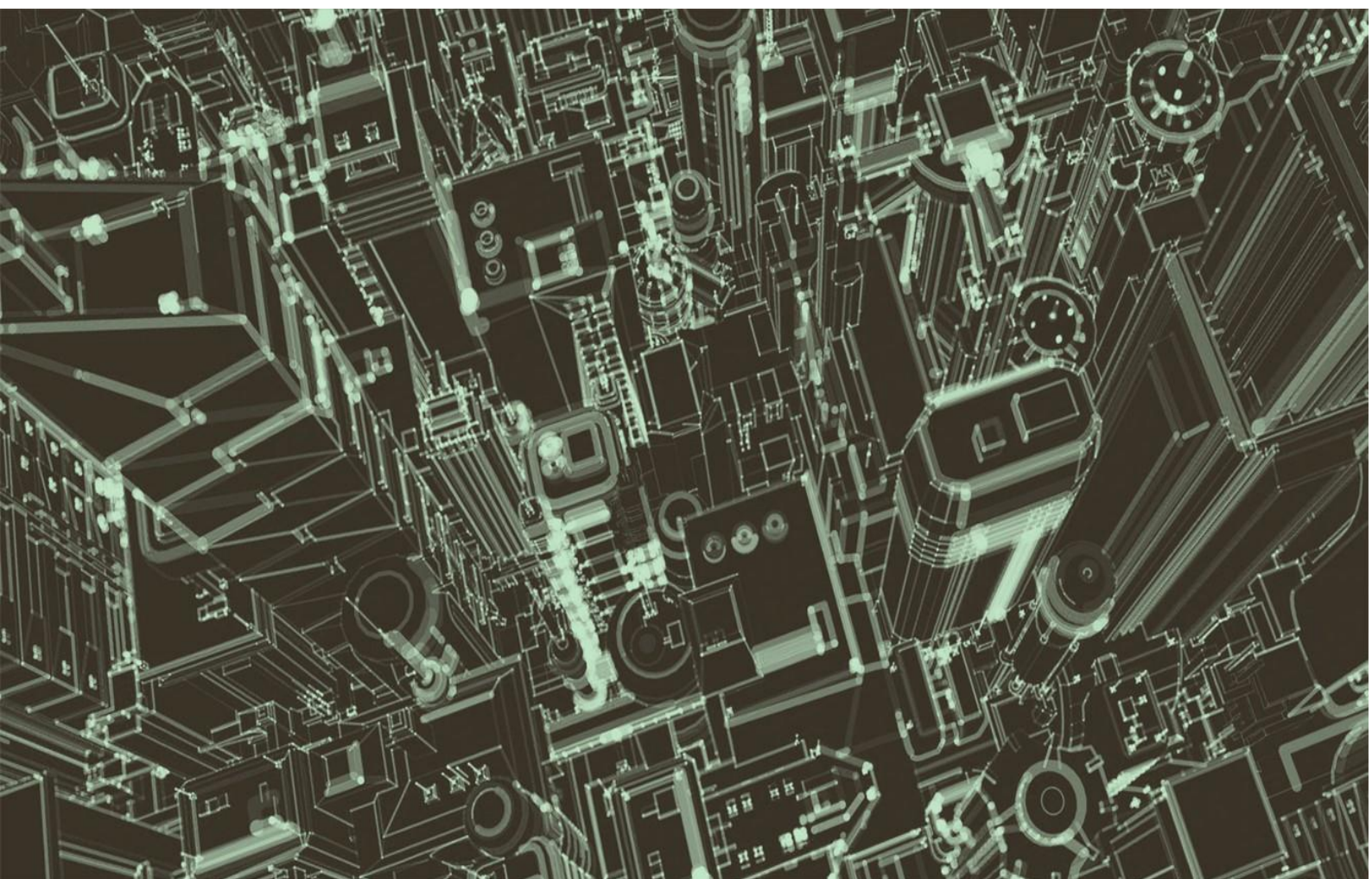




SEE ME

SAFE AND EQUAL IN EMERGENCIES

CURRENT STATE ANALYSIS



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CURRENT STATE ANALYSIS



Co-funded by
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- Civil Protection Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior of Montenegro
- Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief

ABOUT SEE ME PROJECT

With climate change-induced disaster risks on the rise and security threats evolving both globally and in the EU, there is a growing pressure to build resilience and preparedness of our local communities for future emergencies in order to reduce the impacts and speed up recovery.

In disasters and their aftermaths, persons with disabilities are disproportionately more at risk of injury and death than the general population, and their lives depend almost exclusively on the knowledge, skills and equipment of first responders. While in the past, persons with disabilities played a marginal role in disaster management planning and mitigation, in the light of the increased focus on topics such as safety, risk reduction and preparedness, this vulnerable group has been increasingly recognised as a privileged target in emergency response.

In practice, however, not everywhere is this the case yet. Even if the persons with disabilities make up approximately 15-20% of the Project Partner Countries' populations, their civil protection systems are still exclusively designed for the groups of persons without disabilities. In these countries, the issues related to the safety, equality and accessibility of persons with disabilities in emergencies is well perceived by persons with disabilities and their organisations, but less so by emergency services and civil protection organisations.

Persons with disabilities are generally not mentioned in emergency plans that usually require physical skills and mobility in case of evacuation, and ignore specific needs of vulnerable groups. This results in discriminating emergency plans and civil protection assistance, which may end in providing the wrong kind of support and cause aggravation of impact instead of lessening it. Slovenia, Croatia and Montenegro boast a long tradition of cross-border operational collaboration based on mutual assistance agreements. By jointly addressing this shared gap and harmonising our approaches in emergency planning and preparedness related to protection and rescue of persons with disabilities, the Partner Countries aim to further enhance our coordination and interoperability in the provision of cross-border emergency response.

In doing so, we are looking into the existing best practices of surrounding Participating States in order to encourage the standardization of approach related to the rescue and protection of persons with disabilities in emergencies on a wider scale.

The project SEE ME's contribution lies in further developing the existing recommendations regarding rescue and protection of persons with disabilities in relation to the type of disability, namely, involving the GIS component to locate PwDs, and linking the type of disability to the recommended lifesaving procedure (name and personal data are not crucial in order to abide to GDPR) for a faster and better adapted protection and rescue effort. The project also promotes the integration of exercises and training/education on the specific needs of PwDs in emergencies in civil protection systems as an integral part of the "preparedness/response" cycle. In addition, the SEE ME project will continuously organize public awareness and decision-making campaigns on the disadvantages of people with disabilities in emergencies, their special needs and the importance of equalizing their opportunities in emergencies. A variety of materials for people with disabilities on self-help and emergency response will also be produced.

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1. ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------|--|
| PwD | People with Disabilities |
| GIS | Geographic Information System |
| GDPR | General Data Protection Regulation |
| SEE ME | Safe and Equal in EMERgencies |
| EU | European Union |
| MoI CPD | Ministry of the Interior, Civil Protection Directorate (Croatia) |
| MoI PRD | Ministry of the Interior, Protection and Rescue Directorate (Montenegro) |
| ACPDR | Administration for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief (Slovenia) |
| EENA | European Emergency Number Association |
| OSCE | Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe |
| BBK | The Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance (Germany) |
| OCC 112 | Operation communication centre 112 |
| EU | European Union |
| UN | United Nations |
| SOP | Standard operating procedure |
| SMS | Short Message Service |
| SWOT | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats |
| NICS | Next-Generation Incident Command Systems |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| UCPM | Union Civil Protection Mechanism |

2. CURRENT STATE ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

As a first step to get an overview of the current situation regarding the complex issues of dealing with persons with disabilities in emergencies, Analysis of current practices of treating persons with disabilities in emergencies throughout the EU including legislation, emergency plans and existing protocols had to be conducted. The analysis also look into the existing project results on this topic and collect best practices from other countries.

