



Century of Türkiye, Century of Accessibility (2002–2025)

Summary

Since 2002, Türkiye has undergone a significant transition from a “charity-based” approach to disability towards a comprehensive, rights-based policy framework. This shift has established enduring legal, institutional and operational mechanisms designed to protect rights, enhance accessibility and promote the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities.

Conceptual Shift

Disability is now understood not as an individual “deficiency,” but as a condition arising from the interaction between long-term impairments and physical, social or regulatory barriers. This perspective redefines policy priorities: rather than adapting individuals to existing systems, it aims to remove the barriers embedded within environments, services and institutional practices.

As a result, the notion that genuine progress can be achieved through comprehensive measures—such as developing accessible urban environments, enhancing inclusive educational practices, enacting sensible regulations, and intensifying efforts against discrimination—has been reinforced.

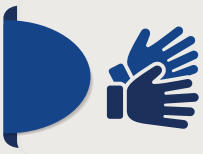
Implementation Framework

Accessibility constitutes a standard:



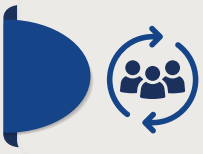
Since 2013, provincial Accessibility Monitoring and Inspection Commissions have routinely assessed public buildings, open spaces and public transport systems, issuing accessibility certificates to compliant entities.

Inclusive education is fundamental:



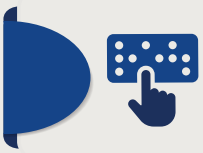
In education, Türkiye has expanded inclusive practices by adapting learning environments to pupils’ needs rather than expecting pupils to conform to rigid systems.

Transparent processes are utilised in employment:



In employment, the introduction of the centralised Public Personnel Selection Examination for Persons with Disabilities (EKPSS) in 2012, along with reinforced quota-and-incentive mechanisms, has improved access to both public and private labour markets. Since 2014, employers who hire persons with disabilities beyond mandatory quotas—or voluntarily—receive a full state subsidy of the employer’s national insurance contribution.

Reasonable accommodation:



Equal participation and employment are facilitated through accommodations such as assistive digital tools, flexible working arrangements and accessible meeting formats.

Strategic Direction

The Barrier-Free Türkiye 2030 Vision and the National Action Plan on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2023–2025) aim to institutionalise accessibility as a core component of public service quality. This involves developing measurable standards, systematic reporting and continuous improvement across the physical environment, transport systems, digital services, education, employment and the justice sector.

Conclusion

Grounded in the Law on Persons with Disabilities No. 5378 (2005) and strengthened by Türkiye’s ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2009, this structure has consolidated a policy shift from welfare-oriented provisions to a rights-based and inclusive citizenship model.

This info pack summarises the principal milestones and outcomes of this transformation throughout the 2002–2025 period.



Introduction

When looking at the global picture, international comparisons show that today approximately 15% of the world's population (around 1,200,000,000 people) lives with disabilities. In Türkiye, however, the ratios vary over time depending on the definition and measurement methods employed: a large-scale study conducted in 2002 reported a disability rate of 12.29%, while the 2011 Population and Housing Survey announced the rate as 6.9% among the population aged three and above, based on the criterion of having “serious difficulty in at least one domain.”

The conceptual framework of “disability” has now been firmly and clearly established. Disability refers to situations in which an individual's long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory characteristics, in interaction with environmental barriers, restrict equal participation in society. This understanding shifts the focus away from the individual and towards “barrier-producing spaces, rules, and service designs.” For this reason, real solutions arise not only from supports directed at individuals, but from structural steps such as building accessible cities, inclusive education, reasonable accommodations, and combating discrimination in this field.

Today, natural disasters and wars occurring on a global scale are increasing both the number of people living with disabilities and the needs of these individuals. Therefore, processes of risk reduction, preparedness, response, and reconstruction must be designed with accessibility as a guiding principle from the very outset. Türkiye's experience in major disasters, such as the February 6, 2023 earthquakes, has clearly demonstrated the vital importance of ensuring equal access to information, evacuation, shelter, healthcare, and psychosocial support services for persons with disabilities at every stage of disaster management.

Since 2002, Türkiye's policy architecture has evolved in line with this human rights-based approach, and its rights-oriented and inclusive framework has been strengthened. The “2030 Barrier-Free Vision,” which sets the roadmap for this framework, identifies measurable targets across many domains, including the accessible built environment and transportation, digital public services, education, employment, justice, social protection, media, and disaster management. The “National Action Plan on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2023–2025),” which constitutes the implementation dimension of this vision, clearly sets out the chain of objective–target–action–indicator, establishing a strong coordination mechanism among central and local administrations, civil society, and academia. Within this context, the emphasis on accessibility gained official status in 2025 with the declaration of May 16, as the “National

Accessibility Day.” In this way, accessibility has been placed on a visible and institutional footing within state policies.

This information package aims to present this framework in a holistic manner. It sets out, step by step and supported by data and concrete examples, what has changed in the legal landscape during the 2002-2025 period; the models established in the fields of education, employment, health, and social support; the practices through which cities and digital services have become accessible; the ways in which everyday life has been transformed in relation to participation in culture and sports; and the roadmap defined for the horizon of 2030.

Disability Identity Card



Since 1998, individuals with a disability report of **40% or above** have been eligible for the **Disability Identity Card**, which facilitates access to rights and public services.



As of **28 August 2021**, applications began to be processed through the **e-Government portal (e-Devlet)**.



Between August 2021 and 2024:
234,588 individuals applied via **e-Government** and received a Disability Identity Card.

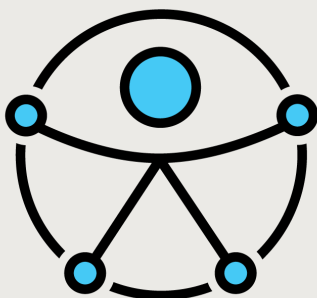
Source: Ministry of Family and Social Services of the Republic of Türkiye

Legal Arrangements

The foundation of the rights-based transformation in the field of disability in Türkiye is the Law on Persons with Disabilities No. 5378, adopted in 2005. This law, for the first time, made accessibility and equal participation explicit objectives of public policy and systematically embedded the principles of “non-discrimination, reasonable accommodation, and accessibility” across all domains—from education to employment, from health to access to public services. With this regulation, the legal basis of the inclusive approach—one that adapts the educational environment to the student rather than forcing the “student to adapt to the system”—became clearly defined, establishing a binding framework for service provision at both central and local levels.

The international foundation of this domestic framework is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Adopted in 2006, the Convention was ratified by Türkiye in 2009 and entered into force the same year. The CRPD defines disability not as an individual “deficit” but as a social rights issue emerging from the interaction between the individual and the environment. This understanding enabled national legislation and practice to shift away from charity- or welfare-based approaches and towards a structure grounded in the responsibility to protect, monitor, and report on rights.

