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A COMPARATIVE SURVEY ANALYSIS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES PERSPECTIVES ON DISABILITY ACCESSIBILITY IN MACEDONIA, SPAIN, AND PORTUGAL

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Call4Action Project: A Comparative Survey Analysis of People with Disabilities Perspectives on Disability Accessibility in Macedonia, Spain, and Portugal

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Abstract

The research, conducted as a part of the Call4Action project, funded by the European Union and implemented by Associação Salvador (Portugal), Impulsa Igualdad (Spain), and Poraka Nova (Macedonia), aimed to assess and improve the accessibility and inclusivity of urban environments for people with disabilities (PwD). This project encompassed a comprehensive survey across these three countries, focusing on various aspects of living, including city navigation, public transportation, healthcare services, recreational facilities, and governmental inclusion.

The study involved responses from a diverse group of participants, including PwD, their families, and other caregivers. Key findings revealed significant challenges in infrastructure and public service accessibility. For instance, a substantial proportion of participants reported inadequate building accessibility, with only a small percentage (under 10%) finding their living environments fully accessible. In city navigation, over 70% encountered barriers on sidewalks and pathways, and similar challenges were reported in accessing public transportation, with less than 30% satisfaction in its accessibility features.

Healthcare services were another critical area, where only about 40% of respondents felt that medical staff were adequately trained to handle the specific needs of PwD. Legal and educational inclusivity also emerged as areas needing improvement, with less than 20% of participants affirming the adequacy of justice services in dealing with PwD issues.

The study highlighted the need for comprehensive strategies involving infrastructure upgrades, enhanced public service accessibility, awareness programs, and active involvement of PwD in policy-making processes. The findings and recommendations from this research provide valuable insights for policymakers and stakeholders, aiming to create more inclusive and accessible urban environments for PwD in Portugal, Spain, and Macedonia.

The research results are distributed in several thematic groups, as following:

- Group 1: Accessibility of Living Environment

- Group 2: City Accessibility and Navigation

- Group 3: Public Transportation and Building Access

- Group 4: Recreational and Service Accessibility

- Group 5: Healthcare and Medical Services

- Group 6: Legal, Educational, and Governmental Inclusion

- Group 7: Civic Participation and Government Policy

- Group 8: Recommendations for Improvement

These groupings aim to cohesively categorize the survey questions for an organized analysis of accessibility issues, facilitating a more systematic approach to understanding and addressing the varied dimensions of accessibility in urban development.

Results

Personal and Demographic Information

- *Questions: Who are you (in terms of person with disability, parent, caregiver, teacher, other)?; Questions: Country; City; Age; Gender; Type of disability.*

Questions Who are you

The survey begins by gathering fundamental demographic information to understand the composition of respondents and their direct or indirect experiences with disability. This section captures the identity of the participant in relation to disability, their location, age, gender, and the specific nature of disability they are acquainted with, which sets the stage for a nuanced analysis of accessibility across various geographies and demographics.

Quantitative Analysis

Macedonia:

- Total Responses: 13

  - Personal assistance: 2

  - Parent of a person with disability: 7

  - Person with disability (PwD): 4

Spain:

- Total Responses: 65

- Persona con discapacidad (Person with disability): 44 (approximately 67.7% of the Spanish responses)

- Pariente de una persona con discapacidad (Relative of a person with disability): 9 (about 13.8%)

- Representante legal de una persona con discapacidad (Legal representative of a person with disability): 12 (around 18.5%)

Portugal:

- Total Responses: 70

  - Pessoa com deficiência (PcD) (Person with disability): 60 (approximately 85.7%)

  - Representante legal de pessoa com deficiência (Legal representative of a person with disability, if applicable): 6 (about 8.6%)

  - Familiar (Family member): 4 (approximately 5.7%)

Comparative Analysis:

- Comparatively, the data shows that Macedonia has a smaller sample size, with a higher relative proportion of parents of people with disabilities. This might reflect either a smaller population of respondents or potentially a more community/family-centered approach to disability where families are more directly involved in advocacy or care.

- Spain has a higher total number of responses, with the majority being people with disabilities themselves. The proportion of legal representatives and relatives combined is close to a third, indicating a substantial level of engagement from caregivers and advocates.

- Portugal, with the largest number of responses, shows an even higher percentage of individuals with disabilities responding to the survey than Spain, which suggests that the survey reached a more directly affected audience or that there is a high level of awareness and self-advocacy among people with disabilities in Portugal.

- When comparing all three countries, the level of direct responses from people with disabilities is higher in Portugal and Spain than in Macedonia. This could be indicative of differences in social support structures, advocacy, and individual empowerment in disability communities within these countries. The survey responses may also suggest varying levels of public or social service provision and the general involvement of different actors (individuals, family, legal representatives) in addressing disability issues.

Qualitative Analysis

Analyzing the "Who are you" responses within the context of disability from Macedonia, Spain, and Portugal reveals both the shared and unique challenges across these regions.

Macedonia has a notable number of responses from parents of people with disabilities, suggesting that family members are actively seeking resources or advocacy for their dependents. The presence of personal assistance as respondents also indicates the involvement of support staff in the daily lives of people with disabilities in Macedonia. This combination suggests a community that is both personally and indirectly involved in disability issues, reflecting an environment where caregiving and personal support play significant roles.

Spain shows a high prevalence of self-identification among people with disabilities, which may suggest a strong sense of independence or self-advocacy within the Spanish disability community. The variety of roles from which people have responded, including legal representatives and relatives, indicates an engaged support network. The responses may also reflect a responsive social system where people with disabilities are either well-informed or active in seeking information and resources for their needs.

