

**SPECIAL REPORT OF THE PROTECTOR OF
CITIZENS
“ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL”**

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INTRODUCTION

The society we aspire to is the one in which every individual will be enabled to live independently and participate in all aspects of life on an equal basis and fully to participate in their rights and obligation. The accessibility of the environment, services and information represent the precondition for the accomplishment of social contacts, independence and inclusion of the persons with disabilities in everyday life, which also refers to the environment which indeed must be such that everyone can use it.

The created environment should take into account the diversity of needs of different segments of population and the need of everyone to be independent in the exercise of their rights. Thus, in all its elements it should be designed in such a manner so that it provides everyone with the access to different contents. It is a fact that the existence of different types of barriers in the environment is discriminatory for a great number of users of public spaces such as persons with disabilities, children, elderly people, parents with children, pregnant women and others denying them in this manner the access to fundamental public services.

Physical barriers in the environment may be removed only by planned, very carefully designed actions of all those who construct such environment and for such activities it is necessary to establish recognizable standards which shall not be neglected, which is indicated by Protector of Citizens in this Report.

PART I: THE PROJECT “ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL”

1.1. About the Project “Accessibility for All”

The aim of the project “Accessibility for All” is to indicate to the accomplished results in practice as well as to the problems and obstacles in the creation of the environment which is accessible to all, including the persons with disabilities and to propose specific recommendations to the decision-makers and all interested parties for the improvement of the existing state in Serbia through the analysis of the domestic and relevant international legal framework and the analysis of the implementation of positive regulations (The Law on Planning and Construction of Facilities and the Law on the Prevention of Discrimination of Persons with Disabilities).

By formulating the specific conclusions and initiating proposals, Protector of Citizens with this Report also aims at contributing to the accomplishment of the goals of this project, which are the following:

- the accomplishment of full social inclusion of the persons with disabilities and their more active participation in the initiation, creation, implementation and monitoring of the regulation application;
- the improvement of national and local policies; and
- the improved cooperation between state bodies and the associations dealing with the improvement of the position of persons with disabilities.

Apart from the existence of the regulations which are binding in terms of adherence to standards of accessibility and creation of an environment accessible to all, inaccessibility of public facilities in the Republic of Serbia is still very noticeable, especially of those facilities in which different rights are exercised, such as social work centers, service centers of local self-government units, the Republic Pension and Disability Insurance (PDI) fund, health centers, etc.

Starting with the scope and importance of the activities performed by these public services, the subject of the analysis within the Project “Accessibility for all” were the facilities where they were located in 26 cities and municipalities, different in their geographic position, number of inhabitants, level of development, economic development and industrial activity.

Table 1 -Local self-government units subject of the visits and analyses of the project team

Apatin	Zabalj	Mionica	Svilajnac
Aleksinac	Zrenjanin	Nis	Sombor
Bela Palanka	Jagodina	Pirot	Subotica
Blace	Kanjiza	Pozarevac	Topola
Brus	Kraljevo	Prokuplje	Trstenik
Vladicin Han	Lebane	Raska	

Dimitrovgrad	Leskovac	Ruma	
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1.2. Methodology

In order to gain a better insight into the state of affairs in local self-governments and institutions which were comprised by this research, the information and data on the accessibility of facilities in local environments were collected in four different manners.

1) Questionnaires for self-assessment of accessibility of facilities

A questionnaire was sent to the addresses of local self-governments in the mentioned 26 cities and municipalities, social work centers, health centers and the Republic PDI Fund. The project team obtained feedback from approximately 80 percent of institutions to whose addresses the questionnaire was sent, which represented a good basis for the creation of preliminary observations and preparation for field work. Besides, the questionnaires for the evaluation of accessibility in the same self-government units were sent also to the addresses of approximately a hundred local organizations of civil society whose scope of work involves the protection and improvement of human rights and/or gathering of persons with disabilities. The response was significantly lower in comparison to the surveying of the institutions (only 15 completed questionnaires), but the responses contained more details and information and provided more complete review of the situation from the user perspective, which helped the project team in the formulation of the questions for interviews with decision-makers at the level of mentioned institutions.

2) Interviews with the representatives of local authorities, public services and civil society organizations

In July and August the project team visited all 26 local self-government units and talked to the representatives of local authorities, abovementioned institutions and civil society organizations. The aim of these talks was to obtain a wider range of information about practices in reaching the standard of accessibility and the exercise of rights and providing services for disabled and elderly persons: whether there is a strategic approach to the removal of barriers (architectural, communicational, informational), what is the cooperation of decision-makers with civil society organizations like in solving problems, what are the most frequent barriers which slow down or disable the construction of an accessible surrounding in their environment, whether there were formal proceedings or complaints regarding the inaccessibility, what is the situation with public spaces (parks, public transportation stops, pedestrian crossings, parking lots) or services not provided by the state/local self-government community (restaurants, cinemas, shops), etc.

3) Visits to facilities

Apart from discussions, significant information was collected also through visits to the facilities where the mentioned institutions are located as well as by visits to administrative and service centers of the local self-government units. On these occasions, examples of good and bad practice were identified, the most frequent shortcomings in insuring physical access of persons with

disabilities to the facilities and the potential design solutions for overcoming the noticed obstacles were through talks.

4) Insight into publicly available documents

As the last source of information, to a smaller extent, the project team used insight into publicly available documents (plans, decisions, regulations) in order to check or closely clarify certain statements expressed during the performed discussions.

After processing and analysis of the collected material, the project team formulated their observations based on the facts determined in the project process which represent the basis for the recommendations of Protector of Citizens which shall be sent to the competent bodies. It is necessary to emphasize here that the results of this research to the greatest extent match the noticed trends which are present in all self-government units in Serbia in the last decade, which the members of the team noticed in their previous work in this field.

PART II: RESULTS OF MONITORING OF THE LAW IMPLEMENTATION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

2.1. Institutions of local self-government units

Within the stipulated activities the project team attended the meetings with managements of 26 local self-government units -10 city¹ and 16 municipal administrations² which were mostly attended by the commissioners of city and municipal administrations as well as the commissioners of the departments and members of the councils which have in the focus of their activities also the topic of accessibility (departments for social activities, social protection,

¹ Zrenjanin, Jagodina, Kraljevo, Leskovac, Nis, Pirot, Pozarevac, Prokuplje, Sombor and Subotica.

² Apatin, Aleksinac, Bela Palanka, Blace, Brus, Vladicin Han, Dimitrovgrad, Zabalj, Kanjiza, Lebane, Mionica, Raska, Ruma, Svilajnac, Topola and Trstenik.

urbanism, investments). In those local self-governments where the institution of Protector of Citizens is established it is noticeable that their presence contributed to a great extent to better understanding of the actual problems of citizens as well as of the mechanisms which are at their disposal with the purpose of more efficient activities against the discrimination of the persons with disabilities. Even though the interlocutors of the project team during most of the visits were very cooperative and well familiar with the topic of the meeting, the number and the quality of the pieces of information depended on their familiarity and availability of the data in compliance with the scope of work they performed.

2.1.1. The knowledge of the competence

The project team obtained general responses to the question about the most important measures, activities and solutions which local self-governments assume with the aim of satisfying the standards of accessibility pursuant to the Rulebook³ in local communities.

The majority of the questioned local self-government units are familiar with the obligations in accordance with the legal regulation but the level of understanding of the standard of accessibility is different. It leads to the uneven practice in the actions of the public authorities at the local level which are in the range from declarative statements about the development of the policies of equal possibilities for everyone to reaching of the standards which satisfy the needs of only a certain group of persons with disabilities.

The general conclusion is that local self-governments assume actions ad hoc, i.e. occasionally depending on the initiative of individuals within local self-governments, associations of persons with disabilities, civil society organizations or obtaining donations on the basis of the approved projects. Furthermore, the problem is also the fact that the scope of activities of the organizational local self-government units to whose competence the topic of the development of the accessibility belongs is not clearly defined but its segments are treated through the work of different departments.

All aforementioned leads to the conclusion that the competent bodies of local self-governments lack more detailed instructions in which manner the standards of accessibility and stipulated legal obligations should be implemented during the activities which they assume within their competences.

2.1.2. Strategic documents

Strategic documents which stipulate the development of all elements and reaching of the standard of accessibility pursuant to the Rulebook⁴, as the best approach to the implementation

³ Article 5 of the Rulebook on technical standards of planning, designing and construction of facilities, which provide undisturbed movement and the access to persons with disabilities, children and elderly people ("Official Gazette of RS", no. 22/15) prescribes mandatory elements of accessibility: (1) elements of accessibility for overcoming height differences; (2) elements of accessibility of movement and staying at premises –residential and residential-business buildings and facilities for public use; and (3) elements of accessibility of the public transportation.

⁴ Rulebook on technical standards of planning, designing and construction of facilities, which provide undisturbed movement and the access to the disabled persons, children, and elderly people ("Official Gazette of RS", no. 22/15).

of this topic into local policies, are adopted in few local self-government units, while not one of the visited local self-government units has a special strategy for the development of accessibility.

The existence of strategic documents in certain local self-governments represents a direct result of the education of the members of local self-governments. Namely, local self-governments which reached a certain level of success in the construction of an accessible environment base their progress on clear and accurate plans which are the basis for the provision of all necessary sources.

The most frequent strategic document created on a local level is the Action plan for local economic development (LED) which stipulates in one its segment specific measures for the development of the accessibility. The practice of implementation of the accessibility into the strategy of the social development is also present. However, the flaw of these documents is the fact that mostly there are no financial funds allocated for their realization, that the period for which the strategy was passed expired, that in smaller and poorer municipalities there are no trained and skilled staff with the experience in work in the field of the accessibility development and that there are no mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of the effects of potentially assumed activities.

2.1.3. Budget funds allocated for the development of accessibility

The lack of funds in the budget is, according to the words of representatives of local self-governments, the greatest obstacle to the realization of all forms of accessibility in local environments and to more efficient actions of municipal and city administrations in this field.

Nevertheless, the fact that the failure to identify the topic of accessibility is apparent also in the budget stems from the absence of the awareness of the importance of the implementation of accessibility into local policies and taking care of the adherence to the principles of equality of all citizens during the budget planning. If the overall budget does not allocate the funds for the improvement of accessibility, since at the level of the local self-government unit there is no another body which would be competent for the implementation of measures for the improvement of the position of persons with disabilities, there is the assumption that the removing all types of barriers and adherence of the standards of accessibility will still be at a dissatisfying level. Therefore, the manner in which the funds from the budget are dedicated to the development of accessibility requires a review because the removing of architectural barriers is still treated as a social category instead of being planned through the part of budget which is allocated for infrastructural works. In other words, local self-governments in this manner allocate the funds for the services of social protection and regular functioning of organizations of persons with disabilities at the expense of the removal of barriers and vice versa.⁵

2.1.4. Committees for the accessibility development

One of the main indicators of the manner in which local authorities perceive the position of the persons with disabilities and the topic of accessibility, as the main condition for the development of the social inclusion is also the existence of special committees or mechanisms whose task would

⁵ The center for child's day care for developmentally disabled children is frequently the only social protection service which is offered and maintained by budget funds.

be to map all types of barriers and the care about the development of elements of accessibilities in local environments.

During the working meetings the project team learned that in only one of visited 26 local self-government units within the work on the project which refers to the removal of architectural barriers in the narrow city core the committee with this task was formed. For the execution of the project the budget funds were allocated and the committee consisted of independent experts and employees in the city administration that have the experience in the work on the development of the accessibility standard.