The concrete implementation of accessibility in the field is shaped by the Accessibility Monitoring and Inspection Regulation (2013), through which commissions and the Accessibility Certificate mechanism were established. Within this framework, public buildings, open spaces, and public transportation services are regularly inspected, and certificates are granted to units found compliant. In this way, accessibility has moved beyond being merely a legal requirement and has become a public standard whose continuity is measured and reported. Recent data indicate a consistent rise in the number of audits and certifications, suggesting that the system has achieved nationwide operational status. The technical standard for this structure, TS 9111 (Accessibility Requirements in Buildings), was revised in 2023 to conform to contemporary international standards. Tools like the Accessibility Logo and ERDEM (Accessibility Assessment Module) facilitate a standardised communication framework for practitioners.



ERDEM
Erişebilirlik Değerlendirme Modülü

The fundamental provisions regulating the employment of persons with disabilities in working life impose distinct obligations on the public and private sectors. Article 53 of the Civil Servants Law No. 657 mandates that public institutions employ a minimum of 3% civil servants with disabilities. Article 30 of the Labour Law No. 4857 stipulates a 3% quota for private-sector workplaces and a 4% quota for public-sector workplaces. The monitoring of quota implementation is carried out by İŞKUR. With the introduction of the E-KPSS in 2012, the employment of persons with disabilities in the public sector has gained a transparent and centralised placement process. With an amendment introduced in 2014, employer premium support for employers who hire persons with disabilities above the quota or even when not legally required to do so, was increased to 100%, thereby establishing an incentive architecture that encourages additional employment. For groups that face difficulty transitioning into the open labour market, the Sheltered Workshops model has been supported by regulation; with the 2022 amendment, the establishment and operating thresholds were lowered to facilitate the wider adoption of the model.

The European Accessibility Act (2019/882), which began to be implemented in the EU on June 28, 2025, defines accessibility requirements for products and services such as e-books, ticketing systems, banking, e-commerce, and computers/smart devices. Ensuring that digital content and products developed in Türkiye comply with these requirements provides a concrete advantage—particularly in alignment, interoperability, and user experience—for production and services targeted at the EU market.



The dimension of combating discrimination and ensuring equality for persons with disabilities is supported by the regular reports of institutions, particularly the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye (TİHEK). Issues such as reasonable accommodation in employment and accessible application and communication channels in public services are thus operationalised within the complaint-investigation-sanction framework. In this way, legal texts cease to be mere “statements of goodwill” and become guarantees whose implementation is measured and verified.

RIGHTS-BASED FRAMEWORK IN THE CONTEXT OF DISABILITY



Legal foundation:

A rights-based framework established through **Law No. 5378** and the **CRPD**.



Standards and processes:

TS 9111, the national inspection and certification system, **ERDEM**, and the national accessibility logo.



Employment and incentives:

Public-private sector quotas, the **EKPSS**, social insurance premium subsidies, and Sheltered Workshops.

This whole framework provides a solid foundation for the 2030 vision, which aims to make accessibility the default quality of public service across all areas, from education to transport and from digital services to employment.

Legal Improvements for Persons with Disabilities, 2005–2025

Years	Practice	What changed?	Why it matters:	How it works:
2005	Law No. 5378	A national, rights-based framework was adopted, defining principles for access to education, employment and public services.	It became the legal foundation for all subsequent regulations and inspection mechanisms.	Temporary provisions assigned responsibilities for monitoring and enforcing accessibility; the right to education was guaranteed through an inclusive approach.
2009	Ratification of the CRPD in Türkiye	The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities entered into force in Türkiye.	It introduced obligations on equality, accessibility and non-discrimination, requiring systematic reporting and monitoring.	State Party reporting and national coordination mechanisms track progress and ensure policy alignment with the Convention.
2013	Law No. 6462 (Terminology Reform)	The terms “crippled” (özürlü/sakat) were formally replaced with “person with disabilities/ disability” (engelli/engellilik).	Administrative language was harmonised with rights-based principles, and all implementing texts were revised accordingly.	
2013	Accessibility Monitoring and Inspection Regulation	Provincial Accessibility Monitoring and Inspection Commissions were established.	Systematic inspection of public buildings, open spaces and public transport began nationwide.	Compliant units receive Accessibility Certificates; annual plans and digital reporting tools support continuous monitoring.
2014	Employment Incentives	The social security employer premium support for private sector businesses employing disabled individuals beyond the quota, or even without obligation, has been elevated from 50% to 100%.	It incentivised employment beyond mandatory quotas, encouraging additional hiring rather than mere “compliance with quotas.”	The employer’s full premium share is covered by the state through İŞKUR and SGK.
2014	Entrepreneurship Grants (Complementary Measure)	Grant programmes for entrepreneurs with disabilities and ex-offenders were introduced.	They strengthened independent income generation and entrepreneurial participation.	İŞKUR administers grant schemes within set financial limits.
2018	Budget Monitoring for Accessibility	A dedicated “Ensuring Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities” section was added to the programme budget.	Accessibility expenditures became traceable, supporting planning at both ministerial and provincial levels.	
2021	Expansion of Accessibility Certification	Inspection and certification practices became more widespread.	Field-level results of the monitoring system became more visible and measurable.	
2023	Revision of TS 9111 & Expansion of the Accessibility Logo	The national accessibility standard (TS 9111) was updated and the use of the Accessibility Logo broadened.	It strengthened a unified “single language–single symbol” approach across physical and digital accessibility.	
2023–2025	National Action Plan on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	A comprehensive framework was introduced: 8 policy areas, 31 objectives, 107 actions and 316 activities with a clear timeline.	Policy, implementation and monitoring cycles were consolidated into a structured governance model.	

Education and Participation

Since 2002, Türkiye has adopted an inclusive approach to education that adapts the learning environment to the student rather than forcing “students to adapt to the system.” Inclusive education is implemented across all levels—from early childhood to higher education—through reasonable accommodations, support education services and individualised education plans tailored to the needs of each student. The intellectual foundation of this framework is the international inclusive education approach based on the principle that “schools are for everyone”; at the national level, it has been formalised through Law No. 5378 and the relevant regulations.

Mainstreaming/integration practices constitute the core building block of this approach. According to the Ministry of National Education, in the 2022–2023 period, more than 500,000 students with disabilities were enrolled in formal special education, and the majority of these students received their education in general education classrooms through mainstreaming. At the primary level, hundreds of thousands of students are included in this model, and at the lower- and upper-secondary levels, tens of thousands participate. Additionally, special education classrooms and special education schools are offered when necessary. Altogether, this picture shows that shared learning, rather than “separate spaces”, has become the mainstream practice.

Guidance and Research Centres (RAMs) are the pivotal point of diagnosis, referral and monitoring processes. RAMs jointly plan the most appropriate educational environment for the student (mainstreaming, special class or special school) and the required support services (support education rooms, assistive technologies, guidance), ensuring coordination between the family, school and teachers. Thanks to this structure, the student’s development is reviewed at regular intervals and the education plan is updated accordingly.

Steps facilitating the participation of students at the transition to higher education have also been strengthened. In student dormitories affiliated with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, students with a disability rate of 40% or above are granted priority and free accommodation. The combined provision of scholarships, accommodation and transport support creates a significant advantage for students moving to study in another city. Accessibility commissions and units established within universities coordinate reasonable adjustments regarding campuses, libraries and examination arrangements, making the learning process smoother for students.