In performing the current state analysis it was very important to determine the methodology that we were going to use. It was decided to draw up three questionnaires, one for associations representing persons with disabilities, another for members of the operational forces and a third for the Member States of the mechanism.



These questionnaires have been distributed in all three partner countries in order to collect the experiences from first responders when rescuing persons with disabilities and from persons with disabilities about the difficulties they are facing or may face during emergencies as well as their recommendations on how to prevent these situations.

It was also decided to study the legislation in our states taking into account differences in the organization of the state and differences in the system of the Civil Protection in each country.

3. RESULTS OF CURRENT STATE ANALYSIS

3.1. QUESTIONNAIRES

As we have already noted, three questionnaires have been drawn up for associations representing persons with disabilities, members of different operational forces and for institutions in charge for civil protection from the member states of the Union civil protection mechanism. In this chapter the collected answers are summarized.



3.1.1. CROATIA

Two types of questionnaires were prepared and distributed within the Republic of Croatia. One type of the survey was sent to several addresses of first responders (firefighters, mountain rescuers, Red Cross, emergency medicine, Ministry of the Interior operational forces (police), CP Intervention Units etc....) and another one to the various associations of persons with disabilities. In total 17 answers from first responders and 42 answers from PwD are analysed in this report.

After processing surveys, we can conclude that Croatian emergency services do not have a standard SOP for persons with disabilities. In most cases, first responders are treating all injured persons in the same way, unless they have an information about PwD in advance when they can prepare and better adjust to the situation (in communication, transport etc.). Among different difficulties during rescuing PwD, first responders mentioned problems with establishing first contact, communication issues, problems in transfer, lack of education in dealing with PwD. They usually rely on improvisation. When we talk about use of geographical information systems in their work, emergency services use different tools and systems and they are mostly familiar with NICS tool.

Regarding the surveys collected by different associations of persons with disabilities, we can conclude that PwD encounter (or might encounter) numerous obstacles during an emergency. These obstacles are ranging from constructual barriers such as steps, curves, heavy doors, to heavy traffic, disabled ramps and roads blockage. They also mentioned the lack of understanding when dealing with PwD, but also the incompetence and unprofessionalism of first responders and misunderstanding of their diversity. As one of the main problems, PwD pointed out that first responders usually do not know that they are rescuing person with disability on certain address so they are not familiar with PwD's difficulties and how to treat them. They also mentioned their own unpreparedness and uncomprehending how serious the situation is, with complicated instructions and technical language. Sometimes it is hard for rescuers to persuade PwD to make some actions because they usually block or panic so it makes difficult to convince them to cooperate. People with intellectual disabilities have a hard time understanding instructions, and it is especially difficult for them when they feel pressure or an extraordinary situation that they perceive as threatening.

To prevent such situations PwD stated that educations and trainings of the first responders in rescuing PwD are needed. Moreover, they want to be included in these trainings because they know best how to approach them; “Nothing about us, without us!” They also mentioned the need for their own education on how to prevent and act in case of an emergency but also on how to explain their condition and to enhance their confidence to stand up for themselves. They also stated that services should have information about the exact location of the PwD and their impairment (motor, visual, hearing, mental) as well as how to communicate with them and act. The creation of general evacuation plans and evacuation techniques should be made in a language that is understandable to persons with intellectual impairments. The materials should also be adjusted to different types of impairment. For the persons with autism, the brochures with pictures showing the arrival of the rescuers are suggested so they can visualize the arrival of uniformed people who are going to help them. With these brochures, the parents and teachers can prepare children with autism for an emergency through storytelling.

When we asked PwD on the instructions how to behave in different emergencies, most of them answered that they are partially familiar with instructions (50%), 26% are familiar and 24 % of them are not familiar with the instructions. Regarding the availability and understanding of these instructions, most of PwD answered that the instructions are available and understandable partially (52%) while 26% said that the instructions are not understandable and available to them.



To improve availability of instructions to PwD, the need to prepare the educational materials in a customized way (for different types of disability) was pointed out. The instructions should be made in easy reading way, with pictures and sound (for visual impaired persons and persons with autism) as well as in sign language (for hearing impaired persons). The public should be informed through leaflets, public media, information workshops in schools, associations, public places etc. PwD also stated that the easiest way to share information is through associations because their members are very attached to the associations and are informed about everything through the association's channels (website, social networks, lectures that they regularly organize, association's informative bulletin boards). Therefore, they also suggested the training of some association's members who can share their knowledge with other members. They also mentioned the brochures with a pictorial representation of the arrival of firefighters, emergency services, police... to visually present to PwD how people in official uniforms will come to help them, because explaining visually is stronger than verbally (for persons with autism).

3.1.2. SLOVENIA

The Administration of the Republic Slovenia for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief (ACPDR) send three questionnaires, regarding the treatment of PwD in situations when natural and other disasters happen.

The answers to the questionnaires sent by DG ECHO were prepared by ACPDR in cooperation with its internal organizational units.

ACPDR also received two questionnaires from the leading partner, one of which was intended for first responders and the other for organizations that are connected with PwD.

The questionnaire, intended for first responders, was forwarded to the Ministry of Health, the Police, the Fire Brigade of Slovenia, the Association of Professional Firefighters of Slovenia, the Red Cross of Slovenia, the Mountain Rescue Service, and the Cynological Association Slovenia and to the Cynological Club of Slovenia.

ACPDR in the project SEE ME cooperates with the Association of Associations of the Blind and Visually Impaired of Slovenia and the Association of Associations of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing of Slovenia, so the answers to the questionnaire intended for organizations with disabilities were prepared by these two associations.



When analysing the answers of the first responders, it was found that 20 % of the rescue services have developed standard operating procedures, but we did not receive answers for which forms of disability they are developed.

First and foremost, the emergency medical services meet people with special needs (especially people that are physically handicapped - immobility and reduced mobility) every day during their work, so they have a lot of practice to work with physically handicapped people in the event of natural and other disasters. When dealing with deaf and blind people, they improvise (for example writing on a list of paper when in contact with deaf and hard of hearing).

Some first responders/emergency services are using Blackbloxs' application that uses application OpenStreetMap, Google maps, NMP3000 and NMP3000Quicktrac for vehicle navigation, or do not use them at all. They think that GIS applications are useful because they contain basic data (40 %), 20 % of them think that they are not useful, and 40 % do not use GIS applications during their work at all. The vast majority of respondents (80 %) said they had never heard of the NICS application, while the rest had heard of it, but did not use it in their operational work.

When asked what obstacles/problems the members of each association encounter during rescue, evacuation and other interventions implemented by different rescue services, the Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired of Slovenia believes that first responders are not sufficiently qualified to work with the blind and visually impaired, because they do not know their needs or they do not know how to approach them, communicate with them and how to accompany them. They also believe that the evacuation routes are not properly marked for blind and partially sighted people. The Associations of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing of Slovenia believes that it is important that deaf and hard of hearing people have the possibility of communication in an adapted form (access to an interpreter, video call with communication in sign language, short written instructions, getting a notification through the main and local associations that provide information to persons with disabilities).

