



## **Code of good practices**

**Issued as part of the EMVISION trans-national structured dialogue  
meeting held in Cluj-Napoca**

**Project funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union**

“Empowering Young Visually Impaired to Stand-Up for Inclusive Policy Reforms” – EMVISION, is an Erasmus+, KA-3 project that took place in Cluj-Napoca between October 29 – November 5, 2017. 37 participants (visually impaired, non-visually impaired, and decision makers/experts) coming from 5 European countries have met and discussed current problems and challenges that VIPs (visual impaired people) face daily.

Widespread ignorance, fear and stereotypes cause people with visual impairment to be unfairly discriminated against society and in employment. As a result, they experience high unemployment levels and, in the workplace, often remain in low status jobs and earn lower than average remuneration. Additionally, there is a general lack of proper infrastructure, which prevents them to move easily across the city or to access public institutions/places. However, people with visual impairment can demonstrate their ability and contribute equally to the decisions, which concern their safety and wellbeing if their voices are heard and if their actions are visible.

Based on the recommendations of the white paper “A New Impetus for European Youth” (2001), which highlights the need to consult young people on policy fields that affect them directly, on the European Union Council Resolution (2005) initiative to develop a structured dialogue with young people and youth organizations, experts on youth issues and public decision makers, and the European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) adopted in 2009 through the Council Resolution that recognize young people as key actors in society,



the EMVISION project aimed to outline the importance to promote young people's right to be involved and to participate in the elaboration of inclusive policy reforms through a structural dialogue involving decision-makers, young people and youth organizations.

The trans-national meeting held in Cluj-Napoca highlighted not only the importance of active participation on young people in the democratic life, but also the debates around the topic of visual impairment affecting youth, deepening therefore social responsibility, mutual respect and intercultural understanding. This process enabled them to be involved in the shaping of policies at local and hopefully, at national level, and encouraged continuous cooperation among youth representatives and decision-makers. The results of the consultations and discussions held in Cluj-Napoca are compiled in the present paper, for which the participants had the opportunity to work together, offer their input and present a joint message for other similar events.

This Code of good practices is in fact a guide for all the actors involved in implementing Erasmus+ structural dialogue projects and activities with/for/including VIPs, promoting equal opportunities, fair treatment, and key aspects to take into consideration for future similar actions. The Code is intended to help decision makers, organizers and participants understand their role in such international meetings and their contribution to amending decisions/regulations of the local council, creating therefore the necessary framework for increasing mobility of VIPs, the premise of a better social inclusion, labor market insertion and entrepreneurship initiative stimulations.

In this respect, the 37 participants to the trans-national meeting have stated the following recommendations:

### **1. Decision makers**

- The role of the decision makers is very important for such events, for the amendments made and for the other participants. They are perceived as leaders and therefore, they need to prove their abilities to improve things or to have them changed. They need to be carefully selected and need to show involvement, determinations and initiative;



- Decision makers must take responsibility for the group members in all activities, they must show the participants motivation, such as “we need you to make good changes in our environment!”;
- Decision makers should be well-prepared while attending this kind of meetings, with information regarding the situation of the VIPs in different countries, with examples of good practices, with relevant statistics, legislation, policies etc. Also, they should prepare similar documents/materials which allow comparison and debates;
- More experts are needed as participants to such events in order to increase awareness regarding the needs that VIPs face;

## **2. Participants**

- All participants are encouraged to be actively involved in all the activities of the project/meeting and give their best to come up with good and innovative ideas for the well-being of visually impaired;
- They are advised to get better informed about guiding VIPs, learn more about the obstacles that VIPs can come across and about the best ways to help them overcome these, learn more about moving with a visually impaired person;
- Participants should have at least average knowledge about English in order to be able to get involved in the discussions or activities;
- Participants need to know that it is not advisable to distract the guide dogs and it is good to always ask if they can pet the dogs;
- Participants must be open to gain new knowledge, experience, and fight against stereotypes and ignorance;
- Participants should be comfortable in sharing their knowledge to the others in order to identify the best solutions and ideas for improving the policies for VIPs;



- The opinions and experience of the VIPs from the group is very important since they might bring good insights over the aspects which need to be regulated/ improved/ changed;
- Clearly understand what it is behind the project and prepare well for it;
- Be open-minded, tolerant and committed to the activities.

### 3. Organizers

- All documents, regarding the project and activities should be sent to the participants in a MS Word format, which is compatible with the reading apps for VIPs, so that VIP can read them, easier. Moreover, the printed versions of the info packs which are given to the participants should have large fonts or Braille format;
- The organizers need to ensure that there are enough changes between the members of the working groups so that the interaction between participants can increase, and therefore, each young participant can meet the decision makers and come up with innovative and original ideas and solutions.
- The discussions with the working groups are more useful if there is used a clear frame so that everyone (participants and decision makers) can stick to the point and generate solutions to the issues affecting young people;
- Regular evaluation/reflection sessions are required, so that the participants and the decision-makers can give feedback during the project, allowing daily improvements for the process of discussion and consultation;
- The participants attending such projects should have different ages in order to create different ideas and activities. Therefore, it is advisable that the organizers encourage the selection of participants with different ages;
- Provide working materials printed in Braille and in large fonts;
- Not encourage the use of PowerPoint presentations;



- Ensure that microphones are used during official meetings;
- Provide many practical activities including VIPs;
- Organize more activities related to what it means to have visual impairment (discussing ideas, exploring the city blindfolded, eating in the dark etc.)
- Encourage participants to produce as much ready solutions, ideas, information to be implemented as possible;
- Create a network of organisations which share common aims regarding young VIPs;
- Make sure that all activities are inclusive for blind people;