Accessibility in educational content and digital tools has now become a fundamental requirement. Adding subtitles and Turkish Sign Language (TİD) support to lecture videos, providing alternative text and appropriate contrast

for visual materials, and preparing e-publications in accessible PDF or EPUB formats are increasingly becoming standard practice. With the acceleration of digitalisation during the pandemic, the addition of subtitles and TID layers to remote-learning materials has now become a permanent implementation. Accessibility guidelines prepared for teachers and content developers, as well as practical workshops, help ensure that these standards evolve into daily classroom habits.

Participation opportunities outside school also form an important part of the overall picture. Youth centres, arts and science workshops, technology programmes and sports courses carried out by municipalities and ministries provide students with broad opportunities to build friendships, engage in creative production and express themselves—when supported with accessible venues and appropriate communication methods. In this way, education is no longer confined to exams and grades; it becomes a process through which students enter social life safely and confidently.

Türkiye’s direction in the field of education and participation is an inclusive model centred on learning together. The coordination provided by RAMs, the widespread use of mainstreaming, accommodation and scholarship support in higher education, accessible digital content and opportunities outside school all serve to ensure that every student can progress at their own pace, within the same shared environment.



Students in Special Education within Formal Schooling

Academic Year	Total Number of Students Receiving Special Education in Formal Schooling
2014/15	259.282
2015/16	288.489
2016/17	333.598
2017/18	353.610
2018/19	398.815
2019/20	425.774
2020/21	425.816
2021/22	472.686
2022/23	507.804
2023/24	559.725
2024/25	602.729

Inclusive (Mainstreaming) Education Table

Academic Year	Number of Students in Inclusive Education
2014/15	183.221
2015/16	202.541
2016/17	242.486
2017/18	257.770
2018/19	295.697
2019/20	318.300
2020/21	319.881
2021/22	357.319
2022/23	384.250
2023/24	426.990
2024/25	462.327

Employment and Economy

Since 2002, the goal in the field of employment in Türkiye has gone beyond merely opening job vacancies for persons with disabilities; it has also become important to ensure that a disabled candidate can genuinely access that job, remain in the workplace once employed, and progress fairly thereafter.

The centralised placement system (E-KPSS), implemented since 2012, makes entry into the public sector more transparent. Institutions declare their needs in advance; candidates, meanwhile, go through an examination and preference process structured according to their educational background, within a placement system based on rules applicable to all. Thus, recruitment is anchored in an open and verifiable mechanism.

Quotas and incentives form the backbone of employment in both the public and private sectors. The obligation to employ 3% workers with disabilities in the private sector, 4% in public sector, and at least 3% civil servants with disabilities in the public administration has, since 2014, been reinforced by a 100% employer premium support for those who employ persons with disabilities beyond the quota or even when not required to do so. In short, the objective is not merely to ensure that employers meet the quota, but to make additional employment attractive.

Sheltered workshops provide a safe starting point for groups who face difficulty transitioning into the open labour market, and when possible, serve as a bridge towards entry into the mainstream labour force. Simplifications introduced in 2022 reduced establishment and operational thresholds, enabling more businesses to open their doors to persons with disabilities. As an extension of this approach, the support amount provided to sheltered workshops was increased from 500,000 TL to 720,000 TL in 2025, creating a meaningful financial facility for both capacity growth and the sustainability of operations.

Entrepreneurship and grant programmes play a genuine leverage role for those wishing to establish their own businesses; support for equipment, accessible workspace design and start-up capital enables independent income and flexible working options alongside traditional “salaried employment.” Project training and mentoring help transform this journey into a more grounded and feasible plan. In this context, the grant support provided for entrepreneurs with disabilities was increased from 400,000 TL to 580,000 TL in 2025, marking a significant and encouraging step for individuals seeking to start their own businesses.

Reasonable accommodations in the workplace are increasingly becoming part of daily practice; screen-reader software, meeting systems compatible with hearing aids, quiet working spaces and flexible hours are now regarded as inherent requirements of the job. Remote and hybrid working—accelerated during the pandemic—has tangibly eased access to employment by reducing transport and spatial barriers.

Vocational rehabilitation and skills alignment aim not only to “enter employment” but also to sustain and advance within the workforce. Early guidance, job coaching, on-the-job training and regular monitoring match skills with actual labour-market demand, transforming employability into sustained performance that supports retention and progression.

Tax and transport rights constitute the first link in access to work; income tax reductions, tax advantages for equipment and free or discounted public transport help reduce, particularly in major cities, the barrier of “commuting to work”.

This new architecture opens the door to employment for persons with disabilities on fair terms, enables them to remain within the workplace, and encourages progression. Looking ahead to 2030, the objective is to fine-tune this structure in a way that reduces regional disparities, accelerates sector-skill matching and establishes accessibility as the “default quality” in every workplace.

The table below presents the developments in the employment of persons with disabilities in Türkiye between 2002 and 2025.



The **rise in public-sector employment** has become more stable through the centralised recruitment system (EKPSS).



Quotas combined with a 100% premium subsidy incentivise additional hiring in the private sector.



The **sheltered workshop model** provides a safe entry point and a transitional pathway for individuals facing significant barriers.