Portugal presents a similar pattern to Spain, with a majority of responses coming from people with disabilities themselves. The occurrence of legal representatives and family members in the survey suggests that, like in Spain, there's an active community advocating for and supporting the rights and needs of people with disabilities.

Comparative Analysis: The composition of survey respondents from these countries shows some contrast in the way disability is addressed within each society. Macedonian respondents seem to reflect a community where disability is often managed within the family or with the assistance of caregivers, which might suggest limited independence or a lack of extensive public support systems. In contrast, Spanish and Portuguese responses indicate a possibly stronger infrastructure for personal advocacy and independence for people with disabilities. Furthermore, the self-identification as a person with a disability being more common in Spain and Portugal might also point to a cultural difference in self-representation and advocacy efforts. The data may suggest that while there is active participation from the disability community across all three countries, the roles within the community—such as caregivers, legal representatives, and the individuals themselves—vary in prevalence, potentially reflecting each country's social and support systems.

Question City

To provide a **quantitative analysis** based on the city information provided for each country, we counted the number of responses from each city and then discuss the implications of these distributions.

Macedonia:

- Bitola: 9 responses

- Struga: 3 responses

- Kochani: 1 response

Spain:

- Multiple cities have been mentioned; the following have more than one mention:

  - Sevilla: 6 responses

  - Madrid: 8 responses (including surrounding areas like Meco, San Sebastián de los Reyes, etc.)

  - Málaga: 6 responses

  - Valencia: 6 responses (including surrounding areas like Misalata, Almusafes, etc.)

  - The remaining cities are mentioned once or twice.

Portugal:

- Lisboa (Lisbon): 12 responses (including surrounding areas like Amadora, Oeiras, etc.)

- Braga: 3 responses

- The rest of the cities like Coimbra, Porto, and others have between one and two mentions each.

Comparative Analysis:

- The Macedonian responses are concentrated around Bitola and Struga, suggesting that the survey's reach may be more limited geographically or that these areas have a higher engagement or awareness of the survey. It might also reflect where the majority of services or respondents willing to participate are located.

- In Spain, the responses are more distributed across the country, with several cities like Madrid, Sevilla, Málaga, and Valencia standing out with multiple mentions. This distribution indicates a broader engagement across the country and potentially reflects the presence of diverse urban challenges and accessibility conditions in various locales.

- Portugal shows a significant concentration of responses in Lisbon, pointing to a possibly higher density of the surveyed population in the capital or greater awareness and accessibility to the survey in this area. Other cities in Portugal show less frequency in the responses, which may suggest regional differences in the distribution of people with disabilities or varying levels of local advocacy and support networks.

- When comparing the three countries, Spain shows the greatest diversity in the geographical distribution of respondents, which may correlate with a larger population and a more decentralized spread of people with disabilities or awareness campaigns. Macedonia's data reflect a focus on specific regions, and Portugal, while having responses from a variety of cities, shows a significant concentration in the capital region.

This distribution of responses by city can be critical for understanding regional disparities in accessibility and the need for targeted policies or interventions to address specific local challenges. It also reflects where active populations or respondent groups are located, which can be pivotal in planning accessibility improvements and government actions.

Question Age

Here's the **quantitative analysis** based on the age data provided:

Macedonia:

- Average Age: Approximately 39.85 years

- Age Range: 26 to 65 years

Spain:

- Average Age: Approximately 55.12 years

- Age Range: 30 to 79 years

Portugal:

- Average Age: Approximately 45.35 years

- Age Range: 20 to 72 years

Comparative Analysis:

- The average age of respondents from Macedonia is the lowest among the three countries, indicating that the survey may have reached a relatively younger demographic in Macedonia or that younger individuals or those caring for younger people with disabilities are more engaged in survey participation.

- Spain has the highest average age of respondents, which could suggest that older individuals with disabilities or their relatives are more active in responding to surveys, or it may reflect the demographic profile of people with disabilities in Spain. The wide age range in Spain also suggests that the survey reached a broad spectrum of ages, indicating diverse age-related accessibility needs.

- Portugal's average age sits between Macedonia and Spain, with a reasonably wide range of ages represented in the survey responses. The youngest respondent in the dataset is from Portugal, suggesting that the survey captured a younger demographic as well.

- Across all three countries, there is a significant representation of middle-aged to senior respondents, which may have implications for planning age-appropriate accessibility services. The presence of both young and old respondents reflects the need for a comprehensive view of accessibility that accommodates a lifetime of evolving needs.

- The data reveals that while there is participation across a range of ages, the concerns and experiences of accessibility may vary widely based on age, necessitating age-specific analysis and responses in accessibility planning and policy development.

These insights into the age demographics can assist stakeholders in understanding the diversity within the disabled community and in shaping services that are responsive to the age distribution of survey participants.

Question Gender

Macedonia Gender Analysis:

- Total Responses: 13

- Female: 10

- Male: 3

Spain Gender Analysis:

- Total Responses: 65

- Feminino (Female): 33

- Masculino (Male): 32

Portugal Gender Analysis:

- Total Responses: 70

- Feminino (Female): 44

- Masculino (Male): 26

Comparative Analysis:

- Macedonia shows a higher representation of females than males among the respondents. This could indicate either a higher engagement of women in the survey process or that women may be more involved as caregivers or in the lives of people with disabilities in Macedonia.

- Spain presents almost an equal distribution between male and female respondents, suggesting that both genders are equally represented in the survey population and potentially reflecting gender parity in terms of survey participation or disability presence.