The improvement of the capacity and competences of the members of the local self-government units would inevitably lead to the raising of the level of the awareness of citizens in local communities about the importance of an accessible environment. Nonetheless, it is noticeable that the attitude of decision-makers that the matter of accessibility is important but not that high at the list of priorities since there are other, as it is usually mentioned, more important problems which require the urgency in actions and much greater material expenditures. This attitude results in the absence of specially organized units or associates who would assume the role of coordinators of activities in the area of accessibility. It would certainly facilitate the availability of information on the accessibility to all citizens who are interested in it as well.

Strengthening of the capacity of self-government unites refers to the continuous education of employees, connecting and networking of different participants and key associates in the process of strategic deliberation, assuming of specific steps and realization of action plans. As the greatest obstacles to such functioning the lack of employees, lack of funds, insufficient information and lack of practice in this field are mentioned.

„Easy kilometer“ is the name of the project which is realized by the Council for work with persons with disabilities at the Office of the mayor of Nis. The name and the goal of the project were taken as an example of a good practice of the city of Milan and it represents the work on reaching the full accessibility of all institutions in the center of the city, which in the diameter of one kilometer would be adjusted to persons with disabilities.

2.1.5. The cooperation with other authority bodies and international organizations

The representatives of local self-governments emphasize the good cooperation with other organizations and authorities, especially with the competent Ministry of labor, employment, veteran and social affairs, Public Investment Management Office, Ministry of construction, SKGO⁶ and NALED⁷.

A special emphasis is placed on the successful cooperation with the Public Investment Management Office, whose projects are binding for the local self-government units to comply

⁶ Standing conference of cities and municipalities

⁷ National alliance for local economic development

with the principle of accessibility and removal of architectural barriers. The precondition of the work on the project is the compliance with the standards and the execution of technical documentation pursuant to the Rulebook on technical standards of planning, designing and construction of facilities which provide the undisturbed movement and access to persons with disabilities, children and elderly people.

As a very important matter, the cooperation with the Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments is highlighted. The greatest number of facilities in which local self-governments and administrative centers are located are under the jurisdiction of this institution. In case of the adaptation and reconstruction of the facilities the Institute stipulates and requires the fulfillment of certain conditions. It sometimes represents significantly aggravating circumstances because it requires greater financial funds and longer period of time for the realization of the project. It frequently occurs that local self-governments do not even submit to the Institute the request for obtaining the conditions for the reconstruction of the facility, finding the justification in advance in "the complicated procedure". Those local self-government units whose facilities have already been in the process of reconstruction or façade renovation, emphasize a very good cooperation with competent services of the Institute, but also very high material expenditures so that as investors they mostly decide to choose projects which do not require additional but only essential investments.

The cooperation with international organizations is also realized to a satisfactory extent. The EU projects are significantly present, the funds are allocated for the reconstruction of municipal buildings, educational institutions and important infrastructural facilities and mostly the employees in the office for LED deal with the project execution.

2.1.6. The facilities of administrative / service centers

During the previous period, as an adequate manner of overcoming the problems of inaccessibility of facilities of local self-government units, the practice of forming service/ administrative centers was present.

It is necessary to pinpoint that these are the centers in which citizens exercise many of their rights and needs for administrative services, mostly located at the ground floor of facilities and in their adaptation and equipment, more or less successfully, the accessibility was taken into account. The local self-government units which have a greater number of inhabitants and bigger budgets⁸,

⁸ E.g. Kraljevo, Pirot, Leskovac, Nis.

almost by the rule, have service centers which are more accessible than those in smaller communities⁹.



Image 1 – City house of Sombor: an example of the lifting platform which is user-friendly, safe and well fit into the architectural design of the space

The local self-government units in most of the municipalities and cities are located at multi-floor buildings which are under the jurisdiction of the Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments. The property right to the facility most frequently belongs to the local self-government unit but the situations in which the property right to one part of the facility is constituted on behalf of the Ministry of Finance –Tax Administration, the Republic Geodetic Authority or judiciary bodies are not rare. It additionally aggravates the space organization, functioning of services and potential reconstructions with the aim of making the facility accessible. Multiple floors are mostly completely inaccessible and their premises are used for the activities of selected representatives of citizens and for the organization of sessions of local self-government bodies. This opens the question of the possibility of choice and work organization of a person with disability who would have the function of a counselor or a member of the city/municipal council and would not be able in that case to participate in the work of the body actively and equally.

⁹ E.g. Vladicin Han, Brus, Lebane



Image 2 – Entrance into the service center of the Pirot municipality is the only noticed example of good practice of connecting the entrance and counter by tactile guiding lines

During the last ten years the Ministry of labor, employment, veteran and social affairs established the mechanism to provide support to the removal of architectural barriers at the level of local communities through constantly opened competition for the citizen associations. Mountable-demountable ramps¹⁰ which were installed in most of the cases owing to this mechanism of support in the previous period as the solution for overcoming the barriers with least demanding administrative procedure have created a new problem. After many years of use and exposure to atmospheric matters and without regular maintenance, these elements of access decay and represent a safety risk for users. Furthermore, the cases of installed vertically and/or slanted lifting platforms at the entrance into the institutions which formally enable persons with disabilities to overcome the obstacle are frequent, but, from the user perspective, their use is complicated¹¹. A special challenge are regular servicing and repair of lifting platforms either

¹⁰ „A ramp is an element of accessibility for overcoming height differences. The mandatory elements of a ramp are steep plain, handrails, borders and in some cases rest areas.“, the Rulebook on technical standards of planning, designing and construction of facilities which provide undisturbed movement to persons with disabilities, children and elderly people, The Official Gazette of RS, no. 22/15, Article 3 Paragraph 11.

¹¹ It is necessary first for the users to signal their intention to use the platform (ringing of the bell, visual contact through the doors, by phone or by sending their companion to the facility) and then to wait for the arrival of the person who handles the platform to help them.

because of ownership relations¹² (sometimes it is not clear who is supposed to finance the repair), or because the company which installed the equipment no longer exists or the seats of certified services which may provide the service and repair are mostly located only in major cities.¹³



Image 3 – Ruma municipality, an example of good practice: the ramp is safe, completely functional and esthetically fits into the existing exterior.



Image 4 – Lebane municipality, an example where the ramp on the right side of the entrance is steep and interrupted by closed doors

¹² SLC Prokuplje has a constructed ramp at the entrance, but it cannot be determined whose obligation it is to do its maintenance.

¹³ During the visits paid to 26 local self-governments, the project team saw only two lifting platforms (“Hristina Markisic” center in Aleksinac and city service center in Sombor) which completely provide users with independent handling and one of them (Aleksinac) is also designed and constructed in a local company so it is regularly and timely serviced.

2.1.7. Pedestrian communications, parking and public transportation

The accessibility of pedestrian communications and public transportation in cities and municipalities which are included in this project is still insufficiently good and does not match the needs of all citizens, especially persons with disabilities.

The vehicles of public transportation are mostly inaccessible. Local buses in most of the cases do not have the possibility of transportation of persons who use wheelchair. Bus stops adjusted for low-floor vehicles are rare or do not exist at all. Sidewalks are insufficiently maintained, which causes new barriers, and the curbs at pedestrian crossings are lowered only at reconstructed sidewalks so it is not a rare case that lowered curbs exist on one side of the pedestrian crossing, but not on the other. The traffic lights/crossroads provided with all the elements of accessibility pursuant to the Law on Safety in Traffic on Roads¹⁴ and the Rulebook¹⁵ are rare. The needs of persons with disabilities are perceived individually and there is no systematic approach.

Within the reconstruction and adaptation of sidewalks, apart from the prescribed sidewalk width (180 cm, exceptionally 120)¹⁶, the placement of tactile fields¹⁷ which are in function of providing the movement of blind and visually-impaired persons is taken into account, but it is apparent that in designing and installation their function is not sufficiently paid attention to¹⁸. This especially refers to marking of pedestrian crossings and pedestrian communications. The trend of the removal of architectural barriers at pedestrian crossings boiling down to “lowering”, “bringing down” or “beveling” of curbs is noticeable, instead of being in compliance with the standards stated in Article 35 of the Rulebook¹⁹ in terms of sound and tactile signalization. Apart from that, in some local environments what used to be orderly pedestrian communication with time has become non-functional and unsafe due to their frazzle. Tactile fields of warning/safety are missing, slanted curbs are not constructed along the whole width of the pedestrian crossing,

¹⁴ the Law on safety in traffic on roads “The Official Gazette of RS”, no. 41/09, 53/10, 101/11, 32/13 - US, 55/14, 96/15 - another law, 9/16 - US, 24/18.

¹⁵ The Rulebook on technical standards of planning, designing and construction of facilities which provide undisturbed movement to persons with disabilities, children and elderly people, The Official Gazette of RS, no. 22/15

¹⁶ The Rulebook on technical standards of planning, designing and construction of facilities which provide undisturbed movement to persons with disabilities, children and elderly people, The Official Gazette of RS, no. 22/15, Article 33 Paragraph 1

¹⁷ „A guiding tactile path is relief processing of a walking surface with the purpose of orientation and guiding of the movement of persons who are blind or vision-impaired.”, the Rulebook, Article 3 Paragraph 18, 19, 20.

¹⁸ The function of tactile fields is to help the orientation and guiding of the movement of persons who are blind or vision-impaired. If this function is neglected during the design, blind persons who move independently will not accept the tactile path as an element of accessibility, which raises doubt about the profitability of this solution.

¹⁹ Tactile fields of warning/safety are missing, slanted curbs are not placed along the whole width of the pedestrian crossing, passages through pedestrian islands in the middle of the driveway are constructed by curbs, crossroads are not equipped with sound traffic lights, etc.

passages through refuge islands in the middle of the driveway are constructed with curbs, crossroads are not equipped with sound traffic lights, etc.



Image 5 – Pedestrian crossing in Pozarevac is an example of the application of various technical solutions in one place



Image 6 – Tactile guiding line in Kraljevo where the panels used for tactile field of safety at pedestrian crossings are used to bypass the manhole which essentially is not even an obstacle to justify the increase of expenses (significantly greater number of tactile panels was placed than it was necessary) and it is repeated along the entire length of the street

Parking of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Serbia is regulated by acts passed by the bodies of local self-government units. The complicated procedure for obtaining the license for parking at parking lots labeled for persons with disabilities is very characteristic so as to avoid abuses, which in practice creates new obstacles for the ones who want to exercise their right. With regards to this, it is also noticed that at the locations where there are labeled lots for parking of persons with disabilities, they are not either planned or labeled pursuant to Article 36 of the Rulebook.²⁰



Image 7 – The Health center Apatin –the parking lot for persons with disabilities without vertical signalization placed at the greatest distance from the entrance to the facility instead of being at the shortest distance

²⁰ Dimensions of parking lots are smaller than prescribed, the space between two parking lots in line is less than 150cm, in majority of cases the exit from the parking is not secured by the lowered sidewalk or a parking lot does not have a direct pedestrian connection between designed free space for movement and the closest sidewalk, without the exit to the driveway etc.



Image 8 – The city of Nis is the only local self-government in which during the visit the existence of an accessible public restroom was recorded. The restroom is located in the underground passage, but the elevator which from the street level leads to it was out of order on the day of the visit of the project team

2.1.8. Residential buildings and business facilities

Taking into account that the majority of residential buildings and business facilities in all visited self-government units were constructed in the period of time before the provisions of Article 5 of the Law on Planning and Construction came to force, only few of the stated facilities are in compliance with the standards of accessibility. These are mostly old buildings where there are no technical conditions for the installation of an elevator and the possibility that tenants themselves finance its installation or there are unsolved property-legal issues with regards to parcels where the facilities are located, ownership share or legality of the facilities.