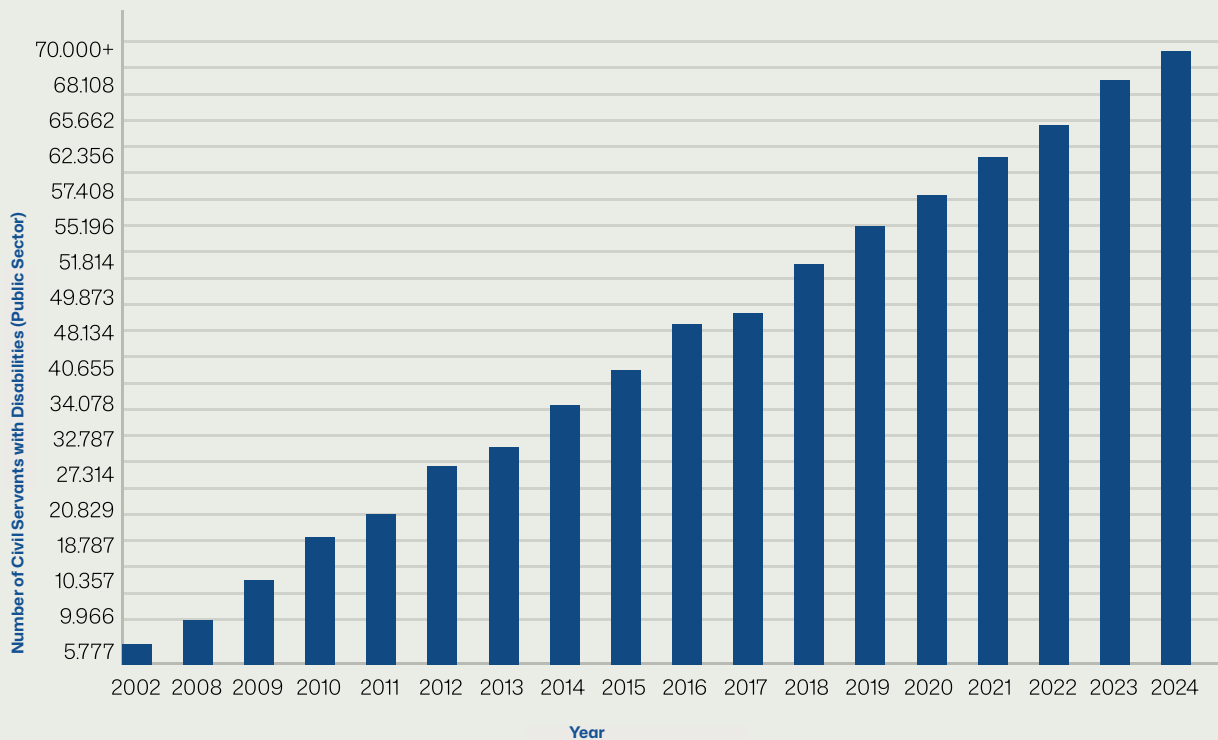


Reasonable accommodation and assistive technologies strengthen retention in employment, while **remote and hybrid work options** expand accessibility.

Why is this important?

Employment encompasses more than just income generation; it also provides dignity, fosters social relationships, and facilitates the development of an independent life. For this reason, the system that has been established sets out a roadmap that transforms a person who is “seeking work” into an employee who can “remain in work and progress.” In the 2030 targets, further strengthening this structure comes to the fore. Key priorities include introducing measures that reduce regional disparities (for example, diversifying local incentives), aligning sector-specific skills training more closely with labour-market demand, and expanding micro-finance and mentoring support in disabled entrepreneurship. Through steps taken in this direction, the aim is for working life to become the most visible and sustainable sphere of accessibility.

Number of Civil Servants with Disabilities in the Public Sector



Key Outputs and Impact Summary

(2002–2025):



Steady increase in public-sector employment of civil servants with disabilities
(2020–2025 October 82.626).



Quota requirements:
Public sector (worker status) 4%, private sector 3%, and a minimum 3% quota for civil servants (civil servant status).



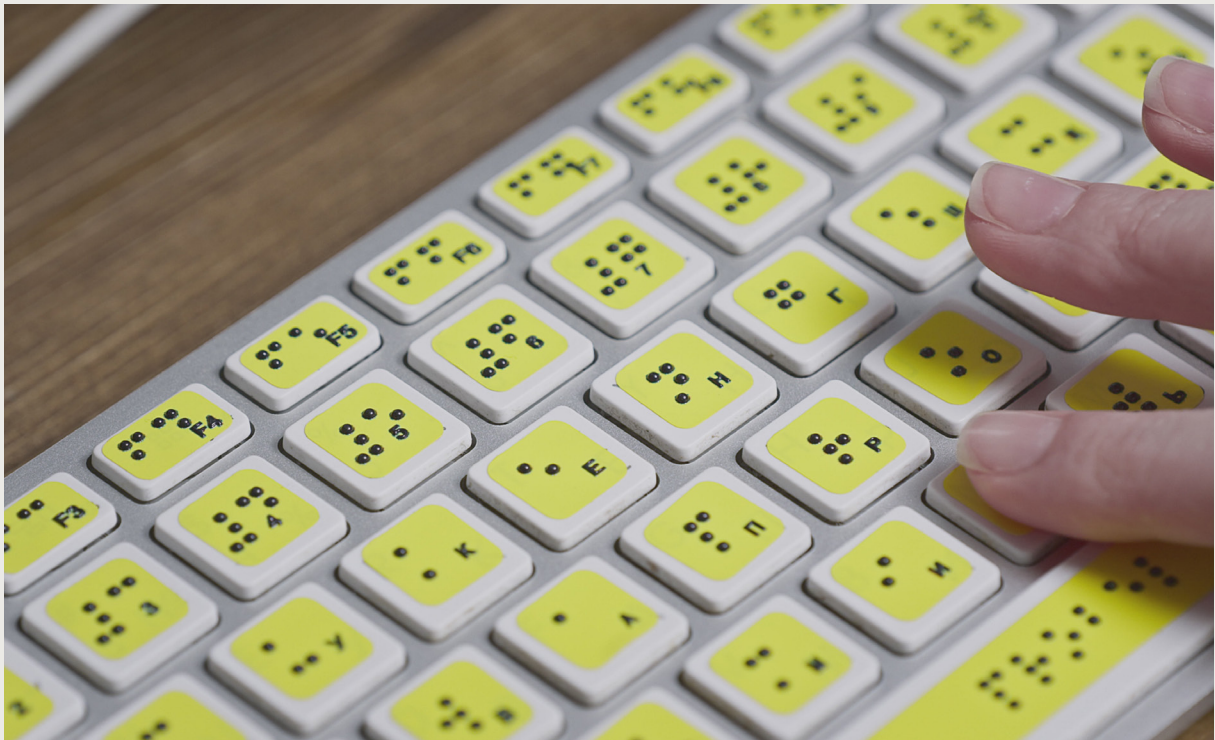
Strengthened private-sector incentives
(2014, state subsidy 100%).



Simplified regulations for sheltered workshops as of October 2025 **16 workplaces/ 133 individuals** supported by monthly wage incentives.



Enhanced accessibility standards and inspection capacity (**Revision of TS 9111; with 5,135 inspections and 388 accessibility certificates issued in 2024).**



Health Services

In Türkiye, health policies after 2002 have been designed to ensure an uninterrupted journey for persons with disabilities—from the hospital to the home, and from the home to everyday life. Access to services now means not only treatment but also accessibility, appropriate communication and continuity. This framework consists of a system in which primary care, home healthcare–home care, physical therapy and rehabilitation, mobile services, and the 112/ALO 183 hotlines operate in coordination.

Primary care is the first point of contact. Adaptations such as home visits/monitoring in family health centres, flexible appointments, accessible examination areas, and the use of assistive equipment reduce barriers to seeking care. Family health centre teams, together with RAMs and social service units, initiate the referral and guidance process at an early stage, rapidly activating the treatment–care chain. YAŞAM units (Healthy Ageing Centres) strengthen this first contact, particularly for older adults and groups with limited mobility.

Home healthcare and home care services bring treatment and monitoring into the household for individuals with mobility limitations or those who are bedridden. Provincially coordinated teams (physician–nurse–physiotherapist) carry out chronic disease management, wound care, medication and medical supplies monitoring, oral and dental health practices, and, when necessary, the integration of palliative care.

On the side of physical therapy and rehabilitation, the goal is to go beyond treatment and enhance functionality and independent living. Individually tailored programmes provided in hospitals and day centres include gait–balance training, upper/lower limb therapies, speech–swallowing therapy, hand rehabilitation and assistive technology adaptations. When early intervention programmes for children operate in coordination with education, participation in school and family life increases significantly.