In order to improve the situation, the Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired of Slovenia suggests that the first responders should be better informed about PwD, which could be achieved by educating and training first responders on how to approach to the PwD. They also believe that blind and partially sighted people do not have adequate information on how to act in the event of natural and other disasters and should also be trained accordingly. The Association of Associations of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing of Slovenia proposes that together with their cooperation, guidelines and protocols for taking action in the event of natural and other disasters, which will be adapted and prepared for deaf and hard of hearing (for example video instructions via QR code, easy-to-read instructions etc.) are prepared. They suggest that, in the event of the disaster, the competent services contact a local association, which can provide information about people with deaf and hard of hearing, their condition, and help with providing/transferring information to them.

Both associations believe that their members are partially aware of instructions in the events of disaster, but they recommend that a detailed review is made in the future, to see if the information is available in an accessible and adapted format. Suitable forms for the needs of the blind and partially sighted are audio recording, Braille writing or enlarged print, system adaptations of the websites to ensure accessibility, an evacuation plan available in tactile form and other. For the needs of deaf and hard of hearing people, they recommend instructions in an easy reading form and instructions in a video image with sign language and subtitles, that would be accessible via a QR code (if the instructions are in printed form in brochures). Members of both associations know that in the event of an accident or disaster, they can call or send a message to European emergency number 112.

3.1.3. MONTENEGRO

The aim of this study is to examine how the rescue and protection services (rescuers) deal with persons with disabilities in emergency cases (whether there is a standard operating procedure during rescue) and how much people with disabilities are included in the planning of the rescue and protection process.

The study was conducted using the method of qualitative content analysis. The material for analysis consisted of two questionnaires that were sent to associations of persons with disabilities and operational units for rescue and protection.

The questionnaire was created in such a way that, after filling it out, it automatically determines the percentages related to the answers provided.

Montenegro doesn't have a database of people with disabilities.

The collected research data indicate the fact that about 10% of respondents of the PwD population of Montenegro are fully aware of the instructions for dealing with floods, fires, earthquakes and epidemics, while about 75% of them are partially aware, that is 20% of organizations are not familiar at all. Quite small respondents are familiar with the emergency number 112, only 10% of them, although OCC 112 gives priority to calls/messages from PwD.

One of the main problems that exist or face with PwD are architectural obstacles during the evacuation or other intervention of the rescue and protection services.

Units providing assistance to persons with disabilities, development of guides or manuals, etc.

Organizing trainings and workshop on the actual topic for PwD and their family members is good opportunity for raising awareness and education such as adapt guidelines to different types of disabilities, such as Braille, audio format, easy-to-read format to follow guidelines for –accessibility of documents is a good opportunity/ best way to improve brochure-instruction for emergency management/rescue and protection.

Collected and processed data questionnaires from operational units-emergency services show that Montenegro does not have SOP for persons with disabilities. Procedures for providing assistance to PwD are mainly based in accordance with the procedure of the Institute for emergency medical care. They mainly provide emergency medical assistance to immobile persons who were brought for examination or some intervention in a regular condition.

When asked about the knowledge and use of geographic information system applications, more than half of the surveyed services declared that they do not use these applications and that 54% of them have heard of the NICS application.



3.1.4. UNION CIVIL PROTECTION MECHANISM MEMBER STATES

The questionnaire was sent to all UCPM Member States and 10 answers were collected and they are summarized in this report.



SWEDEN

The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) is providing guidance about safety issues for people with difficulties to notice alarms and those who can't evacuate by themselves in case of an emergency. The project is called "individanpassat brandskydd" (fire safety designed to individual needs)

In Sweden there are no databases, and there are no national guidelines for providing assistance for people with disabilities. There are numerous (approx. 150) local fire and rescue services, and some of them do have SOPs for people with disabilities.

112-services are handled by public owned company SOS Alarm AB. SOS Alarm AB is providing special services in terms of SMS-112 (emergency call by SMS). There is also a possibility to make emergency calls from a number of platforms for video, audio and text specially provided for people with special needs. There is a special mobile app provided by SOS Alarm that includes automatic positioning during emergency calls.

In case of people with hearing problem they are notified by other people or in their vicinity exists sounding alarm with flashing lights.

ROMANIA

Romania has SOPs in place for responding to various emergencies. Even though these SOPs aren't specifically for disabled people, first responders assist everyone using the "no one left behind" approach.

First, the persons with disabilities like deaf or speech disorder should register in 112 service (Unique National System for Emergency's Calls). Then, when a 112 operator receives a call through 112 service from a disabled persons already registered in the database as person with disabilities, operator will make the phone localization and then close the call and send the disabled person a message with

needed data for emergency services through the emergency number 113 and he communicates with the person through text messages until the emergency is ended.

In the event of an emergency, the Department for Emergency Situations sends an alert via the RO-ALERT System. According to the law, this system uses Cell Broadcast technology to send messages to warn and alert citizens in the event of an emergency.

The RO-ALERT system is used in situations where citizens' lives and health are at risk, such as extreme weather, inevitable flooding, terrorist attacks, or other situations that may endanger the community's life.

Finally, people can be alerted via the RO-ALERT system, first by a warning signal and/or a phone vibration that announces an emergency, and by a text message that can be read on a phone screen.

Romania has a database with persons with disabilities like deaf or speech disorder who registered in 112 service (Unique National System for Emergency's Calls). The 112 service who manage the database of persons with disabilities is a personal data operator which comply with GDPR, so there are no potential concerns/issue.

In 2010-2011, General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations (first responders) implemented a project SAFE QUAKE co-financed by European Commission to increase awareness and preparedness in case of an earthquake. One of the project's objectives was to increase the level of awareness for focused groups of people like: elders, children and disabled people. (<https://isubif.ro/local/safe-quake/>).

FINLAND

Finland like Sweden does not have database of people with disabilities but has ongoing projects to assist and facilitate this vulnerable group in case of emergencies like Mutual Trust (2016 - 2019) that was collaboration project between disabled people, rescue authorities and operators. (<https://www.mutualtrust.fi>)

In June 2021, Finnish Social Insurance Institution (KELA) and the Emergency Response Centre Agency launched a project in which a person in emergency situation needs urgent assistance from authorities can make notification in Finnish language via the 112 Finland application. The project is still going on and will continue until the end of year 2022.

The experiment is aimed for deaf and people with hearing disabilities whose mother tongue is Finnish Language. The experiment examines how the 112 Finland application and KELA's remote service would be suitable for emergencies and official activities, and how the service could be developed. An emergency notification can also be sent via emergency text message on a mobile phone (more info from webpages: Emergency Response Centre Agency - Emergency Response Centre Agency - Finland (112.fi))

If there is fire in those properties, where is fire alarm - these systems includes flashing lights. Also information can be shared by the 112 mobile phone application.

(more info from webpages: Added safety with the 112 Suomi mobile app - Emergency Response Centre Agency – Finland)

LATVIA

Latvia as well does not have database of people with disabilities but instead persons with hearing and speech disabilities communicate with joint emergency call 112 about their health, life risks through SMS. SMS service is available only to those using services of Latvia communication operators. Persons with sight disabilities communicate with 112 using the voice call.

If the sirens of the fire detection and fire alarm system are activated, deaf persons shall be warned about the dangerous situation by visual alarm devices which comply to European standard EN 54-23, alarm sounders (according to EN 54-3) or other type of alarm devices.

