

Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation

**Directives to election commissions on ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled
citizens of the Russian Federation. Law enforcement practice experience**

**Moscow
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This publication is dedicated to election commissions' practical work to ensure the electoral rights of disabled citizens of the Russian Federation during the period of 2009-2011.

The publication contains documents and materials of the CEC of Russia, election commissions and public organizations of the disabled reflecting work on ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled, text of speeches of the participants of the "round table" dedicated to "Participation of the disabled in the election process in the Russian Federation" held by the State Duma Committee for constitutional legislation and state construction, the Inter-factional Deputy Association of the State Duma for the disabled in cooperation with the CEC of Russia on September 20, 2010 in the State Duma. It also contains the materials on implementation of the pilot project of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation under the title "Road to election precinct" within the frames of preparation and carrying out of elections during the single voting day on October 10, 2010 in the subjects of the Russian Federation.

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Dear friends!

It is regrettable that approximately 11 percent of voters of the Russian Federation are disabled people and that amounts to 12.5 million of our citizens having the right to vote.

For the period followed the last federal elections the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation and the election commissions of the Russian Federations have carried out the activities aimed at ensuring the electoral rights of disabled citizens of the Russian Federation.

We are fully aware that the election commissions of the Russian Federation shall establish all reasonable conditions for ensuring the electoral rights of the disabled.

Four specific programs are dedicated to this issue.

First program involves joint work of the election commissions with the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation, Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Russian Federation on obtaining and verifying advance information on disabled voters. These authorities, other organizations and public organizations of the disabled are in charge of listing the people in need of special conditions for exercising of their constitutional electoral right.

Second program involves installation of special equipment at polling stations, customization of new voting machines to the needs of people with sight and hearing impairments and reduced mobility.

Third program involves broad awareness-raising activities which form and contents are adjusted to the needs of disabled voters.

Fourth program that we pay the most attention to is the CEC of Russia project “Road to election precinct”.

Volunteers (representatives of the election commissions and local administrations, youth organizations, public organizations of the disabled and other institutions) join voters most of which are the disabled on the way from their place of residence to a polling station. They carefully record all obstacles on this way and then provide a local administration with the relevant information with the aim to remove recorded shortcomings that might prevent disabled voters from exercising their electoral right.

We expect that these four programs will be implemented in close cooperation of the election commissions with state power bodies, bodies of local self-government, political parties, public organizations of the disabled and youth organizations.

We welcome the initiative of the State Duma deputies on introduction of amendments to the Federal election and referendum legislation that will allow disabled voters fully exercising their electoral right guaranteed by the Constitution of the Russian Federation.

Unfortunately some candidates do not fully understand the importance of work with disabled voters and often disregard them at all.

We hope that all political parties of our country pay more attention to work with this group of their potential voters and consider the specifics of interaction with disabled voters while organizing the election campaigning.

On the eve of preparation to the federal elections of the State Duma deputies and the President of the Russian Federation in 2011-2012 all election commissions shall continue their work on ensuring the electoral rights of disabled voters taking specific measures and adding new contents to it.

I wish all the readers health and success.

*Vladimir Churov,
the Chairman of the Central Election Commission
of the Russian Federation*

SECTION 1

Documents and materials of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation

CENTRAL ELECTION COMMISSION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
RESOLUTION

“On Directives on ensuring the electoral rights of disabled voters of the Russian Federation at carrying out of the election of deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation of the Sixth convocation and elections and the election of the President of the Russian Federation”

June 29, 2011

N 18/194-6

On the basis of Article 25 of the Federal Law “On the Election of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation” and Article 19 of the Federal Law “On the Election of the President of the Russian Federation” the Central Election Commission resolves the following:

1. The Directives on ensuring the electoral rights of disabled voters of the Russian Federation at carrying out of the election of deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation of the Sixth convocation and the election of the President of the Russian Federation

2. Department of election process organization, department of public relations and information and Russian Center for Training in Election Technologies under the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation with participation of members of the Public scientific and methodological advisory council under the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation shall prepare information publications for disabled voters in connection with the election of deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation of the Sixth convocation and the election of the President of the Russian Federation.

3. The Administration of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation in cooperation with election commissions of the Russian Federation shall summarize the experience of work on ensuring the electoral rights of disabled voters of the Russian Federation during the federal election period.

4. This Resolution shall be published in the journal “Bulletin of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation”.

*the Chairmain of the
Central Election Commission
of the Russian Federation*

V.E. Churov

*The Secretary of the
Central Election Commission
of the Russian Federation*

N.E.Konkin

The Directives on ensuring the electoral rights of disabled voters of the Russian Federation at carrying out of the election of deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation of the Sixth convocation and the election of the President of the Russian Federation

1. General Provisions

1.1. The Directives objective on ensuring the electoral rights of disabled voters of the Russian Federation at carrying out of the election of deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation of the Sixth convocation and the election of the President of the Russian Federation (hereinafter – Directives) is the determination of tasks and methods of their implementation within the frames of activities of election commissions at all levels in relation to ensuring of the most comfortable conditions for disabled citizens of the Russian Federation for exercising of their active electoral right.

The Directives can also be used at organization of balloting of citizens with temporary health limitations that are not recognized as the disabled (senior people, temporarily disabled, other population of low mobility and others).

The Directives consider specifics of preparation and carrying out of elections for the following categories of the disabled: the blind and visually impaired, the deaf and hearing impaired, as well as people with reduced mobility, including wheelchair users.

The Constitution of the Russian Federation guarantees the equality of rights and freedoms of citizens of the Russian Federation regardless of sex, race, nationality, language, origin, property and official status, place of residence, religion, convictions, and membership of public associations and also of other circumstances.

In accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation this equality refers to the electoral rights of all citizens of the Russian Federation including those who due to their physical form experience certain problems with exercising their rights on their own.

1.4. The issues of ensuring and exercising of the electoral rights of the disabled at carrying out of the election of deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Sixth convocation (hereinafter – the election of deputies of the State Duma) and the election of the President of the Russian Federation are governed by the Constitution of the Russian Federation, Federal Laws “On Basic Guarantees of Electoral Rights and the Right of Citizens of the Russian Federation to Participate in a Referendum” (hereinafter – Federal Law on Basic Guarantees), “On the Election of Deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation” (hereinafter – Federal Law on the Election of Deputies), “On the Election of the President of the Russian Federation” (hereinafter – Federal Law on the Election of the President).

Every citizen of the Russian Federation regardless of his physical condition has the right (and shall be provided with a possibility) to participate in the management of state affairs through representatives he freely elected by ballot voting, personally participate in ballot voting during elections that is based on universal and equal right guaranteed, inter alia, by such international legal instruments as the Convention on democratic election standards, electoral rights and freedoms in state members of the Commonwealth of the Independent States ratified by the Russian Federation on July 1, 2003, the UN Convention on the disabled rights signed by the Russian Federation in September 2008, as well as the Directives for international observers of the Commonwealth of the Independent States in regard to elections and referenda observation.

Organizational and technical issues of ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled in accordance with the federal legislation are governed by Resolutions of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation of May 28, 2009 N 162/1152-5 “On standards of technical equipment for precinct election commissions at carrying out of elections and referenda in the Russian Federation”, of December 23, 2009 N 186/1309-5 “On work of certain election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation with websites”, and other regulations of the CEC of Russia.

2. Organization of election commission preparation for the ballot day

2.1. Before the official publication of the resolution on calling the election of deputies of the State Duma and the election of the President of the Russian Federation, election commission of subject of the Russian Federation shall develop a plan of activities aimed at ensuring the electoral rights of disabled citizens of the Russian Federation and impose control over these activities on one of the voting members of the election commission of subject of the Russian Federation.

When deciding on the activities plan it is recommended to consider all stages of election campaign preparation and ensuring of the ballot process, including, inter alia, organization of work on verifying the disabled voters’ information, provision of the polling stations with additional equipment, informing and explaining laws to this category of voters and election administration.

2.2. Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation can organize a Working Group on ensuring the electoral rights of disabled citizens of the Russian Federation out of representative of bodies of social protection (departments)

of the executive bodies of state power of subjects of the Russian Federation, bodies of local self-government, regional branches of the Social Insurance Fund of the Russian Federation and territorial branches of the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation, public organizations of the disabled, specialized institutions and business entities for the disabled. If necessary such Working Groups can be organized under territorial election commissions.

2.3. The Election commission of subject of the Russian Federation is advised: while training members of territorial and precinct election commissions to discuss specific subjects related to preparation for the voting day and organization of voting of disabled voters. This work recommends using an educational film under the title “I have the right”. Ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled citizens” prepared by the CEC of Russia in cooperation with the Russian Center for Training in Election Technologies under the CEC of Russia,

team training methods and other materials. It is considered advisable to involve representatives of public organizations of the disabled in the training process and account their recommendations;

to train the core members of the public organizations of the disabled and other organizations, as well employees of bodies of social protection of population that will be involved in informing disabled voters serviced by them (including home service) on the elections. These organizations being the link between disabled voters and the election commissions are in the most confidence with the disabled especially in regard to obtaining information and necessary clarifications.

2.4. During the establishment of the precinct election commissions it is recommended that they shall include, where necessary, representatives of public organizations of the disabled, bodies of social protection of population, specialists in sign language (sign language interpreters), etc.

3. Organization of work on obtaining (verifying) information on disabled voters included in the voters list in the respective territory

3.1. In accordance with paragraph ¹6 of Article 20 of the Federal Law on Basic Guarantees the information on the number of disabled voters with indication of their disability groups presented to the election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation by territorial branches of the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation as of July 1, 2011 and January 1, 2012 in the context of municipal formations shall be submitted to the territorial election commissions.

The information on disabled voters in detention facilities can be submitted by the heads of such detention facilities at the request of the relevant election commissions.

Territorial election commissions shall organize work on verifying the above information including the information on disability categories (the blind and visually impaired, the deaf and hearing impaired and people with reduced mobility).

Territorial election commissions while cooperating with bodies of social protection (departments) of the executive bodies of state power of subjects of the Russian Federation, bodies of local self-government, medical and social expertise institutions, the territorial branches of the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation and regional branches of the Social Insurance Fund of the Russian Federation and the relevant public organizations of the disabled shall prepare the following information: surname, first name, patronymic name, date of birth, residential address and place of actual residence of citizen (if different from residential address).

On the basis of verified information territorial election commissions together with precinct election commissions organize work on identifying the will of the disabled to take a ballot outside the polling station or at the polling station, revealing the need for the administrative assistance in provision of special vehicle in the latter case.

4. Equipment for election precincts and polling stations

4.1. The election commissions while equipping the election precincts and polling stations shall consider that the disabled participating in the election have the same rights as any other citizens, however they require creation of special conditions that allow them exercising their rights in full. It shall also be accounted that disabled people's personal visit

to polling stations at election precincts, their communication with members of precinct election commissions, use of technical means for balloting is beneficial for their integration into the society and serve as an incentive for them being socially active.

While equipping election precincts and polling stations the needs of citizens with temporary health limitations that are not recognized as the disabled shall be identified and accounted.

4.2. While coordinating the establishment of election precincts and polling stations by heads of local administrations of municipal formations and the territorial election commissions (in accordance with part 2 of Article 13 of the Federal Law on the Election of Deputies and paragraph 2 of Article 25 of the Federal Law on the Election of the President) they shall take into account that election precincts and polling stations where disabled voters will directly participate in balloting shall be easily accessible, that is located on the first floor, have convenient access for citizens and transport, be sufficiently lit, etc.

4.3. If the entrance to the building where the polling station is located is not equipped with special facilities for entering of voters with reduced mobility, the visually impaired and wheelchair users, election commissions shall address municipal authorities and territorial bodies of social protection of population with the request to assist in equipping polling stations with hand-rails, decks, rails, ramps, tactile signs, etc. (could be temporary).

While installing the abovementioned special facilities it shall be taken into account that such facilities shall comply with current construction norms and regulations of the Russian Federation (SNiP 35-01-2001 "On accessibility of buildings and constructions for population with reduced mobility", approved by the Resolution N 73 of the Russian Federation Construction Committee of July 16, 2001), and pedestrian paths and territories adjacent to polling stations at election precincts shall comply with Rules CP 35-105-2002 "On reconstruction of urban development with the account of accessibility for the disabled and other population with reduced mobility", approved and recommended by the Resolution N 89 of the Russian Federation Construction Committee of July 19, 2002.

A Working Group shall be established with participation of members of the election commission, representatives of public organizations of the disabled and bodies of local self-government in order to verify the compliance with the specified standards of special equipment and pedestrian paths.

4.4. At the polling stations where the disabled including those with reduced mobility using wheelchairs, as well as the accompanied blind voters will ballot, in accordance with the Resolution of the CEC of Russia of May 28, 2009 N 162/1152-5 "On technological equipment regulations for precinct election commissions at carrying out of elections and referenda in the Russian Federation", a special polling booth (special balloting booth) shall be established.

Equipment at the polling station (tables, booths and ballot boxes) shall be positioned to ensure accessibility for voters using wheelchairs or voters with reduced mobility.

4.5. For the blind and visually impaired citizens the information board shall be placed with information on political parties participating in the election, on the registered candidates for the President of the Russian Federation and on the procedure of filling in the ballot papers published in large font and (or) using the Braille system.

In accordance with part 9¹ of Article 72 of the Federal Law on the election of the deputies of the State Duma, paragraph 9¹ of Article 66 of the Federal Law on the election of the President the election precincts to have such information on their information board are determined by the election commission of subject of the Russian Federation.

Taking into account the needs of the said category of voters, special means of optical correction (magnifying glasses, optic magnifying glasses, etc.), additional lighting and chairs shall be placed in ballot booths at election precincts.

4.6. During the balloting of voters who are visually impaired, if they want to independently fill their ballots, two types of special stencils can be used:

with cuts in place of squares in ballots to mark the rows with names of political parties and registered candidates;

with cuts in place of squares in ballots to mark the rows with names of political parties and registered candidates published using the Braille system.

In accordance with part 2¹ of Article 73 of the Federal Law on the election of the deputies of the State Duma, paragraph 2¹ of Article 67 of the Federal Law on the election of the President the election precincts to have such stencils made for are determined by the election commission of subject of the Russian Federation.

5. Organization of public awareness activities

While developing the plans of activities aimed at information support for the election in order to improve information availability the election commissions shall consider reasonable measures aimed at informing of disabled voters.

Informing of disabled voters is carried out with the help of various ways of ensuring their free access to information that are determined with account of their disability category.

5.3. The election commissions can distribute information materials among the relevant categories of voters independently and with assistance of bodies of social protection of population, public organizations of the disabled and other public institutions, placing them (as agreed) in areas most frequented by the disabled of all categories (clinics, bodies of social protection of population, branches of The Pension Fund of the Russian Federation, social shops, etc.)

5.4. Election commissions that shall provide information for disabled voters shall:

provide the possibilities for using radio broadcasting network;

prepare information materials in audio format (on digital media) on the election campaign procedure (on balloting time and place, main activities and contacts), political parties, participating in the election, candidates for the President of the Russian Federation, balloting procedure, ballot filling procedure and others;

provide for the preparation of information publications (leaflets) printed in large fonts as well as with the use of the Braille system;

while providing information materials for visually impaired people use possibilities of information and telecommunication network or special information system including, inter alia, official websites of the CEC of Russia, the election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation created in accordance with paragraph 6 of the Resolution of the CEC of Russian of December 23, 2009 N 186/1309-5 “On work of certain election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation with websites”;

address the mass media with the request to publish information about the election in text format in information and telecommunication network or in special information system;

in order to provide blind citizens with information on the election use technical means of the libraries for the blind, correctional schools and public organizations of the disabled that possess special equipment (for visually impaired) with computer programs that convert text files into audio files. If possible information can be transmitted using mobile communication by sending text messages that are converted into voice message when received;

provide specialized libraries for the blind with necessary information materials prepared by election commissions and adapted for this category of voters.

Election commissions shall provide information support to visually impaired voters in cooperation with regional and local public organizations of the All-Russian Association of the Blind.

Election commissions that shall provide information for the deaf and hearing impaired voters during the election campaign shall, whenever possible:

use text transmission of information on the election by means of fax or mobile phone (text messages);

while cooperating with the mass media and preparing broadcasts of various programs on the election and news bulletins including videos on preparation and process of the election ensure that the sign language or subtitles are provided.

Visual information on the election in public zones shall be placed in the way that it can be read by voters using wheelchairs without extra efforts.

Election commissions with due advance shall provide disabled voters with information on various ways of balloting stipulated by the Federal election legislation: balloting using absentee ballots, balloting outside the polling station, balloting with assistance of other people.

Political parties participating in the election and candidates for the President of the Russian Federation shall pay special attention to information work with this category of voters and prepare election campaign materials for blind and visually impaired voters in audio format or in large fonts, and video materials for deaf and hearing impaired voters with subtitles or sign language.

With the aim of improvement of legal culture of disabled voters and their integration into society, election commissions in cooperation with public organizations of the disabled, bodies of local self-government and other organizations shall use various forms of public awareness activities, including organization of exhibitions, forums, business and role play games, as well as games with computer technologies elements; pay attention to work with young and future voters; organize various informational events for target audience in correction schools and other educational institutions, rehabilitation centers, children’s summer camps, etc.

While providing disabled citizens with information and rendering counseling assistance to them the election commissions may use the “hot line” communication with voters including fax, mobile

communication and web resources of election commissions. Election commissions shall also involve representatives of public organizations of the disabled to assist with this.

6. Organization of the balloting process for disabled voters

6.1. In order to ensure maximum accessibility for disabled voters on their way from their residential place to polling station the relevant election commission may address the bodies of social protection of population and public organizations of the disabled with request to organize a joint work on preparation of a “passport of disabled voter with the route to election precinct” (hereinafter – passport).

The passport shall contain the following information: surname, name, patronymic name; residential address; age; disability category (visual impairment, reduced mobility); lives in apartment: alone/with family; building floor; telephone; availability of special transportation vehicle/accompanying person to reach the election precinct; type of building (private/comfortable); availability of means to exit the apartment into the street (elevators, lift platforms, hand-rails, ramps complying with current construction norms and regulations); availability on the way: sound traffic-lights, underground walkways, surface walkways with tactile signs, specially equipped municipal vehicles with lift platforms, convenient access roads to election precinct; means for entering election precinct (elevators, lift platforms, hand-rails, ramps complying with current construction norms and regulations); other problems that may arise while moving from residential place to election precinct.

Filled passport can be signed by disabled voter, representative of bodies of social protection of population, representative of public organization of the disabled, the chairman of precinct election commission.

On the results of the analysis of data indicated in the passport(s), proposals are submitted to state power bodies of subject of the Russian Federation and (or) bodies of local self-government to take measures to ensure access of the disabled to election precinct, and to bodies of social protection of population – to allocate a specialized vehicle with lifter to assist the disabled using wheelchairs or a social taxi (specifying the quantity).

Before the voting day and upon receiving of the data on disabled voters precinct election commissions verify the information on the balloting place of the disabled (inside the polling station of the election precinct or outside it) and on necessity to assist with balloting.

In accordance with Article 77 of the Federal Law on the election of the deputies and Article 71 of the Federal Law on the election of the President, disabled voters have the right to submit a written or oral request (including submitted with assistance of other people) on providing them with a possibility to ballot outside polling station on the voting day. Precinct election commission is obliged to ensure this right in accordance with the above provisions of the Federal Laws.

In accordance with parts 5 and 6 of Article 74 of the Federal Law on the election of deputies and paragraphs 5 and 6 of Article 68 of the Federal Law on the election of the President, the disabled who are not at their residential places on the voting day and cannot come to the polling station that lists them as voters have the right, by submitting the written application with stating the reason for being provided an absentee ballot, to receive in the relevant territorial election commission (in 45-20 days before the voting day) or in the precinct election commission (in 19 days before the voting day or later) the absentee ballots and take part in balloting at the election precinct on the territory of which they will stay on the voting day.

If a voter cannot come to election precinct on his own to receive an absentee ballot, this ballot can be given to his representative on the basis of a notarized power of attorney certified by administration of the medical treatment facility (if the voter is being treated at this facility).

Election commissions cooperating with bodies of social protection of population may, at the request of disabled voter, assist in obtaining an absentee ballot and providing of a vehicle (social taxi) by bodies of social protection of population.

6.5. On the voting day at a polling station a disabled voter or a voter with other health impairments that do not allow him signing upon receiving a ballot or filling a ballot or taking part in electronic balloting, in accordance with part 10 of Article 75 of the Federal Law on the election of deputies and paragraph 10 of Article 69 of the Federal Law on election of the President, has the right to use the assistance of another voter who is not a member of election commission, a registered candidate, his agent or an authorized representative for financial matters, or authorized representative of a political party, including for financial matters, or foreign (international) observer.

Such voter informs election commission orally on his intention to use the assistance of another person. In such case the surname, name and patronymic name, number of passport or other document identifying the person assisting the voter is written in the relevant column of the voters list.

6.6. At a polling station voting members of precinct election commissions can assist the disabled when requested and inform them on political parties that are included in the ballot and on registered candidates for the President of the Russian Federation, including information prepared specifically for blind and visually impaired voters as well as escort them to ballot booth, stationary ballot box, assist them with entering and exiting the building where the polling station is located.

6.7. For the purposes of independent balloting of visually impaired voters inside or outside a polling station the election commissions shall use special stencils for filling in the ballots.

By putting a blank ballot inside a stencil folder a voter is able to find the name of a political party, a registered candidate for the President of the Russian Federation and put a mark in the relevant slot. Upon filling the ballot a voter takes it out of the folder and puts into a ballot box.

Stencils for filling in ballots made with the use of the Braille system or without it can be used, if necessary. They can be used by visually impaired voters that are not recognized as the disabled.

Sign language interpreters, social and medical workers shall be employed by election precincts with assistance of bodies of social protection of population and public organizations of the disabled in case a significant number of the deaf and hearing impaired voters is expected.

If disabled voters or voters with reduced mobility are in custody as suspects or accused, election commission shall ensure exercising of their electoral right with account of their disability category or health limitations.

7. Account of specifics of election behavior of disabled voters in activities of election commissions

7.1. Election commissions while working with disabled voters shall account the specifics of their disability categories.

7.2. When a disabled voter comes to a polling station he/she shall be asked if any assistance is needed.

7.3. When communicating with blind voter, it is recommended to talk directly to such blind voter and not to the accompanying person, use colloquial speech and not leave such blind voter without a warning.

7.4. When working with hearing impaired voters, it is recommended to talk directly to such voter, use simple gestures clarifying the procedure of balloting.

This voter can be communicated with in written form or through a sign language interpreter.

7.5. When working with a voter with reduced mobility, such voter shall be offered a chair or free space at the table with ballots for the wheelchair, as well as offered to be escorted to ballot booth and a polling station exit. If necessary, such voter shall be assisted with boarding a vehicle.

8. Final provisions

Upon tabulation of vote returns, election commissions shall take measures to inform disabled voters on the results including with the help of public organizations of the disabled.

Technique of cooperation of election commissions with public organizations of the disabled

Prepared by the member of the working group on issues of ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped people and other specific categories of voters under the Public scientific and methodological advisory council under the CEC of Russia, the chairman of the Election commission of the Tver Region, V.N.Pesenko (term of office from April 23, 2007 to May 19, 2011)

1. Introduction

1.1.The technique of cooperation of election commissions with public organizations of the disabled (hereinafter – Technique) was developed in order to assist election commissions of various levels with ensuring and exercising of the electoral rights of handicapped people and establishing a procedure of cooperation with public organizations of the disabled.

1.2.The legal framework for application of the technique includes:
The Constitution of the Russian Federation

The Federal Law “On Basic Guarantees of Electoral Rights and the Right of Citizens of the Russian Federation to Participate in a Referendum”;

The Directives on ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled voters of the Russian Federation at carrying out of the election of deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation of the Fifth convocation and the election of the President of the Russian Federation (Extract from the minutes of the CEC of Russia meeting of July 11, 2007 N 20-4-5);

Resolution of the CEC of Russia of March 12, 2009 N 32-r “On the Plan of Cooperation of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation with All-Russian Public Organizations of the Disabled for 2009-2011”;

election law of subjects of the Russian Federation.

1.3.The Technique is developed on the basis of the approved forms and cooperation methods of the Election commission of the Tver Region with term of office from 2007 to 2011 with public organizations of the disabled as well as on experience of other election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation.

2. Implementation stages

2.1. Definition of partners for ensuring and exercising of the electoral rights of the disabled.

Proposed partners*: bodies of social protection of population;

regional branch of the All-Russian public organization “All-Russian Association of the Disabled”;

regional public branch of the “All-Russian Association of the Blind”;

regional branch of the All-Russian public organization “All-Russian Association of the Deaf”;
regional branch of the All-Russian public organization “All-Russian Association of the Afghanistan disabled veterans”;
regional specialized library for the blind and the library branches;
branches, regional and local offices of organizations of the disabled;
youth agencies;
volunteer centers;
and specialized media.

2.2. Establishment of a Working Group for ensuring the electoral rights of handicapped citizens (hereinafter – Working Group).

Implementation procedure:

working meetings with potential partners to clarify the objectives of the Working Group activities and approval of candidates for the Working Group;

adoption of the Resolution on establishment of a Working Group at the meeting of the election commission of subject of the Russian Federation (Appendix N 1: Resolution of the Election commission of the Tver Region of August 23, 2007 N 01-13/60 “On Working Group for ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled”).

2.3. Organization of Working Group activities.

The Working Group activities are organized by the election commission of subject of the Russian Federation and include:

exchange of schedules of activities of public organizations of the disabled and the election commissions;

participation of the Working Group members in workshops with members of territorial election commissions, meetings with representatives of regional branches of political parties;

**Partners of the Election commission of the Tver Region include: Department of social protection of population of the Tver Region, Youth agency of the Tver Region, Tver regional branch of the All-Russian public organization “All-Russian Association of the Disabled”, Tver regional public branch of the All-Russian Association of the Blind, Tver regional branch of the All-Russian public organization of the disabled “All-Russian Association of the Deaf”, Tver regional branch of the All-Russian public organization of the Afghanistan war veterans, independent newspaper “Tak zhyvem”, public cultural institution “Tver regional specialized library for the blind named after M.I.Suvorov”, Center of youth volunteer programs of CFR, territorial election commissions, bodies of social protection of population, youth agencies, branches, regional and local branches of the organizations of the disabled.*

advance approval of activities;

testing of new additional balloting tools, consulting on development of new methods of ensuring the exercising of the electoral rights by the disabled;

preparation of working documents.

Carrying out of the Working Group meetings (Appendix N 2: Working documents of the meetings of the Working Group for ensuring the electoral rights of the disabled under the Election commission of the Tver Region).

2.4. Development and adoption of the Plan of cooperation of the election commission of subject of the Russian Federation with regional branches of All-Russian public organizations of the disabled (hereinafter – Plan of cooperation) for the specific period (usually for 2-3 years) and its implementation.

2.4.1. Procedure of development and adoption of the Plan of cooperation includes: meetings, “round tables” discussion, consultations on the issues of the Plan of cooperation development;

summarizing proposals to the Plan of cooperation; drawing up of the Plan of cooperation;

approval of the Plan of cooperation at the meeting of the Working Group for ensuring the electoral rights of handicapped people;

Approval of the Plan of cooperation by the Resolution of the election commission of subject of the Russian Federation (Appendix N 3: Resolution of the Election commission of the Tver Region of May 19, 2009 N 01-13/752 “On the Plan of cooperation of the Election commission of the Tver Region with regional branches of All-Russian public organizations of the disabled for 2009-2011).

2.4.2. Implementation of the developed Plan of cooperation, correction (amendment) of the Plan of cooperation are performed through organization of activities in accordance with the Plan of cooperation, analysis of their results, preparation of information memos, correction (amendment) of the Plan of cooperation activities on the basis of the analysis of their results, as well as preparation of annual and interim reports on implementation of the Plan of cooperation of the election commission of subject of the Russian Federation with regional branches of All-Russian public organizations of the disabled and on implementation of certain projects and events.

3. Main activities

3.1. Project activities.

This type of activities allows solving local problems through development and implementation of specific projects within the approved Plan of cooperation or in addition to approved plans.

The project development starts with determining a specific objective (task or set of tasks) and clear criteria for efficiency assessment. This is followed by specifying the project partners and implementation procedure. Such projects are short-term with specific end result.*

For example, specific projects may include implementation of the project of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation “Road to election precinct” in the subject’s territory, preparation of stencils for balloting of blind and visually impaired voters, events with volunteers participation (for example, the Tver Region project “Elections are open to everyone”), etc.

3.2. Public awareness work among handicapped voters.

Public awareness work among handicapped voters may include the following activities:

preparation and publication of information in mass media, specialized editions, including publication of specialized (thematic) inserts, preparation of special TV programs;

organization of “hot line” including communication in text format for hearing impaired voters;

organization of joint workshops, meetings, “round table” discussions and other events with representatives of regional branches of political parties and public organizations of the disabled;

use of modern adapted information tools such as web sites, including creation of special resource for the visually impaired at the official web site of the election commission of subject of the Russian Federation, use of banners and cross-reference links, as well as mobile communication (text and voice mass messaging);

preparation and distribution among visually impaired people of information materials explaining the issues of the election legislation made with the use of the point system of Braille alphabet and audio records on CDs;

involvement of public organizations of the disabled into election law quizzes and other events;

preparation of audio materials collection with information of the election commission of subject of the Russian Federation and distribution of such collections through specialized libraries and public organizations of the disabled;

making video films with sign language or roll titles;

preparation of audio materials collections on the results of literature competitions adapted for visually impaired people;

organization of specialized exhibitions;

**In 2008 under the initiative of the Election commission of the Tver Region schoolchildren of several municipal formations participated in preparation of stencils for independent balloting of visually impaired voters. This event aimed at achievement of two objectives, one being the provision of stencils for visually impaired voters who could exercise their electoral rights and take part in balloting, and the other being development of schoolchildren's tolerant approach to handicapped people.*

organization and carrying out of discussions, speeches, meetings with members of election commissions explaining election legislation to the disabled in social services centers, regional and district branches of public organizations of the disabled, nursing homes and enterprises that employ the disabled;

preparation and delivery of personal invitations and other activities.