Mobile health teams and field screenings bring services directly to groups facing spatial barriers or those living in temporary shelters. Mobile teams coordinated with home healthcare and family medicine can complete monitoring, vaccination, medical assessment and referral processes on the same day. During disaster periods, temporary rehabilitation units and psychosocial support teams are activated to reduce functional loss and secondary risks from the acute phase onward.

When emergency and helpline services are accessible, crises can be managed far more safely. In this context, 112 and ALO 183 operate with alternative communication channels and call-back protocols for individuals with hearing or speech impairments, directing applications rapidly to the relevant units—from medical intervention to family support. These lines help manage demand in metropolitan areas and compensate for distance in rural settings.

Quality assurance is essential to ensure that the system functions fairly and sustainably. Through the Care Service Quality Standards (BHKS), public and private institutions are regularly assessed, enabling service quality to be monitored nationwide using the same criteria. Accessibility inspections are also part of this framework: in 2024, 5,135 inspections were conducted and 388 units received accessibility certificates. These figures demonstrate that accessibility has become a routine public guarantee.

From a regional perspective, standards are the same, but needs differ. In major cities, the priority is to make strong existing capacity accessible “within” facilities (accessible examination areas, clear wayfinding, accessible websites/appointment systems, flow management). In rural and dispersed districts, the priority is to bring services to the home and village (home healthcare, mobile teams, home-care support) and to facilitate access to transport. The goal is to apply the same standard with tools suited to different needs, narrow the gaps between provinces and districts, and make access to services easier from every part of the country.

Number of Beneficiaries of the Home Care Allowance

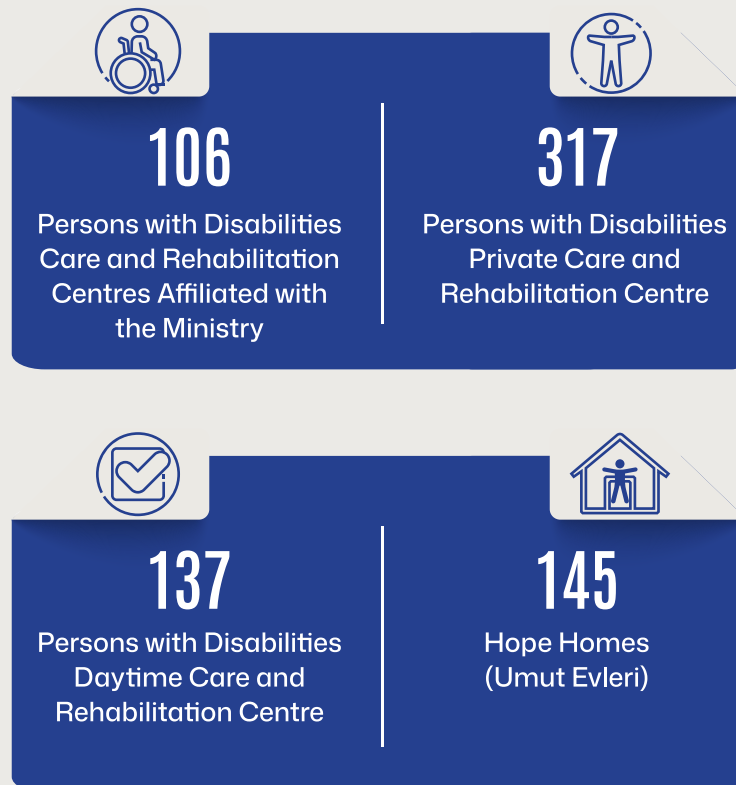
Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2023	560.060
2024	542.619
2025	519.945

Private Care Centres for Persons with Disabilities



Source: Ministry of Family and Social Services 2024 Information Booklet

Persons with Disabilities Care and Rehabilitation Centre Services









Accessibility and the Built Environment

Since 2005, Türkiye has begun to approach accessibility as a fundamental quality criterion of public services. The logic underpinning this approach is as follows: first, setting standards (TS 9111); then conducting regular inspections in the field; certifying those that are compliant; and addressing any deficiencies identified. This cycle has elevated well-intentioned but fragmented practices across different cities to a common level of quality; and the increasing inspection and certification activities in recent years demonstrate that accessibility has now become a routine public duty. Today, accessibility is monitored not by asking “Has it been done or not?”, but rather “At what level, and how sustainable is it?”

2025 Digital Accessibility Reform (Presidential Circular No. 2025/10)

Scope Expansion:
Public institutions and a broad segment of the private sector are required to comply with digital accessibility standards.

 Public institutions  Universities and municipalities  Banks and private hospitals  Universities and municipalities	 Transport operators <small>(road/sea/rail/air)</small>  Private educational institutions  Electronic communication service providers with more than 200,000 subscribers
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***Mandatory Standards:**

All websites and mobile applications must be redesigned in line with:

- **Accessibility Control List – Level A**
- **WCAG compliance**

***Transition Periods:**

- Public institutions and the private sector: **1 year**
- E-commerce websites: **2 years**

A similar coherence is evident in the field of transport. From bus stops to rail systems, and from pedestrian crossings to wayfinding within stations, the entire network is designed with an end-to-end accessibility approach. Platform-vehicle alignment, door widths, audible and visual information systems, and emergency evacuation arrangements are integral components of these standards. The accessible seating and WC arrangements on High-Speed Train sets, together with the escort services provided in stations, demonstrate that accessibility refers not to a single point but to an entire journey experience extending from departure to arrival. In air transport, the fact that Istanbul Airport has obtained national and international accessibility accreditations demonstrate that the chain of “accessibility in design + accreditation in process + service on the ground” has been translated into a measurable success.

The digital counterpart of the transformation in physical space is also steadily strengthening. ERDEM (Accessibility Assessment Module) provides institutions and businesses with a practical dashboard that enables them to self-scan their buildings and services, indicating where they should begin. The Accessibility Guide serves as a comprehensive manual offering step-by-step direction for practitioners. This approach is also being adopted for websites, e-Government applications and digital publications. Criteria such as subtitles, Turkish Sign Language support, screen-reader compatibility, adequate contrast and keyboard navigability are increasingly becoming fundamental elements incorporated at the earliest stages of digital design. In this way, access to information and services is integrated around a common accessibility principle that spans from physical environments to digital platforms.

Training programmes that build local capacity constitute an often unseen but critically important component of this process. Through workshops delivered to municipalities and public institutions, accessibility becomes not only a technical specialism held by a small group of experts, but a natural part of the daily workflow for everyone—from planners to social-media teams. As a result, the ticketing process, audience flow, seating arrangements and content delivery of a cultural centre can be addressed as parts of a single whole; accessibility becomes not an additional “layer” added afterwards, but the guiding principle at the outset of design.

In short: in Türkiye, standards, inspection and certification processes now progress within an institutionalised whole. Tangible improvements in transport, the growing prevalence of measurable tools in the digital sphere, and the strengthening of local capacity render accessibility a public guarantee that is reconfirmed year after year. Today, the goal is not merely to reduce barriers, but to design for barrier-free living from the start—creating a holistic experience that extends from the gateway of a city to the screen of a mobile application.

