

Welcome to EBU Focus

This newsletter is published every three months to take an in-depth look at an issue of importance to our community. It is published in [English](#), [French](#), [German](#) and [Spanish](#) and is [also available as a word document](#). It is produced and translated thanks to the financial support of the European Commission. We hope you enjoy reading it, and we welcome your comments and feedback.

[New ! three more language versions available.](#)

As from March 2019 the EBU Focus newsletters will now be available, as word documents only, in [Polish](#), [Serbian](#) and [Turkish](#). We hope that these translations will enable this information to reach a wider audience.

[Introduction - Accessible Voting or How to Realise a Political Right](#)

“Actually ... how do visually impaired people vote?” In the past year, I heard this question a lot, whenever I mentioned that the German Federation of the Blind and Partially Sighted began to coordinate a new EBU project just that topic. Not just for sighted people, it is a genuinely interesting question with some unsettling answers about political rights and good reason for hope for the future. In this introduction text for the latest EBU Focus, I would like to give a brief overview of what we found out so far.

[Accessible Voting in Ireland](#)

In March 2018, Ireland held a referendum in which people who were blind and vision impaired were able to vote independently and in secret for the very first time. Tactile ballot paper templates were available at every polling station throughout the country.

The introduction of these new tactile ballot paper templates followed the High Court case of Robbie Sinnott of the Blind Legal Alliance who initiated proceedings in 2016 against the then Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government and the Irish State.

[Accessible Elections in Albania.](#)

The Albanian Blind Association (ABA) has put all its efforts in order to fulfil the constitutional right to vote for blind and partially sighted voters throughout Albania, in accordance with the international framework on Equal Opportunities and specifically to put in practice one of the articles of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, already signed by the Parliament of Albania “to ensure full participation of people with disabilities” also in the elections process.

A democracy that is not for all is no democracy at all.

The voting process has barriers for persons with all types of disabilities. At all stages: access to information on how to vote, access to political information, the voting day itself and even knowing the results.

This is even if you have the right to vote at all: there are still 800.000 Europeans with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities that are not given the right to vote due to outdated laws.

Voting is important. Voting is how we influence political change. Voting is the first step for laws that benefit persons with disabilities.

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