



Contribution to the UPR Report of Serbia in 2017

Center for Independent Living Serbia was founded in 1996 on cross-disability principle, working on promoting the philosophy of independent living of persons with disabilities and creating conditions for its implementation in Serbia, through working on the goals which include advocacy for creating conditions for the exercise civil and human rights of persons with disabilities, promoting social approach to disability in all the segments of social life, awareness raising on the need for creating the accessible environment, including improving of access to electoral process for persons with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities traditionally rarely participate in political processes and decision-making processes. One of the first ways of politically involving people with disabilities is the inclusion in electoral processes and realization of our basic civil rights to choose and to be elected. Persons with disabilities rarely participate in the elections. Political parties do not make enough effort to attract PWDs votes. The established electoral rules, prevent us from politically engaging - as candidates, voters, or in the conduct of elections. Our exclusion from the election process permeates almost all phases:

- informing about important electoral issues and election programs,
- inability to vote under limited legal capacity,
- inaccessible information,
- inaccessible polling stations,
- difficulty in voting from home, and
- voting rules on an election day.

On April 2, 2017, **regular presidential elections** were held in Serbia. The accessibility of polling stations on election day was watched by two domestic observation missions - the CRTA watchdog "Citizens on Guard" and the observation mission of the Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CESID). Both missions followed the entire electoral process on the territory of Serbia. The monitoring of election was performed in total of 1050 polling stations in Serbia and it was found that on average **60% of the polling stations in Serbia were inaccessible for persons with disabilities**. There were no assessments on the communication and information accessibility of polling stations, which is especially important for the blind and deaf people, as well as people with intellectual disabilities.

Recommendations to the UPR review of Serbia:

- Make all polling stations physically accessible for people with disabilities through various forms of accommodation
- Abolish the Constitutional norm that prevents persons deprived of legal capacity (persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities) from enjoying voting rights, contrary to UN CRPD Convention
- Ensure the secrecy of voting for blind and visually impaired persons using adequate aids and / or changes in the electoral system
- Ensure that the procedures for voting from home for people with disabilities who can not get to the polling station either because of inaccessibility or for some other reason are effective and easily accessible