To improve the reach of the joint emergency call 112, for the persons with hearing and speech disabilities, especially for those arriving in the country who does not use the Latvia operator tariff plan, the APP 112 will be elaborated in 2022. The users of the APP 112 will not have to own Latvian operator tariff plan.

Additional information:

The study course has been developed at the Fire Safety and Civil Protection College of Latvia providing knowledge, skills and competencies to assist the persons with disabilities.

SPAIN

In Spain first response is the responsibility of the Comunidades Autónomas (regional authorities). Therefore, it is difficult to summarize the rules and regulations of the 19 regions which establish SOPs for assistance to persons with disabilities.

All competent authorities are obliged by Law 17/2015 and Regulation 734/2019 1 to include in their emergency plans SOPs for the different phases of disaster management which offer appropriate assistance to persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. The plans must also include information and communication procedures to cater for the needs of persons with disabilities in order to ensure they have access to all necessary measures and resources.

112 is a decentralized service in Spain, provided by each of the Regions. Most of the services offer some way of access for people with disabilities (SMS, app, etc) with the handicap that this will only work inside the region for which it is deployed.

At the national level two mechanisms of access to the emergency services exist:

- An app called SVisual allows deaf people to establish a video call with a sign language interpretation service. This service can then make a call to the appropriate 112 service (ie the one for the region where the caller is located) and mediate the call

- An app called AlertCops allows anyone to contact the security services PSAP via chat. The PSAP will then redirect the call to whatever service is most appropriate (112, police, etc)

For Nuclear Power Plant emergencies, PA systems are available in all municipalities within a 10km radius of the Plant. Municipalities usually keep a record of people with disabilities so deaf people can be notified on a personal basis.

https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2020-46

The Spanish Directorate-General for Civil Protection and Emergencies, through its National School, has covered for many years the assistance to persons with disabilities in its training programme conceived for civil protection practitioners. This has materialized in a dedicated training module for professional and volunteer practitioners dealing on assistance to persons with disabilities.

In 2019 a working group was created for the persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in the field of civil protection, whose goals were to promote the inclusion of these groups in all phases of the disaster risk management cycle as well as the training of first responders on the issues surrounding these persons. Following the creation of the working group, the abovementioned training module was enlarged and divided into two parts: an “Introduction to the assistance to persons with disabilities” and a second part, “Assistance to persons with disabilities and other vulnerable persons during first response in emergencies”.

This training course is still being offered twice a year at the Spanish National Civil Protection School.



GERMANY

"Inclusive disaster management is a major concern of the BBK. Therefore, BBK was in charge of an EU-funded research project "European Network for Psychosocial Crisis Management - Assisting disabled in case of disaster (EUNAD or EUNAD IP)" from 2013-2014 and subsequently from 2016-2017. The results of this project were practice-oriented recommendations for the development of crisis management concepts - with a focus on psychosocial crisis management - for people with disabilities in complex danger and damage situations.

The EUNAD project initially developed recommendations and training concepts for psychosocial crisis management for people with sensory impairments (visual and hearing impairments). A central concern of the project was the integration of disability associations in the development of the crisis management concepts and further specific training toolkits to improve self-help competencies for people with disabilities in emergencies.

The EUNAD and the EUNAD IP extension projects have filled important research gaps. The establishment of further funding programs in this area to follow up on the research in order to be able to close further existing gaps in care, especially with regard to the prevention of consequences of stress among this target group is very positive. In addition, a model seminar for emergency forces was also conducted as part of the project. All results of the EUNAD and EUNAD-IP projects can be accessed in English at www.eunad-info.eu. This makes the research results, recommendations, training materials and network information widely available to all interested parties."

CZECH REPUBLIC

In the Czech Republic there are procedures for first responders (firefighters) how to recognize and handle persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

There are no public databases of people with disabilities but the law provides the possibility of registering these persons. Registration is voluntary. However, registration is not a condition for alternative access to emergency services - SMS messages. Together with the registration form, the person who wishes to register signs a consent (GDPR) for the processing of personal data under the legal authority according to the relevant law.

In the Czech Republic, access via relay services is also possible (e.g. non-profit organisations or associations dedicated to helping people with disabilities). However, the statutory alternative access is by SMS. Through the mobile operator, we have the possibility to send a warning SMS to all mobile devices that are logged in to the relevant BTS (Base Transceiver Station). This does not only apply to the deaf, everyone is warned.

In the future Czechs are planning a project to expand the possibilities of alternative access to emergency lines by people with disabilities - RTT, video. At the local level, there is cooperation with organisations that bring together people with disabilities. This cooperation includes some form of education and information about the activities of the Fire Rescue Service. However, these are not specific stand-alone projects.



ESTONIA

Estonia does not have database of People with Disabilities and Estonian Rescue Board does not have special SOPs for providing assistance in emergencies to persons with: a. Physical disabilities; b. Sensory disabilities; c. Mental disabilities; and d. Intellectual disabilities. However, the topic is slightly touched in the description of how to solve rescue events (e.g. transportation of a person with partial or total immobility in a building, terrain, altitudes).

Currently, only the deaf population have a working solution to independently reach out to 112 - they can send an SMS to 112. The messages that come through are typically assigned a higher priority from the start. In January 2022, we launched a thorough service design project to help identify the communication needs and capabilities of people with various disabilities in a crisis situation. We chose to focus on the deaf and hard of hearing part of the population first. Through this process we realized that the SMS 112 service does not meet the needs of the target audience when they're in distress. Without first-hand, immediate contact with a human being, the target audience is not convinced that they will get help in time. Following from this feedback, we prototyped a video and icon-based solution which was very well received by the deaf and hard of hearing segment of the population as part of user testing. The next stage of the project is to hone in on a different kind of sensory disability and develop a prototype based on target audience feedback.

There is currently no nationwide siren system in Estonia, but this year we started activities to create it as soon as possible. In addition to the sirens, it will be also duplicated as an SMS to mobile phones within range of the siren, and the message is also transmitted to mass media channels.

In the years 2010-2014 Estonian Rescue Board implemented the project "Prevention and management of natural disaster – increasing fire safety in Estonian 24-hour social welfare and health care institutions. The results of the project can be found on the page <https://www.rescue.ee/et/tuleohutuse-suurendamine-eesti-oeoepaeevaringses-kasutuses-olevates-ravi-ja-hoolekandeesutustes> (in Estonian).

POLAND

Poland does not have database of People with Disabilities and there are no dedicated procedures (SOPs) for providing assistance in emergencies to people with disabilities. Rescue operations are carried out through evacuation routes with the use of rescue equipment included in the equipment on fire trucks. Equipment and methods of action are selected on the spot, depending on the situation. In the case of carrying out rescue operations conducted by the State Fire Service, after completion of the activities, operational documentation is prepared within the meaning of the provisions of the regulation on the national rescue and firefighting system, which may include personal data of people with disabilities. However, this is a "post factum" situation, and these data are necessary to identify the victims, owners or people directly related to the rescue operations.

Preparation for events in which people with disabilities may be evacuated are carried out in the form of exercises in facilities, in which such situations may arise. Of course, in the case of the need to carry out rescue operations at height, equipment such as stretchers, leaning ladders, but also ladders and mechanical lifts are used.