Accessibility Inspections and Certificate Numbers

Year	Number of Accessibility Inspections	Number of Accessibility Certificates
2017	4.797	184
2018	7.225	301
2020	1.142	730
2021	2.020	308*
2022	3.112	680 (reported in the 2023 FR as previous-year data)
2023	4.417	357
2024	5.135	388
2014 - 2025	64.575 (total)	3.992 (total)

* Although the number of Accessibility Certificates decreased from 730 in 2020 to 388 in 2024, reports explain this decline as the result of stricter standards and enhanced quality control, rather than reduced compliance.

Model Application- İstanbul Airport

With its recognition as “Accessible Airport” in Europe (2021), the world’s first “**Accessibility Enhancement**” accreditation (2022) and the national award for “**Accessibility in Transportation**” (2024), İstanbul Airport has demonstrated a consistent accessibility standard from planning to operations.

This trio of achievements illustrates how the chain of



can translate into measurable and internationally validated success.

Cultural and Sports Participation

The most visible domains of participation are culture and sport. Over the past twenty years, Türkiye has taken steps that have expanded activities, facilitated access and made achievement more visible. With these efforts, the aim has not merely been to fill an events calendar; rather, it has been to enable a young person to stand on a stage, a sportsperson to enter a facility with ease, and an audience member to experience the content equally through subtitles or audio description. On the sports side, federations and infrastructure are being strengthened, with regular national team camps, municipal sports schools and investments in accessible facilities, participation in the Paralympic and Deaflympics movements is steadily increasing. At the base of this pyramid lies widespread access and a large athlete pool; in the middle, support in the form of coaching, equipment and training camps; and at the top, international representation.



The medals won in Paralympic disciplines are the result of systematic preparation. When the club-school-federation triangle aligns around the same objective, the pathway for an athlete to begin, continue and progress becomes clearly defined. Accessible sports areas opened locally, adapted pools and sports halls, and training sessions accompanied by guides or sign-language support form essential links in this pathway.

On the culture and arts front, success derives from making both the space and the content accessible. While physical access improves in theatres, museums, libraries and exhibition venues, accessibility features such as subtitles, Turkish Sign Language interpretation and audio description are becoming more widespread in content. Here, accessibility refers not only to a theatre play being accessible on stage but to the whole flow—from ticketing to seating plans, from emergency evacuation to foyer wayfinding—being designed as one coherent experience. In digital cultural content, accessible infrastructure (such as accessible video players, contrast/subtitle options, and screen-reader-compatible e-publications) is becoming standard. In this way, digital bridges narrow the gap between those who can physically attend an event and those who cannot, allowing online exhibitions, live broadcasts and digital archives to reach a growing audience. This change is also evident in small everyday interactions. Recent examples include providing a festival programme booklet as an accessible PDF, promoting an audio-described performance of a concert, and designing asymmetrical seating arrangements in municipal cultural centres to include wheelchair spaces. Tactile routes and guiding surfaces in museums, along with accessible e-book collections in libraries, bring this approach into daily life.

National action plans address culture and sport within a rights-based participation framework, assigning concrete responsibilities to institutions such as “making the venue accessible, producing accessible content and announcing events in an accessible manner”. As a result, an event’s invitation, poster, website and ticketing process are organised according to the same principle. In conclusion, cultural and sporting participation is no longer a “separate field” but part of the mainstream of daily life.



The momentum Türkiye has achieved in recent years shows that this three-part model has become firmly established. It should be remembered that culture and sport are not only instruments of entertainment or performance but also one of the strongest expressions of equal citizenship.

Access to Sports: Measures under the National Action Plan

What is it?

Between 2023 and 2025, the initiative aims to ensure equal access to sports equipment, provide employees with opportunities for daily exercise, and promote education on the benefits of physical activity.

Why is it important?

It secures sports not as a “hobby” but as a right, supported by concrete inter-institutional responsibilities.

Standards and Certification in Cultural Venues

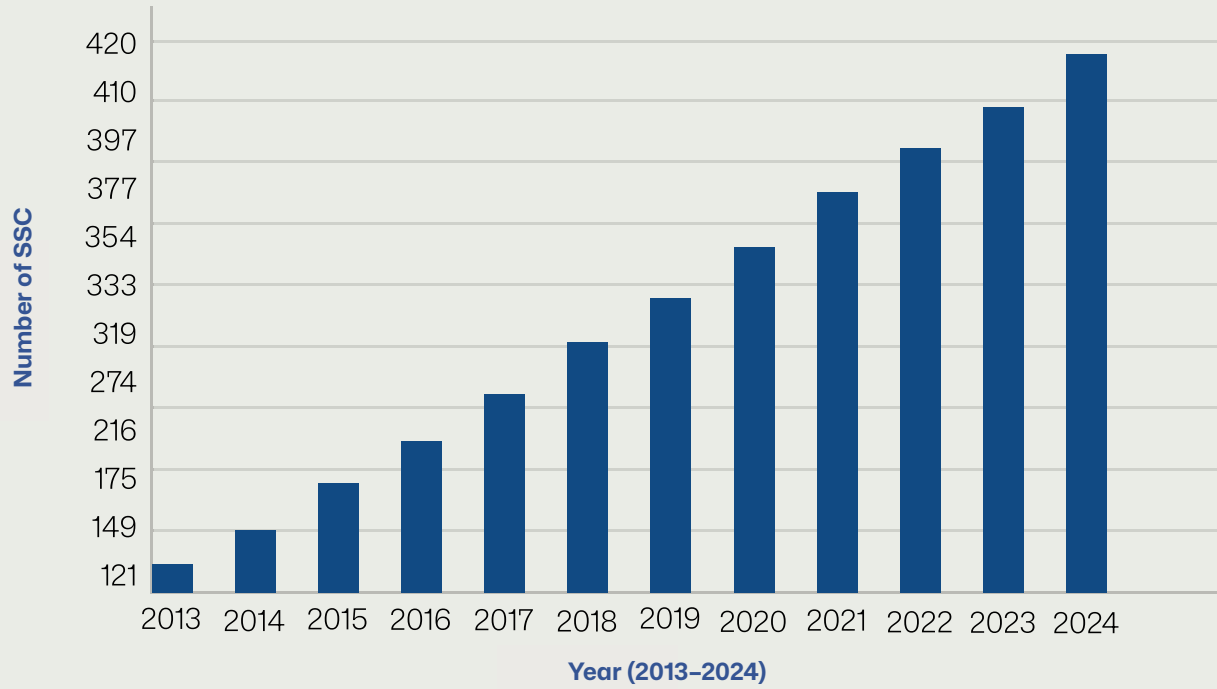
What is it?

An implementation framework based on the TS 9111 standard and the Accessibility Certificate, supported by inspections. In 2024, 5,135 inspections were conducted, and 388 certificates were issued.