The newly-built facilities do not always comply with all legal criteria in terms of accessibility and the competent body of the local self-government unit exclusively does the inspection of the fulfillment of formal conditions for the construction of the facility only and does not assess technical documentation and compliance with the accessibility standard. However, most of these facilities are at least partly accessible to persons with physical disabilities.

Despite the stated state of affairs, the interlocutors of the project team at local self-governments emphasize that the requests of residential units for the construction of access ramps, platforms or elevators are rare, that these are only individual cases when a person with a disability lives in the residential building and the installation is usually

financed by the tenants of the building, except in those municipalities/ cities which allocate the funds for financing such projects in residential units.

Certainly, the inaccessibility of residential facilities, except for the persons with disabilities and persons with difficulties in movement, is a major problem also for the services of the emergency when they are in the field.

As examples of a good practice mostly new hotel or catering facilities, reconstructed or newly-built sports facilities and banks are mentioned.

2.1.9. Media and information

Local printed and electronic media mostly are not adjusted to persons with disabilities so their level of information cannot be satisfactory. There are rare examples of a good practice, even though there are some improvements of the content when it comes to local television stations and programs adjusted to deaf or hearing-impaired persons.

2.1.10. The protection from discrimination due to inaccessibility of the environment

Despite the existing normative framework and legal means which are at the disposal of citizens with regards to the protection from discrimination, on the one hand and many inaccessible facilities and public space at local self-governments on the other hand, interlocutors indicated to few complaints and proceedings referring the discrimination filed by citizens to competent bodies. This attitude is partly conditioned by insufficient information of citizens about their own rights and legal obligations of all public authority institutions to make the facilities in which the stated institutions operate accessible. Apart from that, citizens of local environments do not want or fear not to create animosity and problems to their fellow-citizens employed at public services and most frequently exercise their rights in such a manner that the employees due to inaccessibility of the facility and aggravated movement of parties leave their offices and go to the field, talk to parties outside the facility, outdoors, in a car, etc.

With regards to the violations of the right to accessibility to the environment, apart from the Commissioner for the protection of equality, citizens may also send a complaint to Protector of Citizens as well as the local ombudsman where the stated body was established by the decision of the local self-government unit. The actions of the body depend on the circumstances whether the complaint indicated to the violation of a republic law, other regulation or general act or it is a form of the violation of bylaws of the local self-government units which designate more closely the manner, conditions and forms of the performance of rights and duties in the spheres of importance for the exercise of rights to the access to public-use facilities. If the person who files the complaint indicates simultaneously to the violation of a republic law, other regulation or general act and to the violation of a regulation or a general act of the local self-government unit, the

body which received the complaint shall act upon it within its competences, while the copy of the complaint shall be sent to another competent body for further actions.

The fact which represents perhaps the greatest obstacle to the development of accessibility is the attitude of the majority of employees in public services that the stated actions and reception of parties outside the facility represent a sufficient compensation for the absence of accessibility, i.e. a form of help to the party to exercise their right. Such actions create a false image that the problem of inaccessibility to institutions is overcome when actually the full inclusion of the persons with disabilities in all segments of social life is prevented.

2.1.11. The greatest obstacles to the development of accessibility in local environments

The practice indicates to the existence of a series of obstacles which significantly aggravate the application of legal provisions at a local level. These obstacles in the application also refer to the obstacles to more efficient implementation of measures and programs for the improvement of accessibility within the activities of local self-government units and their competences. The most frequent obstacles as far as the institutions are concerned are insufficient information and capacities of employees at local self-governments, the lack of political will, i.e. the lack of interest of decision-makers, the lack of clear guidelines, instructions and sanctions with regards to the operationalization of the law provisions. A major problem, especially at smaller and less developed local self-governments is the lack of resources primarily in terms of finances and employees. It is noticeable in practice that there is insufficient knowledge about legal provisions as well as the insufficient data about the practical application of the law and bylaws at the local level, insufficient information about the importance and need for the existence of special organizational units whose focus would be on the topic of accessibility, the need for constant education and absence of the stated topic in everyday life of citizens.

From the aspect of civil society organizations their exclusion from the process of considering strategic issues at a local level is apparent as well as the lack of knowledge about the manners of application of the law and legal means for the protection from discrimination. Occasionally, at smaller environments the problems of lack of initiative, insufficient capacities and sporadic project activities of the associations of persons with disabilities emerge.

One of the crucial problems is the fact that the notion of accessibility is still misperceived as the notion connected to the position of persons with disabilities instead of being perceived as the possibility of independent movement and equal participation for all citizens. In practice, it results in the emergence of special solutions adjusted to the needs of persons with disabilities and not to the needs of each potential user. Eventually, those specific decisions bring much narrower meaning to the notion of accessibility and boil down to the use of a few elements of accessibility such as ramps, platforms or elevators while the needs of a wider circle of users are neglected.

2.2. Centers for social work

During the realization of project activities the project team visited 26 centers for social work. The incomplete inaccessibility to the stated facilities was detected and confirmed during the previous period, during the activities of the Department for the protection of rights of persons with disabilities of Protector of Citizens. The aim of the visit was to determine the state of affairs and status of the controlled facilities, the reasons due to which the improvement of inaccessibility and potential initiatives initiated by the center employees were not taking place.

2.2.1. The users of services provided by the center for social work

The procedure for the exercise of rights about which, by exercising public authorizations the center makes the decision is initiated in the line of duty or upon the request of the party. In administrative affairs where, according to the law or to the nature of things, for the initiation and conduct of proceedings the request of the party is needed (the exercise of rights to material supply, to the allowance for aid and care of another person, etc.), the center may initiate and conduct the proceedings only if it is requested by the party. In compliance with the stated, it is of exceptional importance to provide the undisturbed access to all services of the center for the citizens with difficulties in movement, old and sick persons, pregnant women and parents with children.

A major problem is the lack of accurate and updated statistical data with regards to the structure of users of visited centers and the project team mostly did not obtain specific information about the number of users who are persons with disabilities or persons with difficulties in movement. At local communities their visibility is relatively small, they rarely leave their homes and participate in social life, and most frequently they exercise their rights via their relatives and legal representatives who on their behalf come before state bodies.

2.2.2. The accessibility of the center facility

The centers for social work in visited local self-governments are mostly located in inaccessible or partly accessible facilities. The center is founded by the local self-government unit and it may be founded for the territory of one or a few of them which is decided by competent bodies of these units. In several visited municipalities the service of the center is actually the organizational unit of one inter-municipal center for social work which comprises the work of the service in two or three municipalities²¹. The premises where the activities of social services are performed in smaller local self-governments are located at ground-floor parts of residential buildings while in cities they are at individual, mostly multi-floor facilities constructed long time ago. These facilities mostly were not constructed with the purpose to fulfill the needs of the center and thus require additional adaptation and adjustment of the space. With respect to the elements of accessibility, except for the ramps of different design and quality which usually do not comply with the

²¹ Centers for social work in Topola, Mionica, and Brus

standards pursuant to the Rulebook²², the presence of other elements for the removal of architectural barriers such as movable platforms, elevators, and restrooms adjusted to persons with disabilities was not identified. Also, not one facility of the center has the issue of informational and communicational barriers solved, so tactile boards for the information of blind people, brochures written in Braille and all other elements of accessibility²³ which provide undisturbed communication of persons with different types of disability also do not exist.



Image 9 – The “Hristina Markisic” institution of children and youth with more or less serious disabilities in Aleksinac: the stairway platform which is user-friendly, constructed by a domestic (local) producer, is not locked and does not require the assistance of another person or some of the employees

Architectural barriers are mostly overcome by great mobility of employees whose job description comprises also the field work, the reception of parties as well as at specially designed premises at the entrance to the facility which are used for the reception of the parties with serious difficulties in movement.²⁴

²² The Rulebook on technical standards of planning, designing and construction of facilities which provide undisturbed movement to persons with disabilities, children and elderly people, The Official Gazette of RS, no. 22/15.

²³ Mandatory elements of accessibility are prescribed by Article 5 of the Rulebook.

²⁴ The example of the Center for social work in Blace, which after initiated process of control by Protector of Citizens used its own financial funds to place the fold-down mountable-demountable ramp and at the entrance to the facility the office for the conversation with parties with difficulties in movement was established.



Image 10 – the center for social work in Blace: the mountable ramp which is not in compliance with the standards and the office for reception of the parties with serious difficulties in movement

2.2.3. The initiatives of the centers for the removal of architectural and information barriers

The activities of management structures of local centers for social work which are focused on making efforts to overcome, primarily architectural barriers are of different kinds. The previous question which requires an answer before the reconstruction of the facility is the unsolved property-legal affairs. The centers are located in the facilities of different legal owners of the ownership right, from the local-self-government unit to companies in bankruptcy while the use of premises is based on the contract about the lease or the contract about the cession of rights to the use of the real estate. The stated circumstances require consultation and filing of the request for issuing the prior consent of the facility owner, which usually refer to a longer period of time and a very complex procedure. The situations when the facilities are in the process of restitution or legalization are especially complex.

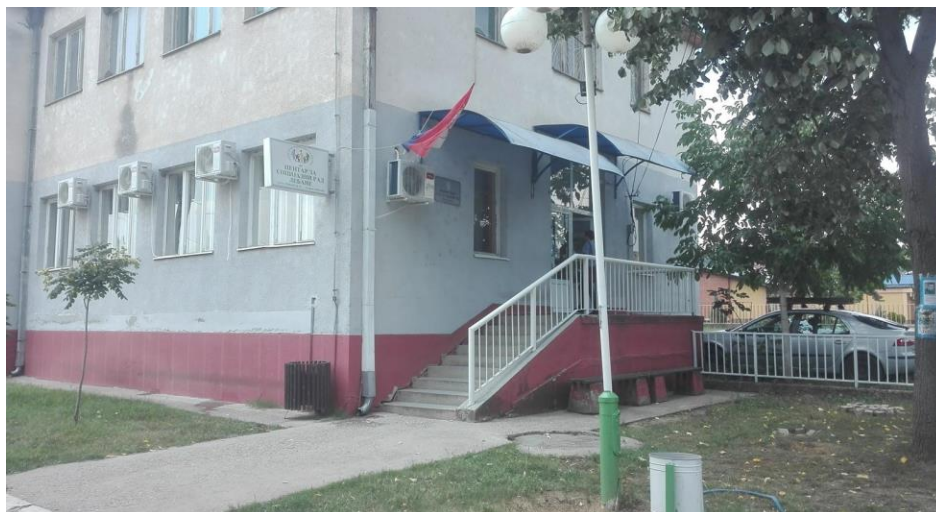


Image 11 – Entrance to the Center for social work in Lebane

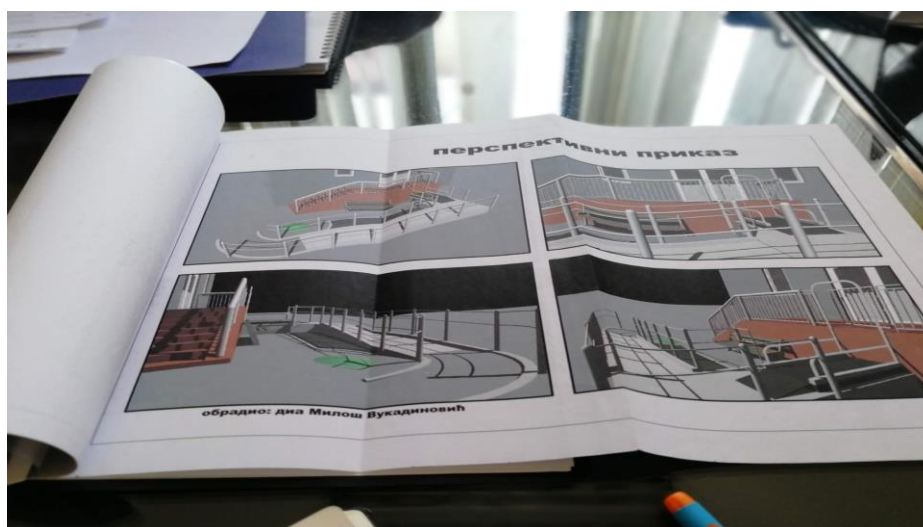


Image 12 – The design solution for the adaptation of the same facility; an example of good practice that the managers of institutions assume the activities but the lack of financial funds prevents the project realization;

