



The voice of blind and partially sighted people in Europe

# European Blind Union disappointed by results of European Commission's evaluation of EU Lifts Directive

EBU Statement | February 2026

On 23 January the European Commission released its [evaluation](#) of the Lifts [Directive](#) (2014/33/EU)

The European Blind Union (EBU) participated in the consultations for this evaluation, including through a targeted interview by the drafters of the support study. Our message was essentially that a revision of the Directive was necessary to strengthen the accessibility requirements therein. We argued that, due to the current legal state of play, the European standard on accessible lifts (EN 81-70) was not fit for purpose and that the current review of this standard did not appear to be set to solve the problem.

## Promising elements in the evaluation report

The very first paragraph of the introduction of the evaluation report was promising. It reads: "Lifts provide an essential means of comfortable and safe access to different floors in buildings. By making buildings more accessible, they promote inclusivity. Installing lifts supports the social integration of persons with disabilities, including those with temporary impairments or reduced mobility."

Also promising were the following observations in the report:

- In section 4.1.2: "The Lifts Directive's requirement on the accessibility of lifts for people with disabilities is often interpreted as optional, as in its current wording it applies only to lifts where adaptations are possible. (...) Consequently, accessibility is not seen as a feature that all lifts should have by default, but rather as an add-on to the basic design. In addition, some Member States have adopted more specific legislation, such as rules on the minimum width of lifts, which risk fragmenting the single market,

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and suggest that the Lifts Directive does not ensure the desired level of accessibility. Finally, the evaluation highlighted that for people with disabilities not only safety, but also reliability is essential. When a lift is out of service, people with reduced mobility are prevented from going where they need to go. Currently, the Lifts Directive does not contain any provisions on minimising lift downtime.”

- And in section 4.3: “It could be considered a shortcoming that the scope of the Directive includes the safety, but not the reliability and accessibility of lifts. As discussed in section 4.1, this of the utmost importance for persons with disabilities. Since the Lifts Directive was first adopted in 1995, the EU’s ageing society has made this aspect more relevant. Additionally, society now places a higher value on the inclusion of people with disabilities.”

## Disappointing conclusion

We are disappointed that the evaluation nevertheless does not come to the conclusion that the Directive should be revised and instead considers it remains fit for purpose. There are various considerations for that, beyond accessibility. But as far as accessibility to persons with disabilities is concerned, the motivation appears to be two-fold:

- “accessibility does not fall squarely within the scope of the Lifts Directive, which focuses on safety and the single market. Accessibility goes beyond safety and also includes reliability, i.e. lifts’ ability to perform their intended function without fail.”
- “Stakeholders expressed doubts as to whether revising the Directive to address their concerns, and those of others, would produce a net positive outcome for their specific group.”

## Some important takeways

Nevertheless, there are some important elements for EBU’s continued advocacy on the issue of accessibility to lifts:

- The evaluation confirms that “the lift sector experiences the same issues as those identified in the evaluation of the Standardisation Regulation, such as lengthy processes for updating standards and difficulties for some stakeholders in making their voices heard in the standardisation process.” This is something we had been vocal about.
- The evaluation observes that “emerging national rules on lift accessibility are fragmenting the single market” – an observation that calls for EU legislation).

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- The Commission [announced](#) it will study in more depth four issues identified by the evaluation, including accessibility of lifts for persons with disabilities.

## About EBU

The European Blind Union (EBU) – **Interest Representative Register number 42378755934-87** – 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 40 national members including organisations from 26 European Union member states, candidate countries and other countries in geographical Europe.

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