In Poland there is Alarm 112 mobile application for people with sensory disabilities. More information: <https://www.gov.pl/web/numer-alarmowy-112/aplikacja-moblina-alarm112>. Independently of the sirens, the Alert RCB notification system works (location-based sms system). More information: <https://www.gov.pl/web/rcb/alertrcb2>

Currently, the Main School of Fire Service is implementing a project on a similar subject entitled "Comprehensive Accessibility Program of the Main School of Fire Service". More information: <https://www.sgsp.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Kompleksowy-program-doste%CC%A8pnos%CC%81ci-SGSP-w-Warszawie.pdf>

The subject of the evacuation of people with disabilities was discussed during the scientific-practical seminar entitled "Evacuation of people with special needs", which took place on May 20, 2022 at the Main School of Fire Service. More information: https://www.sgsp.edu.pl/?page_id=29046

On April 11 and 12, 2022, at the Scientific and Research Center for Fire Protection (CNBOP-PIB) took place a training "ETR in practice. Create texts that are easy to read and understand". The training was aimed at provincial coordinators of social prevention, school coordinators of the SFS and the Central Museum of Fire Service. The training was carried out by the Polish Association for Persons with Intellectual Disability (PSONI).

In addition, steps are taken to include the issue of the protection and rescue of people with disabilities in training courses on installing autonomous smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Installing detectors in the places of residence of people with disabilities was the subject of trainings for young people, conducted by the Scientific and Research Center for Fire Protection employees. So far, 3 editions of training have been carried out.

The cooperation of the Social Prevention Department of the National Headquarters of the SFS with PSONI (<https://psoni.org.pl>) resulted in a joint effect, which are three publications:

- "My knowledge of the fire service. What a person with mental disability should know about the work of firefighters"

- "My safety in everyday life. How the fire service helps people in times of emergency"
- "My knowledge of threats. How the fire service helps in dangerous weather"

Publications in Polish: <https://www.gov.pl/web/kgpsp/poradniki-i-materialy-z-zakresu-prewencji-spoecznej-dla-osob-z-niepelnosprawnosciami>

The following articles were also devoted to the issue of evacuation of people with disabilities:

- "The impact of the type of disability on the risk of evacuation in the face of fires and other local threats": <https://zeszytynaukowe-sgsp.pl/api/files/view/1500690.pdf>
- "Supporting evacuation of disabled people - organizational and technological challenges": <https://books.google.pl/books?id=svQ-EAAAQBAJ&pg=PA135&dq=ewakuacja+os%C3%B3b+z+niece%C5%82nosprawno%C5%9Bciam&hl=pl&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjmrKbI9Lv4AhVlr6QKHZj9AjlQ6AF6BAgKEAl#v=onepage&q=ewakuacja%20os%C3%B3b%20z%20niece%C5%82nosprawno%C5%9Bciam&f=false>

SLOVENIA

Slovenia does not have database of People with Disabilities and first responders do not have special SOPs in place for providing assistance to people with special needs/disabilities.

The Training Centre for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief provides training courses where the practical part includes issues related to the rescue of people with disabilities, especially when the trainees are from health and social institutions, for example in the Civil Protection Commissioner Introductory and Basic Training Programme and the Basic Training Programme for Civil Protection Commanders, their deputies, members of Civil Protection staffs and Civil Protection commissioners and their deputies in companies, institutes and other organizations.

Other training, such as firefighter and emergency services training, also treats casualties in a special way in exercise scenarios. However, we do not have programmes that deal exclusively with the protection and rescue of people with disabilities in emergencies.

People with sensory disability can send a text message (SMS) to the 112 number. The person writes what has happened in the message and the operator replies in writing. The operator's answer or additional questions are displayed on the telephone screen.

A telephone application for receiving notifications and alarms will be available from summer 2022.

In 2014, the Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief, as part of the "October – Fire Safety Month" project, prepared guidance on evacuation in the event of fire for the deaf and hard of hearing, blind and partially sighted, deafblind people and those with reduced mobility. The leaflet with the instructions was adapted for the visually impaired and a Slovenian sign language interpreter was included in the TV spot. An instruction with recommendations for evacuation planning for the deaf and hard of hearing, blind and partially sighted, deafblind people and those with reduced mobility was published on the website, also aimed at those authorized to carry out fire protection measures.

Since 2014, the leaflets aimed at raising public awareness of fire and natural and other disaster protection have been adapted for visually impaired people, and subtitles and a Slovenian sign language interpreter have been included in didactic films and TV spots. The central website of the state administration, GOV.si, is accessible to all users (<https://www.gov.si/dostopnost/>).

The materials are published on the following website: <https://www.gov.si/podrocja/obramba-varnost-in-javni-red/varstvo-pred-naravnimi-in-drugimi-nesrecami/napotki-prebivalcem-ob-nesrecam/>.



3.2. LEGISLATIVE AND RELATED PROJECTS

Project SEE ME takes stock of and builds upon prior achievements of the many past actions aiming to improve the assistance to persons with disabilities in emergencies. Some of them are the following:

- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, specifically Article 11 (Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies). This calls on the international community to ensure the safety and protection of persons with disabilities during situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies.
- World Humanitarian Summit's Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action (2016), • The Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in EU-funded Humanitarian Aid Operations (2019) - The guidelines provide tools for assessment and removal of the barriers preventing meaningful access and full and effective participation of disabled people in humanitarian assistance and protection. The objective is to lead to better

programme quality and improved, safer and more accessible services, assistance and protection for persons with disabilities in humanitarian operations.

- “Verona Charter on the rescue of PWD in case of disasters” (The Verona Charter is a declaration of principles signed by the participants of the Consensus Conference held in Verona on 8 and 9 November 2007 in the framework of the project RDD - Rescuing Injured Disabled Persons in case of Disasters - Civil Protection’s Challenge in the Challenge) with the aim to identify and establish guidelines and recommendations on how to preparedly proceed and promptly respond to the basic needs of persons with disability in case of an unexpected disaster and/or emergency situation.
- Guidelines for Assisting People with Disabilities during Emergencies, Crises and Disasters within the framework of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement (a platform for co-operation in the field of major natural and technological disasters). Its field of competence covers disaster risk reduction, in particular; knowledge, prevention, preparedness, risk management and post-crisis analysis.
- Accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by, for and with persons with disabilities, Report of the Secretary-General, Commission for Social Development UN
- EENA's (European Emergency Number Association EENA 112) document – „Emergency Services Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities“. This document aims to provide Associated with document Ref. Ares(2022)901092 - 08/02/2022 Call: [insert call identifier] — [insert call name] EU Grants: Application form (UCPM Prevention): V1.0 – 23.02.2021 11 comprehensive information for countries to ensure that emergency communications are accessible to all citizens.
- “Guidelines on community-based management of data-based disaster prevention for vulnerable groups” that resulted from The ADAPT project - Awareness of Disaster Relief for Vulnerable Groups. The ADAPT project was coordinated by SAMARITAN INTERNATIONAL, the network of European Samaritan organisations and is co-financed by the European Commission, DG Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection. The objectives of this project were: to improve aid for elderly people and people with disabilities in emergency disaster situations such as evacuations due to flood or earthquakes, develop and implement an innovative system to integrate vulnerable people in risk management mechanisms, restructure existing information (formal and informal) to make it usable in civil protection emergencies; identify European best practices in the involvement of vulnerable people and stakeholders in the development of emergency plans; Raise public awareness in matters of civil protection, complementary to other EU efforts in capacity building, in which some of the project partners are involved.
- PROMYLIFE guidelines issue analytic approach to the problems derived from natural hazards. "PROMYLIFE" project (How to Better Protect my Life in Major Emergencies) was coordinated by the Development Enterprise of Achaia Prefecture (NEA) – Greece. The project aimed to improve the preparedness of the public and in particular of the vulnerable groups (elderly, children, disabled and disadvantaged people, etc.) in major and extreme events. A task of the project was to prepare guidelines on the facilitation of information provision to the public and the vulnerable population groups.
- ‘The Guidance note on disability and emergency risk management for health’ is a short, practical guide that covers actions across emergency risk management such as risk

assessment, prevention (including hazard and vulnerability reduction), preparedness, response, recovery and reconstruction. The Guidance note is intended primarily for health actors working in emergency and disaster risk management at local, national or international level, and in governmental or non-governmental agencies. All of the above-mentioned projects cover different issues of the safety and protection of persons with disabilities in emergencies. Project SEE ME is innovative in its contribution to the existing recommendations and rescue and protection procedures differentiating them according to the type of disability and involving the GIS component to locate the person with disability, read their type of disability and link it with the adequate lifesaving procedure (name and personal data of that person is not crucial in order to abide to GDPR). The project highlights the importance of improving preparedness and response to disasters, and enhancing transborder cooperation, which are EU priorities.