Upon the initiative of the centers for social work, certain local self-governments have already entered the procedure for obtaining financial funds planned for the adaptation of existing facilities granted by the Public Investment Management Office²⁵ or applied for the funds from

²⁵ The city of Sombor

IPA fund 2016²⁶ and delivered the project-technical documentation and are currently waiting for the feedback about the competition outcome.²⁷

In the discussion with employees of various local centers for social work, it is stated that the plan of the Ministry of labor, employment, veteran and social affairs is the construction of standard, uniform facilities where social services will be located, but none of the interlocutors could provide more information about the realization of this project.

Local self-governments which in compliance with the attitude of the Ministry of labor, employment, veteran and social affairs about approved funds for the construction of new center facilities in the previous period provided construction parcels, location conditions and construction permits were informed that the work on this project was stopped.

2.2.4. The cooperation of local self-government and center for social work

It is a general impression that the local self-government units do not cooperate enough with the centers for social work and that there is no clear and recognizable form of cooperation but it depends of currently dominant circumstances. On the other hand, the topic of accessibility is not sufficiently recognized even within the competence of the centers for social work. Even where the cooperation exists, it is declarative, almost always of the project character and most frequently not related to a systemic solution. The absence of a more quality form of cooperation exists especially in municipalities where the location of the center for social work was changed several times during the previous period. The frequent change of location creates a certain level of uncertainty with employees about the future undisturbed operation of the center and prevents further initiatives which lead to the adjustment and adaptation of the facilities in compliance with the standards of accessibility.

²⁶ The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance is a financial instrument of the European Union which supports the strategy of expansion of the EU, whose purpose is to provide aid to candidate states and potential candidates in the accession to the EU.

²⁷ The Center for social work Zrenjanin

2.3. Health centers

2.3.1. The organization of health protection

The primary health protection at local self-governments is characterized by the organization of health services located in a few dispersed facilities of the pavilion-type. Some facilities are usually located in suburbia and village environments. The subject of the project team monitoring this time were only central facilities of health centers where the work of the departments of general medicine, pediatrics, gynecology and emergency are located (at the sites where the service is organized within the health center) due to the greatest number of patients with difficulties in movement who visit the stated services.

2.3.2. The accessibility of the health center facility

It is apparent that significant funds are invested in the accessibility of primary health protection services. There was not a single case of deprivation of the primary health care for the reasons of inaccessibility recorded in any of the local self-government units included in this research. The problem is that the facilities where citizens receive health protection were constructed during the years before the Law on the prevention of discrimination of persons with disabilities was passed and thus there is no adequate organization of work of those services whose accessibility is necessary for persons with disabilities, elderly and sick persons, such as the service of physical therapy which is located at upper floors of the facilities without elevators or adequate platforms. Ever since the mentioned law came to force, the administrations of health centers invest efforts to provide with the help of domestic and international donors at least the accessibility at the ground floor where the primary services for medical care are situated. The removal of architectural barriers is one of the preconditions for the accreditation of health institutions²⁸.

²⁸ Accreditation is the process of evaluation of the quality of work of a health care institution based on the application of the optimal level of determined standards of operation of a health care institution in certain field of health protection and medical branch (The Law on health protection, 2005, Article 213). The request for obtaining accreditation is filed by the health care institution to the Agency for accreditation of health care institutions of Serbia.



Image 13 – Health center in Pirot: Even though the ramp meets the standards (with the exception of the absence of a cover) and it is regularly maintained, it occupies four parking lots and the space is not used in the best possible way; it is necessary to find another solution which would occupy less space;

Nevertheless, great investments in the infrastructure necessary for the connection of floors by means of elevators, stairway platforms or another solution in compliance with the European practice are needed. It should be pointed out that the Public Investment Management Office strictly takes care about the fulfillment of the accessibility conditions during the renovation and construction of public facilities. The already renovated facilities of health centers are indeed an example of good practice and the model of the manner how all needs of users should be perceived and how the project of a complete reconstruction of a facility should be executed.



Image 14 – Children’s clinic in Trstenik: an example of a useless and unsafe ramp

In the existing conditions the employees of health centers are trying to overcome problems and remove all types of barriers which aggravate the communication with patients. The fact that many health centers are located at multi-floor facilities which do not comply with all accessibility standards leads to complete inaccessibility of medical services at upper levels of the facility which is solved by doctors and medical staff coming down to the doctor’s offices at the ground floor. The examinations of patients with difficulties in movement are also usually performed in the part designed for the functioning of the emergency service which has the access to ambulance vehicles. In a smaller number of facilities there was an attempt to solve the problem of accessibility by the placement of a movable platform or the procurement of a caterpillar, but their use was not taken up due to the complexity of handling or there was a malfunction, sometimes even the destruction of the platform which is no longer in use.

With regards to sanitary premises of the facilities of primary health protection it cannot be confirmed that there is a difference with regards to the state of affairs at other facilities of public institutions. The access of persons with a physical disability who use wheelchair is mostly impossible since the premises of restrooms are of small dimensions and without enough space for use, even when they are in an accessible part of the facility. Also, there are no elements of accessibility for blind and vision-impaired persons or assistive hearing systems²⁹ or interpreters of the sign language for deaf and hearing-impaired persons.

²⁹ “The assistive hearing system is the sound system used by transmitters, receptors as well as connecting devices which detour the acoustic space between the source of the sound and the listener. They may be in the form of inductive loop, RF system, IR system or directly wire equipment”, the Rulebook on technical standards of planning, designing and construction of facilities which provide undisturbed movement to persons with disabilities, children and elderly people, The Official Gazette of RS, no. 22/15, Article 3 Paragraph 15.

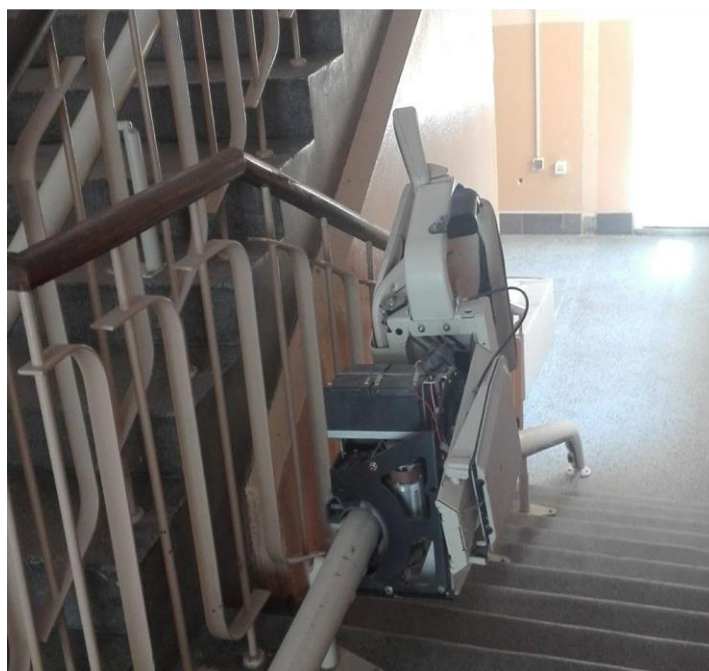


Image 15 – The Health center in Sombor has one type of movable platform/ chair which is out of function due to malfunction which is the consequence of vandalism of unknown subjects; the platform was installed owing to the donation of the Kingdom of Norway;

At local environments with greater number of patients with difficulties in movement home-care services are extremely active. The problem of the lack of vehicles, drivers and doctors is prominent due to ever increasing leave of professionals, especially specialists of certain medical fields, from the sector of primary health protection which aggravates also the adequate care for persons with difficulties in movement.

2.3.3. Health protection of women with disabilities

The project team dedicated special attention during the monitoring to the accessibility of health protection to women with disabilities taking into account that this part of population represents one of the most vulnerable social groups. Gynecological specialist services are located mostly at upper floors and rarely at accessible parts of facilities which significantly aggravates regular gynecological examinations even in situations when the health center possesses adjustable gynecological chairs or adjustable mammography. Even though the awareness of the medical staff about the need for the stated equipment is present, the lack of financial funds for its procurement represents the fundamental obstacle. It should be emphasized that there are examples of good practice and health centers in bigger cities which use adjustable gynecological chairs in all gynecological doctor's offices.

A special problem is the health protection of women with disabilities who live in rural environments. These categories of female health protection users frequently are not able to provide the transport to main health centers and gynecological services mostly are not organized at clinics located in the suburbia and village environments. Certain health centers do not have permanently employed specialists of gynecology and the work of the service is based on the occasional visits of the gynecologists from bigger health centers, which additionally makes the examination organization more complicated.

The Health center in Kraljevo provided during the procurement of new medical equipment five adjustable gynecological hydraulic chairs for all gynecological doctors' offices.

The Health center in Svilajnac is reconstructed using the funds of the local self-government units and the Public Investment Management Office. It represents an example of a good practice of the engagement and cooperation of local levels of authorities with other bodies as well as of the management of the reconstruction of the public-use facility.



Image 16 – The map of the facility of the Health center Svilajnac with drawn pedestrian and vehicle communications for better orientation of users.