3.3. Creation of balloting conditions for disabled voters at election precinct. Creation of balloting conditions for disabled voters at election precinct by election commissions includes the following:

cooperation with bodies of social protection

of population, branches of the Pension Fund, public organizations of the disabled for obtaining of information on the disabled (and their categories) per each municipal formation and creation of the disabled database within the limits of election precincts;

update on the balloting place of handicapped voters (at polling station or at home);

development of election precinct passport form and drawing up of election precinct passport;

cooperation with bodies of local self-government regarding the equipping of election precincts with ramps and hand-rails and providing the disabled with social transport means;

equipping of election precincts with specialized balloting aids (special balloting booths for voters with reduced mobility (larger than normal, with height-adjustable table), table screens, magnifying glasses, stencils);

cooperation with bodies of social protection of population with regard to social services workers participating in precinct election commissions work.

3.4. Sociological research (interviews, questionnaires).

Sociological interviews allow studying of needs and motivations of handicapped voters. Results of interview and sociological researches specify the issues to be accounted during project activities and allow evaluation of efficiency of a project, event or the whole work. They also allow obtaining interim results during implementation of the Plan of cooperation and adjust it with account of the results (Appendix N 4: interviews with visually impaired voters carried out at the meeting in Tver regional branch of the All-Russian Association of the Blind in the Suvorov library).

3.5. Methodical activity.

While carrying out activities to ensure the electoral rights of handicapped voters, election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation provide methodical support to election commissions and partners below that includes:

development of methodical materials for election commissions below on carrying out activities and implementation of specific projects aimed at ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled;

provision of election commissions with information and methodical materials of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation, information and methodical materials of the election commission of subject of the Russian Federation;

providing consultations during preparation of election legislation and election campaigns materials.

4. Cooperation forms

Information exchange	Methodical support	Organizational activity	Analytic activity

<p>Meetings of the relevant Working Group</p> <p>Participation or organization of joint activities with public organizations of the disabled (including information support of activities, specific nominations related to elections)</p> <p>Cooperation with state powers, bodies of local self-government</p> <p>Use of “hot line”</p> <p>Social partnership</p> <p>Workshops and meetings with representatives of political parties</p> <p>Ensuring free access of citizens to information through the Internet (resource for the visually impaired at the official web site of the election commission of subject of the Russian Federation)</p>	<p>Work in public, guardian and supervisory boards under state power bodies and bodies of local self-government</p> <p>Cooperation with specialized libraries</p> <p>Preparation of information materials and recommendations</p> <p>Provision of organization branches, territorial branches of bodies of social protection and territorial election commissions with information and methodical materials</p> <p>Providing consultations during preparation of election legislation and election campaigns materials</p>	<p>Cooperation with public organizations of the disabled in carrying out of various meetings and other events</p> <p>Cooperation with the executive authorities in solving current and future issues aimed at organization of barrier-free movement of the disabled to the polling station.</p>	<p>Joint interviews and sociological studies for obtaining objective information regarding ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens</p>
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Election commission of the Tver Region

RESOLUTION Election commission of the Tver Region

August 23, 2007

N 01-13/60

City of Tver

On the Working Group of the Election commission of the Tver Region for ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled voters

For the purpose of ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled citizens of the Russian Federation, in connection with the CEC of Russia adoption on July 11, 2007 of the Directives on ensuring the electoral rights of disabled voters of the Russian Federation at carrying out of the election of deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation of the Fifth convocation and the election of the President of the Russian Federation, on the basis of Article 26 of the Federal Law “On the Election of Deputies of the State Duma of the Russian Federation”, Article 20 of the Federal Law “On the Election of the President of the Russian Federation”, Article 18 of the Legislation Codex of the Tver Region, the Election commission of the Tver Region resolves:

1. To organize a Working Group on ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled consisting of:

PESENKO Valeriy Nickolaevich	-the Chairman of the Election commission of the Tver Region, the head of the Working Group;
BYKOVA Valentina Mikhaylovna	- Deputy head of the Working Group, Secretary of the Election commission of the Tver Region
VOVCHENKO Alexey Vitalyevich	-the Head of the Department of social protection of population of the Tver Region, as may be agreed;
KALINKINA Natalia Mikhaylovna	- the Head of Medical and social expertise and rehabilitation under the Department of social protection of population of the Tver Region, as may be agreed;
KUZNETSOVA Galina Evgenyevna	-Chief specialist of the Tver regional branch of the All-Russian public organization “All-Russian Association of the Deaf”, as may be agreed;
PUKHOVA Tatiana Nickolaevna	- Member of the Election commission of the Tver Region;
STRELETSKIY Yuri Eduardovich	-Federal inspector for the Tver Region, as may be agreed;
TREGUB Alexander Borisovich	-Chairman of the Tver regional public branch of the “All-Russian Association of the Blind”, as may be agreed
CHARUHCHEVA Natalia Fedorovna	- Chief editor of “Tak Zhyvem” newspaper, as may be agreed;
SHKUTKOV Anatoly Fedorovich	- Chairman of the Tver regional branch of the All-Russian public organization “All-Russian Association of the Disabled”, as may be agreed

2. The Working Group activities shall be provided for by the administration of the Election commission of the Tver Region.
3. This Resolution shall be published in the “Bulletin of the Election Commission of the Tver Region” and at the web site of the Election commission of the Tver Region.

Deputy Chairman of the Election commission of the Tver Region *V.E.Dronova*

Secretary of the Election commission of the Tver Region *V.M.Bykova*

THE WORKING GROUP MEETING RECORDS

AGENDA of the Working Group meeting on cooperation of the Election commission of the Tver Region with regional branches of All-Russian public organizations of the disabled January 15, 2010

Meeting starts: 11 hours 00 minutes, office 129 (conference room),
23 Sovetskaya St., city of Tver

1. On implementation of the Plan of cooperation of the Election commission of the Tver Region with regional branches of All-Russian public organizations of the disabled in the year of 2009.

V.N.Pesenko – Chairman of the Election commission of the Tver Region

2. On participation of handicapped citizens in balloting during the election on October 11, 2009 in the territory of the Tver Region

V.M.Bykova – Secretary of the Election commission of the Tver Region

3. Proposals for ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens during the local self-government elections on March 14, 2010 in the territory of the Tver Region

V.M.Bykova – Secretary of the Election commission of the Tver Region

PROPOSALS

for ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens during the local self-government elections on March 14, 2010 in the territory of the Tver Region

1. During the training of the members of territorial election commissions the issues of organizing work with handicapped citizens shall be discussed.

2. Territorial election commissions shall use the possibilities of the TV and radio networks to broadcast reports of the heads of election commissions on the process of election campaigning, balloting procedure, possible balloting way, etc.

3. Members of election commissions, representatives of bodies of social protection of population and public organizations of the disabled shall jointly report to certain groups of voters on the process of election campaigning, balloting procedure and balloting ways available to various categories of handicapped citizens.

4. Election commissions together with bodies of social protection and public organizations of the disabled shall distribute information materials and personal invitations to the election.

5. "Voters corners" shall be prepared for the territorial branches of the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation, bodies of social protection, specialized treatment institutions (nursing homes for the elderly and the disabled) and for branches of public organizations of the disabled.

6. Representatives of bodies of social protection of population and public organizations of the disabled shall be present at election precincts and polling stations for handicapped voters for the purpose of assisting the voters.

7. When visually impaired citizens ballot outside polling station of election precinct, such citizens shall be visited by members of precinct election commission and social workers for the purpose of assisting in exercising of the electoral rights by this category of citizens.

8. A sign language interpreter shall be present at election precincts where hearing impaired citizens ballot for the purpose of assisting this category of citizens in exercising their electoral rights.

9. Critically ill voters and voters with reduced mobility shall be assisted in balloting outside polling stations of election precincts upon their prior requests.

10. A set of measures shall be developed jointly with municipal formations administrations, bodies of social protection and public organizations of the disabled for prompt response in case of unforeseen circumstances that prevent or hinder exercising of the electoral rights of various categories of the disabled.

MINUTES
of the Working Group meeting on cooperation of the Election commission of the Tver
Region with regional branches of All-Russian public organizations of the disabled
City of Tver January 15, 2010

Head of the Working Group,
Chairman of the Election commission of the Tver Region Pesenko V.N.

Deputy head of the Working Group,
Secretary of the Election commission of the Tver Region Bykova V.M.

Members of the Working Group Shkutkov A.F.
Tregub A.B.,
Kuznetsova G.E.
Sorokin I.V.

Attending at the Working Group meeting Khokhlova E.V.
Meisner E.V.

HEARD:

1. On positive experience of the Election commission of the Tver Region in exercising of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens of the Russian Federation in the year of 2009.
2. Discussion of the potential joint activities of the Election commission of the Tver Region and All-Russian Association of the Disabled in 2010.
3. Proposals for ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens during the local self-government elections on March 14, 2010 in the territory of the Tver Region

I.

On positive experience of the Election commission of the Tver Region in exercising of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens of the Russian Federation in the year of 2009.

Speakers: V.N.Pesenko, A.B.Tregub, E.V.Khokhlova.

RESOLVED: the work of the Working Group in 2009 shall be considered satisfactory. Plans and projects for prompt and constructive solutions of current issues shall be exchanged with public organizations of the disabled and the Department of social protection of population, and potential organization of joint meetings shall be discussed.

II.

Discussion of the potential joint activities of the Election commission of the Tver Region and All-Russian Association of the Disabled in 2010.

Speakers: V.N.Pesenko, V.M.Bykova, A.B.Tregub, G.E.Kuznetsova.

RESOLVED: Organize regular joint events, meetings and contests. The Plan shall include official appeal to political parties on potential cooperation with the All-Russian Association of the Disabled published in mass media.

III.

Proposals for ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens during the local self-government elections on March 14, 2010 in the territory of the Tver Region

Speaker: V.M.Bykova

RESOLVED: To take notice.

Head

of the Working Group V.N.Pesenko

Deputy head

of the Working Group V.M.Bykova



Election commission of the Tver Region

RESOLUTION

May 19, 2010
13/752

City of Tver

N 01-

On the Plan of cooperation of the Election commission of the Tver Region with regional branches of All-Russian public organizations of the disabled for the period of 2009-2011

In accordance with the Resolution of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation of March 12, 2009 N 32-r “On the Plan of Cooperation of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation with All-Russian Public Organizations of the Disabled for the Period of 2009-2011” and for the purposes of assisting in exercising of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens of the Tver Region, on the basis of Article 19 of the Election Code of the Tver Region of April 7, 2003 N 20-ZO the Election Commission of the Tver Region resolves:

To approve of the Plan of cooperation of the Election commission of the Tver Region with regional branches of All-Russian public organizations of the disabled for the period of 2009-2011 (attached).

The Secretary of the Election commission of the Tver Region V.M.Bykova shall be responsible for control over implementation of the Plan of cooperation of the Election commission of the Tver Region with regional branches of All-Russian public organizations of the disabled for the period of 2009-2011.

This Resolution shall be submitted to the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation, regional branches of public organizations of the disabled and territorial election commissions of the Tver Region.

This Resolution shall be published in the “Bulletin of the Election Commission of the Tver Region” and at the web site of the Election commission of the Tver Region.

Chairman of the Election commission of the Tver Region V.N. Pesenko

Secretary of the Election commission of the Tver Region V.M. Bykova

AGREED

Chairman of the Tver regional branch of the All-Russian public organization "All-Russian Association of the Deaf" S.Y. Ibragimova
May 19, 2009

Chairman of the Tver regional branch of the All-Russian public organization "All-Russian Association of the Disabled"

A.F.Shkutkov
May 19, 2009

Chairman of the Tver regional public branch of the "All-Russian Association of the Blind" A.B.Tregub
May 19, 2009
Chairman of the Tver regional branch of the All-Russian public organization "All-Russian Association of the Afghanistan disabled veterans" O.N.Tolstykh
May 19, 2009

APPROVED

by the Resolution of the Election commission of the Tver Region of May 19, 2009 N 01-13/752

PLAN
of cooperation of the Election commission of the Tver Region with regional branches of All-Russian public organizations of the disabled for the period of 2009-2011

Item	Name of activity	Period for performance	Responsible representatives of regional branches of All-Russian public organizations of the disabled	Responsible representatives of the Election commission of the Tver Region
1	Participation of representatives of regional branches of All-Russian public organizations of the disabled (hereinafter – RB APOD) and the Election commission of the Tver Region (hereinafter – EC TR) in activities carried out by RB APOD and EC TR related to ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens.	The whole period	Shkutkov A.F., Tregub A.B., Kuznetsova G.E.	Department of cooperation with participants of the election process, department of organizational work and logistics
	Name of activity	Period for performance	Responsible representatives of regional branches of All-Russian public organizations of the disabled	Responsible representatives of the Election commission of the Tver Region
2	Carrying out of meetings of the Working Group related to cooperation of the Election commission of the Tver Region with regional branches of the All-Russian public organizations of the disabled and ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens (hereinafter – Working Group) (according to separate plan)	The whole period	Shkutkov A.F., Tregub A.B., Kuznetsova G.E.	
3	Consultations with representatives of APOD during preparation of EC TR documents related to ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens (shall be agreed if necessary)	The whole period	Shkutkov A.F., Tregub A.B., Kuznetsova G.E.	Department of cooperation with participants of the election process, department of organizational work and logistics
4	Ensuring of the implementation of the CEC of Russia Resolution of January 28, 2009 N 146/1064-5 "On Work of Election Commissions of Subject of the Russian Federation on Ensuring of the Election Rights of Handicapped Citizens of the Russian Federation During the Preparation and Carrying out of the Federal election of 2007-2008"	The whole period	Shkutkov A.F., Tregub A.B., Kuznetsova G.E.	V.M.Bykova, Department of cooperation with participants of the election process, department of organizational work and logistics
5	Assistance to territorial election	The whole period	Chairmen of local	Department of

	commissions of the Tver Region, including their Working Groups, in ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens		organizations of RB APOD, G.E.Kuznetsova, I.V.Sorokin, A.B.Tregub, A.F.Shkutkov	cooperation with participants of the election process, department of organizational work and logistics
6	Publication of information in electronic media, web sites of the Election commission of the Tver Region (official and youth), publications in printed media (including "Tak Zhyvem" newspaper) on specifics of balloting of various categories of handicapped voters (according to separate plan)	The whole period	Shkutkov A.F., Tregub A.B., Kuznetsova G.E.	Department of cooperation with participants of the election process, Information Center "SAS – Election"
7	Publication of information in print media on cooperation of EC TR with RB APOD, publication of information at web sites of the Election commission of the Tver Region (official and youth)	The whole period	Shkutkov A.F., Tregub A.B., Kuznetsova G.E.	Department of cooperation with participants of the election process, Information Center "SAS – Election"
8	Publication of information on cooperation of EC TR with RB APOD, on specifics of balloting of various categories of handicapped voters at web sites of RB APOD	The whole period	Shkutkov A.F., Tregub A.B., Kuznetsova G.E.	Department of cooperation with participants of the election process, Information
9	Publication of information in electronic media on the election using the sign language or roll titles (subtitles)	During the preparation and carrying out of the election	G.E. Kuznetsova	Department of cooperation with participants of the election process, Information
10	Organization of "hot line" communication using mobile phones with texts (text-communication)	During the preparation and carrying out of the election	G.E. Kuznetsova	Department of organizational work and logistics, legal department of EC TR administration
11	Summarizing of practical work of EC TR, territorial election commissions on exercising the electoral right of handicapped citizens during the election and preparation of analytical materials	Within a month from the voting day of the relevant election	Chairmen of local organizations of RB APOD, G.E.Kuznetsova, I.V.Sorokin, A.B.Tregub, A.F.Shkutkov	
	Name of activity	Period for performance	Responsible representatives of regional branches of All-Russian public organizations of the disabled	Responsible representatives of the Election commission of the Tver Region
12	Preparation of special exhibits for the exhibition held by the CEC of Russia timed with the International day of the disabled (December 3, 2009)	Till November 1, 2009		Department of cooperation with participants of the election process, department of organizational work and logistics
13	Distribution (copying if necessary) of the educational film and guidance materials for members of precinct election commissions on specifics of work with handicapped voters, prepared by the CEC of Russia	As available from the CEC of Russia		Territorial election commissions, department of organizational work and logistics
14	Interviewing members of local offices of the All-Russian Association of the Blind on participation in the election	December 2009	A.B.Tregub	Department of cooperation with participants of the election process, Information
15	Review of issues on specifics of work with handicapped voters at workshops of low-level election commissions	On a regular basis		V.M.Bykova, department of cooperation with participants of the election process
16	Participation of RB APOD authorized representatives in workshops held by EC TR with chairmen of territorial election commissions (according to separate plan)	The whole period	Shkutkov A.F., Tregub A.B., Kuznetsova G.E.	Department of cooperation with participants of the election process, department of organizational work and logistics
17	Publication of audio collection of the best works "Children writing about election" on the results of the regional contest "Our choice is the future of Russia!"	July 2010	A.B.Tregub	V.M.Bykova, T.N.Pukhova, department of cooperation

				with participants of the election process, department of organizational work and logistics
18	Preparation of special stencil folders for independent balloting of blind and visually impaired citizens	During the preparation and carrying out of the election	A.B.Tregub	Department of cooperation with participants of the election process, department of organizational work and logistics
19	Participation in activities carried out by the CEC of Russia aimed at exercising of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens	According to separate plan		Department of cooperation with participants of the election process, department of organizational work and logistics
20	Creation of the database for election precincts summarizing the information on ensuring conditions for exercising of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens	The whole period		Department of cooperation with participants of the election process, department of organizational work and logistics

**Interviews with disabled voters
VOTER QUESTIONNAIRE**

VOTER QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Tick the source you use to receive the information on the election.

Library

Conversations with family and friends

Mass media

Other sources

2. Do you take part in the election?

Yes No Sometimes

/ If “Yes” to the second question /

3. Where do you prefer to vote?

At home At election precinct

4. Tick what aids you use

during the balloting.

Stencil I 1

Magnifying glass

Voter’s help 1

Please indicate your gender, age and occupation

Thank you for your cooperation!

Results of interviews with visually impaired voters carried out at the meeting of the All-Russian Association of the Blind in the Suvorov library.

1. Information sources: Library - 8.4%

Conversations with family and friends – 15% Mass media (radio, TV, newspapers) – 69%
Electioneers and representatives of precinct election commissions – 7,6%

2. Participation in the election:

Attend the election - 85%

Do not attend the election - 4.6%

Sometimes attend the election – 10,4%

3. Balloting place preference:

At home – 9,5%

At election precinct – 90,5%

4. Use of aids while balloting:

Stencil – 5% Magnifying glass – 5%

Voters help, including accompanying people – 45% Independent balloting – 45%

26 visually impaired people aged 30 to 86 were interviewed

Technique of cooperation of the election commissions with bodies of social protection of population for the purpose of ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled citizens of the Russian Federation

(on the results of practical work of election commissions of the Mari El Republic, the Tatarstan Republic, the Vologda Region, the Irkutsk Region, the Kurgan Region and the Lipetsk Region)

Considered at the joint meeting of the working group on issues of ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped people and other specific categories of voters under the Public scientific and methodological advisory council under the CEC of Russia and Working Group on cooperation of the CEC of Russia with All-Russian public organizations of the disabled on November 26, 2010

1. General Provisions

bodies of social protection of population develop and implement the techniques of creation of social environment available to the disabled, control the implementation of the Federal and regional legislation and other legal acts on social integration of the disabled.

Election commissions actively cooperate with bodies of social protection in relation to ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled citizens of the Russian Federation.

Bodies of social protection are the main link between the election commissions and disabled citizens of the Russian Federation.

Technique of cooperation of the election commissions with bodies of social protection of population (hereinafter – Technique) was developed for the purpose of assisting the election commissions at various levels with ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled citizens of the Russian Federation and creation of the unified procedure of cooperation with the such bodies.

2. Technique legal framework

Legislation of the Russian Federation and subjects of the Russian Federation on election and referenda;

regulatory and legal acts of bodies of social protection;

regulatory and legal acts of the CEC of Russia;

Directives on ensuring the electoral rights of disabled voters of the Russian Federation at carrying out of the election of deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation of the Fifth convocation and the election of the President of the Russian Federation (Extract from the minutes of the CEC of Russia meeting of July 11, 2007 N 20-4-5);

Resolution of the CEC of Russia of March 12, 2009 N 32-r “On the Plan of Cooperation of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation with All-Russian Public Organizations of the Disabled for 2009-2011”;

as well as legal acts of the election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation.

3. Interaction principles

Independence in implementing tasks and exercising authorities at development of cooperation principles and procedure.

Harmonization of decision making process aimed at facilitating of exercising of the electoral rights of disabled citizens of the Russian Federation.

Mutual trust and strict compliance of the election legislation while implementing the tasks.

Mutual consultations on issues of competence of each participant.

Enforceability of agreements reached in the course of mutual activities.

4. Organizational forms of cooperation

It is recommended to conclude the Agreement on cooperation between a specific election commission and relevant bodies of social protection which will provide the procedure of cooperation in issues of ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled, including the procedure of exchange of information and establishment of joint working groups, procedure of informing and legal training of the disabled (subject to territorial and other conditions).

The election commission of subject of the Russian Federation can establish a Working Group on ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled citizens of the Russian Federation with participation of representatives of bodies of social protection (departments) of executive bodies of state power of subjects of the Russian Federation.

If necessary, such working groups can be established under territorial election commissions.

4.3. During the establishment of the precinct election commissions it is recommended that they shall include, where necessary, representatives of bodies of social protection of population.

5. Cooperation forms and procedure

5.1. Organization of work on obtaining (verifying) information on disabled voters included in the voters list in the respective territory

The election commission of subject of the Russian Federation promptly notifies the Department of social protection of population of subject of the Russian Federation on incoming election campaign and requests information on the number of disabled citizens.

The Department of social protection of population of subject of the Russian Federation at the request of the election commission of subject of the Russian Federation shall present in due time the information on the number of disabled citizens (in accordance with the Reference letter of the Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Russian Federation to heads of executive bodies of state power of subjects of the Russian Federation in charge of social protection of population on comprehensive assistance to election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation in obtaining (verifying) information on disabled voters included in the voters list in the respective territory, ref.N 18-4/801 of March 16, 2009).

Obtained information shall be promptly delivered to low-level election commissions.

Territorial election commissions, election commissions of municipal formations together with regional branches of bodies of social protection of population shall verify the information on the number of disabled voters included in the voters list; identify places of actual residence of the disabled and compare them with registered places of residence; submit the information to precinct election commission to verify the number of disabled voters included in the voters lists for each election precinct; identify the will of the disabled to ballot outside polling stations or at polling stations of election precinct.

5.2. Equipment for election precincts.

If the entrance to the building where a polling station is located is not equipped with special facilities for people with reduced mobility, the visually impaired and the wheelchair users, the

election commissions shall address relevant bodies of local self-government, territorial branches of bodies of social protection of population with the request to equip the entrance with hand-rails, decks, rails, ramps, tactile signs, etc. (can be temporary).

5.3. Organization of public awareness activities.

5.3.1. Territorial election commissions, election commissions of municipal formations together with regional branches of bodies of social protection of population distribute information materials on incoming election campaigns and inform disabled voters on possible balloting ways, as well as on the balloting results in the relevant territory.

5.3.2. Election commission shall prepare and regularly update an information board for voters in bodies of social protection of population that the disabled often visit. During the election campaign an election commission together with bodies of social protection shall organize “voters corners” in places regularly visited by all categories of the disabled, such as clinics, pharmacies, branches of the Pension Fund, social shops (as may be agreed).

5.4. Organization of joint activities.

5.4.1. Before the election campaign starts, election commissions shall prepare the plan of activities aimed at ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled and coordinate this plan with bodies of social protection of population.

5.4.2. The election commissions shall invite representatives of bodies of social protection of population to their meetings related to ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled.

5.4.3. Election commissions send their representatives to participate in meetings and conferences related to exercising of the electoral rights of the disabled organized by bodies of social protection.

5.4.4. During the election campaign and in between elections an election commission together with bodies of social protection shall organize legal training of disabled voters by carrying out lectures, quizzes, “round table” discussions, information breaks, public consultations, etc.

5.4.5. Training organized by election commission for members of territorial, district and precinct election commission deals with subjects related to specifics of preparation for the voting day and organization of the disabled balloting. Representatives of bodies of social protection may take part in training advising on how to treat certain categories of the disabled.

5.4.6. Election commission together with bodies of social protection organizes training workshops and other activities with social services workers that will be in charge of informing of the disabled on the election (including visiting homes of the disabled).

5.4.7. Election commissions together with bodies of social protection of population prepare invitations to the election for the disabled that will vote for the first time, congratulate them on the voting day (on the basis of the lists of the disabled voting for the first time).

Election commissions together with bodies of social protection of population organize various activities aimed at ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled voters (for example, participate in implementation of the pilot project of the CEC of Russia “Road to election precinct”).

5.4.9. Election commissions together with bodies of social protection monitor social environment available to the disabled in relation to exercising of their electoral rights, summarize obtained information, and submit it to bodies of local self-government that will make relevant decisions.

5.5. Organization of the balloting process for disabled voters

5.5.1. Territorial election commissions, election commissions of municipal formations together with regional branches of bodies of social protection of population shall ensure balloting outside

polling station at the written request of disabled voters; monitor organization and carrying out of balloting by the disabled on the voting day inside and outside polling station.

5.5.2.Election commissions, at the request of a disabled voter, in cooperation with bodies of social protection may assist in obtaining an absentee ballot (employee of social protection bodies may act as a voter representative and assist in providing a voter with a social taxi, etc.).

5.5.3.Election commission, at the request of a disabled voter to ballot inside a polling station, shall identify the necessity of providing special vehicle and, together with bodies of social protection, organize provision of “social taxi” or special vehicle with lift platform.

5.5.4. During the balloting outside a polling station, election commission shall obtain the information on the voters who need to be assisted by other people to meet commission members or filling in a ballot (such voters include those living alone or having reduced mobility). At the request of such voter and in coordination with bodies of social protection a social worker can be assigned to assist a disabled voter at his place of residence on the voting day.

5.5.5.On the voting day election commission together with bodies of social protection employs sign language interpreters, social employees and medical workers, if necessary, for election precincts where participation of significant number of disabled voters is expected.

5.5.6.On the voting day at election precinct voting members of precinct election commissions and social employees may assist the disabled in informing them on political parties that are listed in a ballot and registered candidates, using, inter alia, information materials prepared for blind and visually impaired voters, as well as in escorting them to the ballot booth, stationary ballot box, helping to enter and exit the building where a polling station of election precinct is located, etc.

6. Final provisions

Procedure and forms of cooperation of election commissions, bodies of social protection of population and public organizations of the disabled may also be governed by supplementary agreements in accordance with the election legislation.

On practice of participation of the regional branches of the All-Russian Association of the Blind in the election process

Prepared by:

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Member of the Working Group under the CEC of Russia on cooperation with All-Russian public organizations of the disabled, Deputy Head of the department of cooperation with regional branches of the All-Russian Association of the Blind V.Y.Matveev.

Considered at the joint meeting of the working group on issues of ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped people and other specific categories of voters under the Public scientific and methodological advisory council under the CEC of Russia and Working Group on cooperation of the CEC of Russia with All-Russian public organizations of the disabled on November 26, 2010

According to statistics, there are over 12 million disabled citizens in the Russian Federation, and over 10 million of those can participate in the election. Considering the fact that approximately 100 million citizens of the Russian Federation have the right to vote, it is fair to say that each tenth voter is a disabled person. Visually impaired people constitute a significant amount of disabled voters and, as practice has shown, experience the most difficulties in exercising their electoral rights.

With regard to these circumstances, assistance to visually impaired voters in exercising their electoral rights is one of the Charter activities of the All-Russian Association of the Blind branches aimed at providing the visually impaired with possibility to “exercise their civil, social and economic rights and capabilities” (Charter of the AAB, Article 4.2). This can be implemented by development of measures aimed at improvement of legal education of visually impaired voters and assistance in organization of the election process meeting the needs of visually impaired voters. The key to successful implementation is the comprehensive work of chairmen of regional and local branches of AAB.

To facilitate this work the Russian Federation signed the Convention on the Rights of the Disabled, international legal instrument that contains the regulatory framework for ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled. In accordance with provisions of Article 29 of this Convention member states guarantee that the disabled have the right to vote and be elected, undertake to provide this category of citizens with the opportunity to fully participate in the election process, and ensure that all “procedures, polling stations and voting materials are appropriate, available and easy to understand and use”.

Until recently the issue of ensuring of the electoral rights and freedoms of the disabled, including the visually impaired, in the Russian Federation was not pointed out as a specific area of focus. That is why the Directives on ensuring the electoral rights of disabled voters of the Russian Federation at carrying out of the election of deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation of the Fifth convocation and the election of the President of the Russian Federation shall be considered as positive and advanced aid for solving the problems of ensuring of the electoral rights and freedoms of the disabled.

An important step was taken in 2008 with establishment of the Working Group on cooperation of the CEC of Russia with All-Russian public organizations of the disabled. At the suggestion of the President of AAB A.Y.Neumyvakin, two more people were accepted as members of this group, Vice-President of AAB V.S.Vshivtsev and Deputy Head of AAB administration V.Y.Matveev. The All-Russian Association of the Blind actively participated in preparation of the Plan of cooperation of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation with All-Russian public organizations of the disabled for 2009-2011. Results of this work significantly improved cooperation between regional branches of AAB and election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation.

Quantitative and qualitative analysis of activities of regional branches of AAB aimed at ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled citizens, level of cooperation with territorial and precinct election commissions, state power of subjects of the Russian Federation and bodies of local self-government and other public organizations of the disabled shows the following.

Various public awareness activities carried out by regional and local branches of AAB and supported by regional election commissions positively influenced the legal awareness of disabled voters.

In many cases disabled voters and their families were informed on their electoral rights and modern balloting possibilities via publications in mass media, TV and radio broadcasts and adapted web sites. In 2006 election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation did not have any web site adapted for visually impaired people, and presently almost all subjects of the Russian Federation can provide such web sites. Regional branches of AAB have created 16 web sites of their own that are used for informing and clarifying any issues related to the election. AAB web sites are listed in Appendix N 1.

Almost everywhere blind and visually impaired voters are provided with information materials in audio format (audio cassettes, compact disks) on the election campaign, political parties participating in the election, candidates, balloting procedure, ballot filling procedure, etc.

In 2006-2007 the idea of applying stencils for blind voters balloting was implemented for the first time. Regional organizations of the Tver Region, the Tula Region and the Tambov Region were the first to implement this idea. Regional organizations have accumulated great experience in stencils preparation. In October 2010 stencils and easy instructions on their use in large fonts, audio format and with the use of the point system were prepared for the election in the Novosibirsk Region, the Nizhni Novgorod Region and other regions. Regional experience will be largely used by the Working Group while preparing stencils for the Federal election of 2011-2012.