Other important international documents for persons with disabilities include:

- UN Sustainable Development Program until 2030
- UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- UN Standard Rules on Equalizing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities
- EU Charter of Fundamental Rights
- European Convention on Human Rights
- Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and violence in families
- Convention on the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse
- European Social Charter
- OSCE guidelines for promoting political participation of persons with disabilities
- Directive (EU) 2019/882 of the European Parliament and of the Council of April 17, 2019 on requirements for the accessibility of products and services
- Strategy of the Council of Europe for people with disabilities 2017 – 2023.
- Equality Union: Strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities for the period 2021-2030.

3.2.1. CROATIA

The Republic of Croatia, as a member of the United Nations, the European Union and the Council of Europe and a signatory to all key conventions and standards in the area of social and economic security of citizens, has undertaken the obligation to protect and promote the human rights of persons with disabilities so that they can participate equally in civil, political, economic, social and cultural areas of life.

The Republic of Croatia confirmed its commitment to the full realization of all basic human rights of persons with disabilities by signing and ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008, thereby showing that it wants to follow the path of progress while fully respecting the principles of the Convention and the rights of persons with disabilities.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was the basis for the adoption of the National Strategy for Equalizing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities from 2007 to 2015 and the National Strategy for Equalizing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities from 2017 to 2020.

In December 2021, the National Plan for Equalizing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities for the period from 2021 to 2027 was adopted. It represents an act of strategic planning by which the Republic of Croatia continues to create a policy towards persons with disabilities, respecting the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other contemporary international standards as a framework for the further development of rights for persons with disabilities. This document emphasizes equality, as a fundamental principle of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and aims to ensure conditions for equal enjoyment of rights and active participation of persons with disabilities in all areas of community life.

The national plan is part of a comprehensive reform package of the social welfare system, whose goal is a transparent, efficient and fairer social welfare system, focused on beneficiaries. Among other things, as part of the reform, Amendments to the Law on Social Welfare were adopted (Official Gazette 18/22, 46/22).

In June of 2022, a new Act on the Register of Persons with Disabilities was adopted (NN 63/22), which regulates the method of collecting data on the cause, type, degree and severity of damage to the health of persons with disabilities in the Register of Persons with Disabilities, the method of processing, use and protection of data on persons with disabilities kept in the Register.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities also prescribes, in Article 11, the actions of member states in risky situations and humanitarian crisis situations. It is emphasized here that, the state parties will take all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in risky situations, including situations armed conflict, humanitarian crises and natural disasters in accordance with their obligations arising from international law, including international humanitarian law and international law that includes human rights,.

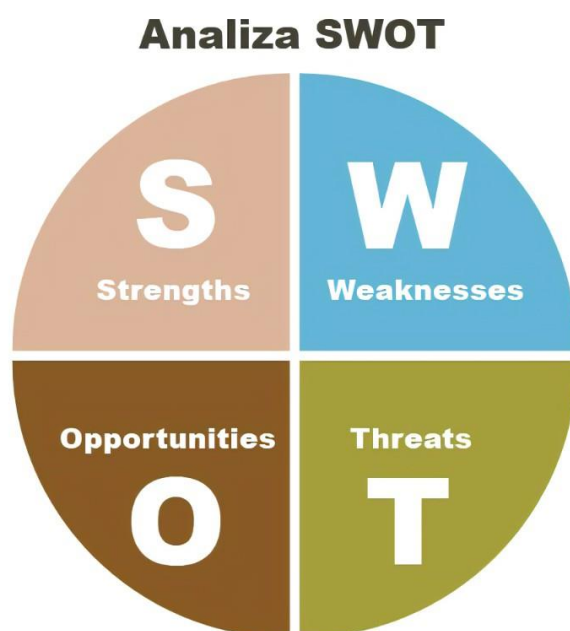
In Croatian legislation, this is regulated by the Law on the Civil Protection System (NN 82/15, 118/18, 31/20 and 20/21) and the Ordinance on the Holders, Content and Procedures of Drafting Planning Documents in Civil Protection and the Method of Informing the Public about the Procedure for Their Adoption (Official Gazette 66/21).

The Law on the Civil Protection System stipulates, in Article 3, Paragraph 3, in the part that refers to the principles of the civil protection system, that according to the principle of non-discrimination in the civil protection system, the necessary assistance is provided to everyone who needs it, regardless of, among other things, health condition, disability and genetic inheritance.

This principle is expanded in the Ordinance of the holders, content and procedures for creating planning documents in civil protection and the way of informing the public about the process of their adoption, paragraph 25. It is prescribed that the action plans of civil protection units of regional (regional) self-governments must necessarily contain the elaboration of meeting the needs group or category of persons with disabilities, while the civil protection action plans of local governments must include ensuring the specific needs of each person with disabilities. Procedures from the civil protection action plans of local self-governments must be elaborated in such a way as to avoid discrimination of persons with disabilities in all phases of the operation of the civil protection system. It is necessary to incorporate specific tasks/procedures of operational forces of the civil protection system in the implementation of measures and activities for rescuing persons with disabilities in major accidents and disasters into the action plans of civil protection.

When creating action plans, there are problems in their creation because the Law on the Register of Persons with Disabilities (NN 63/22) stipulates that LGUs can only receive aggregate data, because they cannot get individual data, and through the plan it is not possible to provide for provision of specific needs of each individual person with disabilities.

The Ordinance also stipulates that it is necessary to provide and adapt methods of alarm, temporary accommodation, evacuation, emergency transport, refuge and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities.



SWOT analysis in the National Plan for Equalizing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2021-2027 showed the following weaknesses when it comes to persons with disabilities in the Republic of Croatia

- lack of reliable statistical data
- regional disparity in the availability of services
- insufficient alignment of terminology in national regulations with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- insufficient financial resources
- insufficient synergy in the planning and implementation of measures and activities of all key stakeholders
- lack of information and insufficient awareness of the community about the rights of persons with disabilities
- insufficient awareness of citizens about the importance of personal responsibility for one's own health and safety with the aim of preventing the occurrence of disability and reducing its consequences
- lack of professional staff due to economic emigration
- occurrence of unforeseen special circumstances that threaten the life and health of citizens (earthquakes, epidemics, etc.)
- the economic consequences caused by major accidents in the territory of the Republic of Croatia affect the funds in the state budget
- lack of systematic and continuous financing of projects and programs of civil society organizations

3.2.2. SLOVENIA

In the Republic of Slovenia, PwD are an important part of society and therefore it is absolutely necessary to ensure that they have an equal role in the development of society and equal role in the development of their activities in society. The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia explicitly emphasizes the right to equality of PwD before the law, or that no one may be neglected due to any kind of disability (PwD have the same rights and obligations as other citizens). In the light of this, it is necessary to take into account their special needs and ensure equal treatment and realization of all human rights. The Republic of Slovenia must undertake effective and appropriate measures to enable PwD to achieve and maintain the greatest possible independence, physical, mental, social and professional capabilities, as well as full inclusion and participation in all areas of life.