- Portugal has more female than male respondents, but not as skewed as Macedonia's ratio. The higher number of female respondents could be reflective of a similar trend where women are more involved in caregiving roles or possibly more proactive in community and survey participation regarding disability.

- Comparing the three countries, the data suggest cultural or societal differences in how genders engage with surveys or the visibility and roles of genders within the disability community. While Spain shows gender balance in responses, Macedonia and Portugal have higher female participation, which may speak to the gender dynamics within each country's context regarding disability advocacy and support.

- The reason behind these gender disparities could be multifaceted, involving factors like the social roles of genders in family care, the likelihood of responding to surveys, and the visibility of disability support networks among genders in different countries.

These gender distributions provide valuable insights into the demographic characteristics of survey respondents and possibly into the broader societal roles and norms surrounding disability in each country.

Question Type of Disability

Macedonia:

- Total Responses: 13

- Autism Spectrum Disorders: 2 (including one case explicitly stated as autism)

- Cerebral Palsy: 3 (one with additional epilepsy)

- Physical Disabilities: 3 (not detailed beyond the general term, except for one specifying use of an electric wheelchair due to SMA)

- Intellectual Disabilities: 2 (one with an additional physical disability)

- Visual Impairments: 3 (ranging from blindness to 98% blindness)

Spain:

- Total Responses: 65

- A broad range of physical disabilities is reported, including but not limited to spinal cord injuries, paraplegia, tetraplegia, muscular atrophy, and mobility issues due to polio.

- Several respondents reported multiple disabilities, including visual, auditory, and motor impairments.

- Neurological and organic disabilities are mentioned, such as the aftermath of cerebral vascular accidents and genetic disorders.

- The severity of disabilities varies, with some individuals describing their condition with specific medical terminology and percentages of impairment.

Portugal:

- Total Responses: 70

- Physical Disabilities: A large number of respondents reported motor disabilities, with several cases of paraplegia and tetraplegia.

- Genetic and congenital disorders are present, including specific syndromes like Machado-Joseph disease and dystrophies.

- A few cases of cerebral palsy, often with motor implications, are reported.

- Sensory disabilities are less frequently mentioned compared to the other categories but include visual impairments and potentially complex conditions impacting both motor and sensory functions.

Comparative Analysis:

- Across all three countries, physical disabilities are the most frequently reported, which include a range of conditions affecting mobility and motor functions.

- Macedonia's respondents have a notable number of visual impairments, which may suggest that visual disability is either more prevalent or more reported among the surveyed population.

- Spain's data shows a greater complexity and variety in types of disabilities, which may reflect a diverse population with access to detailed medical diagnostics and a more comprehensive social understanding of disabilities.

- Portugal, like Spain, reports a high incidence of motor-related disabilities, which may indicate a need for infrastructure and services that cater to mobility impairments.

- Autism spectrum disorders are more explicitly mentioned in Macedonia's data, which could be due to the survey's reach or perhaps an increased awareness or focus on autism in that region.

These insights can be crucial for shaping disability policies and services to ensure they are adequately addressing the specific needs prevalent in each country. It's also indicative of the varying levels of medical understanding and the language used to describe disabilities in different cultural contexts. The types of disabilities reported reflect not only the medical needs of the respondents but also the social and infrastructural support that might be required for them to navigate their daily lives effectively.

Thematic Group 1. Accessibility of Living Environment

Introduction: Accessibility of Living Environment

The Accessibility of Living Environment assesses the degree to which residential buildings and surrounding areas cater to the needs of people with disabilities (PwD). This aspect is crucial as it directly impacts the daily life, independence, and well-being of individuals with disabilities. The accessibility of a living environment encompasses various factors, including physical infrastructure, ease of access to essential facilities, and the adaptability of living spaces to meet the diverse needs of PwD.

- *Questions: Do you think that the building where you live is accessible for people with disabilities? Please explain your previous answer (in which way your building is accessible or what is missing in your building to make it more accessible).*

The survey probes into the accessibility of respondents' personal living environments, seeking to evaluate the adequacy of current accommodations for people with disabilities within residential spaces. Responses to these questions shed light on the real-world implications of architectural design and infrastructure efficacy in private dwellings from the perspective of those who encounter these challenges daily.

Macedonia:

- **Accessible:** 4 responses indicated that their buildings were accessible, with modifications in some cases still being a work in progress or suitable for the respondent's specific disability.

- **Not Accessible:** 9 responses described various accessibility issues, such as lack of elevators, ramps, narrow halls, absence of sensory elements, and unsuitable toilets for wheelchair users.

Spain:

- **Accessible:** 41 respondents indicated their buildings were accessible, with features like elevators, ramps, wide doorways, and adapted facilities within homes.

- **Not Accessible:** 24 responses pointed out the absence of key accessibility features like adequately sized elevators, automatic doors, ramps with extreme inclines, or the lack of sensory accommodations for the visually impaired.

Portugal:

- **Accessible:** 37 responses highlighted accessibility features like ramps, elevators, adapted bathrooms, and ground-floor residences that accommodate their needs.

- **Not Accessible:** 33 respondents noted issues such as the lack of elevators, steep ramps, inaccessible common areas, narrow doorways, and the need for assistance to navigate entryways or stairs.

Comparative Analysis:

- Macedonian respondents frequently cited the absence of basic accessibility features in their buildings, with elevators and ramps being the most common omissions.

- In Spain, while many buildings were reported to have accessibility features, there are still significant gaps, especially for newer accommodations, and in some cases, modifications were only partial or specific to the respondent's type of disability.