Regional organizations extensively use capacities of specialized libraries for the blind for dissemination of various information materials of the CEC of Russia and TEC, information on political parties participating in the election, registered candidates and their election programs in various formats, with the use of large fonts and Braille alphabet, as well as for various information events. Libraries in cooperation with RB AAB create clubs and “voters corners” (the Nizhni Novgorod Region, the Komi Republic, the Khakass Republic), organize workshops (the Krasnoyarsk Territory) and “schools of election legislation” (the Altai Territory). There are many similar examples.

In order to improve election awareness and coverage of election campaign members of RB AAB organize meetings with heads of election commissions (the Chelyabinsk Region, the Irkutsk Region, the Novosibirsk Region), workshops (the Nizhni Novgorod Region), “round table” discussions (the Mari El Republic), “hot lines” (the Bryansk Region, the Irkutsk Region, the Belgorod Region, etc.), education quizzes (“Our right to elect”, the Altai Territory), and contests (the Krasnodar Territory, the Mari El Territory).

Significant attention is paid to assistance and monitoring of distribution of information prepared with the use of Braille alphabet on political parties participating in the election, on ballot filling procedure and balloting process, etc. (the Komi Republic, the Voronezh Region).

Rehabilitation facilities in regional branches of AAB (the Irkutsk Region, the Bryansk Region, etc.) during the preparation to the election serve as information centers equipped with modern devices such as players, voice recorders, electronic magnifying glasses working with computer monitors and other special equipment.

There are many examples showing initiative and creative approach of heads of regional branches of AAB. For example, in 2006, following the initiative of the chairman of the Tver RB AAB A.B.Tregub, specialized Suvorov library for the blind in the city of Tver provided disabled voters with information materials on exercising of their electoral rights with the use of Braille

alphabet, as well as with compact disks and audio cassettes with information materials related to the election (targeted dissemination).

Administration of the Rostov RB AAB and regional library of the Rostov Region, as well as its branches in other cities and districts, participated in the program of informing blind and the visually impaired voters. In 2007 the Rostov TEC and RB AAB were one of the first to create a specialized information resource for blind and the visually impaired voters “ikro.ru” which was highly praised by visually impaired people.

In 2009 administration of the Yaroslavl RB AAB together with the state cultural institution “Yaroslavl regional library for the blind” organized production of information materials in large fonts “Citizen of the XXI century” and two audio books “Incoming elections” and “Voter, make your choice”.

Joint work of the Novosibirsk regional branch, regional library for the blind of Novosibirsk and Election commission of the Novosibirsk Region on implementation of a unique social project “Presumption of equal access” in 2010 deserves special attention. This project is described in Appendix N 2.

System of mutual organizational work of regional branches of AAB and election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation promote positive attitude to the election and gaining of skills that help the disabled to participate in the election process.

1. Each subject of the Russian Federation has developed a plan of cooperation between election commission and public organizations of the disabled that constitutes the basis of comprehensive cooperation of RB AAB and election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation.

Members of AAB and people trained to work with visually impaired people are engaged into activities of many regional election commissions of the Russian Federation and precinct election commissions. According to statistics, AAB representatives participated in activities of over 70 percent of TEC (or their working groups) and PEC in 2007-2010.

AAB representatives take part in all major events organized by the CEC of Russia and election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation (meetings, “round table” discussions, workshops). Participation of heads of RB AAB, representatives of AAB President in the Federal districts, in zone district meetings with heads of election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation held by the CEC of Russia in 2009-2010 was of great practical importance.

Members of regional branches are engaged into target visiting of disabled voters at their places of residence and providing them with invitations to the election and information materials, defining the way visually impaired voters would like to ballot (at a polling station or at home), identifying the necessity of assisting them during the election (providing information materials prepared with the use of Braille alphabet, magnifying glasses, accompanying them to election precinct, etc.).

Regional and local offices of AAB supply visually impaired voters with information on balloting results (the Chelyabinsk Region, the Tver Region, the Bryansk Region, the Irkutsk Region, etc.).

One of the most important factors that matters for visually impaired voters is transport and engineering availability of election precincts.

Presently almost all election precincts and polling stations are equipped with sufficient lighting and ballot booths at those election precincts where visually impaired voters ballot are equipped with magnifying glasses and additional lighting. Medical and social workers organize daily duty on the voting day, accompanying blind and the visually impaired voters to election precincts. Over half of

subjects of the Russian Federation have solved the issues of providing special vehicles for the disabled to visit election precincts.

Mutual work experience of the Election commission of the Tver Region (Chairman V.Pesenko) and Tver regional branch of AAB (Chairman A.Tregub), as well as of the Election commission of the Tambov Region (Chairman A.Puchnin) and Tambov regional branch of AAB (Chairman M.Smoliyaninov) in implementation of the project “Road to election precinct” initiated by the CEC of Russia on the eve of the single voting day on October 10, 2010 deserves special attention. AAB members participated in study of problems that people face during the election process and developed their proposals. The result of this work was the creation of a unique database of visually impaired voters, preparation of individual passports with routes to election precinct for disabled voters and passports of election precincts. “Help me” action in the Tambov Region with participation of volunteers, held within the project framework, was highly appreciated. The analysis showed that due to such projects the number of the disabled that can participate in balloting can be doubled.

Activities carried out by the CEC of Russia and election commissions at all levels on ensuring of the electoral rights of visually impaired citizens of Russia became a powerful incentive for state power and local self-government bodies of subjects of the Russian Federation to solve the issues of availability of such social facilities as election precincts for the disabled. During the last two years availability of election precincts to disabled voters has greatly improved in the Kemerovo Region, the Tver Region, the Irkutsk Region and the Volgograd Region.

Study, summarizing and analysis of cooperation of AAB regional branches and election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation in the field of ensuring of the electoral rights of visually impaired citizens allow to state that this work shall be planned, systematic and comprehensive.

However, there is still much that can be done to improve availability of the election process for this category of citizens. On the eve of the election of deputies of the State Duma and the President of the Russian Federation the following issues still need to be solved or adjusted:

- monitoring of disabled voters participation in the election process;

- handbooks “On balloting with the use of stencil for visually impaired voter”, made in large fonts and with the use of Braille active engagement of political parties in preparation of information materials for the blind and the visually impaired (made in large readable fonts, in audio format and with use of Braille alphabet);

- training of TEC and PEC employees and volunteers for the election period in interacting with blind people and assisting them in reaching election precincts and balloting;

- development of a training audio course “Aid for blind voter”;

- development of techniques of remote (electronic) balloting for the blind and the visually impaired;

- development of standard invitations to the election for blind and visually impaired voters.

We believe that the experience of cooperation of RB AAB and election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation provides positive help in creation of necessary conditions for visually impaired citizens of Russia to exercise their electoral rights during the Federal election.

All-Russian Association of the Blind is ready to continue providing comprehensive assistance to the CEC of Russia and territorial election commissions in solving issues related to ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled citizens of the Russian Federation.

Sites of regional branches of the All-Russian Association of the Blind

Arkhangelsk regional	www.astrobl.ru
Astrakhan regional	www.ivszn.ru
Ivanovo regional	www.ivvos.ru
Kaliningrad regional	www.vos39.ru
Kaluga regional	www.krovos.okis.ru
Karelia republican	www.kareliavos.onego.ru
Kemerovo regional	www.koovos.ucoz.ru
Komi regional	www.komivos.ru
Kostroma regional	www.voskostroma.ru
Krasnodar territorial	www.vos-23.narod.ru
Krasnoyarsk territorial	www.kray.krasvos.ru
Kursk regional	www.vos-kursk.narod.ru
Novosibirsk regional	www.novodostup.ru
Perm territorial	www.vos.perm.ru
Primorski territorial	www.vosprimorye.ru
Rostov regional	www.roovos.ru
Ryazan regional	www.vos-sapojok.0fees.net
Samara regional	www.samaravos.narod.ru
Saint Petersburg regional	www.spbvos.ru
Saratov regional	www.saratov.gov.ru
Tambov regional	www.vos.tambov.ru
Tver regional	www.vostver.ru
Tyumen regional	www.admtymen.ru
Chelyabinsk regional	www.shvsv72.ru
Yaroslavl regional	www.mgnvos.ru
All-Russian Association of the Blind	www.vos.org.ru

Presumption of equal access.

On experience of the Novosibirsk regional branch of the All-Russian Association of the Blind in ensuring of the electoral rights of visually impaired citizens

Developers of the project “Presumption of equal access” set creation of barrier-free information environment and conditions for ensuring of the electoral rights of blind and visually impaired people as one of their priorities.

During the implementation of the project the Novosibirsk regional branch of the public organization “All-Russian Association of the Blind” and Novosibirsk regional specialized library for blind and visually impaired people joined efforts with the Election commission of the Novosibirsk Region on the eve of the election to the Legislative Assembly on October 10, 2010.

In August 2010 the project team initiated meetings with administration of the Election commission of the Novosibirsk Region and proposed to introduce certain changes into regulation of commission’s activities related to participation of visually impaired people in the election process.

The proposals included two main aspects.

First, it was proposed to develop regulatory guidelines for participation of the Novosibirsk Region disabled in the election process that would be coordinated by the Election commission of the Novosibirsk Region and recommended for use in all regional election districts.

Second, it was proposed to work out the procedure of balloting by blind and visually impaired voters in the Novosibirsk Region in cooperation with the project team. Previously such voters either did not participate in voting or had to seek for assistance. This violated the secrecy of the ballot and created conditions for potential abuse.

These proposals were accepted by administration of the regional election commission and acknowledged as appropriate and timely. Moreover, the commission promised to provide all the necessary support.

While implementing the project, the team also developed the Handbook for disabled voter. This document was coordinated with the regional election commission and approved with minor amendments. The document regulates the conditions that election commissions shall create to ensure participation of the disabled in the election.

The said handbook is universal, regardless of the election status. This handbook will set binding regulations for the regional election precincts.

The document is also prepared in audio format and with the use of point system and published on the web site.

Section 2

**Materials of the “round table” meeting
dedicated to “Participation of the disabled in
the election process in the Russian
Federation”**

On September 20, 2010 the small hall of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation hosted the “round table” meeting dedicated to “Participation of the disabled in the election process in the Russian Federation”. This meeting was organized by the State Duma Committee for constitutional legislation and state construction and the Interfactional deputy association of the State Duma for the disabled in cooperation with the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation.

Chairman of the State Duma Committee for constitutional legislation and state construction Vladimir Nikolaevich Pligin and Co-Chairman of the Interfactional deputy association of the State Duma for the disabled Valery Sergeevich Seleznev moderated this socially important discussion that was held on the eve of the single voting day on October 10, 2010.

The “round table” meeting was attended by Vice-Chairmen of the State Duma Lubov Konstantinovna Sliska and Vladimir Volfovich Zhirinovskiy, Co-Chairman of the Interfactional deputy association of the State Duma for the disabled Mikhail Borisovich Terentyev, Chairman of the CEC of Russia Vladimir Evgenyevich Churov, Secretary of the CEC of Russia Nikolay Evgenyevich Konkin, members of the CEC of Russia Lyudmila Fedorovna Demyanchenko and Nina Alexandrovna Kulyasova, Chairmen of the Election commissions of the Karachayevo-Cherkess Republic, the Komi Republic, the Mari El Republic, the Perm Territory, the Vologda Region, the Ivanovo Region, the Lipetsk Region, the Moscow Region, the Nizhni Novgorod Region, the Penza Region, the Rostov Region, the Ryazan Region, the Saratov





The Sakhalin Region, the Tambov Region, the Tver Region, the Tomsk Region, the Ulyanovsk Region, and the Yaroslavl Region, Vice-Chairman of the Election commission of the Kirov Region, Secretaries of Election commissions of the Leningrad Region and Saint Petersburg Election commission, member of the Moscow City Election commission, representatives of All-Russian public organizations of the disabled and their several regional branches.

The keynote speech was given by V.E.Churov, who spoke about the principles of ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled in our country. He drew the attention of the meeting participants to the fact that approximately 10 percent of Russian voters are the disabled (which is over 10 million citizens) and spoke about the practical work with this category of election participants. The Chairman of the CEC of Russia noted some current problems in this sphere, among which there is the lack of statistical data on this group of voters, equipping of election precincts with specialized devices and ensuring the barrier-free access to them for disabled voters.

“Round table” meeting participants listened to the Addresses of the Vice-Chairmen of the State Duma L.K.Sliska and V.V.Zhirinovskiy, Co-Chairmen of the Interfactional deputy association of the State Duma for the disabled V.S.Seleznev and M.B.Terentyev, deputy of the State Duma, the Chairman of the All-Russian Association of the Disabled A.V.Lomakin-Rumyantsev, representatives of public organizations of the disabled V.Y.Matveev and V.A.Pakhov.



Chairmen of the election commissions of several subjects of the Russian Federation told the “round table” participants about their practical work with disabled voters. Presentations were made by chairmen of the following election commissions: the Komi Republic – E.V.Shabarshina, the Perm Territory – T.N.Saydakova, the Vologda Region – L.I.Antonova, the Nizhni Novgorod Region – S.N.Bisin, the Penza Region – N.M.Taktarov, the Rostov Region – S.V.Yusov, the Tver Region – V.N.Pesenko, the Tambov Region – A.S.Puchnin, the Tomsk Region – E.S.Yusubov, and by the chairman of the territorial election commission of the Proletarsky district of the city of Tula I.A.Korneichev. Director of N.A.Ostrovsky specialized library for the blind M.P.Konovalova spoke about joint work of the Election commission of the Kaluga Region and the specialized library.

The “round table” participants visited an exhibition dedicated to practical work of election commissions on ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled and were given an opportunity to test ballot with the help of upgraded vote-counting machines (VCM) specially adapted for visually impaired voters (with voice informing function), as well as to study the citizens’ will process with the use of modern technology. The first to test VCM were the Vice-Chairman of the State Duma V.V.Zhirinovskiy and deputy of the State Duma M.V.Terentyev, who commended the reliability, ease of use and prospects of application of this technology.



The Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation and election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation consider the creation of necessary conditions for exercising of the electoral rights of disabled citizens of the Russian Federation the most important task.

In 2007, within the framework of preparation to the election of deputies of the State Duma of the Fifth convocation, the CEC of Russia and the system of election commissions started active and consistent work on implementation of this task.

During this period the CEC of Russia developed and adopted the Directives on ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled citizens of the Russian Federation that formed the basis of all activities carried out by election commissions in the Russian Federation.

The CEC of Russia summarized practical work of election commissions during the election campaigning and developed the plan of cooperation with All-Russian public organizations of the disabled and established a relevant Working Group. Similar working groups were established in election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation, several territorial election commissions. Plans of cooperation with public organizations of the disabled were also approved.

Establishment of such working groups and approval of corresponding plans facilitated achievement of a new level of election commissions' work on ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled citizens. This work was carried out on a regular and planned basis not only during the election campaigns but also in between elections.

Meetings of the Working Group on cooperation of the CEC of Russia with All-Russian public organizations of the disabled set priority objectives in the sphere of exercising of the electoral rights of the disabled, including those related to obtaining (verifying) information on the disabled voters, increase in number of election precincts equipped for balloting of the disabled of various categories, information work with the disabled, including increased access of visually impaired citizens to web sites of the CEC of Russia and election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation, and many others.

The CEC of Russia carries out consistent work related to exercising of the electoral rights of the disabled and solving of identified problems.

1. Obtaining (verifying) information on disabled voters.

Proper organization of work requires obtaining complete and accurate information on disabled voters. To ensure this, election commissions make requests to various agencies and organizations, including public ones, make lists of voters of this category with account of administrative division and identification of their places of residence and contact phone numbers, obtain detailed information on a specific disability category.

Almost all election commissions experienced certain difficulties while carrying out this work. Those difficulties included the lack of unified database of voters with a specific disability category residing in their territories. Moreover, during the collection of information many of election commissions were denied the requested information on the grounds of Article 9 of the Federal Law "On personal data", in accordance with which provision and processing of personal records is allowed only with the consent of the subject of such records.

The CEC of Russia tried to solve this issue and appealed to the Ministry of Health and Social Development of Russia with the request to assist in providing information on disabled voters. We highly appreciate the assistance in providing information on the number of the disabled of various categories. We further on provided this information to election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation which facilitated verifying data on disabled voters.

Moreover, in March 2009 the Ministry of Health and Social Development of Russia sent the heads of executive bodies of state power of subjects of the subjects of the Russian Federation in charge of social protection of population a letter with recommendations to provide comprehensive assistance to election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation in obtaining (verifying) information on disabled voters included in the voters list in the respective territory.

We hope that in future providing of such information is carried out on a regular basis and we are able to solve our common problems.

Significant assistance in providing (verifying) information on disabled voters was also given by territorial branches of the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation and the Social Insurance Fund.

2. Equipment for election precincts.

At the initiative of election commissions and with assistance of executive bodies of state power of subjects of the Russian Federation and bodies of local self-government, election precincts are equipped with special facilities providing access for the disabled (ramps, hand-rails, rails, decks, etc.) (according to ECSRF – about 10%) and where possible such precincts are located on the first floors (according to ECSRF – 86%). However (as was also noted by public organizations) such equipment is usually installed in a hurry and does not comply with construction norms and regulations. Thus, a wheelchair user cannot enter a polling station without assistance of other people. Our common objective is to ensure that such equipment is always available at each precinct where the disabled vote and it shall be usable rather than be a decorative part.

Many election commissions note that the majority of the disabled prefer balloting outside polling stations, at their homes, saying it is more convenient for them. Statistics show that 7 percent of voters in the Russian Federation take part in ballot outside polling station (at home). Visually impaired people and people with reduced mobility often cannot reach the election precinct because of lack of necessary conditions: inconvenience of urban infrastructure (lack of elevators and ramps in apartments, lack of special vehicles with lift platforms, traffic lights with audio warning, etc.). Election commissions in accordance with the legislation on election and referenda provide disabled voters with an opportunity to ballot at home; however, it shall be ensured that they could make this choice themselves.

In July 2010 this issue was included by the CEC of Russia in the final document of the “round table” meeting of the Inter-factional Deputy Association of the State Duma for the disabled under the title “Extra-budgetary financing resources for creation of accessible environment for the disabled”. For the purpose of ensuring the disabled with maximum independence within the frames of exercising their electoral rights the CEC of Russia suggested to pay attention to creation of the appropriate conditions: installation of stationary devices for entering polling stations of election precincts and their compliance with construction norms and regulations (SNiP 35-01-2001), as well as to implementation of tasks related to accessibility of urban infrastructure.

The work of the CEC of Russian and election commission on assisting in exercising the electoral rights of the disabled was even more positive since state power bodies of many subjects of

the Russian Federation and bodies of local self-government started paying more attention to issues of improvement of the disabled lives. This was also facilitated by specialized “hot lines” in election commissions and establishment of interdepartmental working groups. Requests for providing material assistance, housing repairs, purchase of medicines, hearing aids, wheelchairs etc. sent to election commissions were then delivered to heads of municipal formations and territorial branches of the Ministry of Health and Social Development of Russia for further consideration.

Election commissions pay significant attention to equipping of polling stations and creation of necessary balloting conditions for disabled voters of various categories. Election precincts are equipped with special booths for balloting of wheelchair users, special means of optical correction, additional lighting, and ballot stencils, including stencils prepared with the use of the Braille point system. Special information boards provide information in format suitable for visually impaired voters. Sign language interpreters are employed for election precincts where many deaf and hearing impaired citizens take part in balloting.

Many election commissions now include representatives of public organizations of the disabled and bodies of social protection, as well as medical workers.

Taking into account the preparation for ratification of the UN Convention on the rights of the disabled by the Russian Federation, on the eve of the single voting day on October 10, 2010 the CEC of Russia initiated a pilot project “Road to election precinct” that shall identify problems arising in the process of unassisted movement from the place of residence to election precinct and deliver the obtained information to state power bodies, bodies of local self-government and corresponding organizations and enterprises. Almost all election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation expressed their readiness to participate in implementation of this project. Many of them plan to engage youth public organizations to assist with its implementation. Public organizations of the disabled will also take part in this work. It will help if political parties and deputies of various levels also participate in this project implementation.

This is a long-term project. We are sure that its implementation will positively influence the quality of life of the disabled citizens.

3. Public awareness activities.

Special attention in election commissions’ work on ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled is paid to public awareness activities. It involves organization of joint meetings, consultations and workshops of regional and local branches of All-Russian public organizations of the disabled, as well as implementation of measures aimed at informing of the disabled on the election process using mass media, publication of special information materials, use of outdoor advertising, TV and radio broadcasts, “hot line”, web sites and other means. All these measures are taken by election commissions in relation to this important sphere.

In 2010, within the frames of public awareness activities, the CEC of Russia together with the Russian Center for Training in Election Technologies under the CEC of Russia prepared an educational film (in English language as well) “I have the right. Ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled”, which was highly appreciated by public organizations of the disabled. The film was distributed among several government bodies, public and international organizations. Publications included booklets “Ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens” and “Handbook of disabled voter (questions and answers)”. These booklets were also printed in adapted version with

the use of the Braille alphabet and delivered to election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation and public organizations of the disabled.

An exhibition dedicated to practical work of election commissions on ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled on single voting days was held on the eve of the International Day of the Disabled and within the frames of the joint meeting of the CEC of Russia and chairmen of election commissions. Besides exhibits presented by election commissions the exhibition also demonstrated an automated workstation for the blind. That is a blind aid device with Braille alphabet keyboard and software with screen interface that converts text files into audio files. A blind user noted that due to this equipment he can work on his computer and has almost unlimited access to all information published via the Internet. The exhibition also presented production of the specialized enterprise “TIFLO VOS” (blind aid devices) including special means of optical correction (magnifying glasses, optic magnifying glasses, electronic magnifying glasses, etc.). These devices help visually impaired people to have easy and uninterrupted access to information and may be used at election precincts.

The CEC of Russia and almost all election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation created special resource for blind and visually impaired users at their web sites that allow obtaining information on incoming election campaigns, provide answers to questions, etc. We are going to improve those sections and streamline them with international standards.

During election campaigns election commissions urged political parties to pay more attention to work with disabled voters. However, presently there is lack of activity in this sphere. There is also lack or absence of promotional materials (printed and video) that are designed for the disabled. We want political parties to face disabled voters who need special and non-traditional ways of providing information.

A special working group on issues of ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped people and other specific categories of voters was established under the Public scientific and methodological advisory council under the CEC of Russia. The issues considered by this working group include preparation of a new edition of the Directives on ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled for the forthcoming Federal election, consideration of possibilities of the use of facsimile reproduction of visually impaired voters' signatures on paper while taking part in balloting, preparation of proposals to the Plan of technical upgrade of the election process at election precincts with account of communicative specifics of disabled voters, development of the technique of cooperation between election commission and public organizations of the disabled, and many more.

At the recent meeting of the working group its members made interesting proposals worthy of attention related to ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled citizens. In particular, the All-Russian Association of the Blind proposed additional inspection of polling stations in regard to their suitability for the disabled balloting. In connection with this the CEC of Russia plans to prepare “precincts passports”. Moreover, an upgraded vote-counting machine (VCM) with voice informing function was demonstrated at the working group meeting and aroused great interest of representatives of public organizations of the disabled and scientists. Upon VCM test it was suggested to adjust its height, since it is not very convenient for wheelchair users. We will continue to work over this issue.

We plan to use these VCM at election precincts during the election on October 10 on the single voting day. Those VCM were first tested at three election precincts in the Ryazan Region during this year election in March. Their work was highly appreciated by disabled voters.

The Working Group on development of ballot stencils for the Federal election of 2011-2012 was established under the CEC of Russia. Upon the CEC of Russia request election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation provided information on required number of ballot stencils and technical possibilities of their production.

The CEC of Russia actively cooperates with the State Duma on issues of ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled and participated in several discussions of amendments to the election legislation proposed by the deputy of the State Duma Mikhail Borisovich Terentyev. These amendments, in particular, were related to exercising of passive electoral rights of disabled voters and were initiated by the CEC of Russia in cooperation with public organizations of the disabled that submitted proposals for creation of conditions for exercising of election activities of disabled candidates for deputies.

Moreover, within the frames of preparation to ratification of the UN Convention on the rights of the disabled by the Russian Federation, the CEC of Russia in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Social Development of Russia carries out work on bringing the legislation of election and referenda in compliance with international regulations.

The CEC of Russia participated in work of “The Group of Friends of UN Convention on the rights of the disabled under the UN Information Center”.

Summing up I would like to note on behalf of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation that only our consolidated efforts can solve the issues and remove the identified problems.

This “round table” meeting is another step towards ensuring of the most important constitutional right of citizens of our country, disabled voters, to elect and be elected.

*The Address of the Chairman of the
Election commission of the Nizhni
Novgorod Region S.N.Bisin*



On the work of the Election commission of the Nizhniy Novgorod Region in relation to cooperation with public organizations of the disabled

Dear Presidium members and participants of the “round table” meeting!

The work of the Election commission of the Nizhni Novgorod Region on ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped voters can be divided into two areas: informing of this category of voters during the election period and between elections and facilitating their personal participation in the election campaign at preparation stage and on the voting day.

Personal participation at preparation stage involves attending events held by election commissions, candidates and political parties.

Provision of this possibility is determined by three factors: urban infrastructure, voters will and weather conditions.

Urban infrastructure is not adapted for movement of people with reduced mobility and the blind, despite of rare ramps, low-deck buses, lift platforms, traffic lights with audio warning, etc.

Spring and autumn election campaigns are usually held in adverse weather conditions that make washing of wheelchairs in our apartments more difficult and do not stimulate the disabled to leave their homes.

The voter will to participate personally in election events is one of the few factors that election commission may influence on with the help of intensive and competent information work in cooperation with public organizations of the disabled and increase the disabled interest in the election process.

Possibility of personal participation in balloting at election precinct is also determined by urban infrastructure that cannot be changed by election commissions except the preparation of election precinct to suit the disabled, which is the responsibility of precinct election commission.

In order to make election precinct suitable for use of the disabled it is necessary to gather the data on such handicapped people.

Reduced mobility. According to fragmentary data, in our region there are 3,5 thousand wheelchair users for 2,4 thousand election precincts, and in Nizhni Novgorod this number is 850 wheelchair users for 500 precincts. That means that ramps shall not be installed in every election precinct, but only in some of them.

However, with account of the large number of voters over 60 years old (654 000, that is every fourth voter) there is a necessity to locate election precincts on the first floors of schools and clubs and use the second floors in exceptional cases. This regulation can hardly become the part of the

Federal Law “On Basic Guarantees of Electoral Rights and the Right of Citizens of the Russian Federation to Participate in a Referendum”; however, we believe that it can be mentioned in the CEC of Russia Directives.

At voter’s request within the frames of a relevant procedure members of PEC can visit a voter at his home or in hospital. In accordance with this procedure members of PEC can meet the disabled by the election precinct entrance, if precinct election commission is located at the 2nd or 3rd floor, so that the disabled will not have to be lifted up on his wheelchair.

The number of blind or visually impaired voters amounts to over 70 thousands, or about 30 people per each precinct. Some precincts are located in areas with many voters of this disability category.

This category faces problems with accessibility of election precinct and even more serious problems with obtaining information. Moreover, they have specific communicative issues.

Those people who lost their eyesight early were mostly educated in specialized schools and trained to use Braille alphabet, however, some of them (especially women) have lost those skills not practicing them daily.

Those who lost their eyesight in middle or old age because of injuries were not taught to use Braille alphabet and can obtain information only aurally. Some of them can read with the help of magnifying glasses or read texts made in large fonts. This shall be taken into account in areas where the majority of visually impaired people live. All PEC members in our region study guidelines developed by the Election commission of the Nizhni Novgorod Region that contain techniques on communication with blind voters, preparation of stencils and balloting with the use of stencils.

Voters of this category are aided with ballot stencils made with the use of Braille alphabet or stencils and handbooks in large fonts.

Hearing impaired voters usually face less problems with getting to election precinct and obtaining written information. A major problem for hearing impaired voters is communication. - Their speech is usually incomprehensible, and not all of them can lip read the people they want to communicate with.

It should also be noted that sign language is a common language and many of the election legislation terms are either substituted with synonyms or omitted altogether by sign language interpreters. Moreover, the number of sign language interpreters is extremely limited. There are only 40 sign language interpreters in the Nizhni Novgorod Region, with only three of them being professionals, and others are self taught. Election commission shall adapt an audio text specifically for sign language which requires special skills.

Sign language interpreters may be employed for the areas with close-together accommodation of hearing impaired voters.

In connection with the foregoing the Election commission of the Nizhni Novgorod Region believes that the primary task of all election commissions is to inform this category of voters on candidates, political parties and their programs before the voting day. While communicating with families and colleagues they will obtain information that will help them to make an informed choice.

We believe that information on candidates and lists of candidates determined by paragraph 3 of Article 61 of the Federal Law “On Basic Guarantees of Electoral Rights and the Right of Citizens of the Russian Federation to Participate in a Referendum” of June 12, 2002 N 67-FL shall be

published in special booklets and disseminated via Russian mail services. This requirement shall become the part of this law and will provide significant help to mentioned categories of voters as well as for all other voters.

In order to ensure participation of handicapped voters in the voting day, members of election commissions together with representatives of public organizations of the disabled shall carry out activities aimed at creation of trust atmosphere, gaining communicative skills and solving arising issues during the election campaign and during the period between elections.

The Election commission of the Nizhniy Novgorod Region started regular cooperation with public organizations of the disabled during the Federal election campaigns of 2007-2008. We developed, approved and successfully implemented the Package of measures aimed at organization of work on ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens.

Presently cooperation with public organization of the disabled is carried out on the basis of the Plan of cooperation of the Election commission of the Nizhni Novgorod Region with regional public organizations of the disabled and other institutions with the aim of ensuring and exercising of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens for 2009-2011, approved by the Resolution N 909 of May 19, 2009.

A Working Group was established within the framework of this Plan which consisted of representatives of public organizations of the disabled (not all disabled are members of such organizations), the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation for the Nizhni Novgorod Region, the Public Chamber of the Nizhni Novgorod Region, Department of Federal Postal Services of the Nizhni Novgorod Region, the Ministry of Health of the Nizhni Novgorod Region, the Ministry of Social Policy of the Nizhni Novgorod Region, the Legislative Assembly of the Nizhni Novgorod Region, the Territorial Fund of Compulsory Medical Insurance of the Nizhni Novgorod Region, mass media including those working with the disabled (“TV for the deaf”, newspaper “Hello people!” and “Veteran’s voice”).

