

# FEI ACCESSIBILITY HANDBOOK FOR EVENT ORGANISERS

## Introduction from FEI Secretary General Sabrina Ibáñez

Dear Organising Committees,

Although the right to play sports is recognised in international agreements like the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, the lack of accessibility at sports Events is often a barrier to participation.

Accessibility refers to the practice of making information, activities, and physical environments usable and functional for people of all abilities. People with disabilities need to be empowered, independent and given every opportunity to contribute to the staging of an Equestrian Event so they can enjoy the sporting action.

The need for a systematic approach to making all FEI Equestrian Events more accessible for para athletes and their support staff, spectators, media, volunteers and other stakeholders with disabilities, has become evident over the years.

This includes ensuring all areas of the venue and facilities are fully accessible, providing dedicated and convenient car parking, providing disabled toilets at appropriate locations, ensuring information is readily available regarding accessible routes, services and facilities, and making sure volunteers are well briefed to provide information and answer questions.

The FEI also appoints host cities for non-sporting Events like the FEI General Assembly and the FEI Awards, which is held in different countries each year and brings together national and regional federation representatives, some with reduced mobility.

In producing this Handbook, it is hoped that the Organising Committees of all FEI Events will take the necessary measures to embed accessibility into all strands of Event planning and delivery.

Disabilities take many forms including physical, hearing, visual and speech impairments, as well as learning and intellectual disabilities. The FEI is aware that people's functional abilities vary significantly and there is no one size fits all solution to enhancing accessibility at FEI Events. But it is necessary to start somewhere and for this reason, this Handbook is intended as a living document.

Changing perspectives towards disability is a key step in the accessibility journey, and it is hoped that accessibility consultants will eventually become a permanent fixture in the structures of Organising Committees.

Some of the suggestions in this Handbook can be easily implemented while others may require some investment in time as well as economic or human resources. The information here is intended to as guidance and a resource for Organising Committees considering accessibility across their Event structures.

It is important to start small and for Organising Committees to gradually build accessibility thinking into their planning processes. We hope that there will be plenty of learnings to share as we progress through this journey together, and that the changes we make in our Events will have a ripple effect on life in the host city much after the sporting action is completed.

**Sabrina Ibáñez**

## General Accessibility Considerations

The key to the success of any accessibility initiative is to ensure that people with disabilities have the necessary access to participate in and enjoy sports Events.

While accessibility considerations for sports Events are often focused on the athlete, it is also important that other stakeholder groups are also be taken into account at every stage of the planning, organisational and implementation phases. People with physical disabilities can be part of an athlete's entourage, and failure to provide for them can result in significant barriers to participation.

It is important to consider accessibility from the start and to see which Event aspects are impacted. It takes more time and effort to fix accessibility issues once an Event is up and running. When accessibility is incorporated at the start of the process, and a fully accessible venue is considered from the start, Organising Committees can optimise results and minimise the resources needed.

### Accessibility Consultants

- Consideration should be given to involving a Disability Access Consultant who is trained to identify potential accessibility issues – preferably from lived experience – and who can advise on best practice of national legal obligations at the early stages of the Event planning process.
- It is also important to have one person on the Organising team responsible for championing accessibility and who can react quickly to any issues affecting people with disabilities during the Event.

## Event Accessibility Checklist

### Event Communications

*Making the commitment to openly communicate about accessibility is the first step in ensuring that people with disabilities feel welcome at Events.*

*Accessible and inclusive communication requires that the messaging and information available through Event websites and social media is clear, direct and easy to understand. Inclusive communications also requires careful consideration of the various barriers that exist to accessing information such as visual impairment.*

*No one should be excluded because of accessibility needs and the FEI as well as Organising Committees can play a key role in ensuring this does not happen.*

- Event websites should have a dedicated page with the following information:
  - Information on disabled parking facilities and any ticketing requirements.
  - The website could host a booking system where disabled parking spaces can be reserved in advance.
- A map of the premises with:
  - Accessible routes around the venue clearly marked.
  - Locations of all the disabled toilets around the venue.
  - Accessible services at restaurants and bars around the venues and the most efficient routes to get there.