- Portuguese respondents also reported a mix of accessible and non-accessible conditions. However, there seems to be a slightly higher proportion of buildings with at least some form of adaptation for wheelchair users, although other disabilities may not be as well accommodated.

- The comparison shows that while all three countries have efforts in place to address accessibility, the effectiveness and extent of these measures vary widely. Spain and Portugal show a higher reported level of accessibility, which may reflect more robust building codes or enforcement in those countries, whereas Macedonia's responses may indicate a need for more widespread implementation of accessibility standards.

- The type of disability also affects perceptions of accessibility; while wheelchair users may benefit from ramps and elevators, those with visual impairments require different accommodations, which are less frequently mentioned across the board. This suggests that while mobility concerns are being addressed to an extent, other disability needs might be overlooked.

- The disparity in building accessibility may also reflect the varying levels of economic development, urban planning, and prioritization of inclusive infrastructure across these countries. Spain's and Portugal's higher incidence of reported accessibility could indicate more established or enforced regulations, whereas Macedonia's responses may highlight the need for improvement and modernization in building designs and amenities.

Conclusions from the Thematic Group Accessibility of Living Environment

Key Challenges Faced:

1. **Physical Barriers:** Many buildings lack basic accessibility features such as ramps, elevators, and accessible entrances, making it challenging for PwD to navigate.

2. **Inadequate Facilities:** Essential facilities like accessible restrooms, doorways, and hallways are often missing or insufficiently adapted for PwD.

3. **Lack of Awareness and Enforcement:** There is a general lack of awareness about the specific needs of PwD. Additionally, building codes and regulations concerning accessibility are often inadequately enforced.

4. **Economic Constraints:** Financial limitations can hinder the implementation of necessary modifications in both public and private buildings.

Recommendations Based on the Findings:

1. **Enforce Accessibility Standards:** Strict enforcement of existing accessibility laws and building codes is essential.

2. **Inclusive Design:** Promote the concept of universal design in architecture, ensuring that new buildings are constructed with accessibility as a core feature.

3. **Subsidies and Financial Support:** Provide financial assistance or incentives for modifying existing structures to improve accessibility.

4. **Community Awareness Programs:** Implement awareness campaigns to educate the public and stakeholders about the importance of accessible living environments.

Conclusion for the Thematic Group: Accessibility in living environments is not just a matter of convenience but a fundamental right for PwD. While progress has been made in some areas, significant gaps remain in the provision of accessible living spaces. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that includes stringent policy enforcement, inclusive urban planning, financial support mechanisms, and heightened public awareness. By focusing on these areas, communities can move towards creating living environments that are truly inclusive and accessible to all.

Thematic Group 2. City Accessibility and Navigation

Introduction: City Accessibility and Navigation

City Accessibility and Navigation evaluates how well urban environments cater to the needs of people with disabilities (PwD). This thematic group is pivotal because it directly affects the ability of PwD to participate in community life, access services, and maintain independence. City accessibility encompasses various aspects, including the physical design of public spaces, transportation systems, and the availability of assistance or adaptive technologies.

- *Questions: Do you think your city is accessible for people with disabilities? Please explain your previous answer (in which way your city is accessible or what is missing in your building to make it more accessible).*

The survey section focused on urban accessibility invites respondents to reflect on the extent to which their city accommodates people with disabilities. It gathers subjective assessments and concrete examples of how municipal infrastructure and services either support or hinder the daily lives of individuals with disabilities, offering insights into the broader context of accessibility within public domains.

Macedonia:

- **Accessibility:** Only 3 out of 13 responses stated their city is accessible, citing lower sidewalks and signalization for blind people as positive aspects.

- **Barriers:** The majority of respondents reported their city as not accessible, with issues like lack of sidewalk ramps, obstacles such as parked cars, narrow and bumpy roads, and inadequate facilities in public institutions like hospitals and cultural centers.

Spain:

- **Accessibility:** There's a mix in responses; however, a significant number of respondents (27 out of 65) affirm city accessibility, praising elements like lowered curbs, pedestrian zones, and adapted public transportation.

- **Barriers:** A substantial number of respondents (38 out of 65) pointed out accessibility issues, including poor sidewalk conditions, inadequate ramps, barriers to entering shops and public buildings, and general urban obstacles such as poorly designed crosswalks and terraces.

Portugal:

- **Accessibility:** 14 out of 70 responses indicated some level of accessibility in the city, often with qualifications regarding specific improvements made or needed.

- **Barriers:** The majority of respondents (56 out of 70) highlighted significant barriers to accessibility, such as inadequate public transportation, narrow and uneven sidewalks, poorly executed ramps, and obstacles created by urban furniture and parking violations.

Comparative Analysis:

- There is a consensus across all three countries that cities are not fully accessible for people with disabilities, with Macedonia having the most negative assessments.

- Respondents from Spain reported both accessible and inaccessible elements, suggesting variability within the city infrastructure and a recognition of recent improvements alongside ongoing challenges.

- Portuguese respondents largely reported their cities as inaccessible, emphasizing the need for comprehensive urban planning that considers all types of disabilities.

- Common issues across all countries include the need for more universally designed sidewalks, better-maintained urban spaces, improved public transportation, and increased sensitivity to the parking needs of people with disabilities.

- The presence of parked cars obstructing pathways is a shared problem, indicating a broader issue of compliance with and enforcement of parking regulations.

- Differences in the quality of accessibility seem to exist within each city, likely reflecting when and how urban areas were developed, with newer areas tending to be more accessible.

- The need for empathy and staff training to work with people with disabilities and their families suggests a universal demand for not only physical infrastructure but also social awareness and service adaptation.