Presently the Election commission carries out work in the following areas:

- explanation of the election legislation to this category of voters, especially to young people (at meetings, workshops and conferences);

- assistance in ensuring and exercising of the electoral rights of such citizens (through purchase of aid materials for election precincts, preparation of stencils, involvement of political parties into cooperation with the disabled);

- carrying out of events aimed at improving of legal culture of the disabled of various age groups (preschool children, schoolchildren, students).

We work in cooperation with major regional public organizations of the disabled as well as with the Nizhni Novgorod regional center of labor, social and psychological rehabilitation of the visually impaired “Kamerata”, with the Nizhni Novgorod regional specialized (correctional) boarding school for blind and visually impaired children, the Nizhni Novgorod regional public organization of parents with visually impaired children “Perspektiva”, Internet radio station for the blind at web site of the Russian association of blind students and specialists (RABSS, www.ransis.org.)

The Election commission has its regular monthly column in “Hello people!” newspaper for the disabled under the title “Right of choice” which explains basics of the election law and election legislation and informs on activities carried out by the Election commission for the disabled.

Members of the Nizhni Novgorod regional center of labor, social and psychological rehabilitation of visually impaired citizens “Kamerata” and disabled students of the Nizhni Novgorod State University named after N.I.Lobachevsky attended the course “Basics of the election law of Russia” so that they could provide this information to other voters and participated in various contests, tournaments and classes for students and schoolchildren.

The Election commission with the help of specialized organizations created “voters corners” for blind and visually impaired citizens.

“Voters corners” provide the following materials:

various editions of the text of the Constitution of the Russian Federation: with the use of Braille alphabet; audio recorded: onto special flash card with cryptographic protection for specialized flash player, onto magnetic tape with 2,38 cm/s playback speed for special tape recorders for the blind;

various editions of the text of “Voter’s dictionary” prepared by the Election commission of the Nizhni Novgorod Region: with the use of Braille alphabet; in compliance with special guidelines for preparation of printed materials for visually impaired citizens; audio recorded onto flash card with cryptographic protection and audio cassette with special playback speed;

pictures of state symbols of the Russian Federation – national emblem and flag – made with the use of relief printing on special thermal paper that allows them to be identified by citizens with Braille alphabet reading skills.

Various ways of preparation of information materials were used because of special technical replay devices used by this category of voters.

Presently “voters corners” are opened in all primary organizations of the blind and in the Nizhni Novgorod regional specialized library for the blind.

Regular work is carried out on identification of places of close-together accommodation of hearing impaired and visually impaired voters in order to create necessary conditions for their participation in the election. The blind will be provided with stencils made with the use of Braille alphabet and large fonts, and the hearing impaired will use the services of sign language interpreters employed by election precincts.

Territorial election commissions received the following materials prepared for the election on October 10, 2010:

handbooks “On balloting with the use of stencil for visually impaired voter”, made in large fonts and with the use of Braille alphabet;

instructions on preparation of stencils for visually impaired citizens;

methodical recommendations on interaction of members of election commissions and visually impaired citizens.

Soon to be released are the Methodical recommendations on interaction of members of election commissions with handicapped citizens.

Main problems that the Election commission faces while working with this category of voters include: lack of targeted information on handicapped people; lack of financing for equipping of election precincts with aid devices for the disabled; problems with providing facilities for election precincts that are adapted for the disabled.



*The Address of the Chairman of the Election commission
of the Vologda Region L.I.Antonova*

On work of the Election commission of the Vologda Region in relation to cooperation with the bodies of social protection of population

In any country and at any society level there is always a group of people that are now called handicapped people and the disabled in short. They grow in number. However, for a long time only their families dealt with their problems. Gradually the attitude of the society towards this category of its members started to change. There are three stages of the society (and the state) awareness of the main directions of support provided to the disabled:

- regular care provided by their families and relevant institutions;
- rehabilitation and disability compensation;
- integration into normal life of the society.

Standard rules for ensuring of equal opportunities for the disabled were developed only in 1991, and even though they are not mandatory, they are already becoming the rules of international customary law applicable in great number of states.

They state that the disabled have the same rights as other people, but they cannot fully participate in social life due to barriers created by their disabilities.

The state and the community are obliged to take necessary measures to remove these barriers and ensure equal opportunities.

What is required for that?

1. In-depth understanding of the problem (and this meeting shows we take steps in this direction).
2. Proper registration of this category of citizens (for example, social services of our region create Electronic social register of the Vologda Region).
3. Support services, availability.

4. Employment.
5. Income maintenance and social security.
6. Improvement of the legislation.
7. Development of integration policy and planning of activities.
8. Training of personnel to work with this category of population.

All these measures are the components of rehabilitation and integration of the disabled into the society. Our region takes all necessary measures in this sphere. I note this because political rights of the disabled cannot be improved separately from improvement of their lives.

Cooperation with bodies of social protection of population. Major principle of work of election commissions and bodies of social protection of population was formulated as follows: "The disabled are our citizens and they shall enjoy all the benefits and rights of this society!".

124 000 disabled people live in the Vologda Region, and over 119 000 of them are voters. In 2005-2008 the region carried out a program "Social support for the disabled", and in 2010 "Barrier-free environment" program that costs 361 million rubles has started.

This program will allow linking of various areas with places of the disabled residence through creation of a continuous chain of the relevant infrastructure: house – entrance – pavement – public transport stop – special bus – shop, library, hospital, school, election precinct, etc.

Specific figures. Within the framework of the program the following was adapted to the needs of the disabled:

- 150 apartments;
- 316 public transport stops; 188 administrative buildings; 45 low-deck buses;
- 62 units of specially equipped vehicles for health, educational and social protection institutions;
- 13 track lifting devices.

The program provides for the accessibility of secondary schools where election precincts are usually located.

The Council for the disabled under the Governor of the Vologda Region consists of heads of all 8 public organizations of the disabled and representatives of the Election commission. The Council organized meetings on measures to create barrier-free environment for the disabled in the region, and meetings of the Election commission of subject of the Russian Federation and heads of public organizations of the disabled dealt with issues related to preparation to the election during election campaigning.

What are the forms and methods of our joint work on assistance in exercising of the electoral rights of the disabled?

They include traditional forms such as meetings, cooperation with public organizations of the disabled, lectures and talks, personal meetings, etc.

Specific activities:

1. Organization activities include identification of categories of handicapped citizens, preparation of the lists of the disabled, equipping of election precincts.

2. Information activities include individual delivery of notices, meeting with veteran organizations and public organizations of the disabled, preparation of information materials in large

fonts, roll titles in information videos, identification of the disabled will to ballot outside polling stations.

3.Ensuring of direct participation of handicapped citizens in balloting includes providing assistance at election precincts and visiting the disabled at their homes.

Cooperation with bodies of social protection in between elections and during election campaigning provides positive results.

Social services organizations (available in each district of the region) closely cooperate with precinct election commissions. 174 precinct social workers work in 186 regional rural settlements.

They inform citizens on the importance of the forthcoming election, on the election campaigning and candidates;

provide the disabled registered in social services organizations with leaflets and periodicals on the election and deliver application forms for balloting outside polling stations to precinct election commissions.

Social workers are included into precinct election commissions; they participate in election campaigns as agents and candidates assistants.

During the election special election precincts are established in nursing homes for the elderly and the disabled, as well as in regional neuropsychiatric houses where voting citizens live.

Precinct social work has changed from declarative into identifying principle of providing support that fits well into election campaigns.

In order to provide the disabled with information on the forthcoming election we also use unconventional measures.

For the forthcoming election on October 10, 2010 and by-election of the deputy of the Vologda City Duma the disabled shall receive invitations to the election (in accordance with the law election commissions shall inform voters on the date of the election and place and time of balloting twice) and socially important information.

This information states the rights of various categories of population (the disabled, veterans, young people, low income families) and provides simple instructions, for example, where to seek the assistance in exercising these rights.

Citizens are informed on implementation of socially important decisions of the city and regional administration (for example, on the procedure of receiving subsidies for housing and communal services, stating who is entitled to it, how to fill in the documents, as well as contact phone numbers to be used, etc.).

Summing up the experience of past election campaigns we can note the main problems related to ensuring of participation of the disabled in the election process:

1. Information problem:

a) Insufficient amount and difficulties with preparation of promotional materials in audio format (for the blind and visually impaired);

b) Insufficient information for the hearing impaired (roll titles, sign language interpretation of videos and other materials).

The problem of accessibility of election precincts (development of entrances to precincts, house exits, transportation and everything that is included in the barrier-free environment concept).

A common problem is the lack of trained professionals for work with the disabled of various categories (for example, lack of sign language interpreters).

In order to increase participation of the disabled in the election process all the above mentioned problems shall be solved. We also consider it necessary to improve the integration of this population category into all spheres of social life through changing of the election legislation that shall provide population with reduced mobility (mainly young disabled people) with possibility to participate in the election with the help of modern information technologies, such as Internet balloting and text-balloting. Our region and other regions of Russia already enjoy successful experience of these technologies application.

*The Address of the Chairman of the
Election commission of the Rostov
Region S.V.Yusov*



On use of information-telecommunication technologies for informing of disabled voters

Dear colleagues!

I would like to begin my speech with thanking the organizers of this “round table” meeting. Issue of ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens is very important for Russia.

Three years ago the Plan of cooperation of the Election commission of the Rostov Region with regional branches of All-Russian public organizations of the disabled was adopted. We are aware of problems the disabled face as we actively cooperate with public organizations of the disabled, and we believe it is important to give new impetus to social integration of the whole Russian society which is vital not only for the disabled, their families, but for each of us.

In 2006 the statistical analysis showed that the disabled amounted to 10 percent of the total electorate. It was obvious that we did not pay much attention to this sphere for quite a long time.

My personal meetings with regional branches of organizations of the disabled convinced me that their integration into political life of our country was the matter of vital importance.

On the eve of the “round table” meeting of the Election commission of the Rostov region we held a working meeting with heads of regional branches of All-Russian public organizations of the disabled and representatives of the disabled of various categories. This meeting dealt with issues of information and telecommunication ways of delivering and exchanging of information on the election processes in the territories of the region that are accessible to the disabled.

Much attention was paid to problems arising at exercising of the electoral rights of the disabled and proposals to address them were given. The meeting also considered major trends in development of electronic balloting.

For example, when discussing the use of VCM during October election, we listened to the special opinion of the chairman of the regional organization of the blind Meshcheryakov. He noted that the use of such electronic balloting would not simplify the balloting process for the blind but would complicate it. In his opinion more opportunities could be provided by using touch monitors.

I believe his opinion was justified and we should think over it.

We shall not forget that we shall ensure not only active electoral rights of the disabled, but passive as well. Regional branches of political parties shall develop programs on work with the

disabled, and they could consider including handicapped people into their nomination lists which is especially important due to widespread use of proportional election system.

We will have to think of additional measures that are required when providing candidates out of the disabled with premises for their meetings and other campaign activities.

Since the disabled experience lack of information provision, new information technologies can play a significant role in this sphere. Their development fundamentally changes the approach to problems of information provision of handicapped people and facilitates removal of great number of limitations.

In 2007 the Election commission of the Rostov Region launched a new Internet project. It was the first ever specific Russian information resource for blind and visually impaired voters at the web site of the Election commission of the Rostov Region. A special converting program was developed specifically for this project. It allows vocalizing texts on elections and other social and political topics, specially formatted for visually impaired voters. The visually impaired who is interested in publications can request through the Election commission site vocalizing of the full content of publication which significantly increases awareness of the visually impaired. Presently several books were prepared in audio format, including "Election law and election process", "Ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens of the Russian Federation", "Self-government on Don", etc.

Handicapped voters also highly appreciated the search engine "Personal control" which allows, through the Election commission web site, visiting an election precinct and checking whether they are included in voters lists. They can also be directed to territorial commission site and review the information on candidates.

A voter can get the address of election precinct and look at its photographs, checking the special facilities. If there is no ramp installed, a voter can call a precinct election commission and apply for balloting outside polling station.

Another project called "Mobile assistant" providing several sections related to the election undergoes development and planning stage. By calling an election commission and pressing appropriate keys, a voter can choose the section he is interested in and obtain required information. Each key corresponds to specific information, and one of them directly connects a voter with regional commission expert. This way a disabled voter can receive required information on various aspects of the election process and his participation in it.

In relation to the ongoing and planned activities I believe that we shall discuss the issue of providing the disabled with computers. We can use the European experience of "Microsoft" company developing the concept "Digital inclusion" on the grounds of which the disabled are provided with free computers. I assume that our national business that strives to become socially responsible could participate in provision of our disabled voters with free computers and unlimited Internet access under certain legal conditions set by deputies of the State Duma. The state in its turn could provide free training courses teaching the disabled to use personal computers and the Internet.

Use of telecommunications for informing disabled voters shall be available to all categories of the disabled with no exceptions. All information videos and TV programs shall have roll title and that could be set as a regulatory requirement.

Political parties and elections commissions shall use their web sites for publication of such text information that can be vocalized via special programs developed for the blind and visually impaired.

Taking into account the subject of this meeting I understood that conditions that shall be created for the disabled are also the conditions of comfortable and secure life for healthy people. Smooth roads and sidewalks, bright marks in front of any obstacles, ramps in public building are also needed for baby prams.



The Address of the Chairman of the Election commission of the Komi Republic E.V.Shabarshina

On work of the election commissions of the Komi Republic on facilitating voting for disabled voters

Work on ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens in the Komi Republic is of comprehensive and system-based nature in spheres of development of the data base of voters of this category and organization of balloting, equipping polling stations, as well as in the field of information and improvement of legal culture. Main results of this work include ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens, absence of complaints on violations of the electoral rights of this category of voters and positive feedback on work of election commissions in the region.

In order to achieve the objective related to guarantees of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens of the Russian Federation and creation of optimal conditions for voting, election commissions of the Komi Republic carry out the following activities:

- establishment of working groups and organization of their meetings;
- development and implementation of planned activities;
- improvement of legal culture of voters;
- identification of places where the disabled prefer to ballot;
- inspection of polling stations to determine their needs in additional equipment of election precinct (lighting, furniture, magnifying glasses);
- identification of specific election precincts for the handicapped;
- organization of representatives of medical and social protection organizations attendance at election precincts on the voting day.

Overall, due to purposeful work with the handicapped, over 30 thousand disabled voters took part in balloting during the last election of the President of Russia on March 2, 2008.

I will talk briefly about some of our activities.

1. Work on improvement of legal culture of voters and public awareness activities.

On the eve of each election the Election commission of the Komi Republic, territorial election commissions approve resolutions "On plan of activities on ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled and other handicapped citizens". These activities provide for compulsory organization of regular work on verifying information on disabled voters, identification of necessity in special vehicles, additional equipment for polling station, attendance of social workers at election precincts, as well as information and legal education of this category of voters.

One of the main tasks is providing disabled voters with information. We apply various information techniques, designed for specific groups of voters and individual work. Individual work with handicapped citizens proved to be the most effective.

Information work in the Komi Republic is organized through:

- publication of information in mass media;

- activities of voters clubs under organizations of the disabled and rehabilitation centers;

- organization of “direct lines” and “hot lines”;

- preparation of special handbooks on balloting procedure for handicapped voters and recommendations for election organizers;

- preparation of subject materials for information boards in organizations of the disabled, hospitals, bodies of social protection, municipal administrations, branches of the Pension Fund, rehabilitation centers;

- use of outdoor advertising and exhibitions;

- distribution of information materials during personal meetings with the disabled;

- organization of meetings, open days, “round table” meetings with the aim of informing (with account of various age categories of voters);

- use of the Internet;

- adaptation of subject lessons, interactive lectures, business games for handicapped voters with participation of rehabilitation centers and bodies of social protection employees in activities aimed at improvement of legal culture.

This work is carried out in between elections as well. For example, since 2009 we actively participate in implementation of the Plan of cooperation of the Election commission of the Komi Republic with regional branches of All-Russian public organizations of the disabled in the Komi Republic for the period of 2009-2011 that mostly focuses on joint activities of election commission and regional branches of public organizations of the disabled and information support.

2. Organization of work on obtaining (verifying) information on the number of handicapped citizens.

Election commissions of the Komi Republic obtain information on voters from:

- Social development agency; social services centers; medical and social expertise agencies; organizations of the disabled and veterans; branches of the Pension Fund; health institutions; municipal administration; employment centers;

- administrations of nursing homes.

The Election commission of the Komi Republic develops the database of handicapped people through summarizing of information provided by these institutions and organizations on the regular basis from one election to another.

The procedure of this database development is as follows: we receive lists of the disabled from Social development agency of the Komi Republic, verify this information locally with the help of the abovementioned institutions and organizations and divide them into categories, such as the blind and visually impaired, the deaf and hearing impaired, and people with reduced mobility.

3. Establishment of special election precincts, equipment for election precincts.

We consider issues of organization of balloting of handicapped citizens and special equipping of election precincts with account of three categories of voters: the blind and visually impaired, the deaf and hearing impaired, and voters with reduced mobility.

On the eve of election in cities and districts of the republic heads of municipal formations issue resolutions on cooperation with TEC and establishment of coordination councils under TEC.

If possible, municipal administrations provide vehicles for bringing handicapped voters to polling station and back to their homes, carrying out balloting outside polling stations, and information activities.

For the Federal election of 2007-2008 the Komi Republic had all its election precincts equipped with special balloting places for the disabled with additional lighting, magnifying glasses, chairs; some precincts also used screens on the tables that were easy to use by wheelchair users. This work was accomplished due to assistance of heads of municipal formations of urban districts and municipal areas. Same work was carried out for the election of local self-government bodies.

Availability of social workers at election precincts provides very positive results. Issue of availability of social workers at election precincts is under constant monitoring that we arrange together with the head of Social development agency of the Komi Republic. We study the necessity of such availability and upon analyzing the results come to optimal solutions.

On the problems.

Registration of the disabled. Today, more than 730 thousand of citizens of the Komi Republic have the right to participate in elections. Each tenth of them is the disabled. We cannot provide exact figures of the handicapped with their division into categories, since those people are registered by bodies of social protection and health institutions with division into disability groups. We understand that these data regularly changes as the disabled undergo relevant examinations that might change their disability groups.

Despite the balanced cooperation, the development of the database of handicapped voters reveals the following problems:

lack of legal regulation for providing information to create the database. In particular, branches of the Pension Fund do not provide this information referring to the Federal Law “On personal data” N 152-FL, in accordance with which provision and processing of personal records is allowed only with the consent of the subject of such records;

lack of unified database of the voters with a specific disability category residing in the territory of region, district or settlement. As a rule, relevant agencies and organizations register handicapped citizens in accordance with their disablement (disability group) without dividing them into separate groups in accordance with type of their disability;

some public organizations of the disabled register them in accordance with type of their disability, but membership in these organizations is voluntary and the network of such organizations is not sufficiently developed. On average, only one third of people with disabilities are members of public organizations;

many disabled do not reside at their registration place which complicates their search even with the help of social services (for example, they may live with their relatives who take care of them or move to another districts for a certain period);

considering the complexity of registering the disability group, many voters do not have such group and are not registered (disability category of such people can be revealed only in the process of individual work).

All the above mentioned problems complicate the work on informing handicapped citizens and organization of their participation in voting. However, election commissions of the Komi Republic try their best to solve those problems by carrying out organized activities.

Information activity. Special information resource for visually impaired voters was created at web site of the Election commission of the Komi Republic. Web banner of “Resource for the visually impaired” uses marks of the All-Russian Association of the Blind. This resource provides information on composition and activities of the Election commission of the Republic, news and current topics. Visually impaired Internet users can ask questions in special section “Question – answer”.

Statistics show that on average 17 people regularly use this resource for obtaining information. - At one of the “round table” meetings representatives of organizations of the disabled noted that presently only few handicapped citizens in the Komi Republic have computers and use Internet services due to financial difficulties.

Issue of informing via the Internet and prompt exchange of information was solved in 2008 when, within the frames of cooperation plan, the Election commission of the Komi Republic provided the republican branch of the “All-Russian organization of the disabled” with eight computers and two printers.

Work on improvement of legal culture of voters faces same problem. In 2009 we organized an online intellectual game “Brainstorm” for handicapped citizens. Over 130 people from 61 subjects of Russia participated in this game touching upon issues of the election law. The winners were participants from Volgograd, Irkutsk, Minsk and the Komi Republic.

There are only three professional sign language interpreters in our region. There are certain difficulties related to production of materials with the use of Braille alphabet, as well as to lack of skills in using it by the disabled. During the Federal election this issue was mostly solved due to materials sent from the CEC of Russia. Presently our commission, on the eve of the election in March 2011, decided to produce several audio and video materials specifically for handicapped citizens. These materials will clarify the specifics of the balloting procedure. We coordinate the format and scripts of audiovisual products with heads of organizations of the disabled.

Organization of the balloting process. We are all aware of unsuitability of many buildings for the wheelchair users. The Komi Republic arranged installation of special ramps on single voting days, but unfortunately we could not provide all precincts with such ramps. Moreover, the existing ramps hardly meet the requirements of construction norms and regulations SNiP. Who shall we blame if the developers ignored SNiP rules that were approved 9 years ago? Even with this issue we experience the lack of legal regulation norms.

One of the most pressing issues is the availability of vehicles that bring the disabled to election precincts. Unfortunately, not every social services organizations of regional cities and districts can provide special vehicles. Administration of one of our districts concluded an agreement with private carrier on use of the car with lift platform.

Election precincts in many territories are located on the second floors and even higher. This complicates balloting procedure not only for wheelchair users but also for people with reduced mobility.

The Election commission of the Komi Republic considers it important to ensure that all election precincts are located on the first floors of buildings. However, the solution of this issue is even more complicated as not all premises comply with safety requirements and fire safety in particular.

Attendance of social workers at election precincts. We understand that human resources shall be used efficiently, not mentioning salaries of social workers. We believe that implementation of the pilot project “Road to election precinct” will help us to identify the demand for organizing of Social

development agency workers attendance at election precincts. Ideally we could employ sign language interpreters, but unfortunately, there are only three professional sign language interpreters in whole Republic.

The abovementioned problems can be solved by organizing balloting outside polling stations; however, each citizen has the right to choose the balloting place, and relevant organizations shall create conditions for exercising this right. We face similar problem in solving the issue of establishment of specialized election precincts. Weather conditions in winter seriously complicate the issue of establishment of specialized election precincts. Usually during the winter in the Komi Republic majority of the handicapped prefer balloting at home. However, such weather conditions do not exempt election commissions from an obligation to create conditions for balloting of this category of citizens. I can provide an example. During the Federal election campaigning of 2007-2008 a specialized election precinct in Pechora was equipped specifically for one wheelchair user who at the end decided to ballot at home.

Project "Road to election precinct". I would like to thank the CEC of Russia for the pilot project "Road to election precinct". Positive decision on joint efforts for implementation of this socially important project in the territory of the Komi Republic was taken at the meeting of the Working Group on cooperation of the Election commission of the Komi Republic with regional public organizations of the disabled. During the single voting day on October 10 the Komi Republic will hold the election to settlement bodies of local self-government in three municipal districts that currently implement this project in the election territory.

We believe that this project gives us a unique possibility to prepare to the regional election on March 2011 to the uttermost. During the single voting day on March 13, 2011 we will hold the election of deputies of the State Council of the Komi Republic, bodies of local self-government of urban districts and municipal regions of the Komi Republic. Presently all territorial election commissions together with centers for provision of public services in the sphere of social protection of population of cities and regions of the Komi Republic, primary organizations of the disabled, youth organizations, administrations of municipal formations are already engaged in preparation.

At the meeting of the Working Group the passport of disabled voter route to election precinct was expanded and the following items were added to it:

residential specifics (number of residents in the apartment, need in being accompanied, possibility of being accompanied by a relative, need in assistance of social worker);

approximate distance to election precinct;

"special notes" that include possible wishes of voters, for example, their wish to exercise their active electoral right outside polling station (at home), equipping of election precincts with additional aids (magnifying glasses, lighting devices), involvement of social worker, sign language interpreter).

Within the frames of implementation of this project we prepared an appeal to disabled voters clarifying the purpose of the project and importance of participating in it. What is the reason for these activities? While working on ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens election commissions face certain psychological problems. In particular, many handicapped citizens are constrained because of their poor living conditions and they do not allow members of precinct election commissions visit them at their homes and refuse to participate in the election. Some handicapped citizens can allow members of election commissions entering their homes only in the presence of social workers.

By the end of this year we plan to submit to state power bodies and bodies of local self-government a comprehensive analysis of the situation in all territories and our proposals on how to eliminate the identified problems.

It shall be noted that the Election commission of the Komi Republic has an experience of preparation of analysis reports to all heads of municipal formations administrations of urban districts and municipal regions and settlements with analysis of the situation in all territories and our proposals. In June of this year we held a “round table” meeting with representatives of state power bodies of the Komi Republic, all heads of municipal formations administration of urban districts and municipal regions, territorial and precinct election commissions of every city and district of the Republic, which was focused on ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled.

Thus it is necessary to consider the issue of legal regulation in the sphere of ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens.

This may be achieved through unified registration of handicapped citizens that will divide them into separate groups according to their disability category (deaf and hearing impaired, blind and visually impaired, with reduced mobility, etc.) and regular update of this information.

I assume that in every subject of the Russian Federation election commissions carry out work on ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens and apply lots of efforts that are aimed at establishment of the system of cooperation of election commissions with municipal formations administrations, ministries and agencies. In many cases these projects are initiated by election commissions.

Recently a head of the society of the deaf in her interview to one of republican media expressed her resentment caused by absence of roll title on TV channels, at least for news programs. She stressed that during the election roll title was always used. Indeed, the Election commission of the Komi Republic insisted on adding roll title to texts during the election campaigns. I am not sure whether these words of the head of organization of the disabled shall be considered as praise or as a reproach.

The project “Road to election precinct” will only help us with creation of the database. Elimination of identified problems and achievement of the main project objective will depend on efficiency of our work, goodwill of municipal powers and all state power bodies.

The example of efficient work is one municipal formation of the Komi Republic, urban district “Ukhta”. It annually adopts municipal program “Creation of a living environment, accessible for the disabled”, long-term targeted program “Social support for the disabled and ensuring their living conditions for the period of 2009-2010” that provides for equipping of buildings with ramps, access to information in news programs for the hearing impaired, allocation of funds for acquisition of literature for the disabled by centralized library system.

We consider it necessary to comprehensively solve the issue of creation of accessible environment for handicapped citizens. It is important that all state power bodies take part in implementation of the project on creation of barrier-free environment for citizens of this category. Otherwise any activities of election commissions are considered solely as race for votes, and population gets the impression that issues of ensuring of barrier-free access to information and objects of social, transport and engineering infrastructure become vital only during the election campaigning.

Complexity and cooperation are the basic principles of work on ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped people. Only joint work of election commissions and state power bodies and bodies

of local self-government will facilitate solution of the problems connected to equipping of election precincts and buildings where election precincts are located, and to creation of barrier-free environment for voters of this category.

I would like to express confidence that elections commissions are ready for organization and carrying out of such joint work.

**The Address of the Chairman of
the Election commission of the Tomsk
Region E.S. Yusebov**



**On implementation of the
pilot project “Road to election
precinct”**

4711 disabled people, out of whom 1504 are deaf-and-dumb, 1440 are blind, 1767 are wheelchair users, live in the Tomsk Region (364 wheelchair users, 953 immobile, 280 blind and 217 deaf live in the city of Tomsk).

On average 5% of those disabled people take part in balloting.

Within the framework of the project “Road to election precinct” of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation, election commissions carried out the following activities while preparing for the municipal election on October 10, 2010:

1) election commissions developed a passport of route to election precinct. It is necessary for the description of the problems connected with the disabled movement from house to election precinct. The objective of the project is to help the disabled to choose the best route from their residence place to election precinct for unassisted movement. Each disabled will receive an individual passport of voter route passport shall contain disability category, residence floor number, availability of means allowing exiting to the street, traffic lights with audio warning along the route etc

The Youth Election committee of the Tomsk Region, youth public organizations and students of Tomsk will take part in implementation of the project. They will assist the disabled with reaching election precinct;

2) The disabled will be transported to election precinct on October 10 on special vehicles free of charge.

If some disabled people wish to ballot at home members of precinct election commissions will promptly organize a delivery of portable ballot boxes;

The enlarged polling booths will be installed at some election precincts of the city for exercising of the electoral rights of wheelchair users;

for election precincts the Election commission ordered about 250 magnifying glasses, including illuminated magnifying glasses;

posters in large fonts will be placed for such voters at election precincts on the voting day;

presently the issue of production of audio disks with detailed information on the balloting procedure, on candidates for the deputies of the City Duma and on political parties presented their lists to representative body of the city of Tomsk, is under consideration;

a special page for visually impaired voters was created on the web site of the Election Commission of the Tomsk Region that will help such people to receive comprehensive information on work of election commissions, on preparation for the election in October, 2010.

A regular meeting of working group on exercising of the electoral rights of the disabled at the election of October 10, 2010 was held together with administration of the city of Tomsk. Workers of public health and social policy departments of city administration, representatives of election commissions of the Tomsk Region took part in this meeting.

The Election Commission established a working group on ensuring of the rights of the handicapped that included representatives of public health and social policy departments of the Tomsk administration, the Chairman of the "All-Russian Association of the Blind" of the Tomsk Region, members of Youth Election commission under the Election Commission of the Tomsk Region. The plan of activities aimed at information support of the election, the balloting procedure organization, equipping of election precincts and polling stations was approved and implemented. The recommendations stated in the letter of the CEC of Russia №07-09/3252, dated 8/4/2010, and connected, in particular, with developing and filling in of the passport of the disabled voter route to election precinct were accounted during implementation of approved measures.

First of all it was necessary to identify the number of people who need help with exercising their electoral rights, therefore a request for information on four categories of the patients, registered at medical and preventive treatment facilities of the city, was sent to the Department of health of Tomsk administration. The Commission received and processes the personal data of immobile people and wheelchair users, of the visually impaired and the hearing-impaired.

It was found out that among 26 000 disabled people at the age of 18 and over:

1. 288	are	wheelchair
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users;

953 are immobile;
248 are visually impaired;
203 are hearing impaired.