Image 17 – The Health center Svilajnac: An example of good marking of the instructions for the space orientation (interior) –the board on the wall provides information about health center departments;

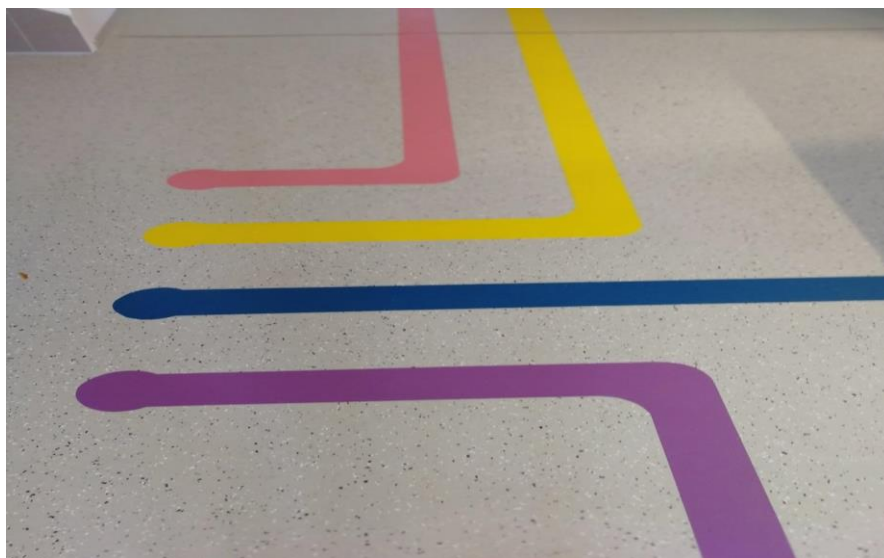


Image 18 – The Health center Svilajnac: An example of good marking of the instructions for the space orientation (interior) –the labels of the corresponding color guide the user to the selected department

2.4. The Republic PDI fund

2.4.1. The users of PDI fund services

The subject of the visit and analysis of the project team during the visit to the stated cities and municipalities were the affiliates and branches of the Republic PDI fund which is extremely important for the exercise of different rights and services for the persons with disabilities and elderly people. This category of citizens represents the greatest number of users of the Fund services but also the one for which there is the greatest need for accessibility of facilities and information. For these users sometimes the very exit from the house represents a problem, so it is not possible to exercise it without serious logistic efforts³⁰. Pursuant to the Law on Pension and Disabled Insurance³¹ the requests are filed to the Fund services and, among other things, the rights to the aid and care of another person as well as to the age and disabled pensions are exercised. At the same time the number of inhabitants who belong to the population older than 65 is on constant growth. It is visible from the stated that the inaccessibility of the Fund facility represents a problem to ever increasing number of citizens and that the exercise of rights frequently requires the engagement of the family members or other persons. Without these forms of assistance elderly citizens are not able to perform even relatively simple administrative tasks with regards to the exercise of the stated rights.

2.4.2. The accessibility of the Fund facility

The PDI fund affiliates and branches are mainly located in inaccessible and partly accessible facilities. The gravest problem is certainly the inaccessibility of the facility/ parts of the facilities where the examinations of medical commissions are performed in order to determine the level of disability. The most frequent manner to overcome this problem is for employees/ doctors to go out to parking site or to the ground floor of the building. These forms of assistance are unacceptable both from the perspective of officials and from the perspective of users, especially during bad weather conditions. Even though certain funds are invested in the reconstruction and adaptation of the PDI fund facilities, very often the desired effect is not produced³².

The services of the PDI fund are predominantly situated in inadequate facilities characterized by the burden of the unsolved or complicated property-legal affairs. It is not a rare case that the owners of the parts of facilities where the PDI affiliates are located (in one observed case even the

³⁰ The Directorate of PDI and competent Ministry are familiar with the problem of inaccessible facilities and are trying to solve them but the process itself is complicated and slow.

³¹ The Law on pension and disabled insurance, The Official Gazette of RS, no. 34/03, 64/04 – decision of CC, 84/04 – other law, 85/05, 101/05 – other law, 63/06 – decision of CC, 5/09, 107/09, 101/10, 93/12, 62/13, 108/13, 75/14 и 142/14.

³² During the visit of the affiliate of the PDI fund in Kraljevo, the project team found installed and functional lifting platform installed on the side of the building in relation to the main entrance, but (see footnote 10) at that moment when the project team wanted to check how the system of connection functions, nobody from the institution responded to pressing of the button which (as assumed) was connected to the sound signal somewhere inside the building.

municipal administration) there are many parties, from state institutions and companies to citizen associations and private parties. In these cases, the negotiations about the facility adaptation in order to make them accessible for disabled users last too long or are almost impossible to reach.



Image 19 – The affiliate of the PDI fund in Kraljevo: the lifting platform at the lateral part of the building without visible labels and guideposts which could attract the user's attention. Additionally, the platform is designed in such a manner that its independent use is impossible



Image 20 – The PDI fund in Prokuplje is located in the attic of the facility shared with a few more owners; the adaptation of the offices has recently been done and the replacement of handrails at the staircase is obviously inadequate so it was necessary to additionally install one part of scaffold for fixing and the stability of the handrail but the premises of the Fund are still inaccessible to the citizens with difficulties in movement because there is no elevator and movable platform;

The use of sanitary premises in the facilities of the affiliates and branches of the Fund for the persons with disabilities (whether they are service users or employees) is mostly either aggravated or impossible. The reasons are high doorsteps, narrow doors, lack of space for the movement with wheelchairs and sanitary elements which are not adjusted to use of persons with disabilities. Even in the facilities which have gone through the reconstruction in recent years, the situation has not significantly changed due to lack of space, even though by joining men's rooms and ladies' rooms or different organization of the space this problem might be solved.

2.4.3. The protection of rights of the users of the Republic PDI fund services

The interlocutors emphasize the fact that the parties have never been deprived of the exercise of the rights due to inaccessibility and the only activity in the protection from discrimination is performed by the associations of persons with disabilities which in cooperation with local ombudsmen address Protector of Citizens or the Commissioner for the protection of equality.

With regards to potential filed complaints or proceedings for the protection from discrimination, it is identified that they mostly do not exist despite the fact that the majority of affiliates and especially branches of the Fund are inaccessible.



Image 21 – The affiliate of the PDI fund in Sombor: the platform made by the domestic producer has never been used due to inability to provide the attest (the producer is the company in the process of bankruptcy)

The affiliate of the PDI fund in Pozarevac is located in the facility shared with the Fund and the Republic fund for health insurance and Public company for roads from Pozarevac. The Directorate of the Fund from Belgrade is the initiator of the project for the adaptation of the facility which includes the planned installation of an elevator and adequate sanitary premises. Currently the lifting platform at the entrance

to the facility used only by users of the PDI fund is in function while the parties of other legal parties situated in the same facility cannot use it but they have not requested the permission for its use.

2.5. Associations of persons with disabilities and civil society organizations

The intention of Protector of Citizens project team was during the visits to local self-governments, through direct conversations with civil society organizations and associations of persons with disabilities to acquire the most realistic image possible and to obtain a significant part of information about architectural, communicational and informational obstacles³³ which prevent the full social inclusion of persons with disabilities, elderly and sick people. A great number of associations responded to our invitation to meetings and organizations which through project activities indirectly or directly deal with the improvement of the position of persons with disabilities also took part in the discussions.

The issue of cooperation with the self-government units and the level of participation of members of associations of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes and activity planning were emphasized. It is noticeable that the level of cooperation between associations of persons with disabilities and local self-governments differs from a municipality to municipality and that the success of the removal of obstacles and development of all forms of accessibility in the community depend on it to the greatest extent. Not rarely did the project team obtain from the associations completely opposite information to those obtained from the local self-government emphasizing a very weak cooperation with local authorities whose level, on the one hand, depended on the understanding of the local self-government, and on the other hand on the activity of the association and their requests. The members of associations emphasized that the cooperation and feasibility of requests sent to different sectors were on a minor and dissatisfactory level, that they had not been consulted in the process of considering strategically very important matters to persons with disabilities and that the cooperation was missing because there was no individual committees or local self-government organizational units which would focus on reaching of accessibility standards. It is visible that in those local communities where the institution of a local ombudsman was established citizens initiate more frequently initiatives in cooperation with the ombudsman and indicate to the absence of accessibility with regards to public space as well as the requests for the removal of mostly architectural barriers in certain public-use facilities.

Another segment of the lack the members of associations refers to the financing and organization of work of all associations, greater engagement of competent ministries with regards to the improvement of the position of persons with disabilities but also of staff capacities in the implementation of projects through which the associations might finance and improve professional capacities of the civil society in providing social protection services at the local level.

³³ „The obstacle is physical, communicational and/or orientation barrier which exists in space and which may obstruct and/or prevent a person in undisturbed access, movement, staying, reception of some service and/or work.“, The Rulebook on technical standards of planning, designing and construction of facilities which provide undisturbed movement and access to persons with disabilities, children and elderly people, The Official Gazette of RS, no. 22/15, Article 3 Paragraph 6

With regards to priority facilities and public space which are inaccessible, the interlocutors most frequently highlight the need for the removal of architectural barriers at sidewalks in narrower and wider center of the city/ municipality, the lack of tactile paths but also to the inaccessibility of sports and cultural centers and institutions. A special emphasis is put on the need for a more intensive inclusion into social events, visits to cultural manifestations, theatres, museums and galleries as well as sports facilities and centers. At local communities which represent touristic destinations so far the existing potential for the development of tourism with the aim of the increase of the number of tourists in the category of disabled and elderly people was not exploited enough because the economic effect of the improvement of all types of accessibility would produce was not recognized enough.

The general impression is that the members of association see as the greatest obstacle in fact the resistance of local authorities to any kind of change or new manner of functioning despite the existence of interested participants who find it difficult to fight for the support to the idea which will cause a change of the existing state in their environment. On the other hand, during the discussion a certain level of self-criticism was present because the interlocutors emphasized the passivity of the associations whose activities are mostly based upon the engagement and abilities of individuals, lack of synchronized activities of various associations and defining of joint strategies aiming at reaching of the accessibility improvement.

CONCLUSION

During the field work in 26 local communities which are included in this project, the trend that the emphasis of competent bodies of public authorities is placed on the removal of architectural barriers was noticed while the problem of the existence of informational barriers is in the background. In the institutions which were the subject of monitoring, the examples of installation of assistive hearing systems and/or the employment of persons who know the sign language were very rare (four facilities out of 104 observed have the inductive loops installed and only two employed persons who use sign language). Tactile tables for informing blind persons, fire alarms which may produce both sound and visual signals, brochures written in Braille and tactile paths which facilitate the communication through the facilities are the elements of accessibility which are almost completely neglected in the equipment of public-use facilities. Additionally, the overcoming of architectural barriers (by placing ramps, handrails, lifting platforms, lowering of counters) is very frequently performed without the awareness about the necessary level of compliance with accessibility standards and actual needs.

Especially worrisome is the trend that new facilities are constructed and old are reconstructed without an adequate application of all accessibility standards because by this action the basic principles of the UN convention about the rights of persons with disabilities as well as the provisions of the Law on Planning and Construction and other regulations which establish the obligation of adherence to the accessibility standards are violated.³⁴ The local self-government at the level of information about location (location conditions) takes care about the accessibility principle but the problem emerges once the investors, whose legal obligation is to provide compliance with norms and standards, due to many other obligations, fail to do that. During the reconstruction of the facilities which are protected pursuant to the Law on Cultural Property³⁵, the conditions of the competent Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments for the removal/overcoming of architectural barriers are not demanded frequently but the architectural barriers are knowingly left under excuse that the facility is protected³⁶.

The use of information technologies in providing services to citizens electronically has become popular in Serbia in recent years³⁷. This practice may be also observed as an element of accessibility because persons with disabilities who have the access to a computer connected to the Internet, have the access to certain services provided by the state, local self-government and other institutions, without the necessity to leave their homes and face the problem of inaccessible public transportation and other barriers. The provision of electronic services to citizens is

³⁴ The Law on planning and construction, The Official Gazette of RS, no. 72/09, 81/09 - corr., 64/10 - decision of CC, 24/11, 121/12, 42/13 - decision of CC, 50/13 - decision of CC, 98/13 - decision of CC, 132/14 and 145/14.

³⁵ The Law on cultural property, The Official Gazette of RS, no. 71/94, 52/11 - other laws and 99/11 - other law

³⁶ It should be pointed out that the Institute responded promptly to the requests in cases in which the institutions asked for conditions.