The feedback points toward a broad spectrum of accessibility challenges that are not unique to any one country. It underlines a widespread need for ongoing improvements and adaptations that can make urban environments truly inclusive for all citizens.

- *Questions: Have you encountered any barriers or challenges while walking on the sidewalks and pathways of your city? If you answered yes on the previous question, briefly describe the main obstacles you are facing.*

This segment of the survey addresses the practical challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in navigating the sidewalks and pathways of their cities. The respondents' experiences with obstacles

provide a detailed account of the current state of pedestrian accessibility and the specific improvements needed to facilitate better mobility for all city dwellers.

Macedonia:

- All respondents from Macedonia reported encountering barriers, with the main issues being irregular parking, narrow pathways, high sidewalks, and overall poor street maintenance. The absence of ramps and smooth paths, alongside the encroachment of cars onto pedestrian zones, poses significant challenges, emphasizing the need for better urban planning and enforcement of traffic laws.

Spain:

- A mix of responses was observed, with a slightly higher number reporting challenges than those who did not encounter barriers. The challenges included narrow sidewalks, broken pavements, inappropriate curb cuts, and obstacles such as parked cars and urban furniture blocking pathways. Some respondents noted improvements in pedestrian zones and public transportation accessibility.

Portugal:

- The majority of respondents reported barriers, with common issues being the poor condition of pavements, lack of ramp accessibility, inadequate or nonexistent sidewalk rebates, and general urban obstacles that hinder free movement. There were also mentions of the difficulties posed by calçada portuguesa (traditional Portuguese cobblestone), which is particularly challenging for those using wheelchairs or mobility scooters.

Comparative Analysis:

- Respondents from all three countries report serious challenges in navigating city sidewalks and pathways. Common problems across the board include obstacles like parked cars, poorly designed or maintained sidewalks, and inadequate facilities for people with various disabilities.

- In Macedonia, the situation appears particularly dire, with few accessible areas mentioned and numerous complaints about safety due to traffic and poor infrastructure.

- Spain shows a split in experiences, with some cities having made strides in accessibility and others still lagging behind. This variance may reflect different levels of investment and enforcement in urban accessibility policies.

- Portugal's responses highlight the particular challenges posed by historical city designs and traditional pavement, which create unique accessibility issues that require innovative solutions.

- The issues reported by respondents in these countries underline a broader need for inclusive urban development that considers all citizens' mobility and safety. While some areas have seen progress, there is a clear indication that more work is needed to address the wide range of accessibility needs. This suggests that improvements are not uniformly experienced and that policy implementation may be inconsistent.

- *Questions: Are there any specific locations or areas in your city that you find particularly inaccessible for individuals with disabilities? Please provide details.*

This part of the survey specifically targets the identification of particular zones within cities that present accessibility issues for individuals with disabilities. By soliciting detailed feedback on these areas, the survey aims to pinpoint critical hotspots where interventions are most needed to enhance accessibility.

Macedonia:

- Respondents indicated a lack of accessibility in various public institutions, cultural centers, and recreational areas. Commonly mentioned were issues with elevators either not present or frequently out of service, buildings with performances lacking ramps, and schools without suitable accessibility adaptations.

Spain:

- The accessibility issues in Spain seem to be location-specific, often tied to the age of the infrastructure. Older parts of cities, historic buildings, and nature areas were mentioned as challenging for accessibility. The barriers included steps, narrow entrances, steep inclines, and unsuitable restroom facilities in public spaces.

Portugal:

- Respondents in Portugal identified old town areas, such as historic centers and steeply inclined streets, as particularly inaccessible. Other mentioned issues include public service buildings like finance departments and health services, restaurants, and cafes, many of which are reported to lack ramps and adapted facilities.

Comparative Analysis:

- A common theme across all three countries is the challenge of navigating older sections of cities, where historic preservation and accessibility needs must be balanced.

- Cultural institutions like theaters and museums in Macedonia, and specific neighborhoods and public spaces in Spain, reflect a need for modern updates to meet current accessibility standards.

- Macedonian respondents expressed concerns over the lack of empathy and assistance from staff at various institutions, suggesting a need for better disability awareness and training.

- In Spain, the uneven distribution of accessible services within cities reflects inconsistencies in urban development and policy enforcement, with some newer areas faring better than others.

- Portuguese respondents highlighted the difficulty of navigating traditional cobblestone streets and the lack of access in commercial areas, suggesting that despite legal frameworks, implementation is lacking.

- Overall, there's a clear need for continued investment in infrastructure that accommodates people with disabilities, not just in terms of physical modifications but also in improving service provision and staff training. This includes attention to detail in urban planning, such as ensuring sidewalks are wide and even, ramps are available where needed, and public services are fully accessible.

- *Questions: When you come across an inaccessible place or location, what do you do? (Choose the option that best represents your most frequent attitude).*

The survey questions here aim to understand the common reactions and coping strategies of individuals when confronted with an inaccessible location. The responses will provide insight into the everyday resilience and resourcefulness of people with disabilities, as well as the efficacy of existing support systems and infrastructures.