As a result of the Commission work, the data of the disabled voters with above mentioned categories was divided in accordance with urban districts, election districts and election precincts and submitted for checking and verifying to Tomsk district administrations. In turn, administrations submitted verified information to the Department of social policy of Tomsk city administration that requested social workers interview the handicapped and find out whether they were going to ballot and where they were going to do it, at home or at election precinct. Data on the number and categories of the handicapped was also sent to district election commissions for further cooperation with precinct election commissions (verifying lists, residential place and wish to ballot at home or at election precinct).

Data that allow evaluating the accessibility of environment for the handicapped was obtained on the ground of the letter of the CEC of Russia of August 4, 2010 N 07-09/3252.

1. Availability of accommodation.

The analysis of availability of environment for wheelchair users showed that the main problem for them is the impossibility to exit their apartments. Only 6% of the disabled have expanded doorways in their apartments, elevators fit for wheelchairs and ramps at entrances.

42% of wheelchair users do not have an opportunity to install ramps at entrances due to absence of elevators and narrow stairs, mainly in 5-storey apartment buildings.

Therefore 30% of wheelchair users said when interviewed that they cannot ballot at election precinct and are going to ballot at home.

The visually impaired face the difficulties because of absence of hand-rail on the stairs at the apartment building exits and contract color painting of porch steps.

2. Accessibility of pedestrian and transport network.

The majority of the above listed categories of the disabled can reach election precincts using public transport or by free "social" taxi.

It is necessary to note the public trolleybus park of the city of Tomsk has been renewed by 60% for the last two years. Only low-deck trolleybuses were purchased during replacement.

60% of trolleybuses have displays with destination indicators and voice automatic informers, 25% have only voice automatic informers.

30% of trams have displays with destination indicators and voice automatic informers.

The visually impaired face difficulties when moving in the streets because of absence of tactile ground signs and insufficient quantity of traffic lights with audio warning.

3. Accessibility of election precincts.

In order to exercise the electoral rights low mobility groups of population are in need of conditions that make election precincts accessible for the disabled (availability of ramps, hand-rails at entrance, parking lots for special vehicles for the disabled marked with "Disabled" sign, convenient pedestrian-transport network).

Inspection of election precincts carried out with the aim to check accessibility for the disabled showed that:

Only 3% of buildings have ramps at entrances to election precincts, and 36% have staircase hand-rails.

15 % of election precincts have parking lots for special vehicles, marked with "Disabled" sign;

57 % of crossings on the way to election precinct are regulated by traffic lights.

It is recommended to place direction signs inside election precincts premises.

It is necessary to note that 90.4 % of election precincts are located in city educational institutions:

71 % - in municipal educational institutions (institutions of extended education);

11.4 % -in educational institutions of regional subordination (colleges, institutions of technical and vocational education, hostels of educational institutions);

8 % - in higher education institutions (administrative buildings, hostels).

These figures indicate limited opportunities of participation in the election for citizens with reduced mobility, the visually impaired, etc. and insufficient accessibility of election precincts for wheelchair users, though low mobility groups can still exercise their electoral rights by balloting at home.

Thus, the study of problems of the disabled in the territory of the municipal formation "Tomsk city" within the frames of the pilot project "Road to election precinct" once more confirmed the relevance of the following tasks:

1) installation of ramps, staircase hand-rails at the place of residence and at the entrance to socially significant facilities (including educational institutions);

equipping of crosswalks, stops with light-audible and tactile information (including graphical diagrams of traffic routes);

providing special road signs, both for the disabled and informing about movements of the disabled along these roads;

creation of specially designated parking spaces for the disabled in city parking lots and socially significant facilities;

further formation of public transport facilities to meet requirements of accessibility for various categories of the disabled.

Tomsk city administration adopted and is currently implementing a city target program "Social integration for 2009-2011", providing a package of measures for creation of comfortable living environment for the disabled.

As part of this program implementation the following activities were carried out in 2009-2010:

ramps and hand-rails were installed at the entrance to rooms of municipal medical treatment facilities;

one secondary school was re-equipped for integrative educational process (activities of children with developmental disabilities together with healthy counterparts). By 2012, a municipal secondary school N 58 in Tomsk with in-depth study of subjects of artistic-aesthetic cycle will be re-equipped;

80 apartments of the disabled in Tomsk were repaired with expansion of doorways and equipping of bathrooms. For 2009-2011 more than 7 million rubles are allocated from city budget for these activities.

Management companies. Home owners associations, at the request of citizens, install inter-floor ramps and ramps at exits. However, the Housing Code does not regulate this issue. Lack of control mechanisms and administrative responsibility while implementing the Federal Law of November 24, 1995 N 181-FL "On Social Protection of the Disabled in the Russian Federation" within the frames of the Housing Code of the Russian Federation does not allow to solve this problem at local self-government level.

More than 50 percent of the disabled need ramps in apartment buildings; only 15% might have them installed, and the rest of the disabled need relocation to more accessible areas.

According to Article 72 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation housing legislation is in joint competence of the Russian Federation and its subjects.

In this regard, the relevant question concerns the creation of regional programs of the Russian Federation to use authorities granted to them for relocation of the disabled to more accessible areas with account of their health and other circumstances (proximity to a medical and preventive treatment facility, place of residence of family members and friends, etc.).

In order to improve work on creating a barrier-free living environment for the disabled and other people with limited mobility in the territory of Tomsk, the adviser in the disabled affairs was appointed under the Mayor of Tomsk, and Tomsk administration prepared a project on regulation of cooperation between interaction between regional and territorial bodies of city administration and authorized representatives of public organizations of the disabled on establishment of a barrier-free living environment for the disabled and other people with limited mobility.

The project of this regulation was studied and approved by public organizations of the disabled at the meeting of the Coordinating Council for the Disabled on August 10, 2010. It was decided to prepare a draft regulation on approving this project. Presently this draft regulation is on approval.

According to the regulation regional and territorial administrative bodies of the city of Tomsk shall carry out activities to create barrier-free environment within the provided authorities, with cooperation and supervision of authorized representatives of public organizations of the disabled:

Municipal service department - to ensure the accessibility of the road environment, including accessibility of transport stops complexes.

Capital construction department - to ensure accessibility of facilities intended for social needs during reconstruction, overhaul and capital construction of transport and pedestrian network (pavements, pedestrian crossings, and crossroads).

Territorial authorities - to ensure accessibility of socially significant objects in the territories (of objects of social security, public services, trade, parking lots) of driveways.

Department of architecture and urban development - to ensure accessibility of urban objects (buildings, structures) in agreement of project documentation, issuance of permits for construction and commissioning of facilities after the construction, reconstruction and repair.

Department of economic development and management of municipal property - to ensure accessibility of socially significant objects of municipal leased property.

Department of social policy coordinates activity of regional and territorial bodies to create barrier-free environment at social, transport and engineering facilities of Tomsk infrastructures, controls cooperation of public organizations of the disabled with territorial and regional bodies during the process of making decisions by these organizations.

Thus, election commissions with the assistance of the Department of social policy of Tomsk administration identified basic problems associated with movement of the disabled with reduced mobility in the city, and first of all to election precinct.

It is necessary to note that for each category of handicapped voters individual work was conducted both to inform them and to organize their balloting on the day of the election.

Realizing that not all citizens can have equal access to information on organization and carrying out of the election, as well as on candidates, the Election commission issued a bulletin "Vestnik", which was distributed to the mailboxes. Thus, people with reduced mobility, who cannot obtain information from sources such as posters placed on city bulletin boards, billboards and screens, were informed on the election.

In order to inform the blind and visually impaired voters election commissions entered into a contract with an employee of the Department of service organization for the visually impaired of A.S.Pushkin regional universal library, who read and recorded to compact disks the information on the procedure of balloting at election precincts and at home. These information media were provided to the Tomsk Region branch of the All-Russian Association of the Blind. The Chairman of the branch distributed those media among the organization members and held public listening in A.S.Pushkin regional library.

In addition to disks, the Tomsk Region branch of the All-Russian Association of the Blind was provided with information materials, printed in large fonts and designed for reading by visually impaired voters. This category of voters can also obtain information on the election at the official website of the Election commission, where a special resource for the visually impaired was created. Besides, in order to facilitate the balloting process, ordinary and illuminated magnifying glasses were provided for all election precincts.

As for assistance in delivering citizens with reduced mobility to election precincts, election commissions concluded a contract with a youth initiative group "Motor Club" SH.M ", according to

which a driver with a car was provided for each district election commission on the election day, whose duty was to pick up voters with reduced mobility from their homes, take them directly to election precinct and then bring home. Following the results of joint work of motor club and election commission 21 voters of this category voted at election precincts.

Precinct election commissions promptly considered written and oral requests of citizens who wished to ballot outside polling stations and organized balloting at home in the procedure stipulated by law.

Moreover, Tomsk administration reached an agreement with Tomsk UME "Tram-Trolleybus Department", on the basis of which all low-deck trolleybuses, designed for transportation of wheelchair users, worked on the voting day.

All activities of election commissions connected with ensuring of the electoral rights of the handicapped were widely covered in mass media: in newspapers, on radio and TV.

Based on the information provided, a conclusion can be made that state and local authorities of the city of Tomsk seek to provide conditions for normal movement of the handicapped in the city. The majority of office buildings, which include the administration of the Tomsk Region, A. S. Pushkin regional library, science library of the Tomsk State University, large grocery stores and apartment buildings in bedroom communities, are equipped with ramps and hand-rails. We hope that passports with information on numbers and residential addresses of wheelchair users will allow authorized bodies and social services making lives of such people significantly easier.

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On work of the election commissions of the Tver Region aimed at informing of disabled voters

Currently in the Tver Region more than 121 thousand disabled people are registered, and some of them are the voters who need special attention.

In 2007 a working group on ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped people was established under the election commission of the Tver Region. It was composed of representatives of regional Department of social protection of populations and regional branches of four All-Russian public organizations of the disabled. Today the working group successfully cooperates with different categories of the handicapped during the Federal election campaigns, the election of local self-government and in between the elections.

Work of the Election commission of the Tver Region is regulated by the Plan of cooperation with regional branches of public organizations of the disabled. In particular, this Plan provides not only the participation of representatives of public organizations of the disabled in many regional election commission's activities, but also consultations with them during the preparation of documents on issues of exercising of the electoral rights of the handicapped. One of the ways of communicating information to disabled voters was organization of joint workshops-meetings with representatives of these public organizations and political parties. The working group organizes working meetings in municipal formations of the Tver Region, in particular in Vyshny Volochek, Torzhok and Tver, areas of close-together accommodation of visually impaired people. That ensures not only getting first hand information and discussing specific problems of the handicapped, but also establishes constructive dialogue between the local self-government bodies, bodies of social protection of population and public organizations of the disabled.

Materials on elections, on cooperation of the Election commission of the Tver Region with public organizations of the disabled, public awareness work with the handicapped are delivered to target audiences through publications in regional newspaper for the disabled "Tak zhyvem" and quarterly insert to "Argumenty i fakty in Tver". Audio disks with information materials related to elections, including those published in "AiF in Tver", adapted for the hearing impaired, are produced. Those audio disks are distributed through the Library Network and the public organizations of the disabled.

Printed materials in large fonts or using Braille alphabet are always in demand.

Last year a resource for the visually impaired was developed for the official web site of the Election commission of the Tver Region. Visitors of this web section can read information in large fonts on the election, activities of regional and territorial election commissions of the Tver Region, as well as publications in mass media on the same subject, and find answers to many questions. Web site of the Tver regional branch of the All-Russian Association of the Blind provides direct link to this resource for the visually impaired. Due to special screen reader “Jaws” installed in the Tver Suvorov library that converts text files into audio files, even totally blind citizens can use this portal. Blind and visually impaired voters are informed on possibility of using special ballot stencils through mass media, public organizations of the disabled, territorial election commissions.

It is worth noted that those stencils in the Tver Region are produced by schoolchildren during their manual training classes, which facilitates solving three issues: helping visually impaired citizens to ballot without assistance, drawing attention of the younger generation to the importance of participation in the election, and improving tolerance towards the handicapped. For example, during the last year 100 schoolchildren in 14 municipal formations of the Tver Region produced 502 stencils. We continue the tradition this year. Positive experience of using stencils was noted during various election campaigns; it was highly appreciated by the All-Russian Association of the Blind and was recommended to be promoted by regional branches of the All-Russian Association of the Blind.

Taking into consideration the recommendations, given by regional branch of the All-Russian Association of the Deaf, the Election commission during election campaigns of various levels produces and broadcasts video clips with roll title at regional and municipal TV channels. At workshops with representatives of political parties, we constantly draw their attention to the fact that needs of all categories of the disabled shall be accounted while producing promotional materials.

On single voting days the Election commission of the Tver Region organizes “hot line”, with the help of which experienced lawyers answer questions related to preparation and carrying out of the election. The deaf and hearing impaired can use a special telephone line and ask questions and receive answers with the help of text messages.

Many issues of informing the disabled and exercising of the electoral rights are solved due to close cooperation with regional Department of the social protection of population. The Election commissions of the Tver Region always maintain actual information on the number of the disabled living in the territories where the election takes place.

Supported by social workers, members of election commissions can reach practically each disabled person and explain the procedure of balloting and deliver personal invitations to the election. The practice of inclusion of social workers into precinct election commissions proved its value. Today in the Tver Region almost half (46%) of precinct election commissions established for the election on October 10 include representatives of the bodies of social protection of population. We are going to continue this work.

We have done a lot, but more needs to be done. What are the tasks that we have to complete? The first one relates to education. It has two aspects. We shall create conditions for informing of the disabled, and they shall also be taught necessary skills. This task can be fulfilled by creating a unified regional specialized information-educational infrastructure that will include recourse centers for the handicapped, educational institutions for disabled children where they will be taught sign language, use of Braille alphabet and computer use. We consider useful to create the resource

centers on the basis of libraries with access to the broadband Internet connections and copying machines, and to equip these institutions with necessary equipment, allowing different categories of the disabled to obtain information. For example, the Tver Suvorov library for the blind is equipped with modern "reading machine" that quickly converts any text into audio files. There is a publishing complex, which produces printed materials with Braille alphabet and high-quality sound-recording equipment. The capacity of such resource center will increase multiple times, if the library is equipped with educational video films, a unified electronic database of audio and video books and textbooks is created, and a special class for distance learning of the disabled is organized. In future this potential can be increased even more by creation of inter-regional electronic network, integrating information bases of specialized libraries. We suggest to take the first step and facilitate development of the project "Standard of activities of the library for the blind of subject of the Russian Federation", developed by the Russian Library Association. The project provides for creation of a unified technique of servicing the disabled regardless of regional specifics of subject of the Russian Federation.

The second issue to be solved involves financing. We need to expand state, regional and municipal target-oriented programs and grant support to projects aimed at helping disabled people. Here is an example from our region. In four years the Tver regional branch of the All-Russian Association of the Blind won and received financing for eleven regional grants. This allowed, in particular, organization of the first Russian regional network of rehabilitation rooms for the visually impaired, equipped with special aids for the blind and transforming furniture. Annual development of this project is included in regional long-term activities program. Here is another example. On the eve the election of the President and deputies of the State Duma another regional grant allowed us to purchase 690 radios for the blind and visually impaired with TV-band with the help of which they could listen to radio and TV news. This helped to improve not only awareness of the disabled but their social status as well as social integration.

The third task is organizational. Russia has stable and diversified structure of public organizations of the disabled. However, new ideas and projects usually remain within these organizations and are not developed. That concerns information as well. I have noted several times that the problem with cooperation between organizations of the disabled and state of power bodies simply does not exist, and as soon as there is a neutral link (for example, election commission) both sides start constructive dialogue. In this regard, role of social workers cannot be overestimated.

A year ago organizations of the disabled in the Tver Region united in the Council that promotes interests of all categories of handicapped people. Thanks to its efforts and help provided by the deputies of Tver, all new traffic lights, installed in the regional capital, are equipped with audio warning and the old traffic lights are gradually re-equipped.

Only on condition of good organization and cooperation with civil society institutions the disabled can demonstrate their huge potential. The Election commission of the Tver Region has consistently recommended the local branches

of political parties to nominate active disabled people as their candidates, to propose their participation in election commissions and invite them as observers. We are trying to encourage this process. This week we launch a new project at our web site – virtual school of young observers. I sincerely hope that handicapped people will be among those who become its students.

*The Address of the Chairman of the
Election commission of the Tambov
Region A.S. Puchnin*



On cooperation with youth organizations of the disabled related to establishment of no-barrier environment during election campaigns

The creation of accessible environment for the disabled is an integral part of any government's policy, the practical results of which are to provide the disabled with opportunities equal to other citizens' in all spheres of life, including participation in the elections. The system approach of the government authorities towards the disabled care is an indicator of the healthy state. The environment accessible to the disabled is the ordinary environment provided with additional equipment aimed at the specific needs resulting from disabilities and allowing the disabled to live an independent life. The crucial parameters of equal opportunities for all the environment users are the environment's comfort and accessibility.

Presently developed system of government measures in the spheres of urban planning, support technology and public transport vehicles production is aimed at gradual development of a barrier-free living environment for the disabled.

However, the task of providing all the necessary conditions for handicapped people to fully exercise their electoral rights is more of an organizational nature than of humanitarian. We must ensure the equal rights for all the categories of the voters. The organizational mobility level depends on the organization of any process, including the election one. The experience of the recent election campaigns demonstrates that there is a necessity in legislation development aimed at ensuring of the election process for the disabled.

Taking this into account I propose, firstly: item 16 of Article 20 of the Federal Law "On Basic Guarantees of Electoral Rights and the Rights of Citizens of the Russian Federation to Participate in a Referendum" (hereafter - the Federal Law) shall include an obligation of local self-government bodies to provide the election commissions with the polling stations complying with the approved standards of accessibility for the disabled in accordance with the provisions of construction norms and regulations (SNIIP) 35-01-2001 "Accessibility of buildings and facilities for the reduced mobility population groups" (basic document of the system of construction normative documents "Ensuring of living environment accessibility for the disabled and other reduced mobility population groups") and the Code of practice SP 35-103-2001 "Public buildings and facilities accessible to the reduced mobility visitors".

The polling stations provided shall ensure:

free access and movement inside the building;

movement routes safety (including escape routes);

timely provision of full and high-quality information to facilitate orientation inside the station.

The fulfillment of these conditions will ensure the environment accessibility for disabled voters as well as their maximum social integration. Thus, it is logical to amend Article 20 of the Federal Law and include a provision requiring the state power and local self-government bodies, while engaged in preparations for elections and referenda, before making decisions on providing facilities for election commissions and polling stations, to create special interdepartmental commissions for preliminary assessment of these facilities for their compliance with the requirements of the Federal legislation. Such commissions shall include representatives of the bodies of social protection on the appropriate level as well as public organizations of the disabled.

At the same time, while amending the election law with such provisions, we shall support them by such measures of government influence on persons and entities as sanctions, as legal liability is sometimes more efficient than any reasoning and appeals to humanity and compassion.

To ensure this, some amendments shall be made to the Federal legislation, for example, to Chapter 5 of the Section II of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Russian Federation, with relation to sanctions for the failure to provide facilities for election commissions and polling stations, or for providing facilities that do not comply with the approved requirements. This is the third proposal.

However, even successful solution of the abovementioned problems may not exclude a possibility of some of the disabled being left outside the barrier-free environment, because there is no unified system of the disabled registration that would allow election commissions to plan their activities.

Thus, the fourth proposal is to amend Article 16 of the Federal Law to include a separate provision requiring the heads of local self-government to provide election commissions with information on the disabled divided by categories of their disability (the visually impaired, the hearing impaired, the disabled with reduced mobility and depended on use of support technology) based on the data of the bodies of social protection of population no less than twice a year.

Lack of the legislative regulation of the above listed problems does not in any way exempt commissions from obligation to organize balloting of the disabled during election campaigns.

Thus, within the framework of the project “Road to election precinct” initiated by the CEC of Russia, the Election commission of the Tambov Region in cooperation with the students of the Public Relations Department of the Tambov State University carries out a PR action “HELP ME!”, aimed at focusing the volunteers’ attention on the problems of the disabled in order to facilitate the exercising of their electoral rights.

The main target audiences of this campaign are the disabled, as well as socially responsible citizens of Tambov and young people.

The PR action is organized in two lines: information work (work with mass media) and organization of special events.

The first line of activity engaged mass media with wide audience that mostly target young population. They already started publishing Interviews with young disabled people (the “Gvozd” newspaper of the Tambov State Technical University), broadcasting television videos and social video clips which are shown on LED displays in the city and in educational institutions (“Alma mater” TV of the Tambov State University named after G.R.Derzhavin).

The second line of work involves organization and carrying out of flash mobs with flyers distribution on September 28 and on October 5, 2010. This shall help to inform wide range of citizens on importance of participation in the election of all voters and especially of the disabled. 1000 flyers with information on specially created e-mail box and “hot line” were prepared for these

purposes. The “hot line” shall attract volunteers, wishing to take part in charity actions, and inform the disabled that require volunteers assistance.

Similar information is placed on pillar boxes around the city. PR action “Help me!” is implemented through social networks of the Internet resource. PR action has a common style concept with recognizable symbols: a band over the eyes of the action participant with the words "HELP ME" that draws attention to problems of a person in need of help.

Increase of public tolerance is a long-term campaign implemented during the first stage of the "Road to election precinct" project during the election on October 10, 2010. Further on this initiative will be supported within the frames of the next election campaigns.



The Address of the Chairman of the regional branch of the Association of the Blind of the Tambov Region M.V.Smoliyaninov

On issues of cooperation of the regional branches of the All-Russian Association of the Blind with election commissions

Dear participants of the «round table»!

First of all on behalf of the All-Russian Association of the Blind and myself I would like to thank the administration of the State Duma and the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation for the provided opportunity to address such a high-level meeting.

It is an honor and at the same time it is very difficult to be one of the final speakers, as almost all the issues have already been covered. Still there are some points to which I would like to draw the attention of the “round table» participants.

I will not repeat the report of Alexey Sergeyevich Puchnin, as we both represent one and the same region, but I will say many thanks to the regional election commission for interaction and cooperation that allowed me for the first time in 25 years after the injury to vote at the last year special election freely, in a democratic way and, most importantly, without anybody’s help. This was achieved through stencils with the use of Braille alphabet that were prepared in advance.

It is not true that as time goes by people forget this system. Even those who lost sight recently can easily master it. If there is a will, there is a way. In the East they say: «A journey of thousand miles begins with a single step». 85 years of rehabilitation work of the All-Russian Association of the Blind and modern electoral rights technologies prove it. Many years ago, when after the loss of sight I found myself in a rehabilitation center, all the things that we are now talking about - the Braille alphabet, audiotapes, and stencils – already existed. Surely, they do

exist now. That is why the issues of information support of the election process are solved more or less successfully. Much more serious is the issue of the engineering and transport infrastructure. And I would like to support Alexey Sergeevich with regards to this issue. We need a unified standard of voting, a unified standard of elections that will reflect everything: the engineering and transport infrastructure, information support of the election including the account of different categories of disability. After all it is a national approach. The standard will help to minimize costs.

In the speeches of our colleagues we heard that each region has its own specifics. Experience is not summed up, efforts are not coordinated. In this regard a legally adopted document will allow solving all of the above mentioned issues in a more optimal way.

There is one more issue that today became a byword. This is the creation of the database of disabled voters. We should remember about a very serious legal conflict that arises here. I'm speaking about the right of privacy. In our opinion we can rely on international experience in this regard. I'm afraid to make a mistake in translation, but some countries recognize legitimate and illegitimate disabled people. The bottom line is this: if a person acknowledges that he is the disabled, he is entitled to a package of benefits. Lots of activities related to him are notice-based and his personal data is accessible.

The other category includes people who do not officially recognize themselves as the disabled. They have different legal status and their personal data is not accessible. This is where municipal formations carry out important work. Local government is well aware of the situation. Where does a disabled person live? What is his condition? When we speak about the possibilities of exercising the rights we shall keep in mind that many disabled people also experience psychological issues. It is not right to say that we do not need the election. We do need it very much! We must reach every disabled person and awaken a citizen in him, and then keep the election statistics. We shall give the disabled a possibility to build an independent life.

Of course the time will come when we gain more experience of electoral technologies, barriers will be eliminated, and there will be no need in such statistics. A disabled person will know then that he will come to an election precinct and just give his vote. However, today it is necessary to awaken a citizen in him.

The experience of the All-Russian Association of the Blind can be used while working out the standard. Our experts have already prepared a so-called passport of a socially significant object that reflects the entire engineering and transport infrastructure. And we are willing to share our developments.

Another thing that can be safely included in the standard is production of Braille stencils. We can cope at the small-scale local election with the help of schoolchildren volunteers. However, at an election of a regional level or, moreover, of a Federal one it is a very costly procedure. And we believe that we shall use international experience

in this regard. If I'm not mistaken, Canada uses relief ballots that are made in the image and likeness of bank notes, when each denomination has a sign of its own. In our case it is enough to indicate the right top corner with a stamping and raise the squares for marks. The rest of the work is information support, when a disabled person knows well in advance the order of candidates in a ballot and knows who he will vote for. With the appropriate resources our organization is ready to take over this part of the election technologies.

In conclusion I would like to emphasize once again that we are ready for collaboration and cooperation.

*The Address of the Chairman of the territorial election commission of the Proletarsky district of Tula
I.A.Korneicheva*



On forms and methods of the Election commission of the Tula Region work on ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled voters

The Constitution of the Russian Federation guarantees equality of rights of citizens, the right to elect and to be elected as well as the state protection of their rights and freedoms.

While preparing and carrying out of the election the Election commission of the Tula Region takes all measures provided by the Federal Law «On Basic Guarantees of Electoral Rights and the Right of Citizens of the Russian Federation to Participate in a Referendum» that are required to ensure the exercising and protection of electoral rights of citizens of the Russian Federation. Recommendations on ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled citizens of the Russian Federation developed by the Central Election Commission of Russia for the last election of the President of the Russian Federation in 2008.

1.3 million voters were registered in the territory of the Tula Region. Among them:

12 % of disabled persons (180,168 people),

1.2 % of the disabled of the first disability group (16,585 people).

The disabled of the first disability group are the ones in need of special attention, and special measures taken by various organizations are required in order to ensure exercising of the electoral rights of this group.

Out of total number of the disabled of the first group:

the visually impaired – 15 %;

disabled veterans of the Second World War – 10 %;

the hearing impaired – 9 %;

the disabled in wheelchairs – 2 %.

The Election commission of the Tula Region works closely with the territorial election commissions, administration of municipal districts, social services, the Pension Fund administration, public organizations of the disabled, mass media and local self-governments. In addition, during election campaigns the issues of exercising of the electoral rights of the disabled are under constant control of local public prosecutors' offices.

In order to deal with the disabled voters it is first of all necessary to know their number and places of residence.

During the preparation for the election territorial election commissions create lists of disabled voters for each election precinct and separately for each disability category. Then these lists are submitted to precinct election commissions that visit each disabled person, inform him/her of the preparation for the election and ask whether this person would like to vote at a polling station or outside it.

Experience of dealing with this category of voters shows that they are very distrustful and are reluctant to communicate with strangers. That is why in order to provide assistance in exercising of their electoral rights social service workers are engaged as well as housing seniors and chairmen of street committees. They help with filling out applications and deliver them to precinct election commissions. Such applications are considered by commissions in the first place. In case of problems with regards to access into the buildings housing services are engaged.

However, a part of voters remain uninvolved as there is no unified database containing full information about the disabled. Besides, according to the law on protection of the information organizations cannot give out lists with places of residence of the citizens without permissions of the said citizens to do so.

This issue could be solved by signing an agreement between the Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Russian Federation and the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation on the exchange of information.

For the disabled participation in the balloting process at election precinct is one of the vital and the most anticipated events, they feel themselves citizens there, actively participating in the political life of the country, needed by the society.

The challenge we are facing is to provide all conditions to maximize access of each voter to polling station, to provide the election commissions with special technological equipment and reference materials.

Election precincts of the Tula Region have enough desktop booths, booths with an extended entry for balloting of the wheelchair users; sign language interpreters are engaged to assist to the hearing impaired.

A «social» taxi service is organized in all municipal formations of the Tula Region. The town of Tula has a regular tram equipped with a lift platform and specially adapted to carry the wheelchair users.

According to the results of an interview, the visually impaired are the most active category of voters. They generally vote at election precincts, make their choice consciously, deliberately, willingly come to the meetings with the candidates and obtain information about the election from all sources of information available to them.

I am the Chairman of the territorial election commission of the Proletarsky district of Tula where there is a neighborhood densely populated by the visually impaired. There is a shop, yards specially equipped with hand-rails, traffic lights with audio warning, a library and a culture center. We always organize a separate election precinct in this neighborhood.

To comply with the principle of secret ballot and of filling out a ballot in accordance with the will of the voter without any help, we use a device that allows a visually impaired voter to vote independently. The device placed in balloting booths contains information about candidates inscribed in Braille alphabet and a folder-stencil for the ballot with cut-outs in place of the squares where a voter puts a mark.

However, there are unresolved issues related to ensuring access of disabled people.

Not all the entrances to the voting centers are equipped with access ramps, but construction of them will not resolve the problem of access of a disabled person with reduced mobility to election precinct. First of all a wheelchair user faces difficulties with exiting his home, as there are no ramps in majority of apartment buildings. In addition, in order to establish all the voting centers not higher than on the first floor there should be enough municipal and state premises that are as close as possible to the places of residence of the voters. Currently from three to five election commissions

are located within one and the same building (these buildings are mostly schools). Due to this fact election commissions are forced to turn to commercial entities that are not always willing to provide their facilities free of charge.

I believe we shall consider the introduction into the legislation of a state duty for the owners to provide their premises for voting or to provide rent or grant benefits.

One of the main activities of election commissions is public awareness work.

During the preparation and carrying out of elections all presently forms and methods of public awareness work with the disabled are used.

First of all mass media and the website of the Election commission of the Tula Region are used for informing the voters.

The most visited sections of the website are «Forthcoming election», «FAQ» and «Find your election precinct».

It is obvious that availability of the website and constantly updated information there allow a disabled person to have full information without leaving home.

During election campaigns the local news broadcasts are accompanied by roll title. In addition, information messages prepared by territorial election commissions are broadcasted in all trade centers, shops, markets and other places of public gatherings.

At the request of regional public organizations of the disabled the Election commission of the Tula Region prepares and distributes special handbooks and brochures.

Meetings, workshops and talks with members of the public organizations of the disabled and organizers of the election as well as other events are held in public organizations, libraries, departments of social protection and homes. «Voters corner» are also established in such places.

In every district of Tula one or two libraries are equipped with automated voters' workstations (AVW).

There is an AVW installed in a special library for the visually impaired located in the territory of our district.