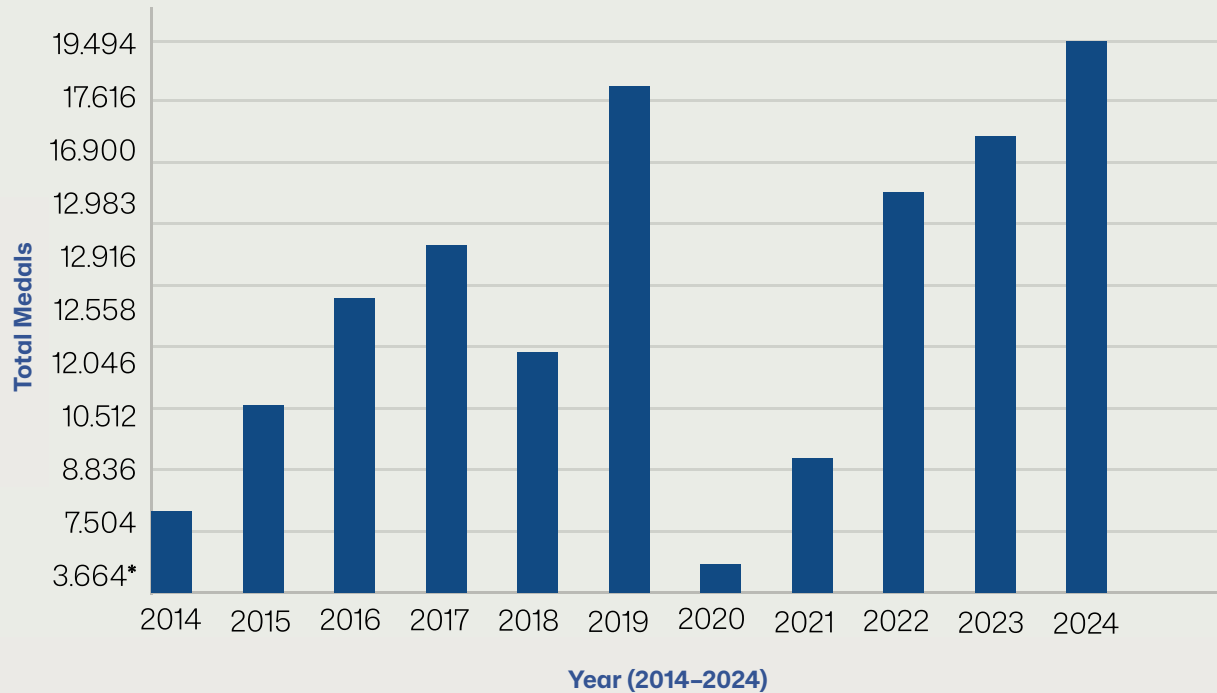
Why is it important?

This system ensures that theatres, concert halls, museums and libraries adopt a measurable, consistent quality standard for accessibility.

Number of Social Service Centres (SSCs)



Annual Medal Totals of Athletes with Disabilities (2014–2024)



* COVID pandemic period

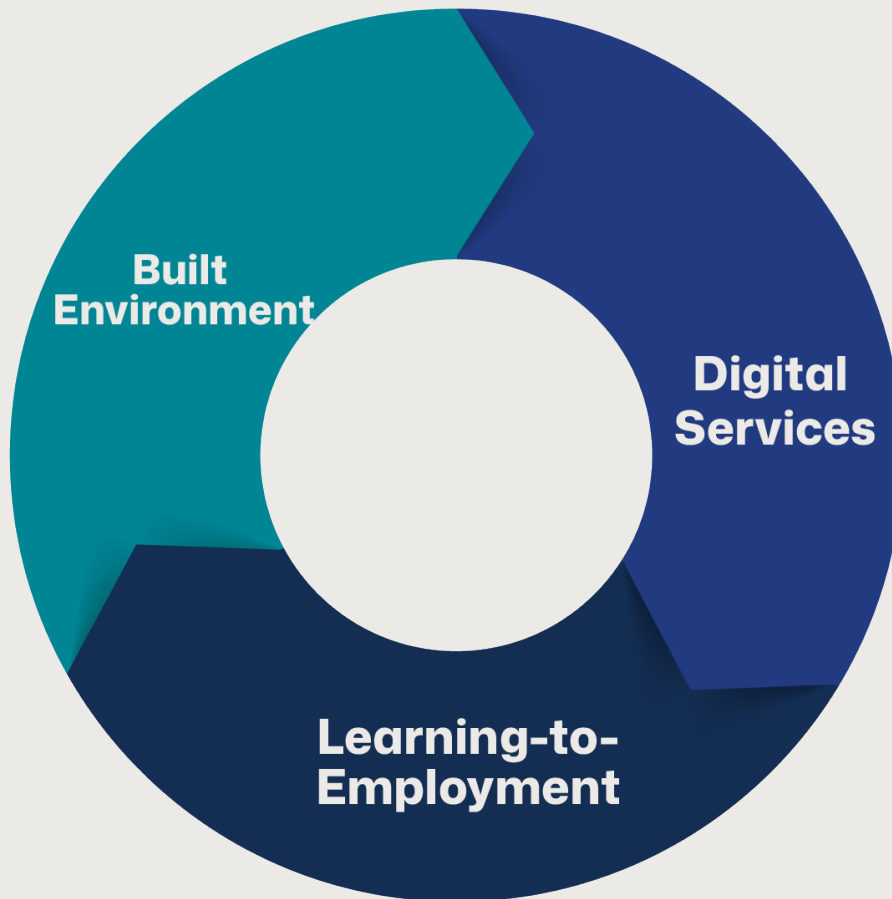
Medal Counts at the Paralympic Games – By Year

Year	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
2004	1	0	1	2
2008	1	0	1	2
2012	1	4	4	9
2016	3	1	5	9
2020	2	5	9	16
2024	6	11	12	29



Future Outlook

The approach envisioned for the 2030 period seeks to shift accessibility from project-based interventions to a default quality standard embedded across all public services. This vision requires coordinated progress along three main axes: the built environment, digital services and the learning-to-employment continuum.



In the built environment, new developments, urban transformation initiatives and transport investments are expected to be designed in line with universal design principles. The full travel chain—pavements, pedestrian crossings, stations and vehicles—must be planned as an “end-to-end accessible route”, while emergency and disaster scenarios (assembly areas, evacuation plans and wayfinding systems) should be integrated with accessibility criteria. Short training programmes and practical checklists for local administrations will help strengthen technical capacity and promote consistent implementation.

In digital services, the primary objective is to internalise accessibility at the earliest stages of design. Institutional standards should mandate captioning, Turkish Sign Language interpretation, screen-reader compatibility, keyboard navigability and minimum contrast ratios for public websites and e-Government

processes. Accessibility layers in live broadcasts (captions/TİD), accessible PDF/EPUB production in institutional documents and accessible navigation features in mobile applications should be mainstreamed across public service delivery.

Across the learning-to-employment continuum, support beginning with early identification and guidance should continue through vocational training based on real work environments, on-the-job coaching and reasonable accommodation. Sector-specific skills programmes developed through public-private-civil society partnerships, micro-finance and mentoring packages for entrepreneurs with disabilities and the standardisation of accessible human-resources processes in remote and hybrid work arrangements will enable a seamless “school-to-work transition”.