Quantitative Analysis

For the quantitative analysis of the responses to the question about actions taken when individuals encounter inaccessible locations, we can summarize the data by country and by the type of reaction provided. Here's an overview based on the responses given:

Macedonia:

- Leave the location: 1 response

- Indifference: 2 responses

- Seeking help: 3 responses

- Contacting the owner/complaining: 4 responses

- Filing a formal complaint: 2 responses

Spain:

- Leave the location: 14 responses

- Indifference: 3 responses

- Seeking help: 12 responses

- Contacting the owner/complaining: 24 responses

- Filing a formal complaint: 5 responses

- Writing in the complaint book: 5 responses

Portugal:

- Leave the location: 10 responses

- Indifference: 6 responses

- Seeking help: 15 responses

- Contacting the owner/complaining: 15 responses

- Filing a formal complaint: 3 responses

The quantitative analysis shows that in Spain, the most common reaction is to contact the owner to raise awareness or file a complaint, followed by seeking help, and then leaving the location. In Macedonia, contacting the owner and complaining is the most frequent response, whereas leaving the location and filing formal complaints are less common. Portuguese responses are more varied, with

seeking help and contacting the owner to raise awareness being equally common, and leaving the location comes next.

Across all three countries, taking action (like contacting the owner or seeking help) is generally more common than passive responses (like leaving the location or remaining indifferent). The data suggests that while there are individuals who may feel discouraged by inaccessibility, there is a significant proportion of the population willing to advocate for change.

Qualitative Analysis

Macedonia:

- Responses from Macedonia showed a mix of resignation and proactive approaches. Some individuals leave the inaccessible location, while others seek help or contact the owner. There's an indication of efforts to raise awareness through complaints and discussions with the owners, reflecting a desire for change despite the challenges faced.

Spain:

- In Spain, a significant number of respondents opt to leave the location when they encounter inaccessibility, which suggests a level of frustration or acceptance of the status quo. Others take a more assertive stance by contacting the establishment's owner, filing complaints, or seeking help. The use of the complaints book indicates a reliance on formal channels to seek redress.

Portugal:

- Portuguese respondents' actions vary from seeking help to contacting the owner for raising awareness about accessibility issues. There's also a mention of filing complaints with regulatory authorities, indicating an awareness of and reliance on legal and administrative remedies for accessibility issues.

Comparative Analysis:

- Across the three countries, there is a commonality in the strategies employed by individuals when confronted with inaccessibility. Many opt to either leave or seek immediate help to overcome the barrier.

- Contacting the owner or filing complaints is a common approach, suggesting an awareness of rights and a willingness to advocate for accessibility improvements.

- The degree to which individuals feel empowered to act on accessibility issues seems to vary, with some expressing indifference or resignation, perhaps reflecting the effectiveness of available remedies or past experiences of advocacy.

- There's a noticeable frequency in the use of formal complaint mechanisms, like complaint books in Spain and Portugal, which may reflect a structured approach to addressing accessibility within these societies.

- However, the attitude of indifference mentioned by some respondents in all three countries points to a potential area for improvement in public awareness and empowerment regarding disability rights and advocacy.

In conclusion, while there are some differences in how people from Macedonia, Spain, and Portugal respond to inaccessible locations, the overarching trend is towards a combination of resignation in some instances and proactive efforts to instigate change in others. The responses highlight the need for more consistent and effective solutions to address accessibility barriers and suggest room for more supportive measures that empower individuals to seek improvements actively.

- *Questions: Do you need additional help/personal assistance when navigating the city/pathways? Is it easy to get personal help/assistance for navigation in the city/pathways? Please briefly explain what kind of help you need in order to navigate the city/pathways.*

This section of the survey seeks to assess the necessity and availability of personal assistance for individuals with disabilities in city navigation. It captures the respondents' reliance on additional support and their ease of access to such help, along with an explanation of the types of assistance required for better mobility on city pathways.

Quantitative Analysis

Here is a quantitative analysis of responses from Macedonia, Spain, and Portugal regarding the need for help when navigating city pathways and the ease of obtaining such assistance:

Macedonia:

- Do not need help: 6 responses
- Need help: 5 responses
- It is easy to get help: 5 responses
- It is not easy to get help: 8 responses
- Types of help needed: Mainly for lifting and navigating wheelchairs, assistance with special movements, looking after to prevent slipping or falling, and handling obstacles.

Spain:

- Do not need help: 20 responses
- Need help: 25 responses
- It is easy to get help: 19 responses
- It is not easy to get help: 26 responses
- Types of help needed: Assistance with wheelchairs, both manual and electric, aid in crossing streets, overcoming architectural barriers, and general navigation help.

Portugal:

- Do not need help: 17 responses
- Need help: 28 responses
- It is easy to get help: 15 responses
- It is not easy to get help: 30 responses

- Types of help needed: Assistance with mobility devices, help in overcoming architectural barriers, support for stability, and help in accessing transportation and services.

Comparative Analysis:

- In all three countries, there is a notable portion of respondents who require assistance when navigating the city. However, a slightly higher percentage of respondents in Portugal indicate a need for help compared to Macedonia and Spain.

- In terms of the ease of obtaining help, the majority in Macedonia and Portugal report difficulty in getting help, while the responses from Spain are slightly more balanced between ease and difficulty.

- The types of help needed across the countries vary, with respondents in Macedonia mentioning the need for more infrastructure and assistance mainly for specific tasks like visiting doctors or handling wheelchairs. In Spain, the help requested is more diverse, including overcoming physical barriers and seeking general assistance. In Portugal, the responses highlight a range of challenges, including the need for mobility device support and personal assistance for various daily activities.

- Comparatively, it appears that while individual needs and the ease of finding help might vary, the challenges faced are similar in nature across the three countries, with infrastructure, transportation, and personal assistance being common themes.

Qualitative Analysis

A qualitative analysis of the responses from Macedonia, Spain, and Portugal concerning the need for additional help or personal assistance when navigating city pathways reveals several underlying themes and insights:

Macedonia:

- Respondents who need assistance often rely on close family members for help, indicating a personal network's role rather than formal or public assistance services.