An AVW of a visually impaired voter is equipped with technical means and the screen reader «Jaws for Windows» that allows visually impaired people to freely use a computer. AVW has access to the Internet and software installed that includes «Consultant Plus» system, electronic versions of the magazines «On elections», «Tula voter», a wide range of demonstration material, quizzes, games and educational films for young voters. A special machine «Info-100» converts hard copies into audio signal providing the disabled with all the necessary information about elections, parties and candidates. There is a special sound program installed on a computer that recites information; there is an electronic magnifying glass for the visually impaired that magnifies text.

The book «First on the front, first in the election» issued by the Election commission of the Tula Region for the 65th anniversary of the Great Victory was also adapted for visually impaired readers. A coloring book «Make the choice» is prepared specially for visually impaired children. Images are transferred to the relief; the text is printed with the use of Braille alphabet.

The Election commission of the Tula Region has a permanently operating public reception room; a public «hot line» for communication with voters is organized during the election campaigns.

All above forms and methods of work are carried out in accordance with the approved Plan of cooperation of the Election commission of the Tula Region with the bodies of state power of the Tula Region

and regional branches of All-Russian public organizations of the disabled with the aim of assisting in exercising of the electoral rights of the disabled for 2009-2011.

As a result, during the last election of the President of the Russian Federation and local elections in 2009-2010 almost all wheelchair users took part in balloting (almost all of them voted at home), as well as disabled veterans of the Second World War of the first group of disability and visually impaired people (mainly at election precincts). No calls from voters on the issues of violation of the electoral rights of the disabled were received by election commissions.

Today everything possible is done by election commissions for the disabled citizens, but in order to ensure full exercising of their constitutional rights it is necessary to have a complete database of such voters as well as solve the issue of the suitability of urban infrastructure for their movement.



The Address of the Director of a special library for the visually impaired named after N.Ostrovsky of the town of Kaluga M.P. Konovalova

Ensuring of the electoral rights of the handicapped in the Kaluga Region

Population of the Kaluga Region amounts to one million, and 100 000 out of them are handicapped people. Five thousand people out of this number are visually impaired.

For this category of users the special library for the visually impaired provides printing materials on the election law published on traditional and special media (printed, with the use of Braille alphabet, on tapes, disks and flash cards). These materials include laws, handbooks and information publications. The Election commission of the Kaluga Region provides considerable financial support for acquisition of these materials.

The library provides information on the election law to disabled readers both in printed and oral form.

In January 2009 two Centers of legal information for disabled people were opened in order to meet legal requests of readers.

Visually impaired users of the library received access to both the databases of the legal reference systems «Consultant Plus» and the information in the Internet. Seven free Internet access points are organized for visually impaired users. The Election commission provided assistance in allocation of 500 thousand rubles for the organization of a computer class for visually impaired employees of ETE AAB “Borovsk enterprise”.

The library regularly organizes the days of legal information with the participation of lawyers. The Chairman of the Election commission of the Kaluga Region V.I.Kuznetsov and the human rights commissioner for the Kaluga Region Y.I.Zelnikov are frequent guests at such events. - Members of the Election commission organize meetings with the disabled within the library, in social institutions and at their homes.

Deputies of the Legislative Assembly of the Kaluga Region and the City Duma of Kaluga attend the events held by the special library. Meetings with candidates are held on the eve of the election. - Documentaries about participation of the disabled in the election are created. The regional mass media regularly covers the issues of exercising of the electoral right of the disabled.

The library for the visually impaired in cooperation with the Election commission of the Kaluga Region carries out interviews to identify the reasons preventing the disabled from attending the election. The main wishes of the disabled are the following: availability of stencils with the use of Braille alphabet, ramps and the possibility to move freely to election precinct.

For the last ten years the library has been publishing information materials for the election and ballot stencils with the use of Braille alphabet.

There is a special information resource for the visually impaired at the website of the Election commission of the Kaluga Region.

Workshops «Everyone should know about his right to choose!» are organized for the disabled in all districts of the Kaluga Region.

All this would have never happened without the help and support of the regional government and the Public Chamber of the Kaluga Region. Additional vehicles were provided by regional government for ensuring of free transportation of the disabled to election precincts.

For contribution to organizing and carrying out of the election of deputies of the Legislative Assembly of the Fifth convocation of the Kaluga region the Director and the library employees were awarded with a diploma and a letter of gratitude from the Election commission of the Kaluga Region.



The Address of the Chairman of the Election commission of the Perm Territory T.N.Saydakova

On issues of obtaining and verifying of information on disabled voters

One of the challenges faced by the Election commission of the Perm Territory during the preparation and carrying out of the election is ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled citizens of the Russian Federation and providing them with optimal conditions for voting.

To implement the indicated objectives the Election commission of the Perm Territory formed a working group on ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled citizens of the Russian Federation. It is composed of heads of regional branches of All-Russian public organizations such as: «The All-Russian Association of the Disabled», «The All-Russian Association of the Hearing Impaired», «The All-Russian Association of the Visually Impaired» and «The Russian Red Cross», representatives of two Ministries of the Perm Territory - of Health and Social Development, the administration of the human rights commissioner for the Perm Territory, the head of the regional branch of the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation in the Perm Territory, the chief editor of the newspaper “Zdravstvuj” (“Hello”) and the members of Election commission of the Territory.

Similar working groups were organized by territorial election commissions at the municipal level.

Work on ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled citizens in the Perm Territory began in 2007 after the Central Election Commission of Russia approved the Directives on ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled citizens of the Russian Federation during the election of deputies of the State Duma and the President of the Russian Federation.

During the preparation and carrying out of the election of any level, in order to obtain and summarize the information on disabled people, bodies of social protection, health organizations, the Pension Fund and public organizations joined their efforts.

Territorial election commissions, requesting lists of disabled people, often receive only the number of people of such category. This is quite understandable, as Article 9 of the Federal Law N 152-FZ «On personal data» allows providing and processing of personal data only with written consent of the subject of such data.

Public organizations are also limited by current legislation with regards to providing the requested information. Moreover, they are only aware of members of their organizations, and that

membership has always been voluntary. Besides, not all of the municipal formations of our Territory have local branches of public organizations of the disabled.

Despite these difficulties, we manage to partially solve the problem of obtaining the information on this category of voters.

Territorial election commissions of the Territory send requests to regional branches of bodies of social protection of population that compile and provide commissions with the lists of disabled voters with account of election precincts location. The lists contain the necessary information: surname, first name, patronymic name, date of birth, residence address, telephone number of a voter and also information on ability of the voter to move independently. In addition, these lists are completed with information of public organizations of the disabled with regards to ability of each of the voters of the group to do without outside help, to go out or move around the apartment.

Upon creation of disabled voters lists, territorial election commissions distribute them to precinct election commissions. Members of precinct election commissions, having this information at their disposal, deliver invitations to the elections and personally talk to the said category of voters finding out whether they want and can vote either at election precinct or at home. A big problem while carrying out this work is that visiting homes of the citizens requires time and efforts and it is not always possible to reach every disabled person as not all of them live in places of their registered residence.

In practice election commissions request information on disabled persons in order to create the most favorable conditions, ensure exercising of the electoral rights of each disabled citizen. Most often it works in small areas, both urban and rural.

Despite this, it is also necessary to create a legal mechanism that would allow election commissions lawfully request and receive complete information about disabled voters from the competent authorities. The said legal mechanism shall include responsibility for delay or inaccuracy of any information provided.

A necessity to create a unified database of disabled persons and keep it updated is long overdue. This database shall be maintained by one of the state institutions. Responsibility for maintaining this database and the order of provision of data shall be established at the legislative level. Election commissions shall be included into the lists of bodies that shall be provided with information from this database.

For example, the Federal state institution “General agency of medical and social expertise for the Perm Territory» has a database of persons who have passed examinations and received one or another group of disability since 2000. However, practice shows that it contains some details that are no longer relevant. This database still contains information on people who died, moved permanently to another location, etc. This institution also has information about children with disabilities. If a disabled child is about to turn 18 years old, he becomes our responsibility as we shall ensure his electoral right.

The Pension Fund bodies have their own database. However, this database does not contain information on the disabled that worked in law enforcement, judiciary and other law enforcement agencies. Since 2007, the database of the disabled, beneficiaries of social assistance and support is maintained by the Ministry of Social Development of the Perm Territory. Unfortunately, provision of information from all these institutions is limited by the mentioned law on personal data

Therefore, we consider it necessary and timely to raise the issue of working out at the legislative level of an issue of creation of a unified database of disabled persons (a register of disabled voters) in the context of not only subjects of the Russian Federation but also of municipal formations of all levels, especially as our country prepares to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons, and first of all we should know their number and place of residence.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that during the creation of the lists of disabled voters a number of problems is revealed that are important not only for us as organizers of the election but also for the development of infrastructure for the disabled at the local level.

Here is an example. On October 10, 2010 in the territory of the Lysva municipal district a by-election of the deputy of the Legislative Assembly of the First convocation of the Perm Territory is held at a single mandate election precinct N 18.

In order to identify problems that appear in the process of independent transportation of a disabled person from his place of residence to election precinct, submitting of the obtained

information to local governments, relevant organizations and enterprises in order to eliminate the identified problems, we organized a working meeting with representatives of the Perm Territorial branch of the All-Russian Association of the Blind.

As a result of this meeting one election precinct was chosen for participation in the pilot project "Road to election precinct". The territory of this election precinct is densely populated by visually impaired voters. Special aid means are installed on the way to this election precinct designed for visually impaired persons: special guideline hand-rails, traffic lights with audio warning and staircases. Presently a work is carried out on creation of individual voters routes to election precinct. Special attention is paid to creation of necessary conditions for visually impaired voters both along the way to election precinct and at polling station.

The Election commission of the Perm Territory in cooperation with the library for visually impaired created a text with a detailed description of the route that will be recorded on an audio disk and distributed to visually impaired voters so that they could freely come over to election precinct and vote.

Information on the work done within the framework of this project is broadcasted via the media to all municipal formations of the Territory. This example will serve as another incentive for creation of barrier-free environment in other areas of the Perm Territory.

SECTION 3

On implementation of the pilot project of the CEC of Russia "Road to election precinct" within the frames of preparation and carrying out of the election on the single voting day, on October 10, 2010 in subjects of the Russian Federation.

The CEC of Russia, election commissions of subjects of the Russian Federation, territorial election commissions carry out systematic work on ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled citizens of the Russian Federation both during the election campaigns and in between elections.

Taking into consideration preparations to ratification of the UN Convention on the rights of the disabled by the Russian Federation, the CEC of Russia on the eve of the single voting day, on October 10, 2010, initiated a long-term pilot project "Road to election precinct," the purpose of which is to identify problems in the process of independent movement of the disabled from the place of residence to election precinct, transfer of information obtained to the state power bodies, local self-government, relevant organizations and enterprises to deal with problems on elimination of identified deficiencies.

Most election commissions of subject of the Russian Federation showed their willingness to participate in implementation of this project both while preparing to regional and municipal elections, and in the period between elections.

Some election commissions, including the Election commission of the Chechen Republic, realizing great social significance of this project, participated in its implementation, though this Republic did not hold the election on the past single voting day.

Most election commissions plan to continue to implement this project during the forthcoming election on the single voting day in March 2011, as well as during the Federal election of 2011-2012.

The analysis of materials, presented by election commissions, on implementation of the pilot project "Road to election precinct " showed that there are quite a lot of common problems. They are mainly connected to lack of special means (elevators, ramps, lifts) in places of residence of the disabled, which help them to exit their homes. As a rule, it refers to the so-called old construction houses. Besides, often the route of disabled voters from home to an election precinct is characterized by poor quality roads, there are no traffic lights with sound signals, tactile signs, vehicles, which give the possibility to get in and get out of them, etc.

All these drawbacks were recorded by election commissions, information on them was sent to the executive bodies of state power and local self-government to take appropriate measures. For example, the result of work of the Election commission of the Irkutsk Region was sending proposals of the election commission to the government of the Irkutsk Region, which were developed during the project implementation, for their inclusion in the project of the long-term program "Accessible environment for the disabled." In the Tyumen Region specific proposals on improving living conditions of the disabled within the frames of exercising of their electoral rights in preparing for elections on the single voting day on October 10, 2010 were repeatedly announced during conferences and working meetings with representatives of local self-government, at the meetings of the acting Council for the disabled under the governor of the Tyumen Region.

Many election commissions creatively deal with implementation of this project. They prepared completed passports of disabled voters and plans of movement for the disabled with detailed description (the Dagestan Republic, the Tatarstan Republic, the Tyumen Region, and others). Many

commissions submitted to the CEC of Russia interesting photo materials (the Tatarstan Republic, the Chechen Republic, the Irkutsk Region, and others). The territorial election commission of the Volsky municipal district of the Saratov Region has published a colorful brochure, "Report on implementation of the project "Road to election precinct."

Within implementation of the project the Election commission of the Tambov Region and the election commission of the city of Tambov, involving university students of Tambov, carried out an extensive PR campaign "Help me!", and the Election commission of the Khakass Republic and the Ministry of Sport, Tourism and Youth Affairs carried out a republican youth campaign "Everyone's vote is important," which resulted in creation of volunteer units for assisting disabled voters during the election on the single voting day on October 10, 2010.

The territorial election commission of the Kagalnitskiy district of the Rostov Region developed the plan of activities, coordinated with the head of the district, Department of social protection of population and public organization of the disabled, to create the conditions for the unimpeded movement of the disabled to election precincts.

The Election commission of the Komi Republic comprehensively and systematically approached the project: preparatory institutional arrangements were carried out, the project was announced and widely reported in the periodicals, radio newscasts, in TV reports, in the Internet, information materials about the project were prepared and given to the disabled, passports of routes were made, database of voters was specified, analytical reports on the results of the work were prepared and sent to state power and local self-government bodies.

Many election commissions while implementing the pilot project "Road to election precinct" engaged representatives of youth organizations, students, members of public organizations of the disabled, representatives of bodies of social protection and municipal authorities.

This is a long-term project. Its implementation in general will play a positive role in improving the quality of life of the disabled and will contribute to ensuring of their electoral rights.

Election commission of the Komi Republic

The Election commission of the Komi Republic considers that the pilot project "Road to election precinct" initiated by the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation is significant, urgent and socially important.

Main areas of activity on implementation of the pilot project include:

meetings of the Working Group on cooperation of the Election commission of the Komi Republic with regional public organizations of the disabled aimed at taking decision on implementation of the pilot project "Road to election precinct" in the territory of the Komi Republic; approval of required documents;

sending of information materials about the project to primary organizations of the disabled of the Komi Republic cities and districts, to centers for public services in the sphere of social protection of population under Social development agency of the Komi Republic, to territorial election commissions of the Komi Republic;

- extensive republican and local media coverage of project implementation process;
- working meetings with heads of municipal formations administrations of urban districts and municipal regions, urban and rural municipal formations;
- approval of pilot project implementation plan by working groups on cooperation with organizations of the disabled working under each of 21 territorial election commissions of the Komi Republic;
- development of passport of disabled voter with the route to election precinct;
- preparation of information-analytical reports with analysis of identified problems with account of disabled voters' wishes;
- sending of analytical reports to state power bodies of the Komi Republic and bodies of local self-government;
- verification of disabled voters' database.

Positive decision on joint efforts for implementation of this project in the territory of the Komi Republic was taken at the meeting of the Working Group on cooperation of the Election commission of the Komi Republic with regional public organizations of the disabled which was held on August 12. The Working Group includes members of the Commission, its administration members, chairmen of Komi regional branches of the All-Russian public organizations "All-Russian Association of the Blind", "All-Russian Association of the Deaf", "All-Russian Association of the Disabled", the chairman of Board of the Komi republican organization of the All-Russian Association of the Afghanistan disabled veterans.

The representative of the Social development department of the Komi Republic, head of Social services department, was also invited to the meeting.

A sample of individual passport of disabled voter route to election precinct (hereinafter – route passport) and target appeal to the disabled, explaining necessity of visiting the disabled at their homes for filling in of this route passport, was approved during this Working Group meeting. The preparation of this appeal had psychological reasons. In particular, a lot of handicapped citizens have negative feelings about visiting their homes by strangers due to their low living standard and poor living conditions. Some handicapped citizens can allow members of election commissions entering their homes only in the presence of social workers. In consideration of the experience obtained and generalized during the Federal election campaigns of the fifth election cycle, a decision to do door-to-door (house-to-house, court-to-court) visiting of citizens for filling in of the route passport by members of election commissions, representatives of organizations of the disabled, specialists of the centers for public services in the sphere of social protection of population of cities and districts of the Komi Republic was taken at the Working Group meeting.

The Working Group also took a decision to implement the pilot project "Road to election precinct" in the election territories on the single voting day of October 10, 2010 and also to continue project implementation in whole territory of the Komi Republic within the frames of preparation and carrying out of the election in March 2011.

The information on joint actions within the project was submitted through the head of the Komi Republic Social development agency to specialists of the centers for public services in the sphere of

social protection of population of cities and districts of the Region, and through chairmen of organizations of the disabled – to local primary organizations of the disabled. Chairmen of the territorial election commissions held working meetings on implementation of the project "Road to election precinct" with heads of municipal formations of urban districts and municipal regions and urban and rural municipal formations.

Informing of mass media on implementation of the pilot project "Road to election precinct".

The Election commission informed citizens of the Komi Republic on implementation of the pilot project "Road to election precinct" through mass media, official Internet sites, and Internet portals of the Komi Republic cities.

Starting from August 12, more than 14 press releases dedicated to "Road to election precinct" project objectives, stages of its implementation were published in news reels of web sites of the Election commission, news agencies "Komiinform", "KomiOnline", "Syktyvkar Sheau", on websites www.uhta24.ru, www.usinsk.info, www.tymolodoy.ru, www.molgvardia.ru/regions/respublika-komi, including publications in various other cities and districts of the Republic. Materials about the project are published almost every week on "Your choice" special page in the republican periodical "The Republic" and also in municipal periodicals. The detailed report with comments of the Commission administration was broadcasted by Komi Gor TV channel (regional branch of the Federal State Unitary Enterprise "Russia"). The project was widely discussed in the news on "Komi Gor" radio, "People's Radio of Komi", "Europa Plus Komi" radio, "Russian Radio in Syktyvkar".

Extensive media coverage of project start-up was the introduction to individual work with disabled citizens that is considered to be a priority area of activity of election commissions on ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled citizens. Reasons for individual work were of psychological nature and related to poor social living conditions of such category of voters. An information resource was created on the Election commission site for visually impaired voters; statistics show that on average 17 people regularly use this resource for obtaining information. At one of the "round table" meetings representatives of organizations of the disabled noted that presently only few handicapped citizens in the Komi Republic have computers and use Internet services due to financial difficulties. There are only three professional sign language interpreters in the Komi Republic. There are certain difficulties related to production of materials with the use of Braille alphabet, as well as to lack of skills in using it by the disabled. During the Federal election this issue was mostly solved due to materials sent from the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation.

Implementation of the pilot project "Road to election precinct" in election territories on the single voting day of October 10, 2010.

On the single voting day on October 10, 2010 the Komi Republic will hold the election to local self-government: head of "Brykalansk" rural settlement (in territory of municipal formation of "Izhemsky" municipal district), head of "Pezmeg" rural settlement (in territory of municipal formation of "Kortkerossky" municipal district), deputies of the Council of newly established

municipal formation of “Chikshino” rural settlement (in territory of municipal formation of “Pechora” municipal district).

763 voters have the right to vote in “Izhemsky” district. Two precinct election commissions were established for ensuring of the balloting process. During the period from September 6 to September 14 members of the precinct commissions and specialists of the centers for public services in the sphere of social protection of population of the district carried out individual interviews with disabled voters residing in the territory of “Brykalansk” rural settlement (in Brykalansk settlement and Chika village).

66 disabled voters live in the territory of “Brykalansk” rural settlement. Route passport was prepared for 64 people (two citizens were absent at their place of residence for a long time). Among them:

8 disabled of disability group I, including two people with reduced mobility;

27 disabled of disability group II, including three people with reduced mobility and one visually impaired person;

29 disabled of disability group III.

58 people stated that they had the status of the disabled because of systemic disease (i.e. they did not belong to any of the three categories listed in the route passport).

53 people out of those interviewed wished to exercise their electoral right at election precinct on the voting day, 11 people (17.1%) wished to ballot at home.

The database of disabled voters in the territory of “Brykalansk” rural settlement was verified in the course of project implementation. No significant barriers for exercising of the electoral right of the disabled (attending election precinct) were identified based on the results of this work. Specific recommendations to bodies of local self-government on elimination of drawbacks preventing free access to election precincts were prepared prior to September 20.

In particular, a building where the election precinct N 210 is located (rural culture center in Chika) stands on a hill, therefore it is recommended to expand building access from both sides, provide lighting, find means to repair pavements and footbridge over the stream and equip rises/sloped with hand-rails.

In order to ensure the balloting process at election precinct N 209, located in rural culture center of Brykalansk, it is recommended to provide street lighting of building accesses, organize social workers duty, and provide vehicles for organization of balloting outside polling station.

946 voters are included in voters lists in the Pechora district. Three precinct election commissions were established to ensure the balloting process. In the framework of "Road to election precinct" project the territorial election commission of Pechora together with the Center of public services in the sphere of social protection of population of Pechora and precinct commissions established for preparation and carrying out of the election to the Council of Chikshino rural settlement, studied possibilities and conditions of exercising of the electoral rights of disabled citizens in Chikshino and Beryozovka rural settlements.

60 voters with various disability categories are registered in the territory of Chikshino rural settlement, out of which 58 voters live there permanently. Among them:

5 disabled of disability group I,
49 disabled of disability group II,
4 disabled of disability group III.

10 percent of disabled citizens, living in the territory of Chikshino rural settlement, wished to exercise their electoral right outside polling station (at home).

Most of them are visually or hearing impaired people of disability group II having ability to move. Interviews carried out by members of precinct election commission showed that in order to ensure the exercising of the electoral rights of the disabled, polling stations shall be equipped with magnifying glasses and additional lighting. It is also necessary to organize social workers attendance at election precinct. There are no wheelchair users among these people, all of them can walk; thus it is not required to equip election precincts with lifts, ramps and other special facilities.

1044 voters have the right to vote at pre-term election of the head of "Pezmeg" rural settlement in the Kortkerossky district. Two precinct election commissions were established for ensuring of the balloting process. During the period from September 6 to September 14 members of the precinct commissions, specialist of the centers for public services in the sphere of social protection of population of the district, and specialist of "Pezmeg" rural settlement administration carried out individual interviews with disabled voters residing in the territory of "Pezmeg" rural settlement (in Pezmeg village and Adzherom settlement).

49 disabled voters (with reduced mobility, visually and hearing-impaired) live in the territory of "Pezmeg" rural settlement. The route passport was prepared for 49 people. Among them:

9 disabled of disability group I, including four people with reduced mobility, four bed patients and one blind;

39 disabled of disability group II, including 28 people with reduced mobility, one hearing-impaired person, 10 people with systemic disease (i.e. they do not belong to any of the three categories listed in the route passport);

1 disabled person of disability group III with reduced mobility.

21 people out of those interviewed wished to exercise their electoral right at election precinct of the voting day, 28 people (57.1%) wished to ballot at home.

The database of disabled voters in the territory of "Pezmeg" rural settlement was verified in the course of project implementation. No barriers for entering the election precinct N 566 (Adzherom settlement) and exercising the disabled electoral rights were identified; the building entrance has self-made ramp with hand-rails installed. There are not barriers to access election precinct N 567 (Pezmeg village), except one step staircase.

There is no necessity in engaging sign language interpreters. Voters of this category are accompanied to election precinct by their relatives.

It is important to note that the head of administration of municipal formation of the Kortkerossky municipal district approved the resolution "On creation of the working group on implementation of 'Road to election precinct' project"; working group consisted of representatives of district administration, territorial election commission of the Kortkerossky district, center for public services in the sphere of social protection of population, and heads of rural settlements.

Analytical reports were made for each territory of the October 10, 2010 election after summing up of the information included in the route passport. Before October 1 the information was sent to bodies of local self-government for consideration of possibilities of eliminating the identified problems. In particular, these possibilities include equipping of all election precincts with intensified lighting and magnifying glasses. Although none of 171 interviewed disabled wished to use special transport and did not ask to equip entrance/exit with decks and ramps, analytical reports contained information on lack of ramps in premises where election precincts are located, and on improvement of surrounding territories that interfere with free access of handicapped citizens to election precincts.

Preparation for implementation of "Road to election precinct" project on the single voting day on March 13, 2011.

The Election commission and Working Group decided to start implementation of "Road to election precinct" project in the whole territory of the Komi Republic within the frames of preparation and carrying out of the election in March 2011. The election of deputies of the State Council of the Fifth convocation of the Komi Republic, deputies of representative bodies of municipal formations of urban districts and municipal regions of the Komi Republic and elected officials of local self-government will be held on the single voting day on March 13, 2011.

The territorial election commissions of the Komi Republic together with the primary organizations of the disabled in the Komi Republic began preparation of individual route passports in August, 2010. Working groups on cooperation with organizations of the disabled under each territorial election commission organized meetings attended by heads of administrations of municipal formations and specialists of the centers for public services in the sphere of social protection of population.

Presently members of territorial election commissions, personnel reserve of precinct commissions, representatives of primary organizations of the disabled, specialists of the centers for public services in the sphere of social protection of population, members of administrations of municipal formations, representatives of youth public organizations carry out joint work on filling in the route passports.

Summary and conclusion.

The route passports were prepared for 171 out of 175 disabled citizens living in the territories of October 10, 2010 election in the Komi Republic within the framework of implementation of the "Road to election precinct" pilot project. Four citizens were absent at their places of residence for a long period of time.

Information and analytical materials with proposals on ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled citizens, on creation of conditions for an unimpeded access of the disabled to election precincts were sent to bodies of local self-government prior to October 1.

From 10 to 57 percent out of 171 interviewed disabled wished to exercise their electoral right outside polling station (at home).

None of interviewed voters that wished to ballot at election precinct required special means (ramps, decks, lifts, transport). The average distance from disabled people homes to election

precinct is 300 meters. The election of October 10, 2010 is held in the territories of rural settlements, therefore there are no underground passages, traffic lights and so on in townships and villages.

For purposes of ensuring of exercising of the electoral rights of disabled citizens, in accordance with their wish as well, social workers attendance will be organized at election precinct and additional equipment (intensified lighting, magnifying glasses) will be provided.

In connection to preparation for the election on the single voting day on March 13, 2010, there is apparent and widespread incompliance of ramps with construction norms and regulations SNiP, and in most cases absence of such ramps in premises where election precincts are planned to be located, as well as problems with locating such election precincts only on the first floors of buildings.. There are some problems of psychological nature related to filling in of the route passports as some citizens refuse to participate in the pilot project implementation, in particular, to provide personal records.

The example of efficient work is one municipal formation of the Komi Republic, urban district "Ukhta". It annually adopts municipal program "Creation of a living environment, accessible for the disabled", long-term targeted program "Social support for the disabled and ensuring their living conditions for the period of 2009-2010" that provides for equipping of buildings with ramps, access to information in news programs for the hearing impaired, allocation of funds for acquisition of literature for the disabled by centralized library system.

According to the results of the work the Commission plans to make preliminary analytical report for all the territories and to submit it to the state power bodies of the Komi Republic and bodies of local self-government to choose optimal methods for solving of revealed problems and taking into account wishes of disabled citizens.

It shall be noted that the Election commission of the Komi Republic has an experience of preparation of analysis reports to all heads of municipal formations administrations of urban districts and municipal regions and settlements with analysis of the situation on ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled in all territories. In June, 2010 the Election commission held a "round table" meeting with representatives of state power bodies of the Komi Republic, all heads of municipal formations administration of urban districts and municipal regions, territorial and precinct election commissions of every city and district of the Republic, which was focused on ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled.

The Election Commission of the Khakass Republic

A registration of handicapped citizens was carried out in four districts where elections of local self-government will be held on October 10, 2010, within the frames of implementation of the "Road to election precinct" pilot project of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation in the Khakass Republic. 721 disabled, out of which 134 people are visually impaired, 50 people are hearing-impaired, 274 people are the disabled with reduced mobility and 263 people have systemic diseases, were registered.

In the course of implementation of project of registration territorial election commissions of the Khakass Republic closely cooperated with primary branches of public organizations of the disabled in the Republic, with specialists of departments providing social support to population of municipal formations, volunteer organizations, including those that take part in the Republican voluntary action "Everyone's vote is important". The main challenge that specialists of election commission faces was the identification of disability nature. The disabled are not always members of public organizations. For example, the Association of the Deaf consists of about 60 percent of the hearing-impaired in the Republic, and rural disabled are in minority. Lists provided by the Ministry of Labor and Social Development of the Khakass Republic contain only disability group, and no information is given on its type. One more difficulty is the identification of place of residence of the disabled. A disabled person can have one registered address, but actually live in another settlement and have another address.

Taking into account that election of local self-government will be held in rural areas on October 10, 2010, information on the type of road pavement was added to individual route passports.

The majority of registered disabled are elderly people, over 60 years old.

The majority of the disabled in rural areas live in private houses or in 2- and 3-storey houses on the first floor. Therefore the disabled living in private houses do not have problems exiting their homes. Entrance/exit is equipped with necessary simple means by the disabled or their relatives or designed in such a way that it makes it simple for the disabled to exit the house. There are no special means (ramps, lifts, hand-rails with marks for the visually impaired) in apartment buildings. Inconvenient and narrow flights of stairs in such buildings prevent installations of any special means. In some buildings there are steep steps and narrow entrance doors. On exiting the apartment such disabled has to use the help of his relatives or neighbors. It shall be noted that the majority of such apartment buildings were built long ago and, unfortunately, construction norms and regulations SNiP were not taken into account.

There are some problems with route of the disabled from his home to election precinct. Roads in majority of villages and settlements do not have asphalt or gravel paving; pavement is not separated from roadway, in some villages there are no pavements at all. Only large district centers have roads with decent asphalt paving in the center and gravel paving in the side streets. Crossroads are equipped with old traffic lights without sound equipment. The majority of crossroads are regulated with the help of road signs or not regulated at all. There are no specially equipped underground passages and special public transport. Access roads to election precincts are in a better condition. As the majority of election precincts in rural areas are located in community infrastructure and facilities (schools, clubs, rural culture centers, administration buildings etc.), road paving there is more satisfactory (asphalt, concrete paths, paving tiles).

