

Accessibility, infrastructure and habitat (transport, housing and access)

Belarus

Adapting the living environment to the needs of older citizens and people with disabilities, ensuring accessibility of social and transport infrastructure and of the road network is an important condition for the socio-economic well-being of older citizens of the Republic of Belarus.

Ensuring an accessible environment is a set of measures to remove all barriers and create conditions for the active and independent participation of disabled people and people with physical disabilities in the life of society.

Relevant work has been carried out since 2007 in stages within the framework of state programs in accordance with:

- construction standards “Habitat for physically impaired persons”, establishing the mandatory application of accessibility requirements to facilities, taking into account an integrated approach to their design and construction;

- rules for ensuring accessibility for disabled people to social, transport and industrial infrastructure, vehicles and services provided, assessing the level of their accessibility and Rules for ensuring access and use of residential premises, auxiliary premises in multi-apartment residential buildings, entrances and exits from multi-apartment residential buildings by disabled people;

- subprogram “Accessible living environment for disabled and physically weakened persons” of the State program “Social Protection” for 2021–2025.

Access to the environment expands the range of people who can fully and independently participate in the life of society and use products, goods and services.

To ensure an accessible environment, a technical legal regulatory framework has been formed (building codes, state standards), which is constantly updated taking into account the special needs of people with disabilities and physically impaired people.

One tool is the “design for all” approach, which focuses on innovation that supports inclusive principles.

In 2022-2023 Belarus introduced a number of standards supporting this approach, such as a standard defining requirements and guidelines for the design of tactile signs and symbols used to communicate to people who need non-visual or non-acoustic information.

The priority areas of action are the following:

- increasing the level of accessibility of social and transport infrastructure, road networks and services provided to the population;
- adaptation of infrastructure and environment taking into account the needs of older citizens, including in rural areas;

- adaptation of transport means to the needs of older citizens, and citizens with limited functionality to ensure their access to transport services;
- promoting the creation of safe living conditions for older citizens.