility of early warning and emergency communication systems

- Provide visual, text-based, and non-auditory alerts usable under real-life conditions, including power outages and roaming.

10. Prioritise groups at risk in emergency communication

- Treat groups facing higher risk as priority audiences and ensure multi-channel accessible delivery.

11. Institutionalise participation in preparedness and crisis communication

- Formalise OPD involvement in preparedness planning and crisis management, supported by national guidance.

12. Strengthen preparedness planning and continuity of essential services

- Explicitly address evacuation, sheltering, care, and continuity of support in preparedness planning.

13. Promote active roles for persons with disabilities in emergency communication and preparedness

- Train persons with disabilities to support other persons with disabilities during emergencies, including through peer-to-peer preparedness and response roles.
- Involve persons with disabilities in accessible call services and emergency communication functions, including within community-level response arrangements.
- Broaden the range of actors involved in emergency communication and support, so persons with disabilities are not only recipients of assistance but active contributors.

14. Address the requirements of refugees, asylum seekers, and displaced persons with disabilities

- Ensure early identification, accessible accommodation, and sustained support throughout displacement processes.

15. Integrate disability inclusion into implementation of international frameworks

- Align national systems with the Sendai Framework, CRPD, and relevant international guidance.

Implications for future guidance, training, and support

Level 1 – Foundational enablers

- Treat guidance on disability-inclusive preparedness as binding and adequately resourced.
- Systematically document implementation and use evidence to strengthen accountability.

Level 2 – System-strengthening measures

- Strengthen standardisation and coherence of preparedness guidance and tools.
- Revise preparedness guidance to move beyond one-size-fits-all approaches, by recognising the diversity of disabilities and addressing different requirements, including access to assistive technology, continuity of care and psychosocial support, and accessibility in recovery and reconstruction.

Level 3 – Operational accelerators

- Expand accessible, role-specific training on disability inclusion for disaster risk management and civil protection staff at all levels.
- Promote peer learning and structured knowledge management.

- Sustain accessibility gains beyond crisis periods by embedding effective practices into standard systems.

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Annexes