As stated above, the majority of election precincts in rural areas are located in community infrastructure and facilities. It shall be noted that precinct election commissions are located on the first floors; some election precincts are equipped with convenient ramps. However, most of the premises used for balloting were built long ago, therefore there are either no aids that facilitate access for the disabled, or those aids, ramps for example, do not comply with SNiP norms and

regulations. Some election precincts are equipped with temporary decks, but they cannot be installed everywhere because of steep stairs, and the disabled experience difficulties walking up those temporary decks without assistance. Sometimes staircases at election precinct entrance are not even equipped with hand-rails. Narrow doorways at election precinct entrance cause difficulties for the disabled with reduced mobility. Doors are not equipped with special door closers and it is difficult to open and hold them.

Analyzing the results of work on creation of passports, the following conclusions can be made.

The main difficulties for the visually impaired on their way from home to election precincts are caused by orientation problems. This category of the disabled requires contrast color or sound landmarks. Election precincts are traditionally located in one and the same place and the disabled are familiar with the way to them; it makes the situation easier. Thus it is more the issue of personal safety of such disabled along the way.

There are no particular difficulties for the disabled with reduced mobility related to exiting his home, as in the districts subject to passport registration most of the disabled live in private houses. Difficulties for this category of the disabled, especially for wheelchair users, are connected with road paving and lack of ramps at election precincts or their inconvenient design, with narrow doorways and lack of convenient door closers which can make door opening and holding easier.

There are no particular difficulties for the hearing-impaired related to exiting his home; however, they experience difficulties with obtaining information.

The Election commission of the Khakass Republic prepared a list of proposals on creation of conditions for an unimpeded access of the disabled to election precincts on the basis of analysis of the problems revealed when filling in of individual passports of disabled voter route to election precincts and working with heads of organizations of the disabled in the Khakass Republic.

The following was done within the frames of preparation to the election of local self-government in the Khakass Republic that will be held on October 10, 2010:

Chairmen of territorial election commissions of the Khakass Republic appealed to local self-government bodies to allocate funds for equipping of election precincts where the disabled are supposed to ballot with ramps or temporary decks.

A possibility of providing public vehicles for transportation of the disabled and elderly voters to election precincts on the voting day is considered in a number of territories.

A Republican youth action "Everyone's vote is important" during which participants will assist the disabled at election precincts in four districts will be organized on October 10, 2010 in cooperation with the Ministry of Sport, Tourism and Youth Policy of the Khakass Republic.

Members of precinct election commissions carry out court-to-court and door-to-door visitation of the disabled to find out their whereabouts and preferable voting place (at home or at election precinct), to provide them with information on balloting time and place.

The Election commission plans to launch following initiatives according to the results of local self-government bodies election and within the frames of preparation and carrying out of the Federal election in 2011 and 2012 and the election of deputies of the Supreme Council of the Khakass Republic in 2013:

1. To address the Coordination Council of the Disabled under the Government of the Khakass Republic with proposal to work out republican target program «Social support of the disabled in the Khakass Republic for 2011-2013» with inclusion of the item on creation of conditions for exercising of the electoral rights by the disabled.

2. To address the Government of the Khakass Republic with the following proposals: to make provisions the the Khakass Republic and local self-government budgets estimates for equipping of election precincts with sound beacons and contrast colored marks on steps and doorways for the visually impaired, for equipping of pedestrian crossings with sound traffic lights, for equipping of election precincts with convenient ramps in compliance with construction norms and regulations SNiP and widened doorways and doors, equipped with devices for convenient opening and holding, for repair of road paving and equipping of pavement with ramps at accesses to election precincts; to consider the possibility of organization of a "social" taxi in cities and districts of the Khakass Republic on the voting day for organized transportation of the disabled to election precincts and their homes;

to equip facades of buildings where election precincts are located with large plates with street name and house number.

The Election commission of the Krasnodar Territory

At the meeting on September 1, 2010, the Kanevskaya territorial election commission adopted a resolution N 117/6 on implementation of "Road to election precinct" pilot project in the territory of Staroderevyankovsky rural settlement with the purpose of identifying problems arising from unassisted walk of the disabled from their place of residence to election precinct. This rural settlement was chosen because the pre-term election of the head of Staroderevyankovsky rural settlement will be held on the single voting day of October 10, 2010 in this rural settlement.

This settlement is one of the largest in the Kanevsky district, 12 123 voters are registered in its territory, out of which 769 voters are the handicapped, including 26 visually impaired people and 25 disabled with reduced mobility. The majority of these the disabled prefer to vote outside polling station; they submit an application for balloting at home with assistance of social workers, relatives and friends to the election precinct at the place of their registration.

12 disabled, including 5 visually impaired people, 7 disabled with reduced mobility, took part in implementation of the pilot project. These voters regularly take part in ballot and prefer doing this at election precincts.

The voters who took part in implementation of this project positively spoke about conditions of roads and access road in the rural settlement; over 40 km of pavements were built and roads were repaired in 2009-2010.

In January 2009 the administration of the Staroderevyankovsky rural settlement of the Kanevsky district approved the Plan of activities on ensuring of an unimpeded access of the disabled and other categories of citizens with reduced mobility to community infrastructure and facilities of the Staroderevyankovsky rural settlement, which provides for a number of actions in 2009-2011 aimed at improvement of an unimpeded access of the handicapped citizens to culture centers and feldsher-midwife stations, where election precincts are located, including during the election campaigning.

The ramp was installed in the culture center of the Staroderevyankovskaya stanitsa, where election precinct N 17-32 is located, hand-rails were installed in the building of Kanevsky Agrarian Technological College, where election precinct N 17-52 is located and in the building of the secondary school N 11, where election precincts N 17-31 is located; all election precincts have convenient access roads and sidewalks. At the same time no facilities providing unimpeded access to election precinct were installed in rural culture center of Sladkiy Liman khutor and in rural "Olymp" culture center of Sahzavod settlement; there is no public transport that was specifically noted by disabled voters.

The necessity of provision the rural settlements with public transport and engagement of third-party organizations for transportation of voters on the voting day was noted in the letter of the Kanevskaya territorial election commission, addressed to the administration of Staroderevyankovsky rural settlement of the Kanevsky district. The letter also stressed the necessity of inspection of access roads to all facilities where election precincts are located.

Identified drawbacks shall be eliminated by the voting day.

The Election commission of the Vladimir Region

The "Road to election precinct" project was implemented in the territory of single-mandate election district N 14 where a deputy of the Legislative Assembly of the Fifth convocation of the Vladimir Region for the town of Kovrov was elected.

This project was implemented in cooperation with the administration of the town of Kovrov. Information was collected by representatives of public organization "Independent Youth".

A possibility of unassisted walks of visually and hearing-impaired people and voters with reduced mobility to election precincts was analyzed within the frames of the project.

Routes of 268 disabled living in the territory of the district were inspected. For this purpose the Election commission of the Vladimir Region developed a questionnaire on the basis of the sample of the passport provided by the CEC of Russia. Additional questions related to taking part in the election were included in the questionnaire in cases of possibility of direct communication with handicapped voters.

39.5% of interviewed disabled are men, 60.5% are women. Average age of the interviewed is 62. Age categories include: 18 to 25 years old — 1.7%, 25 to 40 years old — 9.6%, 40 to 60 years old — 27.7%, over 60 years old — 61%. 17.5% of the interviewed are the hearing impaired, 76.8% are the visually impaired, 5.7% are people with reduced mobility. 54.8% of the interviewed have inheritable disability. 15.8% of the interviewed live alone, 76.7% — in families, 7.5% — in nursing homes. 58.7% of the interviewed have landline phones at home.

The questionnaire included the following questions: floor on which a disabled person lives, number of floors in a house. The disabled generally live in two- and five-storey buildings. During the inspection it became clear that 21 visually impaired people live on the fifth floor of 5-storey houses which are not equipped with elevators.

11.7% of the interviewed live in 9-storey houses equipped with elevators. Hand-rails are installed in all inspected houses, but only one nursing home where 7 disabled people live is equipped with a ramp.

44% of routes to election precincts are equipped with traffic lights with audio warning. Only 47.5% of routes have convenient access roads to election precincts. 62.7% of election precincts are located on the first floor of buildings, 37.3% are located on the second floor.

Only one election precinct N 90, located in the nursing home, is equipped with elevators and ramp. In other cases hand-rails are the only means helping handicapped voters.

Some of the disabled that agreed to talk during the implementation of the project answered additional questions of the questionnaire. This data cannot be considered as objective; however, it is of interest. 25 interviewed disabled said that they always take part in the election, exercising their electoral right. Eight people take part in the election from time to time. Four people said that they rarely ballot (two are visually impaired and two are hearing-impaired), seven people said that they never ballot (six are hearing-impaired and one is visually impaired). Format of the questionnaire did not presume to find out the reasons, but the problem revealed in the course of the route inspection will be examined during preparation for the municipal election in March 2011. 23 persons ballot at election precinct.

The results of the inspection, including social wishes of handicapped voters, will be submitted to the administration of the town of Kovrov.

During implementation of the project at the initiative of the Election commission of the Vladimir Region the administration of the town of Kovrov moved the election precinct N 691, where visually impaired people mainly ballot, to the premises of the library of production-and-training enterprise of All-Russian Association of the Blind located in close proximity to houses where such voters live.

The Election commission of the Irkutsk Region

In the course of preparation for the single voting day of October 10, 2010, the Election commission of the Irkutsk Region takes part in "Road to election precinct" pilot project to create non-barrier environment for handicapped voters.

Territorial election commissions (Angarsk, Bratsk regional, Nizhneilimsky, Nizhneudinsk, Tayshet, Tulun city, Shelekhov commissions) which organize and carry out the municipal election on October 10, 2010, took part in implementation of this project. They implemented this project in separate precinct commissions depending on territorial and other conditions. Issues of participation in the project, methods of inspection of routes of disabled voters depending on disability groups were discussed at meetings of working groups on cooperation with organizations of the disabled, at joint meetings with representatives of local self-government bodies and bodies of social protection of population. Some territorial commissions (Angarsk, Melekhov) approved project implementation plans. The passport of disabled voter route to election precinct provided by the CEC of Russia, was taken as a basis for work with disabled voters with addition of item 8 "Election precinct equipment

(special balloting booths, magnifying glasses, stencils, etc.)". Information on the project and the sample of the passport are published at web site of the Election commission of the Irkutsk Region, and each Internet user can fill it and make proposals. In addition, a special telephone contact number was provided for handicapped voters to give comments and proposal on creation of accessible environment for exercising of the electoral rights of the disabled. 9 voters addressed the Commission with such proposals.

According to the filled passports, election commissions, participating in the project, identified and summarized problems of handicapped voters on way from home to election precinct and problems arising during exercising of their electoral rights at election precinct.

Barrier-free environment is an environment accessible to handicapped people and people with reduced mobility. Participants of the project marked out two areas of concern: access to material environment and access to information and communications.

The main issue is creation of physical accessibility of community infrastructure for the disabled which is an indispensable condition of accessibility of whole social environment. Conditions of social, civil engineering and transport infrastructure do not ensure social integration of citizens with reduced mobility. Majority of buildings (practically in all settlements), including apartment houses, have no special means, lifts and ramps facilitating access and movement of the disabled. They were not provided for by construction specifications, and now it is practically impossible to install them in such buildings because of design or architectural and planning features. Transport infrastructure is not adapted for citizens with reduced mobility. In most cases the condition of pavements (especially in cities and settlements outskirts) does not ensure safety of movement of wheelchair users. The majority of traffic lights have no audio warning which makes it easier to cross the street for visually impaired citizens. In many territories there are no traffic lights along the routes of the disabled; there are only unregulated pedestrian crossings with speed bumps. There are no buses equipped with special means for transportation of the disabled.

Second important problem is the access of the disabled to information.

Information materials should be accessible to various groups of the disabled. Braille alphabet, phonograph records, large fonts and other appropriate technologies shall be used so that visually impaired people have access to written information and documentation. It is also necessary to apply appropriate technologies to ensure access of hearing-impaired people or people with difficulties in understanding to audio information. The disabled, participants of the project, note that election commissions prepare a lot of such information, but it is not enough information on political parties and candidates (their programs and promotion materials). They also note that mass media, especially television, radio and newspapers, shall ensure accessibility of the services to handicapped people (text information or sign language), and the computerized information service systems shall be available for the disabled once they start using them or after some adaptation.

Participants of the project, filling in the passports, specifically mentioned work of election commissions on creation of barrier-free environment for disabled voters: special balloting booth, magnifying glasses, stencils, available information, direction signs, organization of voting outside polling stations, etc.

Proposals of election commissions which they developed while working with handicapped voters were considered by local self-government bodies and bodies of social protection of population on submissions of summarized information to the Government of the Irkutsk Region to be included in the long-term program project "Accessible environment for the disabled". The Governor of the Irkutsk Region approved the concept of this target program for 2011-2015. The Election commission of the Irkutsk Region prepared proposals on creation of barrier-free environment (taking into account TEC proposals) and suggested to include its representative into the Government working group on development of program activities.

Election commissions take measures within their powers for ensuring of barrier-free exercising of the electoral rights by the disabled; inform authorities on the necessity of equipping entrances to election precincts with ramps, equip polling stations with special means, and carry out public awareness work. However, election commissions are not able to ensure complete and accessible exercising of the electoral rights of the disabled without governmental support. Infrastructure in the majority of municipal formations does not meet barrier-free access requirements, and the unimpeded access of the disabled to election precincts is impossible without governmental support.

Taking into account the proposals of territorial election commissions, participants of the "Road to election precinct" project, we suggest that, with the purpose of further successful implementation of this project, election commissions together with bodies of social protection shall create such "Routes of disabled voters" not for each disabled person, but for all categories of handicapped voters within the limits of election precinct.

Such "Passport of route to election precinct N" shall include information on ramps, exits with no curbs, sound and tactile signals duplicating signals of traffic lights, provision with specially equipped transport, information display signs, tactile ground signs etc. in the territory of election precinct. Such passport can be used as a separate document and as a component of an election precinct passport.

Any member of election commission, social worker, hotline operator can inform a voter about the most convenient route with the help of this passport (one for the whole election precinct, with routes within the limits of election precinct).

According to the results of the project implementation and of the analysis of participation of handicapped voters in the municipal election on October 10, 2010, the Election commission of the Irkutsk Region in cooperation with representatives of public organizations of the disabled plans to develop an additional package of measures for ensuring of barrier-free exercising of the electoral rights by the disabled during the Federal election campaigns in 2011-2012.

The Election commission of the Leningrad Region

There is a particular system of ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens in the Leningrad Region. The Election commission of the Leningrad Region works in close cooperation with administrations of municipal formations, committees of social protection of population, administrations of municipal districts (urban districts), public organizations of the disabled, the

Department of social protection of population of the Leningrad Region and the Committee on cooperation with local self-government bodies of the Leningrad Region.

Within the frames of preparation for the single voting day of October 10, 2010, the Leningrad Region implemented the "Road to election precinct" pilot project in a territory of the Kirovsk municipal district while preparing for the by-election of the deputy of the Legislative Assembly of the Fourth convocation of the Leningrad Region in the Kirovsk single-mandate election district N 8.

The territorial election commission of the Kirovsk municipal district together with local self-government bodies, bodies of social protection, local branch of the "All-Russian Association of the Disabled" worked on preparation of the passports of disabled voter route to election precinct in the territories of two election precincts N 548 and N 550 (the sample of the passport of disabled voter route to election precinct is attached).

47 passports were prepared.

The following categories of the disabled were considered:

the visually impaired;

with reduced mobility.

The polling station of the election precinct N 548 is located at the following address: Kirovsk settlement, Kirov street, 8, MEU "Kirovsk upper secondary school named after Sultan Vaimagambetov", the first floor. Total number of disabled voters of considered categories in the voters list of this election precinct submitted to precinct election commission amounted to 7, including 4 visually impaired people

and 3 people with reduced mobility.

The polling station of the election precinct N 550 is located at the following address: Kirovsk settlement, Gorky street, 16, MEU "Kirovsk upper secondary school named after Sultan Vaimagambetov", the first floor. Total number of disabled voters of considered categories in the voters list of this election precinct submitted to precinct election commission amounted to 40, including:

7 visually impaired people;

33 people with reduced mobility, out of which 3 are wheelchair users.

The individual passport of disabled voter route includes the following information:

Surname, name, patronymic name of a voter.

Age.

Disability category (visual impairment, reduced mobility).

Residence floor.

Availability of the means, facilitating exiting of the apartment (lifts, handrails, ramps in compliance with construction norms and regulations).

Availability of traffic lights with audio warning, specially equipped public transport with lifts platforms, convenient access roads to election precinct.

Availability of access to election precinct (lifts, hand-rails, ramps in compliance with construction norms and regulations).

The following data was obtained while preparing the individual passports of disabled voter routes.

Disabled voters live in twenty buildings: one building is nine-storey, 6 are five-storey, 4 are four-storey, 3 are three-storey, 5 are two-storey and one is a private house. Eighteen buildings were built according to construction projects developed before 1970. Such construction projects did not provide for the means of lifting wheelchair users. There are no elevators and lift platforms in these buildings.

The project of the nine-storey building constructed in 1994 provides for the elevator that can carry a wheelchair user.

12 disabled live on the first floor, 9 — on the second floor, 3 — on the third floor, 16 — on the fourth floor, 5 — on the fifth floor, 1 — on the ninth floor, one disabled person lives in a private house. Wheelchair users live on the second, fourth and fifth floors. There are no means in apartment buildings where the disabled live that facilitate their exiting their homes (ramps, street hand-rails in compliance with construction norms and regulations).

The only means the disabled can use in such apartment building include hand-rails. In 18 out of 20 buildings where the disabled live the staircase width is less than 1.35 m; slope of the stairs meets the standards, however, step shape, tread width and height do not meet the standards. This hinders the disabled movement.

There are no traffic lights with audio warning necessary for the hearing impaired on the route from their home to election precinct.

In the territory of municipal formation “Kirovsk municipal district” there is no specially equipped public transport with lifts platforms for transportation of wheelchair users.

There are asphalt roads in Kirovsk, therefore access roads to election precinct are convenient. Private housing streets and courtyards are poorly lit.

Election precincts are located in the buildings of municipal educational institutions on the first floor. Schools entrances are not equipped with stationary ramps and hand-rails in compliance with construction norms and regulations that shall facilitate in entering election precinct for the disabled.

However, despite some objective difficulties, the territorial election commission of the Kirovsk municipal district does its best to ensure exercising of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens.

In their efforts to create the most convenient conditions for voters balloting, the election commission in cooperation with administrations of municipal formations pays much attention to selection of polling stations that meet corresponding requirements, preparation of special places for balloting, arrangement of conditions for transport access.

Temporary means (hand-rails and ramps) facilitating entering election precinct for the disabled are installed at election precinct entrance.

Targeted visitations are carried out for the purpose of individual interaction with each disabled voter. This allows verifying information on places of residence of the disabled of this category and identifying the disabled wish regarding the balloting place (at election precinct or outside polling station, at home).

Participation of the Leningrad Region in the pilot project revealed the problems connected with urban infrastructure that does not allow the disabled reaching election precinct without assistance. Lack of elevators, lift platforms, ramps, decks and hand-rails hinders access of the disabled to election precinct. That is why the majority of them prefer balloting at home and not at election precinct.

Creation of infrastructure for handicapped people is a serious task that can be fulfilled by joint efforts.

The Election commission of the Tambov Region

The Election commission of the Tambov Region and the Election commission of the city of Tambov together with public organizations of the disabled took part in implementation of the "Road to election precinct" pilot project and supported the initiative of the CEC of Russia on the eve of the election of deputies of the Tambov in advance of election of deputies of the Tambov City Duma of the Fifth convocation.

Not only members of the election commissions, but also the Tambov regional organization of the All-Russian public organization of the disabled "All-Russian Association of the Blind", the Tambov regional branch of the All-Russian public organization of the disabled "All-Russian Association of the Deaf", the Tambov regional organization of the All-Russian public organization of disabled Afghan war veterans, the All-Russian public organization of the disabled "Association of the Young disabled of Russia "Apparel" actively joined the project aimed at assisting handicapped people.

Students of institutes of higher education of the city of Tambov were also engaged to implementation of this project. Students of social work department of the Tambov State University named after G.R. Derzhavin took part in developing of the individual passport of disabled voter route to election precinct; students of public relation department of the Tambov State Technical University initiated and carried out a PR action "Help me!".

Cooperation between participants of the project was carried out through organizing personal meetings, requesting information on the disabled, door-to-door visitation of citizens and preparation of individual passports.

The individual passport of disabled voter route to election precinct includes not only citizen personal records, but information on availability of the means facilitating in exiting the apartment, of special means (traffic lights with audio warning) along the route, of barrier-free access to election precinct and on wish of the disabled to be assisted by volunteers, etc.

The main difficulty that election commissions have while ensuring of exercising the electoral right of the disabled is the lack of unified database that contains information on the disabled in accordance with their disability type (blind and visually impaired, deaf and hearing-impaired, with reduced mobility, wheelchair users). Election commissions obtain information on the number of the disabled in accordance with their disability group, and public organizations cannot provide complete data.

During the project implementation 420 out of 678 citizens included in voters lists provided by public organizations of the disabled filled in the individual passports of disabled voter routes to election precincts.

Students of higher education institutions managed to interview the majority of this social group. Communication with the disabled revealed several problems related to unassisted movement of handicapped people from their homes to election precincts. One of important tasks within the frames of the project implementation was identification of the will of disabled voters to ballot either at election precinct (243 people) or at home (177 people), as well as their wish to use volunteers assistance (13 people). Individual passports of disabled voter routes gave detailed description of obstacles on the route of the disabled from their homes to election precincts.

In addition, the following problems were revealed: 22 people do not live at the specified addresses, 6 people died, 26 people were repeatedly out. Participants of the project also faced the problem of misunderstanding while communicating with disabled citizens: some people were afraid of opening the door, other expressed negative attitude towards the election (37 people).

This work helped to identify the number of election precincts in need of creation of appropriate conditions for balloting of each category of disabled citizens of the Russian Federation.

80 out of 113 election precincts established for balloting at the election of deputies of the Tambov City Duma are located on the first floors.

Special decks will be installed at 12 election precincts where wheelchair users are expected to ballot.

Stencils with cuts for balloting of the blind and visually impaired were prepared for each election precinct, and at election precincts where the blind with Braille alphabet skills live special stencils with the use of Braille alphabet. Totally blind voters at election precincts will be able to listen to audio records with information on the procedure of filling in a ballot and on biographies of candidates. Election precincts will be equipped with magnifying glasses and additional lighting.

However, focus on technical equipment of election precincts will not solve all the problems of disabled voters related to ensuring of exercising of their right to ballot at election precinct. Still unsolved is the problem of the disabled movement from their homes to election precincts.

Public organizations will be informed on timetable of 17 low-deck trolleybuses; special transport will be arranged for transportation of the disabled to election precincts on the voting day.

Taking into account a close-together accommodation of the disabled, a mobile balloting station equipped with GLONASS sensors will be arranged for the disabled who prefer balloting at homes due to their physical condition.

Taking into account the analysis of interviews results and studies of passports of disabled voter routes to election precinct, the Election commission of the city of Tambov sent a letter to the city administration with the request to eliminate the identified drawbacks that hinder movement of the disabled to election precinct (repair works in courtyards in three election precincts, repair or installation of audio warning signals for five traffic lights, installation of special decks at 12 election precincts, road works on the way to 11 election precincts, etc.)

Work of election commissions with young population is worthy of note. Within the framework of the project, election commissions cooperate with volunteer groups under social organizations and create new volunteer groups out of students of the institutes of higher education of the city.

PR campaigns aimed at increasing of tolerance of population in regards to socially unprotected group form an essentially new approach.

The disabled are the most vulnerable social group which requires support of members of election commissions and volunteer organizations as well as increasing of public tolerance. Within the framework of the project election commissions together with students of public relation department of the Tambov State Technical University developed a PR action "Help me!" that aimed at attraction of the disabled attention to the action, involvement of volunteers, wishing to assist in the project implementation, increase of public interest in problems of the disabled, information on work of election commissions with the disabled and work of public organizations of the disabled "Apparel" and the All-Russian Association of the Blind.

The main target audiences of this campaign are the disabled, as well as city population and young citizens.

The PR action is organized in two lines: information work (work with mass media) and organization of special events.

The first line engaged mass media with wide audience that mostly target young population. They already started publishing Interviews with young disabled people, broadcasting television videos and social video clips which are shown on LED displays in the city and in educational institutions ("Alma mater" TV of the Tambov State University named after G.R. Derzhavin). The second line involved organization and carrying out of flash mobs with flyers distribution on September 28 and on October 5, 2010. This shall help to inform wide range of citizens on importance of participation in the election of all voters and especially of the disabled. 1000 flyers with information on specially created e-mail box and "hot line" were prepared for these purposes. The "hot line" shall attract volunteers, wishing to take part in charity actions, and inform the disabled that require volunteers assistance. Similar information is placed on pillar boxes around the city. PR action "Help me!" is implemented through social networks of the Internet resource. PR action has a common style concept with recognizable symbols: a band over the eyes of the action participant with the words "HELP ME".

Increase of public tolerance is a long-term campaign implemented during the first stage of the "Road to election precinct" project during the election on October 10, 2010. Further on this initiative will be supported within the frames of the next election campaigns.

The Election commission of the Tver Region

The Working Group on cooperation of the Election commission of the Tver Region with regional branches of All-Russian public organizations of the disabled and on ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens carried out the following activities within the frames of implementation of the "Road to election precinct" pilot project:

approval of plan of activities aimed at implementation of the project;

selection of two municipal formations (the town of Torzhok and the town of Vyshny Volochek*) for implementation of the project. Many blind and visually impaired voters live in both municipal formations, and the deaf and hearing impaired mostly reside in Vyshny Volochek;

identification of categories of disabled voters used for preparation of voters passports: wheelchair users, the deaf and hearing impaired, the blind and visually impaired;

approval of a questionnaire form;

approval of the form of the individual passport of disabled voter route to election precinct and the form of the passport of election precinct.

Approving both passport forms, the Working Group was guided by experience on work with the disabled during the Federal election campaigns.

Passport of voter route. The Election commission coordinated with the Department of social protection of population the engagement of members of territorial branches of bodies of social protection of population of Torzhok and Vyshny Volochek respectively in preparation of passports.

This was done because the disabled trust representatives of bodies of social protection of population and such representatives work with this category of citizens and can provide information on personal data of the disabled.

At the same time a local branch of the "All-Russian Association of the Blind" independently prepared passports of voter routes for the town of Tozhok where most of the blind and visually impaired live.

Passport of election precinct. Passports were prepared by members of the precinct election commission of corresponding election precincts. Members of the precinct election commissions evaluated the readiness of election precinct for the election and prospects of ensuring of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens.

The election of deputies of the City Duma of Vyshny Volochek, of deputies of the City Duma of Torzhok and of the Mayor of Torzhok will be held in the territory of urban districts on the single voting day on October 10, 2010.

The Election commission of the Tver Region processed and analyzed presented passports. With the purpose of results processing uniformity within the frames of the project implementation in the territory of the

Tver Region it is planned to send electronic processing form of prepared passports to territorial election commissions.

Regional branches of the public organizations of the disabled submitted the information on the number of the disabled (members of the corresponding organizations) to the Election commission of the Tver Region, informed the local organizations about the project and requested assistance in its implementation.

Within the frames of the project implementation 383 passports of voter route were prepared, including 201 passport for the town of Vyshny Volochek and 182 passports for the town of Torzhok, as well as 52 passports of election precincts (30 for the town of Vyshny Volochek and 22 for the town of Torzhok).

Interviews with the disabled allowed identifying their balloting preferences: at election precinct or at home. About 40.3% of the disabled in Vyshny Volochek and 47.2% of the disabled in Torzhok prefer to vote outside polling station (at home). This is mostly explained by the age of this category of voters. Over 55% of them are the disabled aged 61 and older.

<u>Age</u>	<u>Total*</u>	<u>Categories of the disabled</u>					
	In absolute figures	In percent	deaf	hearing impaired	blind	visually impaired	wheelchair user
under 30	31	8.1	9	7	2	7	6
31-40	46	12	21	8	2	10	5
41-50	45	11.7	13	5	7	10	10
51-60	49	12.8	9	4	6	20	10
61-70	85	22.2	22	10	23	21	9
71-80	84	21.9	19	7	23	19	16
80 and older	43	11.2	6	1	21	4	11
TOTAL	383		99	42	84	91	67

** towns of Torzhok and Vyshny Volochek.*

Almost all wheelchair users prefer to ballot at home. One of the reasons is their elderly age. More than half wheelchair users are over 60 year old. There are a lot of 3-, 4- and 5-storey apartment buildings in small towns which are not equipped with elevators, and a third of the disabled in the town of Vyshny Volochek and about 70% of the disabled in the town of Torzhok live above the first floor. When choosing a voting place (at election precinct or at home), wheelchair users did not connect installation of a ramp with voting at election precincts. Polling stations at election precincts where the disabled are registered are located on the first floors. 80% and 70% of polling stations are located on the first floors in towns of Vyshny Volochek and Torzhok respectively. Territorial bodies of social protection are ready to assist in transportation of wheelchair users (should this be the wish of a disabled person) to election precinct. The Election commission of the Tver Region in cooperation with the Committee on youth affairs of the Tver Region agreed on development of the project "Elections are accessible to everyone". This project provides for assistance of volunteers that will accompany the disabled to election precincts.

Television, radio and newspapers are the most needed sources of information on the election, candidates, and electoral associations. The Internet is less required. Only three disabled people in Vyshny Volochek receive information from the Internet.

Television and newspapers are the main information sources for almost 100% of the deaf and hearing impaired. Roll title and sign language interpretation are vital for delivering information to them.

Radio is the main information source for the blind (80%). At the same time the blind receive about 60% of the information through television (listening). We think that election commissions and political parties must take this fact into account when creating video clips and pay attention to their voicing. This way the blind will receive the information on forthcoming election. Television and radio are the main information sources for the visually impaired (70%).

Wheelchair users receive 85% of the information through television.

Results of the interview showed that 55% of the visually impaired and 76% of the blind are sure in necessity of ballot stencils. Some of voters noted the necessity of magnifying glasses at election precinct (17%). The information received during the interviews makes it possible for election commissions to estimate a required number of stencils and magnifying glasses for each election precinct.

On the results of passports creation project letters with commentaries of the disabled made during the implementation of the project were submitted to heads of relevant municipal formations. Information on the results of passport creation project was submitted to the Governor of the Tver Region.