In disaster and crisis management, the provision of accessible information, shelter, healthcare and psychosocial support from the earliest moments must be treated as an institutional obligation. Early-warning systems, evacuation plans, temporary shelters and mobile health and rehabilitation services should be designed in alignment with accessibility standards, while coordination among relevant institutions must be reinforced through regular drills.

Monitoring-evaluation and procurement mechanisms are critical for sustaining quality. Moving accessibility inspections to digital platforms, publishing progress through open indicator dashboards at provincial and institutional levels and making accessibility requirements a mandatory criterion in public procurement processes will improve both the coverage and quality of implementation.

In the deployment of emerging technologies, the primary benchmark should be user benefit rather than “novelty.” The integration of assistive technologies (such as screen readers, induction loop systems, augmentative and alternative communication tools), AI-based captioning/translation systems and customisable interfaces into public services-while adhering to privacy and security principles-will enhance both access and efficiency.

In conclusion, the 2030 perspective is built on the principles of applying standards from the outset, institutionalising routine inspection and certification, embedding accessibility into digital service design, formalising transitions across the learning-to-employment pathway and ensuring readiness for inclusive crisis response. This approach aims to transform accessibility into a permanent public guarantee, measured, reported and reinforced through procurement and governance processes at all levels of administration.



2030 BARRIER-FREE VISION – A Türkiye That Leaves No One Behind



Vision

To build an inclusive and accessible society in which persons with disabilities can realise their potential as equal citizens.



Core Principles

- Respect for human dignity and individual autonomy
- Prevention of discrimination
- Full and effective participation in social life
- Recognition of disability as part of human diversity
- Equal opportunity and accessibility
- Gender equality
- Respect for the evolving capacities and identities of children with disabilities



Scope

Encompasses all individuals and their families whose involvement in society on an equitable basis with others is limited by attitudes and environmental barriers resulting from the loss or impairment of physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory capabilities.



Approach

Mainstreaming: Considering disability from the outset in all policies and services

Dual Approach: Ensuring both the accessibility of general services and special measures tailored to each type of disability

Multilateral Cooperation: Joint action by public institutions, local administrations, NGOs, universities, the private sector, and persons with disabilities

Participation: Active involvement of persons with disabilities in all decision-making processes that concern them

Data-Driven Monitoring: Policy monitoring based on disability-disaggregated data

Eight Main Policy Areas by 2030

1 Inclusive and Accessible Society

- Transformation of social attitudes toward a rights-based approach
- Accessibility of public spaces, transportation, housing, and information and communication technologies

2 Protection of Rights and Justice

- Elimination of disability-based discrimination
- Independent and equal access to justice and political life

3 Health and Well-Being

- Quality, accessible, and affordable health services for all
- Strengthening of prevention, early intervention, and rehabilitation

4 Inclusive Education

- Education systems that adapt to the student rather than expecting the student to adapt to the environment
- Accessible and inclusive education at all levels starting from early childhood

5 Economic Security

- Vocational guidance and training opportunities
- Open, inclusive, and accessible employment and entrepreneurship support

6 Independent Living

- Care models that empower families and support individual independence
- Access to assistive technologies and a sustainable financing system

7 Disaster and Humanitarian Emergencies

- Design of disaster risk reduction, response, and recovery processes to be accessible and inclusive for persons with disabilities

8 Implementation and Monitoring

- Strong data and statistics infrastructure
- Multilateral, participatory, and transparent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

The period from 2002 to 2025 has marked a transition from a “charity-based” approach to a rights-based and accessibility-oriented public architecture in the domain of disability. The legal backbone of this transformation has been formed by Law No. 5378 and the ratification of the CRPD; its institutional backbone by the accessibility inspection–certification system, E-KPSS, quota and incentive mechanisms, sheltered workshops, and national action plans.

The mainstreaming of the inclusive model in education, the joint functioning of centralised placement and incentives in employment, the expansion of home-based healthcare and rehabilitation networks in health and care services, and the establishment of measurable accessibility standards in public spaces and digital services are distinctly reshaping the overall picture.

The framework presented here builds a lasting capacity in three respects:

- Legal and governance capacity: A structure in which rights are defined and the responsibility–monitoring–reporting cycle is institutionalised.
- Operational capacity: Regularly functioning field processes supported by instruments such as Standard TS 9111, inspection–certification mechanisms, and systems like ERDEM.
- Social impact capacity: The simultaneous strengthening of inclusive education, access to and retention in employment, independent living, and digital participation.

At the same time, key objectives include enhancing local capacity that reduces regional disparities, standardising reasonable accommodation practices in the private sector, improving data quality for more precise monitoring of measurable targets, and ensuring that accessibility is secured from the very first moment in disaster and crisis management.

In conclusion, the gains achieved are the product of a determined will supported by the quartet of standards–inspection–incentives–monitoring. The horizon for 2030 is to remove accessibility from the status of a “project” and make it the assumed quality of public service—applying the same principle at every step, from the sidewalk to the screen, from the classroom to the workplace. By maintaining this approach, the foundation for equal citizenship for persons with disabilities will be strengthened, while Türkiye’s international presence, through a service standard that “leaves no one behind,” will be reinforced.

**Accessible Communication
Practices of the Directorate
of Communications of the
Presidency of the Republic
of Türkiye**



One of the key implementers of the rights-based disability architecture outlined in this information package is the Directorate of Communications of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye. Through its work, the Directorate strengthens accessibility in digital public services and supports the equal access of persons with disabilities to information, complaint and application mechanisms, and public discussions.

Within this framework, initiatives such as the “Accessible CİMER” service, the “Kulak Ver” audio-book platform, and the “Accessible Access and Communication” guideline constitute concrete outputs of the national accessibility vision in the field of communication.



Accessible CİMER

What is it?

A screen-reader-compatible and video sign-language-supported application system that enables citizens with visual, hearing, or speech disabilities to access CİMER.

How does it work?

- Persons with visual disabilities can submit applications using screen readers.
- Persons with hearing/speech disabilities can access the system via video applications through the Engelsiz 112 platform.
- Responses are delivered in video format with sign-language interpretation.

Why is it important?

- Ensures digital equality in access to public services.
- Makes all annual applications—nearly 6 million—accessible for all groups with disabilities.
- Supports making the “people–state communication bridge” accessible to everyone.



“KulakVer“ Audio Book Platform

What is it?

A digital platform that presents the publications of the Directorate of Communications in audio book, audio description, and multilingual content formats.

How does it work?

- Publications can be listened to via the website or mobile application.
- Works are accessible in Turkish, English, German, Arabic, and Russian.
- Detailed audio descriptions are prepared for visual content.

Why is it important?

- Provides equal access to information for persons with visual disabilities.
- Standardises the production of accessible digital content in public publishing.
- Strengthens international accessibility through multilingual materials.

Accessible Access and Communication Guide

What is it?

A comprehensive guide that sets accessibility standards in the field of media and communication.

Why is it important?

- Establishes national standards for areas such as sign language, subtitles, Braille, and screen-reader compatibility.
- Enhances institutional capacity for accessible digital communication.



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