

Government's analysis,
assessment and research activities

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and accessibility in the built environment

- Legislation and policy needs of the future

31 March 2022 | Niina Kilpelä



Background

- Finland ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2016. The Convention obligates the Member states to identify and remove obstacles to the built environment and to implement measures to develop minimum accessibility standards and implementation guidelines.
- The Government Decree on the Accessibility of buildings, which entered into force in 2018, is part of the national implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities.

Objectives

- Describe the coverage of current accessibility legislation in the built environment from the perspective of the obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities.
- Produce information for future needs for accessibility legislation in order to meet the obligations of the UN Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities in a sustainable and appropriate manner.

Research questions

- How does the accessibility legislation in the built environment meet the obligations of the UN Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities?
- What is the state of accessibility in the built environment in Finland?
- What kind of legislation, guidelines and operating methods do different countries have to identify and remove obstacles to the built environment?

Working group

- Professor Laura Arpiainen, Sotera Research Group at Aalto University
 - Accessibility expert, architect Satu Wäre-Åkerblom
 - Eeva Hillukkala, Master of laws and Health Sciences
 - Raisa Mäkinen, Research Assistant, Bachelor of Science and technology, Aalto University
 - Dr. Vera Roberts, University of OCAD, inclusive Design Research Center
- The working group also included experts by experience

Project measures

- Literature and statistics review
- Comparison of Finnish national legislation with the requirements of the UN Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities
- Surveys for experts and stakeholder workshop
- Panel discussions between experts by experience
- International survey of legislation and operating methods for identifying and removing obstacles to the built environment

Results

- Description of the coverage of accessibility legislation, e.g.:
 - current legislation does not sufficiently address sensory accessibility
 - lack of provisions on public outdoor spaces
 - accessibility of travel chains is inadequate
 - shortcomings in the supervision of compliance with legislation
- Legislative amendments
- Description of the accessibility of the built environment
- Proposals on how information on the state of accessibility should be collected

Recommendations

- Users are included in the process
- The effects of the provisions are monitored
- Monitoring of implementation
- Incentives
- Influencing attitudes
- Collect information on the accessibility of the built environment
- Determine a body that handles user complaints

More information

- Report in Finnish (abstract in English) <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-383-382-1>
- Report in Swedish, abstract in English) <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-383-275-6>

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Thank you!

Inquiries:
niina.kilpela@gov.fi

A! Aalto University
School of Arts, Design
and Architecture

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