

# Digital accessibility and inclusion in North Macedonia

Why the experience of persons with disabilities must shape digital public services

FINKI · workshop deck

10  
slides

# Accessibility is about daily life

Digital barriers affect rights, services and independence.

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- public information
- education and training
- employment
- healthcare and appointments
- communication with institutions
- culture, media and civic participation

*If a service exists online but cannot be used independently, access is only formal — not real.*

**Digital accessibility supports dignity, autonomy and equal participation.**

# Latest North Macedonia snapshot

Official data show why this conversation matters.

**94,412**

residents with disabilities  
counted in Census 2021

**54.8%**

of them were aged 65+

**40.8%**

had mobility difficulties  
—the largest reported type

*In January 2025, North Macedonia held a public hearing on a draft law on the accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public sector institutions.*

# Accessibility is not a favour

It is a condition for equal access.

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## Accessibility is not:

- charity
- an optional extra
- only a technical issue
- something to be added at the very end

## Accessibility is:

- equal access to public information and services
- a question of dignity and autonomy
- part of good design and good governance
- a basic expectation in digital public services

# Your experience is expert evidence

Real users show barriers that checklists and automated tools often miss.

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- You know which tasks fail in real life.
- You know where autonomy is lost.
- You know which barriers repeat across websites, forms and documents.
- Your feedback helps institutions prioritise what to fix first.

*Nothing about persons with disabilities  
without persons with disabilities.*

The most useful feedback is concrete:  
what failed, where, how, and with what  
impact.

# What to report when a website or app fails

A clear complaint is more likely to trigger a useful response.

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- 1 Which page or service caused the problem?
- 2 What were you trying to do?
- 3 What assistive technology or settings were you using?
- 4 What exactly did not work?
- 5 What was the impact on your independence or privacy?

# Complaints can lead to change

Three European examples you can mention.

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**France, 2024** The Paris Administrative Court condemned the state over inaccessible school software used by teachers, pupils and parents.

**France, 2025** Blind and partially sighted users' organisations formally challenged major online grocery services over digital inaccessibility.

**EU level** The European Ombudsman found maladministration in EPSO's handling of inaccessible online application forms for visually impaired candidates.

# What institutions should do in response

Accessibility improves fastest when responsibility is clear.

- publish a credible accessibility statement
- offer a usable feedback and complaints channel
- treat complaints as evidence, not inconvenience
- fix barriers in websites, forms, documents and videos
- test with disabled users before and after launch
- build accessibility into procurement from the start

**The EU model is simple:**

**statement  
feedback mechanism  
monitoring  
enforcement**

# A message for North Macedonia

Inclusive digital development must be built with persons with disabilities.

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*As digital public services expand, accessibility must expand with them.*

- Include persons with disabilities from the beginning, not only at the testing stage.
- Use complaints and feedback to set priorities for improvement.
- Treat inaccessible digital services as barriers to participation, not minor defects.
- Make accessibility part of strategy, budgeting, procurement and publishing practice.

## Closing thought

Accessibility means independence, equal access and respect.

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**No conversation about digital accessibility is meaningful without the people who experience digital barriers directly.**

**Thank you.**