In particular, blind and visually impaired voters living in close-together neighborhood in the town of Torzhok, requested that at the next election an election precinct should be established in the territory of OJSC "Torhznok enterprise of alkaline products". Firstly, this enterprise is located in close proximity to residential houses of such voters, and secondly the route to this enterprise has orientation guard rails. It is cheaper than road works required for the road to another election precinct located in 300 meters from this neighborhood.

Blind and visually impaired voters in the town of Vyshny Volochek paid attention to a bad condition of pavements along the route to election precinct. This problem needs to be solved; however, the repairs will require considerable financing.

Hearing impaired people are the active voters. 90% of the hearing impaired in the town of Torzhok noted that they can vote not only at home, but at election precinct as well. Their main requirement is the assistance of a sign language interpreter at election precinct. The regional branch of the "All-Russian Association of the Deaf" is ready to solve this problem by providing such interpreter.

Creation of infrastructure for handicapped citizens is important and serious problem that shall be solved in the nearest future. The Election commission of the Tver Region together with regional administration and other structures will continue its work.

Conclusions.

1.The implementation of the project in some municipal formations showed that obtained information was important and urgent for ensuring of exercising of the electoral rights of handicapped citizens.

2.It is necessary to use various information sources for informing on the election with account of different categories of handicapped citizens.

3.Work on production of ballot stencils for the blind and visually impaired shall be continued.

4.Heads of local self-government and heads of regional organizations of the disabled shall be informed on the results of the project implementation.

5.The disabled access to the Internet shall be increased.

6.Young people participating in volunteer activities shall be engaged in providing assistance to the disabled by accompanying them to election precincts.

APPENDIXES

The Tver Region

Individual passport of disabled voter route to election precinct

(name of municipal formation)

ELECTION PRECINCT N

Voter data

(surname, name, patronymic name)

Age (full years)

Disability category (put a mark)		Disability group (insert)				Disability group (insert)
hearing impaired needs sign language interpreter services	deaf YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO ^	hearing YES	impaired		NO
visually impaired reads with the use of Braille alphabet	blind YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO	visually YES	impaired		NO
disability with reduced mobility	wheelchair user	availability of rehabilitation means:				
other category						

Residence address*(settlement, street, house number, apartment number)***Type of house** *private / / apartment building / /***Floor** (specify) *||**(settlement, street, house number, apartment number) * registration stamp in**passport***Registration address**1

PROPOSALS on passport form and contents: _

Passport filled ____ 20__r.

(Full name, organization, position) (signature) (date)

NO YES NO YES

NO YES NO YES

Residence specifics:*lives alone**lives with a family**does not serve himself/herself**needs partial help when moving outside home**can't move without assistance, needs constant help of other people when moving**possibility of accompanying by relative**movement is limited, needs assistance when moving outside home*YES ☐ NO ☐YES ☐ NO ☐YES ☐ NO ☐*needs assistance of social worker*YES ☐ NO ☐

Availability of phone YES [Phone number: NO [

Availability of means allowing exiting the apartment (house) to the street

elevator hand-rails

ramps

YES ☐ NO ☐*on the stairs* YES ☐ NO ☐*on the porch* YES ☐ NO ☐*availability of ramps at building exit* ☐*no ramps* ☐

In case of availability of ramps
compliant with corresponding SNiP \ \ noncompliant with corresponding SNiP
Barrier-free building exit/entrance

availability of thresholds ☐ ☐

absence of thresholds ☐ ☐

availability of wing doors \ \ absence of wing doors ☐ ☐

Other (specify)

Specify availability/absence of orientation guard rails in places of close-together
accommodation of the blind

availability/absence of orientation of guard rails YES ☐ ☐ NO ☐ ☐

Approximate distance to election precinct (in meters) ☐ ☐

Availability of special means and transport on the route to election precinct

availability/absence of orientation of guard rails YES ☐ ☐ NO ☐ ☐

vehicles YES ☐ ☐ NO ☐ ☐

specially equipped vehicles with lift platforms

YES ☐ NO ☐

possibility of vehicles provision by bodies of social protection

YES ☐ NO ☐

If the answer is "Yes", specify type of vehicle

traffic lights with audio warning YES ☐ ☐ NO ☐ ☐

traffic lights with animation YES ☐ ☐ NO ☐ ☐

>ensuring of vehicle access ☐ ☐ ☐

directly to election precinct YES ☐ ☐ NO* ☐ ☐

***If the answer is "NO", specify reasons**

Other

CONCLUSIONS on possibility/impossibility of exercising of the electoral rights at election
precinct:

at election precinct

RECOMMENDATIONS on exercising of the electoral rights of the disabled:

The Tver Region PASSPORT of election precinct

(name of municipal formation)

ELECTION PRECINCT N

as of 20 year

Election precinct address

(settlement, street, house number)

Description of building where polling station is located

(settlement, street, house number)

	Location (put a mark)		Form of property (government, municipal, private)	Constructio n year	Construction material
	building of administration of municipal formation				
	school				
	upper secondary school				
	Culture center				
	club				
	Art center				
	Other culture center (specify)				
	vocational school				
	college				
	institute of higher education				
	branch of the institute of higher education				
	hospital				
	Other building (specify)				

Specify availability/absence of orientation guard rails in places of close-together accommodation of the blind
 availability/absence of orientation of guard rails YES || NO ||
 Possibility of vehicle access directly to election precinct YES (☐) NO*

***If the answer is "NO", specify reasons**

Lighting at election precinct entrance

satisfactory ☐ unsatisfactory* ☐

***If the answer is "unsatisfactory", specify reasons**

Availability of means ensuring access to election precinct:

hand-rails

on the stairs YES *on the porch* YES ||

ramps

availability of ramps at the entrance to election precinct NO ☐ NO ☐

In case of availability of ramps

compliant with SNiP I I I non-compliant with SNiP I I

Barrier-free entrance to election precinct

availability of thresholds absence of thresholds availability of wing doors absence of wing doors ☐ ☐

Other (specify)

Description of polling station

Floor (specify)

availability of elevator absence of elevator

The Tver Region

QUESTIONNAIRE

Source of information on

elections, candidates, parties

TV
radio
newspapers
Internet
other

Preferable balloting place

at election precinct
at home

Necessity of availability at election precinct of

social worker
sign language interpreter

Necessity of availability at election precinct of

stencils
magnifying glasses

The Tver Region

Participation in elections

Ballots

Passport of disabled person route to election precinct developed by the Election commission of the Vladimir Region

Surname, name, patronymic name	Sex	Age (full years)	Disability category (visually impaired, hearing impaired, with reduced mobility)	Disability recognized	Residence address	Lives
	M F			heritable at what age		alone with family nursing home

Phon	Floor		Availability of means, allowing exiting the apartment to the street, compliant with SNiP							Availability of (along the route)							8 2 3	Availability of means at election precinct compliant with SNiP						
	residence	total in building	elevator	lift	platform for	hand-d. rail	hand-d. ramp	traffic light	special ly equ	conven to election	elevator	elevator	lift	platform for	hand-d. rail	hand-d. ramp								

Wishes for election organizers

regularly from time to rarely at polling station outside polling station

Individual passport of disabled voter route to election precinct developed by territorial election commission of the Kortkerossky district of the Komi Republic

Surname, name, patronymic name	Ivanov Ivan Ivanovich
Year of birth	1946
Disability category (underline as appropriate)	Hearing impaired (deaf, hearing impaired) Visually impaired (blind, visually impaired) Disability because of reduced mobility: wheelchair user, cerebral spastic infantile paralysis, other disease Other category (insert disease name or write "systemic disease")
Disability group	I
Residence address,	Kortkerossky district, Adzherom, street,

residence floor	house number apartment number First floor
Residence specifics	Number of living in apartment (house) — 2 Need in being accompanied when moving: yes/no (<i>underline as appropriate</i>) possibility of accompanying by relative (<i>underline as appropriate</i>)
Availability of means allowing exiting the apartment (house) to the street	Elevator Lift platform Hand-rails: on the stairs / on the porch Ramps compliant with construction norms and regulations Ramps incompliant with construction norms and regulations, self-made Barrier-free entrance/exit: availability/absence of thresholds, five steps (<i>underline as appropriate</i>) Other

Approximate distance to election precinct	300 meters
availability along the route of special means, transport (underline as appropriate)	<p>Vehicle: yes / no</p> <p>Specially equipped public transport with lift platforms: yes / no</p> <p>Traffic lights with audio warning/traffic lights with animation: yes / no</p> <p>Convenient access roads to election precinct: yes/no</p> <p>Other</p>
Availability of access to election precinct (underline as appropriate)	<p>Barrier-free entrance/exit: availability/absence of thresholds, eight steps</p> <p>Elevator</p> <p>Lift platform</p> <p>Hand-rails: on the stairs / on the porch</p> <p>Ramps compliant with construction norms and regulations</p> <p>Ramps incompliant with construction norms and regulations, self-made</p> <p>Other</p>
Special notes (underline as appropriate)	<p>Wish to exercise active electoral right</p> <p>outside polling station (at home)</p> <p>Need in additional equipment (magnifying glasses, lighting), social worker or sign language interpreter attendance at election precinct</p>

The Rostov Region

Example of passport filling in

Territorial election commission
of the Kirov district of Rostov-on-Don
(election commission name)

August 27, 2010
(date of filling in)

Passport of disabled voter route to election precinct N 1615
The Rostov Region, Rostov-on-Don
(election precinct address,
prospect Sokolova,
the Rostov Region, district, city, city district, settlement, village, street, house number)

2010

Ivanov Ivan Ivanovich

Age year

Disability category — visually impaired.

Works .

Residence floor — 2.

6. Stairs exit is free, hand-rails are in good order, width of a flight of stairs is not less than 1.35 m. Staircase and exit portal are well lit.

7. Route.

Voter leaves the building and comes out to Sokolova prospect. Goes along Sokolova prospect (the right side) to crossing of Sokolova prospect and Krasnoarmeyskaya St. to the traffic lights. Crosses Krasnoarmeyskaya St. on green light of the traffic lights with audio warning and turns left. Stops in front of the traffic light on pedestrian crossing of Sokolova prospect. Sokolova prospect. The traffic lights are equipped with audio warning. Crosses Sokolova prospect and turns right. Goes along the left side of Sokolova prospect, reaches M. Gorky St. and turns left to the entrance of the building of the Standardization and Metrology Center where the election precinct N 1615 is located.

8. List of road elements noncompliant with barrier-free environment:

Information plate of election precinct N 1615 is printed in small fonts.

Ascent/descent steps at entrance are not painted in contrast colors (white or yellow) Same goes for steps at entrance/exit to election precinct.

8.3. There is no accompanying sound at the entrance to the polling station.

8.4. Texture of pavement surface at the traffic lights does not change in 1 meter before the traffic lights.

9. Availability of access to election precinct. Access to election precinct is convenient. Doors are wide. Premises area is sufficient.

10. Evaluation of the route.

The route of disabled person generally meets requirements of norms and regulations. - Incompliance of certain elements with norms will be added to plan of activities.

The route to the election precinct was tested with participation of disabled voter, Ivanov Ivan Ivanovich.

Passport compiler

(signature) (date) (initials, surname)

PASSPORT

of disabled voter route

to election precinct N 3

Ishim, the Tyumen Region

**Election of deputies of the Ishim City Duma of the Fifth convocation on
October 10, 2010**

P A S S P O R T of route to election precinct N 3

Surname, name, patronymic name , year of birth of visually impaired person.

Address: Ishim, street , house number , apartment number , second floor.

Staircase at exit out of the apartment into the street is equipped with hand-rails. Absence of elevator and ramp.

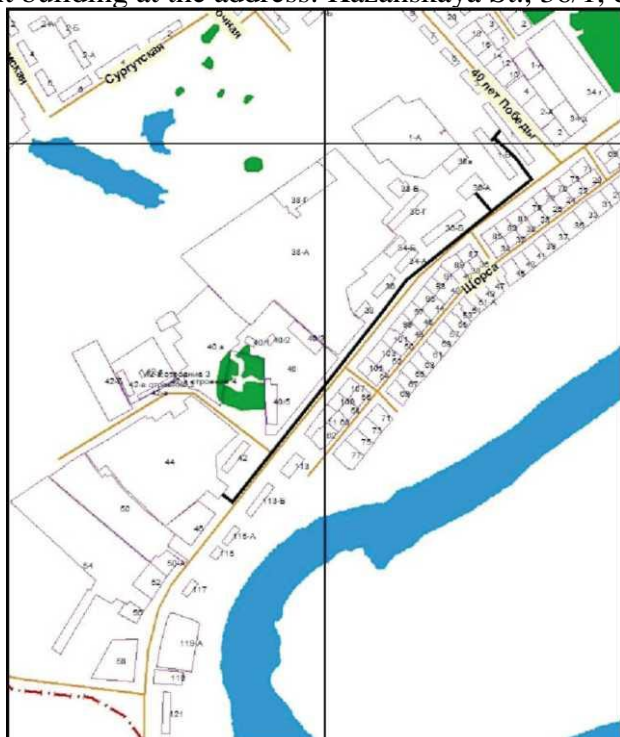
Absence of traffic lights with audio warning, underground passages and special vehicles for the disabled.

Access to election precinct is convenient. Ascent to polling station (2nd floor) – staircase with hand-rails. Absence of elevator, lift platform, ramp.

14.09.2010

(date of filling in)

Shorter and the most convenient way leads to polling station in “Veterans House” located in the next building at the address: Kazanskaya St., 36/1, during PEC working hours.



The Rostov Region

Passport of disabled voter route to the election precinct N 2112

Rostov Region, Kagalnikskiy district, Kirovskaya stanitsa, Gagarina St., 110

(address of the election precinct, telephone number)

tel. :8(863-45) 91-5-78

(Rostov Region, district, city, settlement, village, street, house)

2010

Surname Ivanov Name Ivan Patronymic name Ivanovich

Age years old

Disability classification the visually impaired

Works

Floor of residence one-storey building in private housing

6. Availability of means, allowing exiting the apartment to the street.

House entrance is equipped with a wooden threshold, consisting of two red painted steps. Passage is free of obstructions. Entrance has adequate lighting.

7. Route to the election precinct N 2112 with an indication of availability or absence of elements to create barrier-free environment.

Coming out of the room, the voter goes (about 5 m) across the yard. Passage is free of obstructions. After the yard he turns to the right and goes across Slava St. (about 20 m) to Elevatorskaya St. There is no pavement, so the route runs along an asphalt road. There are no barriers and split-level falls on the way. He turns to the right and goes across Elevatorskaya St. (about 100 m) to Lenina St. There is no pavement, so the route runs along an asphalt road. There

are no barriers and split-level falls on the way. He turns to the left and then goes across Lenina St. (about 200 m) to the pavement in Gagarina St. There is no pavement in Lenina St., so the route runs along an asphalt road, crossing motorways in Budennovskaya St. and Gagarina St. There are no barriers and split-level falls on the way. There are no pedestrian crossings with road signs and markings when crossing the street. There is no warning information a meter before motorways crossing with relief guide path stripes and bright contrast color marking. He turns to the right and goes along the pavement in Gagarina St. (about 1100 m) to the area of the agricultural company "Kirovskaya". The pavement has no barriers and split-level falls on the way. The route crosses two asphalt roads in Chehova St. and Kolhoznaya St. There are no pedestrian crossings with road signs and markings at crossing of the pavement with motorways. There is no warning information a meter before crossing the pavement with motorways with relief guide path stripes and bright contrast color marking. Then a voter turns to the right, crosses the square (about 50 m), including the motorway without pedestrian crossing with road signs and markings. There is no warning information with relief guide path stripes and bright contrast color marking. Comes to the culture center of the agricultural company "Kirovskaya", where election precinct № 2112 is located.

8. The list of road elements that do not comply with barrier-free environment for disabled voters.

No pavement in Slava St. No pavement in Elevatorskaya St. No pavement in Lenina St. There are NO pedestrian crossings with road signs and markings at crossing the pavement in Gagarina St. with motorways. There is no warning information with relief guide path stripes and bright contrast color marking a meter before crossing the pavement in Gagarina St. with motorways. There are no pedestrian crossings with road signs and markings at crossing the motorway in Lenina St. with motorways in Budenovskaya St. and Gagarina St.

There is no warning information a meter before motorways crossing with relief guide path stripes and bright contrast color marking.

There is no warning information with relief guide path stripes and bright contrast color marking a meter before steps at the entrance to the election precinct.

Steps at the entrance to the election precinct are not equipped with hand-rails, which shall be longer than the length of steps.

The first and the last steps do not have altered surface layer in comparison with other steps and they are not painted or upholstered with a contrasting cover (white or yellow).

There is no accompanying sound at the entrance to the voting premises.

There are no large printed marks with names of streets.

A plate with the name and number of PEC N 2112 is in small fonts.

9. Availability of access to election precinct.

All steps have the same height and length. The entrance doors are wide. There are no obstructions in the passage. Premises area is sufficient.

10. Estimation of the route of disabled voter.

The route mainly meets the requirements of norms and regulations of a barrier-free route to the election precinct. Noncompliance of individual elements will be noted in the activities plan.

The route to the election precinct was tested with participation of disabled voter.

(signature)

Passport compiler

(signature)(date) (initials, surname)

The territorial election commission of Kamensk-Shahtinsky of the Rostov Region

The procedure of passport filling in

Passport cover

The commission that prepared the passport and the address of the election precinct

Surname, name, patronymic name shall not be abbreviated

Age according to voter

Disability classification:

The visually impaired (blind or partially sighted). The disability classification is given.

The disabled with reduced mobility. The disability classification is given.

Data in paragraph 3 is filled according to voter.

Floor of residence

Availability of means, allowing exiting the apartment to the street.

Availability of elevators, ramps, proper hand-rails of staircases (the length of hand-rails shall be longer than the length of ascent, descent) are considered, as well as availability of sufficient light at the entrance and exit areas.

Before ascent to the floor and descent from the apartment of the visually impaired stairs shall be painted white or yellow.

It is desirable that steps surface differs from road surface.

In addition, see Appendix N 1 and Appendix N 2 to The procedure of passport filling in.

7. Route to the election precinct with an indication of availability or absence of elements to create barrier-free environment.

It is reasonable to test the route to the election precinct together with disabled voter. It is necessary to indicate the name of streets, squares and avenues in the description of the route. - Crossways, direction signs, availability of traffic lights, absence of road barriers, etc. are given. This section shall contain all the details with account of developed recommendations (appendixes N 1, 2, to The procedure of passport filling in).

8. List of road elements in compliance with barrier-free environment for disabled voters (traffic light without audio warning or with audio warning on the route, open hatches, etc.) This section can be completed on the basis of the results of the route analysis.

9. Access to the election precinct

(elevators, lift platforms, hand-rails, ramps)

Before making a passport it is reasonable to study appendixes N 1 and 2 and the example of filling in the passport.

After the passport is made, chairmen of the territorial election commissions develop specific proposals for creating conditions for unobstructed access to election precincts for the disabled.

Proposals are sent to the organization and territorial department of the Election commission of the Rostov Region not later than by September 29, 2010, and to local self- government bodies.

Appendix N 1 to The procedure of passport filling in, developed by the Election commission of the Rostov Region

Recommendations for creation of barrier-free environment for visually impaired voters

1. Safe movement in city streets provides carrying out of the following activities:

announcements designed for everybody shall be bright and placed at eye-level of pedestrians; pavements and pedestrian routes shall be free of foreign objects and vehicles parked outside parking areas,

before ascent (descent) steps must be painted or upholstered with a contrast color cover (white or yellow);

where possible, steps surface must differ from road surface;

group of steps must be equipped with hand-rails, which shall be longer than the length of ascent (descent);

traffic lights must be duplicated with audio warnings;

warning information on approaching open hatches. Warning information on approaching stairs, pedestrian crossings, end of safety islands with the help of changing the texture of the surface layer of path and pavement coating, relief guide path stripes and bright contrast color marking a meter before an obstacle.

The first and last steps at the entrance, underground passage shall be bright painted (white or yellow);

road works shall have barriers and be painted with bright colors that are lit at nights;

barriers shall be up to waist level and be continuous;

drains across pavements shall to be protected with bars;

plate «Election precinct N» shall be printed in large fonts.

2. Availability of public transport:

1) pillars of the stops shall be bright painted;

2) numbers of routes and destination stations of buses shall be of standard design and located on the front or the side of the vehicle at eye level; size and clarity of letters, contrast of colors shall be observed, notes shall be placed at eye level, lighting shall be arranged;

bright hand-rails in buses, trolley buses and trams shall be provided;

cover of bus station areas with special materials shall be provided;

Additional lighting shall be provided for places which are of special significance or constitute a danger (steps, edges of platforms, entrances and exits);

edges of steps and platforms shall be painted in white or yellow;

station names shall be announced in all kinds of transport;

free passage for blind passengers with guide dogs shall be provided in public transport.

Accessibility of public buildings:

1) all entrances must be easily accessible and not blocked with obstructions;

information shall be placed at the entrance

high quality lighting shall be provided;

it is important that colors match the lighting;

5) important parts of the space shall be marked with contrast colors;

all signs must be visible and readable;

good lighting of portals shall be arranged at building exits;

8) information plate «election precinct N» shall be printed in large fonts;

9) automatic informers at election precincts shall be arranged.

Recommendations for creation of barrier-free environment for voters with reduced mobility

(developed according to SNiP)

Stairs and ramps.

1. The width of a staircase, as a rule, shall not be less than 1,35 m. If the calculated width of a staircase is 2.5 m and more, it is necessary to provide additional dividing hand-rails.

All the steps within the staircase and tread width and rise height shall be of the same geometry and size. It is acceptable to change the design of treads, lower steps of the first staircase of open stairways.

2. The width of stair tread, except inside of an apartment, shall not be less than 0.3 m and height of steps - no more than 0.15 m. Slopes of stairs shall be not more than 1:2.

Treads on the way of movement of the disabled and other people with reduced mobility must be continuous, smooth, without ridges and rough surface. A step edge shall be rounded with the radius of not more than 0.05 m. Lateral edges of steps that are not adjacent to walls shall have skirting boards with the height of not more than 0.02 m.

3. The maximum height of one ascent (of a staircase) of a ramp shall not exceed 0.8 m at a slope of no more than 8%. If a vertical drop on the way of movement is 0.2 m or less, it is allowed to increase a ramp slope up to 10%. In exceptional cases it is allowed to provide heliclines.

The width of the ramp with one-direction movement only shall be not less than 1.0 m.

Area on the horizontal part of the ramp at direct way of movement or on corner shall be with the depth of at least 1.5 m.

Supporting structures of ramps shall be made of noncombustible materials.

It is necessary to set fencing with hand-rails along both sides of all stairs and ramps, as well as at all drops with the height of more than 0.45 m. Hand-rails of ramps shall usually be placed at the height of 0.7 and 0.9 m, at stairs - at the height of 0.9 m, and in nursery schools also at the height of 0,5 m.

Railing on the inside of stairs shall be continuous and match the height. Final parts of the hand-rail shall be 0.3 m longer than the staircase or ramp incline.

6. On the top or side, external to the staircase, surfaces of hand-rails shall be provided with relief floor indication. Size of numbers shall be not less than: width - 0,01 m, height - 0,015 m, height of relief numbers - not less than 0,002 m.

Elevators and lift platforms.

Buildings shall be equipped with passenger elevators or lift platforms, if there are premises visited by wheelchair users, are located on floors above or below the floor of the main entrance to

the building (first floor). Project design shall provide for the choice of the way to lift the disabled and the possibility of duplication of these lifting methods.

Parameters of an elevator car, designated for wheelchair users, must have internal dimensions of not less than: width - 1.1 m, depth - 1.4 m. For new construction of public and industrial buildings it is recommended to use elevators with the width of the doorway of not less than 0.9 m.

It is necessary to set an airlock in the basement or the first floor in front of the door of an elevator for the disabled.

10. Light and sound alarms shall be provided at each elevator door, designated for the wheelchair users.

Elevators equipped with control systems and smoke protection system shall be used.

Lift platform exits shall be provided only at floors where residential apartments or premises that the disabled use are located

Election commission of the municipal formation of Chistopol Passport of election precinct

N 2785

1	Total amount of disabled voters	469
2	Expected amount of disabled voters that ballot at home	142
3	Expected amount of disabled voters that ballot at election precincts	327
4	Availability of means, allowing exiting the apartment to the street:	
	elevators	none
	lift platforms	none
	hand-rails	yes
	ramps compliant with construction norms and regulations	yes
5	Availability on the route to election precincts of:	
	traffic lights with audio warning	yes
	equipped underground passages	none
	specially equipped vehicles with lift platforms	yes
	convenient access routes to election precincts	none
6	Total amount of election precincts, located higher than the first floor	none
7	Availability of access to election precincts (elevators, lift platforms, hand-rails, ramps, compliant with construction norms and regulations)	Hand-rails, ramps
8	Special means for disabled voters available at election precincts, including:	
	ramps	yes
	stencil folders	yes
	magnifying glasses, etc.	yes
9	Number of individual passports of disabled voters routes to election precinct	241

.1	<i>including those by the disability category:</i>	
.2	visually impaired	68
	reduced mobility	73
.3	<i>including those by age:</i>	
	18 years old	none
	18-30	8
	30-40	6
	40-50	14
	above 50 year old	213
.4	<i>including those by floors of residence (on the first floor)</i>	
	on the second floor	34
	from the third floor and above	93
0	Proposals on creation of conditions for unobstructed access of the disabled to election precincts	none

Approved by: Mayor of
Kamensk-Shakhtinsky of the
Rostov Region
_A.N. Harin 2010
Approved by:
Chairman of the local
organization of the Kamensk –
Shakhtinsky Rostov
regional branch of the All-
Russian Association of the
Blind
L.F. Remenskaya 2010

Approved by: Head of the
Department of social protection
of population of town of
Kamensk-Shakhtinsky
O. N. Tarasova 2010
Approved by: Chairman of the
Kamenk regional public
organization "Center for
Rehabilitation of the Hearing
Impaired
V.A. Arsenov 2010

Approved by: Chairman of
Kamensk-Shakhtinsky
organization of the Rostov
regional branch of the All-Russian
public organization "All-Russian
Association of the Disabled"
V.M.V.Lazarenko 2010

**Measures to create barrier-free environment for handicapped people (the disabled) during the elections of various levels
in the territory of town of Kamensk-Shakhtinsky of the Rostov Region**

2010.

With the purpose of creation of barrier-free environment in the territory of town of Kamensk-Shakhtinsky for disabled voters and with account of the recommendations of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation, the Election commission of the Rostov Region shall perform the following activities:

I tem	Activity	Period for performance	Responsible for performance
1	To form a working group on ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled, living in town of Kamensk-Shakhtinsky, composed of representatives of the administration of town of Kamensk-Shakhtinsky and the Department of social protection	15.08.2010	Administration of town of Kamensk-Shakhtinsky
	for population of town of Kamensk-Shakhtinsky, chairmen of public organizations of the disabled, visually impaired, hearing impaired of town of Kamensk-Shakhtinsky		
2	To obtain information on the number of disabled voters in the territory of town of Kamensk-Shakhtinsky	before 01.09.2010	Department of social protection of population of town of Kamensk-Shakhtinsky, chairmen of public organizations of the disabled
3	To identify the number of the disabled by categories (the hearing impaired, the disabled with reduced mobility) and to submit this information to the territorial election commission	before 03.09.2010, 2011	TEC, PEC, Working group on ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled
4	To inspect the routes of disabled voters from their homes to election precinct	before 12.09.2010, November 2011	TEC, PEC, Working group on ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled
5	To develop the Passport of disabled voter route to election precinct;	before 22.09.2010, November 2011	TEC, PEC
6	To analyze identified drawbacks for creation of barrier-free environment for disabled voters	before 25.09.2010, November 2011	TEC, PEC
7	To analyze information on drawbacks for creation of barrier-free environment for disabled voters	before 29.09.2010, November 2011	TEC, PEC, Working group on ensuring of the electoral rights of the disabled
8	To verify information on the place of balloting of the disabled (inside polling station or outside polling station)	before 01.10.2010, November 2011	TEC, PEC
9	To make the list of people balloting outside polling station	before 09.10.2010, November — December 2011	PEC
10	Make provisions in the budget estimates of 2011-2012 for:	2011-2012	Administration Town of Kamensk-Shakhtinsky, Kamensk Shakhtinskaya

			City Duma
10.1	To equip both sides of the stairs at entrances with hand-rails	2011-2012	Administration of town of Kamensk-Shakhtinsky
10.2	To make relief floor marks on the top or the side of hand-rails	2011-2012	Administration of town of Kamensk-Shakhtinsky
10.3	To provide bright plates with the number of an election precinct at eye level of voters	2011-2012	Administration of town of Kamensk-Shakhtinsky
	To paint steps before the entrance or descent in white or yellow	2011-2012	Administration of town of Kamensk-Shakhtinsky
11	To purchase and install traffic lights with audio warning at streets crossings	2011-2012	STSI Internal Affairs Agencies of town of Kamensk-Shakhtinsky

Chairman of the territorial election commission of Kamensk-Shakhtinsky

O.M. Chugreeva

Information leaflet prepared by the Election commission of the Komi Republic for the disabled voters

Dear Voter!

The Election commission of the Komi Republic offers you to participate in the project "Road to election precinct."

The project is organized by the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation within the frames of preparation for ratification of the UN Convention on the rights of the disabled by the Russian Federation.

The purpose of the project is to identify problems arising in the process of individual movement of the disabled from the place of their residence to election precinct; to submit the obtained information for consideration of state power bodies, bodies of local self-government, relevant organizations and enterprises with the purpose of elimination of the identified problems.

With the purpose of implementation of this project, election commissions of the Komi Republic together with the Social development agency of the Komi Republic and public organizations of the disabled developed individual passports of disabled voters routes to election precincts. This passport cannot be completed without your personal participation. We request your assistance in implementation of this project and ask you to provide information needed complete the individual passport of disabled voters routes to election precinct.

We guarantee confidentiality of the information provided.

Today, more than 730 thousand of citizens of the Komi Republic have the right to participate in elections. Almost one tenth of them are people with certain disabilities. One of the tasks of election system workers is to ensure that the process of will expression is equally accessible to all citizens.

Only together we can try to create barrier-free environment for disabled voters.

Thank you for cooperation!

Yours sincerely, Elena Shabarshina, Chairman of the Election commission of the Komi Republic

Information flyer developed by the Election commission of the Tambov Region



Directives to election commissions on ensuring of the electoral rights of disabled citizens of the Russian Federation. Law enforcement practice experience

Under the general editorship of L. F. Demyanchenko

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