- Capture relevant mobility information and specific needs as part of the registration of Event participants. (A list of potential questions can be found in Annex 1 of this document).

### Event venue / Field of Play considerations

*Venue accessibility is key to making the equestrian sporting experience inclusive to everyone attending and working at the Event. It is important that the Organising Committee tests alternate routes, physical infrastructure and other accessible services prior to the start of the Event. As the accessibility requirements may be slightly different from one host nation to another, it is important that Organisers research local and national regulations at the start of the planning process.*

#### □ Cabling

- Cable bridges at Events can sometimes be too high for a wheelchair to pass over easily. Lower cable bridges or longer ramps should be considered to allow for better wheelchair accessibility.
- If this is not possible, an alternate, barrier free route must be clearly indicated and tested for practicality and efficiency prior to the start of the Event.
- In the case of indoor venues and where possible, consideration could be given to running cables through the ceiling to allow for unobstructed pathways for people with reduced mobility.

#### □ Parking Spaces

- On average there should be around one disabled parking space for every 10 regular parking positions.
- Parking should be located close to the key entrances to the venue.

#### □ Signage

- Graphic elements comply with accessibility standards in terms of colour contrast, size of letters, position of signs etc.
- Wayfinding signage complies with accessibility standards such as the use of international symbols, use of Braille and raised lettering, glare free, high contrast, Arabic numerals and sans serif lettering.
- Wayfinding signage to highlight accessible pathways and service.

#### □ Sport & Media Areas

- Accessible criteria, including all connecting pathways, are met for all athlete areas: locker rooms, warm-up areas, field of play, mixed zone, doping control, medal presentation, press conference, athletes lounge, seating areas.
- Adequate accessible seating (with necessary shade) is available for athletes, team officials, press attaches, members of the press.
- All briefing areas must be large enough to accommodate a wheelchair and have a ramp to enter the room.
- If the press conference table is on a raised platform, consideration must be given to allow for wheelchair users to easily access the area.
- Consideration must be given to the ramps leading to the *Kiss and Cry* areas as well as to any raised boards that may obstruct the view of people in wheelchairs.

#### □ Spectator Seating

- Seating areas must include areas that can accommodate multiple wheelchair spaces and associated companion seating.
- Railings and other obstacles should not impair the sightlines of people using accessible seating.

#### □ Food Services

- Pathways, aisles, queuing areas and counters should meet accessible pathway and knee clearance requirements.
- Catering and restaurant areas should have accessible seating options available including tables that allow for knee clearance.

#### □ Vehicles

- Where transport services are being provided to Event participants:
  - Ensure buses can meet the accessible seating capacity required, through low floor accessible buses (preferable), or those equipped with a wheelchair platform lift.
  - Define capacity and timetable for efficient service.
- A pool of accessible taxis and passenger vehicles / vans are available for hiring.
  - The Organising Committee could consider using golf carts, which are an environmentally sensitive mode of transportation that can facilitate mobility, especially in larger venues. They offer alternative transportation not just for people with disabilities for also older people with mobility issues.

#### □ Toilets

- Disabled toilets around the venue need to be open and accessible at all times.
- Toilets should be placed close to key points of interest, as well as one at the parking lot.
- A map with the location of all the disabled toilets around the venue should be made available and should be downloadable onto mobile devices possibly via a QR code.
- All the bathroom doors and other openings leading to the toilet areas should be more than 90 cm wide.
- Ramps should be long enough for people in wheelchairs to access the toilets themselves.

### **Volunteers**

*Volunteers are often the first point of contact for spectators. Volunteer staff must be confident when assisting those with disabilities. Disability/accessibility awareness training should be included for all staff and volunteers.*

- It is important that they have information about the location of toilets, accessible seating etc.
- Volunteers should be taken through all the wheelchair accessible routes around the venue and should have a map with the recorded distances available for consultation.
- Event staff and volunteers need to be ready and prepared to problem solve during the Event if required.