The rights of PwD in the Republic of Slovenia are not guaranteed in a single, umbrella law, but in legislation that covers different areas – in various laws, documents, strategies, plans, decrees, regulations. Mentioned documents regulate different rights of PwD in different areas. The status of PwD is therefore given on the basis of various documents in the field of disabled persons, and through them PwD can realize their rights.

We list some of the most important laws, documents, strategies, plans, decrees, and regulations that have been accepted in the Republic of Slovenia in the field of PwD:

- Law on Equalizing Opportunities for Disabled Persons (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 94/10, 50/14 and 32/17);

- Law on the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities-MKPI (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 37/2008 of 15 April 2008);
- Rulebook on the organization and operation of the expert bodies of the Pension and Disability Insurance Institute of Slovenia (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 60/13, 6/15, 49/18, 38/20 and 60/22);
- Rulebook on universal construction and use of buildings (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 41/18 and 199/21 – GZ-1);
- Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 33/91-I, 42/97 – UZS68, 66/00 – UZ80, 24/03 – UZ3a, 47, 68, 69/04 – UZ14, 69/04 – UZ43, 69/04 – UZ50, 68/06 – UZ121,140,143, 47/13 – UZ148, 47/13 – UZ90,97,99, 75/16 – UZ70a and 92/21 – UZ62a);
- Declaration on human rights (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 24/2018 of 13 April 2018);
- Agenda for sustainable development until 2030;
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- Equality Union: Strategy on rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030;
- Law on Equalizing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 94/10, 50/14 and 32/17);
- Action program for Persons with Disabilities 2022 – 2030 (Government of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 14100-5/2021/3 of 14 October 2021);
- EU strategy on the rights of Persons with Disabilities for the period 2021-2030;
- Emergency Services Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities;
- Resolution on the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Slovenia (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 59/19);
- Resolution on the national program of protection against natural and other disasters in the years 2016 to 2022 (ReNPVNDN 16-22) (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 75/2016);
- Law on protection against natural and other disasters (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 51/06 – official consolidated text, 97/10 and 21/18 – ZNOrg);
- Regulation on the content and preparation of protection and rescue plans (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 24/12, 78/16 and 26/19);
- Regulation on the organization, equipping and training of forces for protection, rescue and help;
- Regulation on service in Civil Protection (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 45/14);
- Rulebook on personnel and material formations of Civil Defense units, services and bodies (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 104/08);
- Instruction on the implementation of protective measures (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 39/94);
- Regulation on the content and preparation of protection and rescue plans (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 24/12, 78/16 and 26/19);
- Protective measure Evacuation, Recommendation, 2017 (No. 840-1/2017-1 - DGZR, dated 9. October 2017);

- Protective measure Reception and care of vulnerable residents, Recommendation, 2018 (No. 840-5/2018-1 - DGZR, dated 27. September 2018);
- Sheltering, development of a protective measure to assist in the planning and implementation of the measure, Recommendation (840-2/2019-1-DGZR, dated 18. September 2019);
- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030, A /CONF.224/CRP.1, 2015;
- Law on the accessibility of websites and mobile applications (Official Gazette of the RS, no. 30/18, 95/21 – ZInFV-A and 189/21 – ZDU-1M);
- Rulebook on universal construction and use of buildings (Official Gazette of the RS, no. 41/18 and 199/21 – GZ-1).



From the above mentioned documents we can conclude that PwD are an important part of society in the Republic of Slovenia and therefore it is absolutely necessary to guarantee them equal participation in the development of society and equal possibilities of their activities in society. To achieve this, they must have the same opportunities, while being aware that they face various obstacles, which are the result of the interaction of biological and social circumstances, among which is also reduced accessibility.

For greater inclusion of PwD in society and better regulation of disability issues, closer cooperation between PwD and individual departmental ministries, government institutions or other organizations dealing with disability issues must be strengthened.

3.2.3. MONTENEGRO

The Constitution of Montenegro, as the highest legal act, in Article 6 guarantees the protection of human rights and freedoms, in Article 7 promotes the prohibition of inducing or inciting of hatred or intolerance on any grounds, in Article 8 proclaims the prohibition of discrimination and in particular stipulates that ratified and published international treaties and generally accepted rules of international law make an integral part of the internal legal order and have the supremacy over the national legislation and are directly applicable when they regulate the relations differently from the internal legislation. Article 68 of the Constitution guarantees special protection to persons with disabilities.

The **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, which was ratified by Montenegro in 2009, aims to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal exercise of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

In the preparation of negotiations on accession to the European Union in the field of the EU acquires, the Government of Montenegro has opened the negotiation Chapter 19-Social policy and employment, as well as the negotiation Chapter-23 Judiciary and Fundamental Rights, which to the greatest extent deal with the issue of persons with disabilities. A special part of the Chapter - 23 is dedicated to the institutions and bodies of the exercise, promotion and protection of human rights in the legal system of Montenegro and the relationship between a citizen and public administration.

In order to monitor the compliance of legislation with the EU acquires, Montenegro has adopted a number of regulations, which guarantee full respect for human rights of persons with disabilities such as **Law on Prohibition of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities**¹, which is fully in compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This law regulates the prohibition and protection against discrimination of persons with disabilities, as well as the promotion of the equality of those persons with other persons.

The Strategy for Integration of Persons with Disabilities in Montenegro for the period 2016-2020² has already implemented. This Strategy followed the fields of action and time framework of the European Strategy for Persons with Disabilities 2010-2020, and identified seven key areas of action, namely: **accessibility, participation, equality, employment, education and training, social protection and health care.**

The Strategy for the Protection of Persons with Disabilities from Discrimination and Promotion of Equality for the period 2022-2027 with the Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy for the period 2022-2027³ presents the second strategic document of this type adopted in Montenegro, which places primary emphasis on effective suppressing all forms of discrimination, as well as creating conditions for the enjoyment of equal rights in all areas of life to persons with disabilities. The previous strategic document for the period 2017-2021 was based on the protection of persons with disabilities

¹ [Zakon o zabrani diskriminacije lica sa invaliditetom.pdf \(skolskiportal.edu.me\)](https://zakon.ris.gov.me/Zakon_o_zabrani_diskriminacije_lica_sa_invaliditetom.pdf)

² [https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/08615fc8-872f-4473-8677-1967e3c23d74;](https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/08615fc8-872f-4473-8677-1967e3c23d74)

³ [https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/e9659c4e-e7f6-41f2-ab98-0fd115b80601;](https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/e9659c4e-e7f6-41f2-ab98-0fd115b80601)

from all forms discrimination and enabling the enjoyment of human rights guaranteed by the Constitution and positive law regulations.



