



The voice of blind and partially sighted people in Europe

Accessible Voting Matters EBU Publishes a Practical Manual on Accessible Elections

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What can decision-makers across Europe do to guarantee the right for everyone to vote? On Europe Day and just a few days ahead of the European elections, the European Blind Union (EBU) publishes a [brochure](#) with clear recommendations for policy makers and elections officials to provide visually impaired citizens with an independent and secret vote. The brochure is coupled with [a video](#), which shows barriers that visually impaired voters currently face in elections and underlines the right for each vote to count.

“30 million European citizens with a visual impairment have the fundamental right to vote secretly and independently on an equal basis with everyone else”, says EBU President Wolfgang Angermann. “We need good electoral legislation and sound implementation to turn the right to accessible elections into reality.” Paper-based ballots are in principle not accessible for most visually impaired voters. To foster accessible elections in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, assisted voting, alternative voting methods and assistive devices are needed.

The brochure and the video are the latest outputs of the EBU’s Accessible Voting Awareness-Raising (AVA) project. They complement the AVA [report](#) published in November 2018. The AVA report compiles good practices in place across Europe and draws some key lessons, based on analysis of five voting methods for blind and partially sighted persons: voting with an assistant, voting with a tactile device, voting by mail, voting in advance and electronic voting.

Across the EU, visually impaired voters will face barriers in the upcoming European elections from 23 to 26 May 2019. As part of its

recent [Statement on European Elections](#) EBU urged the EU to make European elections a standard on accessible voting.

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The European Blind Union (EBU) is a non-governmental, non-profit making European organisation founded in 1984. It is one of the six regional bodies of the World Blind Union, and it promotes the interests of blind and partially sighted people in Europe. It currently operates within a network of 41 national members including organisations from 27 European Union member states, candidate countries and other countries in geographical Europe.

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