³⁷ The official webpage: Portal of eAdministration of the Republic of Serbia, available at: <https://www.euprava.gov.rs/>.

observed as a good practice and at local self-governments comprised by this project, even though they have the capacity to provide information services, it is still not used enough, for instance in the communication with deaf and hearing-impaired persons³⁸, which might be useful to unburden the sign language interpreters, since there is not enough of them³⁹.

Apart from the insufficiently precise legal regulation in the sphere of accessibility and the need for the establishment of sanctions for the failure to apply and/or violation of the legal framework in this domain, the need for additional education and information of all employees about the importance of the topic of accessibility and its placement high at the priority list in future activities of all the levels of public authorities is apparent.

³⁸ The service of translating into the Serbian sign language provides the engagement of relay interpreter –mediator in the communication via video link, and this service is provided by the Association of interpreters of the Serbian sign language.

³⁹ In smaller environments, there is usually only one translator for the sign language and they sometimes cover more geographically close local communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE FIELD OF ACCESSIBILITY

1. The performance of continual approximation of the legislative and institutional framework in the standards of the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and recommendations of the UN Committee for the rights of persons with disabilities.
2. The continual performance of the monitoring of regulations from the sphere of accessibility in practice.
3. The inclusion of representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities in the process of monitoring of the regulation implementation.

SPECIAL RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE FIELD OF ACCESSIBILITY

1. It is required that **the Ministry of construction, transport and infrastructure** review the existing legal framework in the sphere of planning and construction and make its alterations in such a manner so that a more quality supervision, introduction and application of the punitive policy with accurate definition of clear criteria, authorizations and duties of performance of inspection supervision are established.
2. It is required that **the Ministry of construction, transport and infrastructure**, through the amendments of legal acts and bylaws stipulate the introduction of the Elaborate on accessibility as an integral part of the technical documentation necessary for the issuance of the construction permit.
3. It is required that the local self-government units with necessary financial and institutional support of **the Ministry of labor, employment, veteran and social affairs** provide adequate space for undisturbed functioning of the centers for social work, which pursuant to the principle of accessibility and individualization of social protection, shall comply with all the standards of accessibility.

4. With the aim of the consistent compliance with the obligations of assurance of the public-purpose facility accessibility the local self-government units shall execute local action plans for the reconstruction of the existing facilities, according to the list of priorities.
5. It is required that the capacities of local self-government units be strengthened through the continual education of employees, connecting and networking of different participants and key associates in the process of strategic thinking, assuming of specific steps and realization of action plans.
6. **Local self-government units** shall take all measures from their competence which enable persons with disabilities to receive information dedicated to public without any obstacles and in the proper form and corresponding technology and provide funds and other conditions for the work of local media which publish information in sign language or Braille or to enable these persons in some other manner to exercise their rights in public information without any obstacles.
7. **Local self-government units** shall assume all the measures from their competence and provide interpreters of the sign language, which will enable deaf persons to use sign language in the process before all the bodies of state administration established by local self-governments.
8. **Local self-government units** shall introduce the accessibility of facilities and means of transport during the amendment of the regulation which regulates the organization of public transportation at a local level as a condition for the operation in public transportation. Until the fulfillment of the complete accessibility of the means of transportation in the public transportation, local self-government shall provide the service of the transportation of disabled passengers.
9. **Local self-government units** shall take all measures from their competence and provide blind and vision-impaired persons with the electronic accessibility of their official internet presentations.
10. **Local self-government units** shall at their internet presentation provide a special service which will enable citizens to file complaints because of the failure to comply with the standards of accessibility during the construction, reconstruction and adaptation of the facilities in public use with the aim of the implementation of the inspection supervision and assuming of legal measures against responsible persons.
11. **The Ministry of construction, transport and infrastructure and the Ministry of state administration and local self-government** shall in cooperation with the authorities in local self-government units execute plans and continually implement training which will provide systematic teaching of staff, employees in charge of the work on the issues of

accessibility and application of the universal design for all in the sphere of the interior design and facility construction.

12. **Local self-government units** shall provide the institutional framework as well as necessary financial funds for more quality and comprehensive participation of the civil society organizations in the process of implementation of all accessibility standards at a local level.
13. It is required that the **Republic PDI fund** within the shortest period of time adjust all the facilities of affiliates and branches of the Fund where citizens exercise their rights for the undisturbed functioning and movement of the persons with difficulties in movement while the existing lifting platforms placed at the entrance to the Fund facilities will be made functional, and the permit for their use as well as the conditions for regular maintenance shall be provided.

ANNEX 1: NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK

Accessibility in the international legal framework

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁴⁰ in Article 2 Paragraph 1 stipulates that: “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.” This guarantee of non-discrimination in the recognition and exercise of human rights refers also to the right to the freedom of movement (Article 13).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities⁴¹ is the most important international, legally binding document in the sphere of human rights of persons with disabilities which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 13th December, 2006 and it came into force on 3rd May, 2008. The Republic of Serbia signed the Convention and the Optional Protocol on 17th December, 2007 and was among the first states to ratify the mentioned Convention on 31st July, 2009.⁴²

The aim of the Convention is „to improve, protect and secure full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom to all persons with disabilities and to improve the respect for their innate dignity“. One of the fundamental principles of this legally binding document is also the principle of non-discrimination (Article 3 Paragraph 1 Item b). Article 2 Paragraph 3 says: “Discrimination on the basis of disability” means any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”

The best evidence to the importance of the accessibility to the application of this principle and the exercise of human rights of the persons with disabilities is the fact that one of the principles of the United Nations Convention of rights of the persons with disabilities is in fact accessibility (Article 3 Paragraph 1 Item f). It means that in the interpretation of the provisions of the Convention, planning, preparation and implementation of other normative acts and practices mandatory attention must be paid to their accessibility to all persons with disabilities.

Simultaneously, the convention introduces the institute of a “reasonable accommodation” (Article 2) which stipulates necessary and adequate modification and adjustment which does not

⁴⁰ The Declaration was adopted in 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly by the Resolution 3/217.

⁴¹ The Convention was adopted in 2006 by the United Nations General Assembly by the Resolution 61/106

⁴² The Law on the confirmation of the optional protocol with the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, The Official Gazette of RS –International contracts, no. 42/09

impose disproportionate and unnecessary burden in specific cases where it is necessary, so as to provide for persons with disabilities to enjoy and exercise all human rights and fundamental freedom equally to others.

The Committee for the rights of persons with disabilities explains that the notion of accessibility is related to a group while the notion of reasonable accommodation is related to an individual. In practical sense, if it occurs that a person has a rare form of disability which was not taken into consideration during the execution of the accessibility standard and that its application does not provide the access for that person, the principle of reasonable accommodation will be applied. The deprivation of reasonable accommodation represents an act of discrimination and the Republic of Serbia, as a signatory of the convention is obliged to assume all corresponding measures so as to provide persons with disabilities with an efficient legal protection from discrimination and improve the equality.

According to Article 9 of the Convention, accessibility represents a precondition for an independent life of persons with disabilities and their complete and equal participation in all spheres of life. The Republic of Serbia is obliged to assume corresponding measures so as to provide persons with disabilities, equally to others, with the access to a physical environment, transportation as well as other conveniences and services which are open to and at the disposal of the public both in urban and rural environments. These measures include the identification and removal of obstacles and barriers to access, they refer, among other things, to buildings, roads, means of transportation and other conveniences both indoor and outdoor, including schools, residential facilities, medical facilities and workplaces.

Also, the Republic of Serbia is obliged to:

- determine, promote and monitor the application of minimum standards and guidelines for the accessibility of facilities and services which are at the public's disposal,
- ensure that private legal parties who provide services at the public's disposal take into account all aspects of their accessibility to persons with disabilities,
- provide labels in Braille in buildings and other facilities open for public so that they are easy to read and understand,
- provide forms of immediate help and mediators, including guides, readers and professional interpreters for the sign language so as to facilitate the access to buildings and other facilities open to public.

The term "other conveniences indoor and outdoor" should include the facilities where the bodies of interior affairs and judiciary are, courts and prisons, social institutions, space for social interaction, recreation, cultural, religious, political and sports activities and commercial facilities. "Other services" should include the facilities of postal, banking, telecommunication and informational services.

At the level of the European Union there is no law on accessibility even though many member states have such a law. The European Disability Forum (EDF)⁴³ campaigns in favor of the adoption of this law. The European law on accessibility is a bill of the law which could make many products and services in the European Union more accessible to persons with disabilities. The bill stipulates that only certain products and services should be accessible and these are mainly smart phones, tablets and computers, devices for the purchase of tickets and devices for the application, television sets and TV programs, banks and ATMs, internet purchase and e-books.

Accessibility in the legal framework of the Republic of Serbia

In the Republic of Serbia, the field of rights of persons with disabilities, the prohibition of their discrimination and accessibility in either direct or indirect manner are regulated by the highest legal act being the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, individual laws and bylaws and certain strategic documents of the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia⁴⁴, prohibits any form of discrimination especially on the basis of race, gender, nation, social origin, birth, religion, political or social beliefs, economic situation, culture, language, age, mental and physical disabilities.

The Law on Protector of Citizens⁴⁵ defines the role of Protector of Citizens as an independent state body which protects the rights of citizens and controls the work of the state administration bodies, body in charge of the legal protection of property rights and interests of the Republic of Serbia as well as of other bodies and organizations, companies and institutions who have public authorizations entrusted to them. Protector of Citizens also takes care about the protection and improvement of human and minority freedom and rights and especially takes care about the provision of a certain specialization for the performance of tasks from the competence of Protector of Citizens, especially with regards to the protection of persons deprived of freedom, gender equality, child rights, minority rights and rights of persons with disabilities. Pursuant to the stated competences, the act on internal systematization establishes a special organizational unit Department for the rights of persons with disabilities and elderly people, which, based on the transferred authorizations, is managed by Deputy Protector of Citizens. Within the Department the activities of acting upon the citizen complaints and control of the activities of administration bodies with regards to the exercise of rights of persons with disabilities and elderly people. The work of the Department comprises and initiates measures for the improvement of the work of administration bodies and acts which are used by Protector of Citizens to propose bills and start initiatives for the amendment of laws, bylaws and other regulations with the aim of the improvement of the protection of persons with disabilities and elderly people, taking into account the determined state, valid regulations as well as standards and recommendations of the United

⁴³ Available at: <http://www.edf-feph.org/>.

⁴⁴ The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, The Official Gazette of RS, no. 98/06.

⁴⁵ The Law on Protector of Citizens, The Official Gazette of RS, no.79/05 and 54/07

Nation organization, Council of Europe, Organization for the European safety and cooperation, European Union and other international organizations and institutions where the Republic of Serbia is a member or which reflect European principles and values. Pursuant to the scope of activities, the Department for the rights of persons with disabilities and elderly people acts upon the complaints of natural and legal parties which indicate to the inaccessibility of public-purpose facilities, considers and analyses positive regulations which regulate this field and its compliance with international standards and executes individual reports and recommendations with the aim of the improvement of the physical environment accessibility.

The Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination⁴⁶ explicitly states disability as one of the prohibited bases for unjustified creation of differences or unequal activities. In case of the violation of rights, the Law stipulates the possibility of initiation of proceedings for the protection of rights before the court and it facilitates to the discriminated person the process of proving the violation of equality by placing the burden of to the accused person, if it is made probable that the accused has committed the act of discrimination. The Law establishes a special body –the Commissioner for equality, which may with the consent of the damaged party file a suit. If the damaged party has not initiated the court proceedings, they may ask by a complaint to the Commissioner to provide an opinion about the violation of rights, recommendation on the removal or the decision on the measure of warning to the person who fails to act pursuant to the recommendation. If the person who committed the act of discrimination fails to remove the violation within 30 days, the Commissioner may inform the public about that and in such a manner expose them to a “moral sanction”. The same Law, Article 17 Paragraph 2 stipulates that everyone is entitled to equal access to public-use facilities (facilities where the seats of public authority bodies are located, facilities in the field of education, health care, social protection, culture, sports, tourism, facilities used for the environmental protection, for the protection from natural disasters, etc.) as well as to public space (parks, squares, streets, pedestrian crossings and other public roads, etc.) pursuant to the law.

The Law on the Prevention of Discrimination of Persons with Disabilities⁴⁷ prohibits the discrimination on the basis of disability in terms of services and access to public-use facilities and public space and provides the possibility to protect the violation of the right on the basis of disability in the court proceedings by filing a suit, as well as to request the prohibition of discrimination, removal of the discriminatory activity and the compensation of tangible and intangible damage due to the violation.

The Law stipulates that the owner of the public-use facility and the public company in charge of the maintenance of public space are obliged to provide the access to the public-use facility and public space to all persons with disabilities regardless of the level and type of their disability and to make the adaptation of the facility with the aim of fulfillment of the condition for the completion of this obligation. The fulfillment of this condition is necessary for the issuance of the

⁴⁶ The Law on the prohibition of discrimination, The Official Gazette of RS, no. 22/09

⁴⁷ The Law on the prevention of discrimination of persons with disabilities, The Official Gazette of RS, no. 33/06 and 13/16

use permit for all public-use facilities. The public-use facilities in that respect comprise: facilities in the field of education, health care, social protection, culture, sports, tourism or facilities which are used for environmental protection, protection from natural disasters while public space comprise: parks, green surfaces, squares, streets, pedestrian crossings, other public roads, etc.

Article 27 of the Law on the Prevention of Discrimination of Persons with Disabilities prohibits discrimination on the basis of disabilities and stipulates fines for the carrier (as well as for the transportation staff, legal party, responsible person in the legal party and for the entrepreneur) that refuse to transport the passenger with disabilities.

Article 33 of this Law stipulates the measures for the creation of an accessible environment which prescribes the obligation of the local self-government unit to take measures with the aim of making a physical environment, buildings, public space and transportation accessible to persons with disabilities, as well as to encourage the establishment of the support services for the purposes of increasing the level of independence of persons with disabilities in everyday life and for the purpose of exercise of their rights.

The Law on Planning and Construction⁴⁸ is about undisturbed movement and access for persons with disabilities, children and elderly people. Article 5 of this Law stipulates that: "The buildings with public and business purposes as well as other public-use facilities (streets, squares, parks, etc.) must be designed, constructed and maintained in such a manner that all users, especially persons with disabilities, children and elderly people are provided with an undisturbed access, movement and staying, i.e. the use in compliance with corresponding technical regulations whose integral part are the standards which define mandatory technical measures and conditions of designing, planning and construction which ensure undisturbed movement and access for persons with disabilities, children and elderly people". Also, the same Article stipulates that: "Residential and residential-business buildings with ten or more floors must be designed and constructed so as to provide undisturbed access, movement, staying and work to all users, especially to persons with disabilities, children and elderly people".

Article 2016 of the stated Law simultaneously stipulates the sanction, i.e. fine in the amount of 300,000 RSD for the company or other legal party if pursuant to Article 5 the access to the facility is not provided for persons with disabilities in compliance with the accessibility standards.

The Rulebook on technical standards of planning, designing and construction of facilities which provide undisturbed movement and access to persons with disabilities, children and elderly people⁴⁹ specifies and more closely designates minimum technical standards of accessibility which define mandatory technical measures and conditions for planning, designing and construction of facilities. Articles 1 and 2 provide definitions of accessibility and facilities they refer to. Article 1 prescribes that the accessibility refers to planning of new facilities and

⁴⁸ The Law on planning and construction, The Official Gazette of RS, no. 72/09, 81/09 - corr., 64/10 - decision of CC 24/11, 121/12, 42/13 - decision of CC, 50/13 - decision of CC, 98/13 - decision of CC, 132/14 and 145/14.

⁴⁹ The Rulebook on technical standards of planning, designing and construction of facilities which provide undisturbed movement and access to persons with disabilities, children and elderly people, The Official Gazette of RS, no. 22/15

premises, designing, construction and additional construction of new facilities. Also, it refers to the reconstruction and adaptation of existing facilities, when it is possible in technical sense.

The accessibility refers to the buildings of public and business purpose, public-use facilities as well as residential and residential-business facilities with ten or more floors. The public-use facilities are: “banks, hospitals, health centers, nursing homes, cultural facilities, facilities for the use by state bodies, bodies of territory autonomy and local self-government, business facilities, post offices, rehabilitation centers, traffic terminals, sports and recreational facilities, catering facilities, hotels, hostels, schools and other facilities”.

The Rulebook on the content, manner and process of execution and manner of controlling technical documentation according to the class and purpose of facilities⁵⁰ prescribes in Article 9 that the measures for the fulfillment of the fundamental request “safety and accessibility during the use”, should ensure that during the use of the facility there is no risk of accidents or damage during the fall or use, such as slipping, fall, collision, burns, electric shocks, injuries due to explosions and breaking and entering, and especially to provide accessibility and use to persons with disability, children and elderly people.

Article 3 of **The Rulebook on the content and manner of performing professional monitoring**⁵¹ it is stated that the professional monitoring, among other things, comprises the control and quality verification of the execution of all types of works and the application of regulations, standards and technical normative, including technical regulations whose integral part are the standards which define mandatory technical measures and conditions which ensure undisturbed movement and access to persons with disabilities, children and elderly people.

In the Republic of Serbia the regulations which are in compliance with international legal framework are adopted. Such legal framework establishes the obligation of adherence to standards of accessibility and creation of an accessible environment to everyone. Nevertheless, there are some shortcomings noticed which to the greatest extent influence the quality implementation of regulations and these are the following:

- insufficiently elaborated provisions about mechanisms of monitoring and sanctions for failure to adhere to regulations which essentially need to be upgraded and strengthened,
- insufficiently precise bylaws which establish only legislative minimum so sometimes in practice it occurs that the consistent application of standards is insufficient, which requires additional specification of certain accessibility standards. There is an initiative to introduce during designing and adaptation of public-use facilities the obligation of submission of appendices –the Elaborate on accessibility, which will contain all elements of accessibility with detailed descriptions and drawings. If this document was to be introduced in legislation or at

⁵⁰ The Rulebook on the content, manner and process of execution and manner of controlling technical documentation according to the class and purpose of facilities, The Official Gazette of RS, no. 23/15, 77/15, 58/16, 96/16 and 67/17.

⁵¹ The Rulebook on the content and manner of performing professional monitoring, The Official Gazette of RS, no. 22/15 and 24/17

least into regular practice, additional adaptation of facilities due to inadequate or non-existing elements of accessibility would be prevented.

- bylaws of other laws which are in force are not sufficiently in compliance with the existing Law on Planning and Construction, which is precise in the aspect of prescribed obligation to provide accessibility to facilities and services to all persons with difficulties in movement.

An example of a bylaw which is not in consistency with the Law is **the Rulebook on the conditions and manner of performing catering activities, manner of providing catering services, classification of catering facilities and minimum technical conditions for the design and equipment of catering facilities**⁵² which stipulates that the catering facility where the services are provided also to persons with disabilities must have an entrance to the facility, as well as doors, equipment and space for the manipulation in the premises used, dimensioning and interior design in compliance with the needs of persons with disabilities (Article 30). This provision results in the fact that only some catering facilities may provide services to persons with disabilities and that only these are obliged to fulfill the conditions from the Rulebook which represents the violation of international and domestic regulations which refer to the respect of human rights.

⁵² The Rulebook on the conditions and manner of performing catering activities, manner of providing catering services, classification of catering facilities and minimum technical conditions for the interior design and equipment of catering facilities, The Official Gazette of RS, no. 48/12 and 58/16.

ANNEX 2: QUESTIONNAIRES SENT TO INSTITUTIONS

The building of municipality/city administration

In the cooperation with the Accessibility Audit Association, Protector of Citizens implements the project named "Accessibility for all" with the aim to improve the implementation of local policies in the sphere of accessibility pursuant to international standards and thus to contribute to the exercise of the complete social inclusion of persons with disabilities, elderly and other persons with difficulties in movement through enhanced possibility of access to the public-use facilities. The project shall be implemented owing to the financial support of the European Union through the NHRI-EU project implemented by the Danish institute for human rights.

Within the project, the data about problems with regards to the provision of an accessible environment in a certain number of municipalities and cities selected according to the previously determined criteria shall be collected. The collected data shall be processed and compiled in a Special report of Protector of Citizens about the accessibility with the recommendations for improvement sent to competent bodies which shall be published in October 2018.

We would kindly ask you to complete the questionnaire not later than by 15th June, 2018. You may send the completed questionnaire back to the address of Protector of Citizens, 16, Deligradska St., 11000 Belgrade or via electronic mail to zastitnik@zastitnik.rs.

Name of the institution/facility:	
Location and address:	
Questionnaire completed by (name, surname, phone number):	
Questionnaire reviewed and approved by (name, surname, phone number):	
Responsible person on behalf of the self-government unit of the distribution and collection of questionnaires (name, surname, phone number):	
In case of any questions or existence of some uncertainties, please send them to one of the following addresses.	vidan.dankovic@pristupacnost.org (Vidan Danković) al.jankovic@pristupacnost.org (Aleksandar Janković)
The day of the reception of the questionnaire	

Questionnaire:

1. Please describe (by choosing the correct statement) how can the facility be reached from the pedestrian crossing/bus station/parking lot:

- With obstacles (steep climb, curbs, stairs)
- With obstacles which are overcome (e.g. by a ramp or lowered curbs)
- Without obstacles
- I don't know

2. Please describe (by choosing all correct statements) what does the entrance to the facility look like:

- In front of and behind the door there is no step/staircase
- In front of the doors there is a staircase but there is an adequate* ramp
- In front of the doors there is a staircase but there is a lifting platform*
- In front of the doors there is a staircase but there is an elevator*
- In front of the doors there is a staircase but there is no any aid to overcome the height
- The doors are wide enough (90 or more cm)
- The doors are automatic (with sensors for opening)
- The doors are without doorstep
- The doors are easily opened
- The doors are revolving with the option for entrance for the users with difficulties in movement
- The doors are revolving without the option for entrance for the users with difficulties in movement
- The doors are narrow (two people cannot pass each other in the doorframe)
- At the very entrance doors there is a doorstep higher than 0.5 cm
- The doors are difficult to open
- Behind the entrance doors there is a step/staircase

3. Please describe (by choosing all correct statements) what does the movement inside the facility look like:

- Everything is on the same level
- Tactile lines of guidance for blind and vision-impaired persons are provided
- There are levels and floors but everything is connected by ramps
- There are levels and floors but everything is connected by platforms
- There are levels and floors but everything is connected by an elevator
- The hallways from the entrance doors to the information desk, rooms and other premises dedicated to users are wide enough*
- The passage for wheelchairs is narrow, people pass each other by with difficulties
- There are levels and floors and there is nothing to facilitate the movement
- I don't know

4. Please describe (by choosing all correct statements) how can the blind, vision-impaired, deaf, hearing-impaired persons get information inside the facility:

- Tactile information board is provided
- The sign system/ labels for spatial orientation are provided
- The person who knows the Serbian sign language is employed

- The assistive hearing system is provided (e.g. the inductive loop)
- There is a clearly labeled information desk in the interior
- An accessible web page is provided and the documentation which is taken is according to standards which enable blind and vision-impaired persons to read a document with the use of software
- There are visual alarms for deaf persons inside the facility
- Nothing of the stated
- I don't know

5. Please describe (by choosing all correct statements) what does the counter/desk for the communication with users look like:

- The height is adjusted* to users in wheelchair or short persons
- It is equipped with assistive hearing system* (the inductive loop)
- There are visual and sound announcement of the client whose turn it is
- Nothing of the stated
- I don't know

6. Please describe (by choosing all correct statements) what does the sanitary premises, if available to users, look like:

- The doors are wide enough and do not block the entrance by opening
- The doors are wide enough but they block the entrance
- There are handrails at the wall/floor
- The toilet, washbasin and other equipment are available to users in wheelchair
- The space is wide enough* for the movement of wheelchair
- There is nothing of the stated
- I don't know

7. Thank you for the conscientious description of the facility! Please state in the continuation all additional information about the accessibility with regards to the observed facility:

NOTE (the explanation of some of the terms which are used in the questionnaire):

An adequate ramp is a leaning plane with maximum inclination of 8.3 percent (to 15cm of height difference the approximate length of the ramp is 1 meter) and constructed in all aspects in compliance with the technical standards of accessibility.

