

**Instruction for the Beneficiaries
of the Interreg IPA Romania -Serbia**

Ref: Compliance with international/European/national provisions regarding accessibility for web and content with informational character intended for the public for Interreg IPA România-Serbia Programme beneficiaries

Having in mind the provisions of art. 7, letter A para. 4 letter d) and n) of the subsidy contract, the hereby Instruction is issued to clarify the mandatory and minimum requirements to be observed regarding accessibility for web and content with informational character intended for the public for Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme beneficiaries, including technical assistance beneficiaries.

INSTRUCTION

During the 2021-2027 programming period, member states must adhere to the obligations of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and ensure accessibility in accordance with Article 9 of the Convention and harmonized legislation in the field. Additionally, the Common Provisions Regulations 2021/1060 establish a set of enabling conditions, the UN Convention being one of these conditions.

Thus, the implementation of CRPD will be systematically carried out in every phase of the programme, both in programme management and in the management of individual projects at the beneficiary level.

Therefore, to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, the actions funded will ensure equal access to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas (Article 9 of CRPD).

Furthermore, the application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in the European Union is a horizontal condition applicable to all specific objectives of funding programmes. In accordance with the Guide to the Application of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in the Implementation of structural European Funds, beneficiaries must consider the rights mentioned in the Charter throughout the life cycle of projects, including communication activities.

Considering the obligations established regarding web accessibility and content with informational character intended for the public, it is necessary that all beneficiaries comply with minimum standards of web page accessibility and material content used within the programme to ensure full information of all groups in accordance with the

principle of equal opportunities and public participation, and to avoid sanctions established as part of the human rights monitoring mechanism.

At the European level, the reference framework regarding digital accessibility is provided by the European Standard for Digital Accessibility No. 301 549 V3. This standard establishes how web pages and software applications should be designed to meet the needs of users with disabilities.

In digital communication efforts, all project beneficiaries shall consider alignment to the listed requirements, as they see fit for the purpose of their project, and not limited to:

- Project or beneficiary web pages will be made accessible to the persons with disabilities using screen readers (e.g., screen reader or screen magnifier);
- Web pages will contain means to augment written text, modify font, and use colour contrast as necessary;
- Images such as photographs or graphics will be accompanied by written descriptions;
- Documents uploaded to web pages or distributed in electronic format will be made accessible to be read by users of screen readers (e.g., PDF text, text, or Word formats);
- Uploaded documents will also have an easy-to-read version for persons with intellectual disabilities;
- Ensure the correct structuring of content. Use semantic HTML elements (such as <header>, <nav>, <main>, <footer>) to organize content logically. This facilitates navigation for users with screen readers or other assistive technologies.
- Ensure that images have alternative text: Provide alternative descriptions for all images using the "alt" attribute in the tag. These descriptions help users with visual impairments understand the content of the images.
- Use appropriate colours and contrast: Ensure that text and background have sufficient contrast for easy readability. Avoid using colours exclusively to convey information and provide alternatives for different colour combinations.
- Enable navigation and website usage without a mouse: Ensure that all functions and links are accessible and usable using only the keyboard. Also, provide alternative methods for actions that require mouse usage, such as hover or drag-and-drop.
- Facilitate navigation for users with visual impairments: Ensure that all pages and interactive elements are correctly labelled for interpretation by screen readers. For example, use correct labels for forms and buttons.
- Ensure that pages are responsive: Web page design should adapt to different screen sizes and provide a consistent experience on mobile and desktop devices.

- Test page accessibility: Use accessibility testing tools and techniques to identify and address any issues. Additionally, involve users with different disabilities in the testing process to obtain direct feedback.
- Provide alternatives for multimedia content: For multimedia content (such as videos or audio content), provide transcripts, subtitles, and descriptions to facilitate access for users with hearing or vision impairments.
- Use semantic markup for links and navigation: Use clear and consistent labels for links and navigation menus to facilitate their identification and use by screen readers and other assistive technologies.

Furthermore, in accordance with the Decision of the President of the National Authority for the Digitization of Romania no. 815/2022 regarding the Approval of the Compliance Monitoring Standards for websites and mobile applications with accessibility requirements, within 18 months from the publication in the Official Gazette of Romania of the standards, each Romanian public sector organization is obliged to possess an inspection report for each website/mobile application under its administration, which will be renewed according to its validity.

The present **INSTRUCTION** comes into effect starting from the day of its signing by the Head of the MA.

Oana CRISTEA
Head of the MA

Interreg IPA Romania-Serbia Programme