### **Airports**

*Where possible, Organisers should work with airlines to ensure that ground staff – especially for Para Equestrian Events – are prepared (through shuttles, aisle chairs, luggage assistance) for an increase in the demand for accessible operations.*

- The flow through the airports should allow for unobstructed, independent access for all.
- Accessible transportation options should be available for Event participants to and from the airport.

### **Hotels**

*Accessible accommodation can be a challenge for many hotels around the world. Often a wheelchair friendly room is created where many of the features are usable by some people with a disability but not all. Not all hotels claiming to be accessible will actually have features that*

*many wheelchair users need to function normally. The list below is intended to provide some guidance on what to consider when choosing an Event hotel:*

- Bathroom doorways are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs or walkers.
- There are no raised doorway thresholds that make it difficult to manoeuvre a wheelchair — even with the assistance of an able-bodied companion.
- The beds allow for a mobility-challenged person to get into or out of without considerable assistance.
- Bathtub showers allow for disabled people to enter or exit. Walk-in showers are large enough to allow for a wheelchair to enter.
- Sufficient space for turning circles and transfers around the beds for wheelchair users.
- Rooms are located close to the elevators or hotel entrances/exits.
  - Consideration should be given to the number of elevators in the building, as the existence of only one elevator may require assistants to carry people down the stairs in an emergency.
- Services and entertainment areas of the hotels are accessible to all users.
- Disabled parking facilities are easily available around the hotel and if not, a valet service is available.
- Wardrobes are also accessible and hangars etc within easy reach for people in wheelchairs.

## Annex 1 – Questions for Registration Form

Is the registration form accessible?

<b>Requirement</b>
<i>The form needs to be accessible to individual who are blind or who have low vision and who can use a screen reader</i>
<i>The registration process should also be available in alternate formats such as in a paper version, and allow people to register by phone if needed.</i>

Questions about range of disabilities

<p><b>Are you travelling with a Personal Care Attendant?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p><b>If yes, for planning purposes, please provide your Personal Care Attendant's contact information:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> First Name</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Last Name</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Phone Number</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Email Address</p>
<p><b>Option 1: Please indicate which room type you require from the following list.</b></p> <p><b>Option 2: You are responsible for making your own hotel reservation. However, by providing us with information on the type of room you requested, we will be able to check with the hotel to make sure they meet your room request. Please indicate which room type you require from the following list:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No Lodging Required</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Standard Room</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Room with Roll-In Shower</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Room with Tub &amp; Chair</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other. Please Specify:</p>

Additional accommodations

<p><i>Please select any additional accommodations you require from the list below. If you require something that is not listed, please indicate your request by selecting "Other" and providing us with specific information about your request in the comments box. We may contact you for further information, if necessary.</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Wheelchair access</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other. Please Specify:</p>
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### Interpreting

*Please indicate your interpreting needs from the list below:*

- None required*
- Sign Language. Please specify:*
- Simultaneous Spoken Foreign Language Interpretation. Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_*
- Other. Please Specify: \_\_\_\_\_*

### General question

*Please tell us of any additional needs you may have for this meeting. Please be as specific as possible: \_\_\_\_\_*

### Caveat

*Every effort will be made to accommodate advance requests; on-site requests cannot be guaranteed. Reasonable accommodations will be provided during meeting sessions. Referrals for assistance outside of the meeting can be made available. Please contact **(INSERT STAFF PERSON)** at **emailaddress@dot.org** with any questions or for more assistance.*



## Acknowledgements

The FEI Accessibility Handbook is based on the experiences of the Organising Committees for the FEI World Championships that were held in Herning (DEN) and Pratoni del Vivaro (ITA) in 2022.

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Some of the references and language used in this document have been taken from the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) Accessibility Guide.

This Handbook is very much a work in progress, and any additional ideas and suggestions can be sent to Vanessa Martin Randin ([vanessa.randin@fei.org](mailto:vanessa.randin@fei.org)).