A lifting platform (vertically lifting or steep lifting collapsible platform) is electromotive device designed to overcome the height difference of more than 1.2m in compliance with technical standards of accessibility in every aspect dedicated to the wheelchair users.

An adequate elevator is of minimum dimensions 110cm x 140cm, the access to the elevator at the level of the entrance to the building has free space of dimensions at least 150cm x 200cm.

Tactile guiding line/tactile safety field is a relief processing of the walking space dedicated to the orientation and guidance of the movement of blind or vision-impaired persons. These are placed with the purpose of directing and warning of users to the change of the movement direction of that path; of informing users about the approach to a danger zone: the change of the path height, approaching the staircase, approaching the traffic at the crossroads and other danger zones;

Tactile information board is a relief processed surface placed independently at the entrance which shows the facility fundamentals with the purpose of informing blind and vision-impaired persons about the movement inside a larger public facility.

Assistive hearing system is a sound system which uses transmitters and receivers which detour the acoustic space between the source of the sound and the person who uses the hearing aid. These are the systems for the improvement of the sound environment in certain space (e.g. at the counter, in the waiting room, at the conference room, etc.)

Sanitary premises/Restroom for disabled parties is designed and equipped pursuant to Article 20 *the Rulebook on technical standards of planning, designing and construction of facilities which provide undisturbed movement and access to persons with disabilities, children and elderly people* published at the Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia no. 22/2015. See at <https://goo.gl/s8SfYq>

Center for social work

In the cooperation with the Accessibility Audit Association, Protector of Citizens implements the project named "Accessibility for all" with the aim to improve the implementation of local policies in the sphere of accessibility pursuant to international standards and thus to contribute to the exercise of the complete social inclusion of persons with disabilities, elderly and other persons with difficulties in movement through enhanced possibility of access to the public-use facilities. The project shall be implemented owing to the financial support of the European Union through the NHRI-EU project implemented by the Danish institute for human rights.

Within the project, the data about problems with regards to the provision of an accessible environment in a certain number of municipalities and cities selected according to the previously determined criteria shall be collected. The collected data shall be processed and compiled in a Special report of Protector of Citizens about the accessibility with the recommendations for improvement sent to competent bodies which shall be published in October 2018.

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The day of the reception of the questionnaire	

Questionnaire:

1. Please describe (by choosing the correct statement) how can the facility be reached from the pedestrian crossing/bus station/parking lot:

- With obstacles (steep climb, curbs, stairs)
- With obstacles which are overcome (e.g. by a ramp or lowered curbs)
- Without obstacles
- I don't know

2. Please describe (by choosing all correct statements) what does the entrance to the facility look like:

- In front of and behind the door there is no step/staircase
- In front of the doors there is a staircase but there is an adequate* ramp
- In front of the doors there is a staircase but there is a lifting platform*
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- There are levels and floors but everything is connected by an elevator
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- There are visual and sound announcement of the client whose turn it is
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Tactile information board is a relief processed surface placed independently at the entrance which shows the facility fundamentals with the purpose of informing blind and vision-impaired persons about the movement inside a larger public facility.

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Health center

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The day of the reception of the questionnaire	

Questionnaire:

1. Please describe (by choosing the correct statement) how can the facility be reached from the pedestrian crossing/bus station/parking lot:

- With obstacles (steep climb, curbs, stairs)
- With obstacles which are overcome (e.g. by a ramp or lowered curbs)
- Without obstacles
- I don't know

2. Please describe (by choosing all correct statements) what does the entrance to the facility look like:

- In front of and behind the door there is no step/staircase
- In front of the doors there is a staircase but there is an adequate* ramp
- In front of the doors there is a staircase but there is a lifting platform*
- In front of the doors there is a staircase but there is an elevator*
- In front of the doors there is a staircase but there is no any aid to overcome the height
- The doors are wide enough (90 or more cm)
- The doors are automatic (with sensors for opening)
- The doors are without doorstep
- The doors are easily opened
- The doors are revolving with the option for entrance for the users with difficulties in movement
- The doors are revolving without the option for entrance for the users with difficulties in movement
- The doors are narrow (two people cannot pass each other in the doorway)
- At the very entrance doors there is a doorstep higher than 0.5 cm
- The doors are difficult to open
- Behind the entrance doors there is a step/staircase

3. Please describe (by choosing all correct statements) what does the movement inside the facility look like:

- Everything is on the same level
- Tactile lines* of guidance for blind and vision-impaired persons are provided
- There are levels and floors but everything is connected by ramps
- There are levels and floors but everything is connected by platforms
- There are levels and floors but everything is connected by an elevator
- The hallways from the entrance doors to the information desk, rooms and other premises dedicated to users are wide enough*
- The passage for wheelchairs is narrow, people pass each other with difficulties
- There are levels and floors and there is nothing to facilitate the movement
- I don't know

4. Please describe (by choosing all correct statements) how can the blind, vision-impaired, deaf, hearing-impaired persons get information inside the facility:

- Tactile information board* is provided
- The sign system/ labels for spatial orientation are provided
- The person who knows the Serbian sign language is employed
- The assistive hearing system* is provided (e.g. the inductive loop)
- There is a clearly labeled information desk in the interior

- An accessible web page is provided and the documentation which is taken is according to standards which enable blind and vision-impaired persons to read a document with the use of software
- There are visual alarms for deaf persons inside the facility
- Nothing of the stated
- I don't know

5. Please describe (by choosing all correct statements) what does the counter/desk for the communication with users look like:

- The height is adjusted to users in wheelchair or short persons
- It is equipped with assistive hearing system* (the inductive loop)
- There are visual and sound announcement of the client whose turn it is
- Nothing of the stated
- I don't know

6. Please describe (by choosing all correct statements) what does the sanitary premises*, if available to users, look like:

- The doors are wide enough and do not block the entrance by opening
- The doors are wide enough but they block the entrance
- There are handrails at the wall/floor
- The toilet, washbasin and other equipment are available to users in wheelchair
- The space is wide enough* for the movement of wheelchair
- There is nothing of the stated
- I don't know

7. Please describe (by choosing all correct statements) the accessibility of a specific content:

- The ambulance doors are wide enough and without a doorstep
- There is a multilingual audio guide for blind persons
- There is a hydraulic gynecological chair (for the examination of disabled women)
- There is a mammography with an adjustable height
- There is a fenced space for children to play
- There is an option of a visual contact with children
- There is a room for baby changing
- There is no specific content
- I don't know

8. Thank you for the conscientious description of the facility! Please state in the continuation all additional information about the accessibility with regards to the observed facility:

NOTE (the explanation of some of the terms which are used in the questionnaire):

An adequate ramp is a leaning plane with maximum inclination of 8.3 percent (to 15cm of height difference the approximate length of the ramp is 1 meter) and constructed in all aspects in compliance with the technical standards of accessibility.

A lifting platform (vertically lifting or steep lifting collapsible platform) is electromotive device designed to overcome the height difference of more than 1.2m in compliance with technical standards of accessibility in every aspect dedicated to the wheelchair users.

An adequate elevator is of minimum dimensions 110cm x 140cm, the access to the elevator at the level of the entrance to the building has free space of dimensions at least 150cm x 200cm.

Tactile guiding line/tactile safety field is a relief processing of the walking space dedicated to the orientation and guidance of the movement of blind or vision-impaired persons. These are placed with the purpose of directing and warning of users to the change of the movement direction of that path; of informing users about the approach to a danger zone: the change of the path height, approaching the staircase, approaching the traffic at the crossroads and other danger zones;

Tactile information board is a relief processed surface placed independently at the entrance which shows the facility fundamentals with the purpose of informing blind and vision-impaired persons about the movement inside a larger public facility.

Assistive hearing system is a sound system which uses transmitters and receivers which detour the acoustic space between the source of the sound and the person who uses the hearing aid. These are the systems for the improvement of the sound environment in certain space (e.g. at the counter, in the waiting room, at the conference room, etc.)

Sanitary premises/Restroom for disabled parties is designed and equipped pursuant to Article 20 *the Rulebook on technical standards of planning, designing and construction of facilities which provide undisturbed movement and access to persons with disabilities, children and elderly people* published at the Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia no. 22/2015. See at <https://goo.gl/s8SfYq>

Affiliate/Affiliate service/Branch of the Republic fund for pension and disabled insurance – RF PDI

In the cooperation with the Accessibility Audit Association, Protector of Citizens implements the project named “Accessibility for all” with the aim to improve the implementation of local policies in the sphere of accessibility pursuant to international standards and thus to contribute to the exercise of the complete social inclusion of persons with disabilities, elderly and other persons with difficulties in movement through enhanced possibility of access to the public-use facilities. The project shall be implemented owing to the financial support of the European Union through the NHRI-EU project implemented by the Danish institute for human rights.

Within the project, the data about problems with regards to the provision of an accessible environment in a certain number of municipalities and cities selected according to the previously determined criteria shall be collected. The collected data shall be processed and compiled in a Special report of Protector of Citizens about the accessibility with the recommendations for improvement sent to competent bodies which shall be published in October 2018.

We would kindly ask you to complete the questionnaire not later than by 15th June, 2018. You may send the completed questionnaire back to the address of Protector of Citizens, 16, Deligradska St., 11000 Belgrade or via electronic mail to zastitnik@zastitnik.rs.

Name of the institution/facility:	
Location and address:	
Questionnaire completed by (name, surname, phone number):	
Questionnaire reviewed and approved by (name, surname, phone number):	
Responsible person on behalf of the self-government unit of the distribution and collection of questionnaires (name, surname, phone number):	
In case of any questions or existence of some uncertainties, please send them to one of the following addresses.	vidan.dankovic@pristupacnost.org (Vidan Danković) al.jankovic@pristupacnost.org (Aleksandar Janković)
The day of the reception of the questionnaire	

Questionnaire:

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