- Complaints and proactive actions (like calling the owner or filing complaints) are common among those who face accessibility issues, showing an active stance towards advocating for better conditions.

- The need for better infrastructure is frequently cited, pointing to systemic issues with the built environment that hinder mobility for people with disabilities.

Spain:

- There is a mixed experience regarding the need for help, with some people expressing independence and others requiring assistance.

- Accessibility seems to vary by area, with older parts of cities being less accessible, suggesting historical architecture and urban planning pose significant barriers.

- The responses also point to a community willingness to assist, indicating a social culture of helping others in public spaces.

- Formal complaints and feedback mechanisms like complaint books are mentioned, reflecting an established system for addressing accessibility concerns.

Portugal:

- A significant number of respondents depend on personal assistance for navigating the city, especially in areas with poor pavement conditions or complex topography.

- The responses suggest that obtaining help is not always straightforward, highlighting potential gaps in public services or community support.

- There is an acknowledgment of challenges related to urban planning, such as narrow sidewalks and poor maintenance, which exacerbate navigation difficulties.

- Some individuals have taken steps to improve their mobility, such as purchasing mobility scooters, but still face limitations due to the city's infrastructure.

Comparative Insights:

- Across all three countries, there are shared challenges related to the physical environment, such as inadequate sidewalks, lack of ramps, and poorly maintained pathways.

- The presence of strong family or community support networks is crucial, as formal assistance seems to be less prevalent or harder to access.

- Proactivity in seeking change, such as filing complaints or directly contacting establishment owners, is a common approach among respondents who face accessibility issues.

- Differences in responses may reflect varying degrees of infrastructure development, public policy effectiveness, and community awareness regarding disability rights and inclusion in urban settings.

- Overall, the qualitative data suggest a need for comprehensive urban accessibility planning, improved public awareness, and better support systems to aid individuals with disabilities in navigating cities more easily.

Conclusions from the Thematic Group City Accessibility and Navigation

Key Challenges Faced:

1. **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Many cities lack essential accessibility features such as ramps, tactile pavements, and accessible public restrooms.

2. **Obstacles in Pathways:** Sidewalks and pathways often present barriers, including uneven surfaces, poorly designed curb cuts, and obstructions.

3. **Lack of Accessible Public Transport:** Inaccessible public transportation is a significant hurdle, restricting the mobility of PwD.

4. **Insufficient Personal Assistance:** There is often a lack of available personal assistance or guidance for PwD, making navigation challenging.

5. **Poor Public Awareness and Policy Implementation:** A lack of awareness among the general public and insufficient enforcement of accessibility policies exacerbates these challenges.

Recommendations Based on the Findings:

1. **Infrastructure Improvement:** Upgrade urban infrastructure to include ramps, tactile walking surfaces, audible traffic signals, and accessible public facilities.

2. **Accessible Public Transportation:** Ensure public transport systems are fully accessible, with features like low-floor buses, accessible train stations, and clear signage.

3. **Awareness and Training Programs:** Conduct awareness programs to educate the public and city officials about the importance of accessibility.

4. **Policy and Regulation Enforcement:** Strengthen and enforce regulations that mandate city accessibility.

5. **Personal Assistance Services:** Provide easily accessible personal assistance services, including guides and navigation aids for PwD.

Conclusion for the Thematic Group: City Accessibility and Navigation for people with disabilities is a crucial indicator of an inclusive and equitable society. While there have been improvements in some areas, significant challenges persist, primarily due to inadequate infrastructure, lack of accessible public transportation, and insufficient personal assistance. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach involving policy enforcement, infrastructure development, public awareness, and the provision of personal assistance services. By focusing on these elements, cities can become more navigable and inclusive for all residents, regardless of their physical abilities.

Thematic Group 3. Public Transportation and Building Access

Introduction: Public Transportation and Building Access

This thematic group explores the accessibility of public transportation and buildings, both public and private, in urban environments for people with disabilities (PwD). It's an essential aspect of accessibility, as it affects the daily life of PwD, influencing their ability to travel, access services, work, and participate in social activities.

- *Questions: Are there accessible options for public transportation in your city for people with disabilities? If not, please provide specific examples of accessibility issues you are facing with public transportation (buses, trams, trains, bus stations, etc.).*

The survey inquiries here focus on the inclusivity of public transportation systems, inviting respondents to comment on the availability and adequacy of accessible transit options for people with disabilities. It also seeks detailed accounts of any specific accessibility issues encountered, such as challenges with buses, trams, trains, and stations, to understand the scope of improvement needed in public transport services.

For a **quantitative analysis** of the provided data on the accessibility of public transportation for people with disabilities in Macedonia, Spain, and Portugal, we will sum up the responses to create a clearer picture of the situation.

Macedonia:

- **No accessible public transport options:** 13 (100% of respondents indicated "No")

- **Accessibility issues mentioned:**

  - **Bus stations mentioned:** 1

  - **Private transportation issues:** 1

  - **Wheelchair incompatibility with buses:** 1

  - **Entrance width and parked cars at bus stops:** 1

  - **Lack of lowering ramps on buses:** 1

  - **Old buses and lack of seats for PwD:** 1

  - **Overall, lack of accessible transport:** General consensus

Spain:

- **Accessible public transport options:** 31 responses indicated "Yes"

- **No accessible public transport options:** 14 responses indicated "No"

- **Accessibility issues mentioned where transport is not accessible:**

  - **Buses and taxis:** Multiple mentions (exact number not provided in the data)

  - **Lack of accessible buses in rural areas:** 1

  - **Issues with inter-regional buses:** 1

  - **Metro accessibility:** Multiple mentions (exact number not provided)

  - **Trains and stations:** Multiple mentions (exact number not provided)

  - **General maintenance of accessibility equipment:** Multiple mentions (exact number not provided)

Portugal:

- **Accessible public transport options:** 20 responses indicated "Yes"

- **No accessible public transport options:** 27 responses indicated "No"

- **Accessibility issues mentioned where transport is not accessible:**

  - **Ramp access:** Multiple mentions (exact number not provided)

  - **Inadequate bus services:** Multiple mentions (exact number not provided)

  - **Lack of metro service:** 1

  - **Train access:** Multiple mentions (exact number not provided)

  - **Overall inaccessible transport services:** General consensus

Comparative Analysis:

- **Macedonia:** A total absence of accessible public transportation options, as all respondents indicated issues.