This new strategic document retains the planned structure of the strategy represented in the previous period, with the significant addition of two new areas in the body of the strategy relating to the separate treatment of positions: a woman and a girl with disabilities and children with disabilities/children with developmental disabilities

will be provided for in this way equal access to respecting the rights of persons with disabilities, taking specific measures, services and activities in relation to persons with disabilities, especially taking into account vulnerability their position in society and the specific demands they face. It is in line with Strategy of the Council of Europe for Persons with Disabilities 2017 – 2023 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – 4, 8, 10 and 11 as well as with other relevant international regulations in this field.

When it comes the article 11 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities “Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies - States Parties shall take, in accordance with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters” Ministry of the Interior regularly organizes education and evacuation exercises in Resource centres, as well as provide support for drafting entrepreneurial plans for rescue and protection⁴.

In Montenegro, rescue and protection field is defined by two crucial documents; **Law on Rescue and Protection** which is the general legal framework for acting in case of a natural disaster, technical and technological or other accident and **the Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction with Dynamic Plan of Activities for implementation of the Strategy for the period 2018 – 2023** aims to reduce and prevent the occurrence of new risks and to strengthen capacity of the society and state institutions in responding to various types of natural and other disasters. The main goals of this Strategy (2018-2023) include the following:

- Raising awareness of citizens and encouraging institutions to implement disaster risk reduction activities;
- Strengthening risk management capacities for natural and other disasters;
- Integrating disaster risk reduction in policies, programs, and plans;

⁴ Action Plans for the implementation of the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for 2018 and 2019, and for 2020 and 2021.

- Creating disaster-safe and resilient communities.

Unfortunately, bearing in mind that the Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy with Dynamic Plan of Activities for implementation of the Strategy for the period 2018-2023 does not define the role and position of persons with disabilities in the rescue and protection planning process.

The Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy for the period 2024-2030 will take into account role, position and rights as well as equality and safety and gender equality of persons with disabilities in the rescue and protection system and during the emergencies.

Although Law on Rescue and Protection (Article 35a) stipulates creation of rescue and protection plans for companies, other legal entities and entrepreneurs, PwD who do not belong to an institution or company are not in a situation to exercise measures which are an integral part of the rescue and protection plan.

The Law on Rescue and Protection (Article 75a) stipulates that partial evacuation shall include evacuation of only certain categories of the population such as: mothers with children up to 14 years of age or other persons who are legally obliged to care for the preservation and nurturing of children under 14 years of age; pregnant women; persons with disabilities, children with disabilities and other persons in need of nursing and care; and persons under 16 years of age and older than 65 years of age.

The Association of Youth with Disabilities of Montenegro (AYDM) implemented the project *11² - steps to safety* with the financial support of the Ministry of the Interior through the established Fund for rescue and protection. The main objective of this project was to contribute to the improvement of information and protection of PwDs in risk situations and other emergency and crisis situations in Montenegro, through promoting the importance and types of accessible protocols and services in the field of rescue and protection of PwDs at the national and local level of Montenegro, initiating adequate guarantees and respecting the rights of PwDs in domestic public policies in the field of rescue and protection in accordance with international standards. An animated video⁵, Manual and Guidelines on the Conduct of Persons with Disabilities and on Conduct toward the Persons with Disabilities in the Emergency Situations with a Proposal Contents of the Protocol⁶ was prepared under the project.

RELATED THE EU PROJECTS

There is an ongoing project creating a document Risk Management Capability Assessment⁷. Within this project will be mapping in GIS persons with disabilities who are in a threatened area of natural disasters, technical and technological accidents, radiation, chemical and biological contamination, and other disasters that may threaten or endanger people and environment.

⁵ <https://youtu.be/antlt0Blowk>

⁶ <https://umhcg.com/publikacije/>

⁷ It is project funded by the European Commission-Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) through the call for "Single Country Grants for Disaster Risk Management (Track 1)".



4. USED SURVEYS

4.1. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PwD ASSOCIATIONS

RESPONDEE'S CONTACT INFORMATION

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What obstacles / difficulties did your members encounter (or think they might encounter) during the rescue, evacuation or other emergency services interventions?

2. What are your proposals to prevent such situations?

3. Are your members familiar with the operating procedures in emergencies such as floods, earthquakes, fires, epidemics?

YES / NO / Partially

3. Are these operating procedures accessible and understandable to your members?

YES / NO / Partially

4. How the accessibility of operating procedures to your members can be improved?

5. Do the members of your association/alliance know that if need be they can call or send an SMS to 112 - the Unique European emergency number?

YES / NO / Partially

4.2. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR OPERATIONAL FORCES

RESPONDEE'S CONTACT INFORMATION

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Does your Emergency Service have SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) or containing Treatment of Persons with Disabilities within it?

YES / NO

2. For which types of disabilities this SOP was designed?

3. If possible, please, provide us with the part of the SOP concerning the issue.

4. We believe that during the operational activities you have treated people with disabilities of different types of disabilities. Can you, in short, share those experiences?

5. Which GIS application (s) is used by your Emergency Service in its operational work?

6. How much do GIS applications help you during operational activities in case of assisting people with disabilities?

Help, because they provide everything I need

Help with basic information

Do not help at all

I do not use GIS applications in my work

Other _____

7. Have you heard of the NICS application, are you trained to work in it and do you use it in your operational work?

Yes, I have heard, I am trained and use it in my operational work

Yes, I have heard, but I am not trained to work in it and I do not use it in my operational work

No, I have not heard and I do not know what that app is and what it is for

4.3. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR UCPM MEMBER STATES

1. Do your first responders have in place SOPs for providing assistance in emergencies to persons with:

- a) Physical disabilities
- b) Sensory disabilities
- c) Mental disabilities
- d) Intellectual disabilities

If yes, could you please explain briefly how the SOPs address each of the above-stated disabilities?

2. In what ways can persons with sensory disabilities (deaf, blind, deaf-blind) ask for help by means of 112?

3. When sirens go off in the event of an emergency, how are deaf persons notified? In what ways can persons with sensory disabilities (deaf, blind, deaf-blind) ask for help by means of 112?

4. Is there a database of persons with disabilities all emergency services have access to (with information on address, degree of disability... i.e., individual not aggregated data)?

5. In addition to the previous question, how are potential concerns/issues regarding the GDPR solved, if there are any?

6. Do or did you carry out projects addressing the protection and rescue of persons with disabilities in emergencies, the education on first responders or similar topics (could you please provide the names of and links to the projects)?

5. CONCLUSION



In this phase of the project focus was on the overview of the current situation as well as practices of treating PwD in emergencies throughout the EU, including legislation, emergency plans and existing protocols. Although member states have legislation in power, operationally, things are not as they appear on paper. Things are different amongst the states and major issue is the lack of database of PwD, standardized SOP, lack of trained personnel (first responders) in dealing with PwD in emergencies, etc...

By contacting and sending surveys to various PwD associations, operational forces and member states analysis of data is made.

By analyzing the data, we determined the gaps and needs faced by people with disabilities, and we obtained an abundant number of suggestions from responders. The analysis showed that we are on the right track and that we are following the project guidelines.

In the next step, we will organize a panel discussion where we will include interested associations, representatives of people with disabilities, as well as first responders who have expressed their desire to participate. The aim of the panel discussions is to see how to apply the collected best practices, to what extent the current practices satisfy the needs of PwD and what specific needs of different types of disabilities are within each partner country.

Following the panel discussions international conference will be held where will be able to exchange experiences and best practices between different countries.

After all the above (analysis results, best practices, suggestion and recommendations, panel discussions and international conference) all received information will be processed and guidelines will be produced related to PwD in emergencies along with protocols for emergency assistance and inclusion of PwD in civil protection prevention and planning activities.



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