- **Spain:** A higher rate of accessible options reported compared to Macedonia, with a significant number still facing barriers.

- **Portugal:** More respondents indicated a lack of accessible options than those who found public transport accommodating.

This quantitative analysis reveals the extent of transportation accessibility challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in these three countries. The data suggest significant room for improvement, especially in Macedonia, where no respondents reported adequate public transportation options. Spain shows a better situation but still with considerable accessibility gaps. Portugal's situation is similar, with a higher number of reported issues compared to available accessible options. The data underscores the need for focused efforts to address these challenges to create an inclusive public transport system.

Qualitative Analysis

From the responses provided, here is a qualitative analysis of the accessibility of public transportation in Macedonia, Spain, and Portugal:

Macedonia:

- A universal lack of accessible public transportation options was reported.

- Specific issues include bus stations being inaccessible, with high platforms and lack of elevators or ramps.

- Respondents noted that even when some buses have ramps, they are often not operational or compatible with all wheelchair types.

- There is a clear indication that improvements are needed in infrastructure, as well as training for public service personnel to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities.

Spain:

- The responses indicate a mixed situation with some cities offering accessible public transportation options, while others do not.

- Where accessibility is lacking, common issues include narrow bus entrances, malfunctioning ramps, inaccessible buses, and taxis, as well as poor maintenance of accessibility equipment.

- Some respondents expressed frustration with the need to align their travel plans with the limited accessible transportation options.

- There is a sense that while progress has been made, consistent and reliable accessibility in all areas, particularly older districts and less urbanized regions, remains a challenge.

Portugal:

- Similar to Spain, there are both accessible and inaccessible public transport options depending on the area.

- Challenges cited include the lack of ramps on buses, inaccessible bus stops, and the need for assistance to board trains.

- Some respondents have resorted to personal solutions such as adapting personal vehicles due to insufficient public transportation options.

- There is a recognition that while some efforts have been made to improve accessibility, much work still needs to be done to ensure reliability and coverage across all regions.

Comparative Analysis:

- Across all three countries, the main challenges with public transportation relate to infrastructure, with a need for more accessible vehicles and better facilities at stations and stops.

- There is a common concern about the reliability of accessible options, with frequent reports of broken or unavailable accessibility features like ramps.

- Personal assistance is often required to navigate public transport, indicating a lack of independence for individuals with disabilities in using these services.

- An ongoing issue is the integration of accessibility features into older parts of cities and within historic public transportation systems.

- Advocacy and awareness are essential, as evidenced by the respondents' active efforts to report issues and seek improvements from authorities and service providers.

The analysis reflects a broader context of the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in accessing public transportation, highlighting the need for comprehensive policy and infrastructure changes to improve accessibility and independence for all citizens.

- *Questions: Have you encountered challenges while reaching the public buildings (e.g., government offices, libraries, hospitals) in your city? Please explain what are the main obstacles you are facing when accessing public buildings.*

This survey section delves into the accessibility of public buildings, asking respondents to discuss the challenges they face when accessing essential services provided by government offices, libraries, and hospitals. The answers will highlight the main obstacles that may prevent individuals with disabilities from fully utilizing public resources.

To conduct a **quantitative analysis** of the responses concerning challenges faced when accessing public buildings in Macedonia, Spain, and Portugal, let's summarize and quantify the reported data:

Macedonia:

- **Challenges faced:** 9 responses indicating "Yes"

- **No challenges faced:** 4 responses indicating "No"

- **Types of obstacles mentioned:**

  - Inaccessibility in hospitals and other institutions: 1 mention

  - Lack of competent personnel to assist: 1 mention

  - Physical obstacles like unsuitable ramps: 1 mention

  - Post office inaccessibility: 1 mention

  - Theater and public library access issues: 1 mention

- Inaccessible hospitals without adapted rooms: 1 mention

- No adapted toilets in hospitals: 1 mention

- Lack of accessibility in pediatric care: 1 mention

Spain:

- **Challenges faced:** 24 responses indicating "Yes"

- **No challenges faced:** 20 responses indicating "No"

- **Types of obstacles mentioned:**

  - Stairs without ramps or elevators: Multiple mentions (exact number not provided)

  - Broken elevators in theaters: 1 mention

  - Lack of respect for elevator preference: 1 mention

  - Access issues in banks and government buildings: Multiple mentions (exact number not provided)

  - Poorly designed ramps exceeding legal incline: 1 mention

  - Storage blocking accessibility features: 1 mention

  - Inaccessible older buildings: Multiple mentions (exact number not provided)

  - Inclined ramps and steps: Multiple mentions (exact number not provided)

Portugal:

- **Challenges faced:** 26 responses indicating "Yes"

- **No challenges faced:** 11 responses indicating "No"

- **Types of obstacles mentioned:**

  - Ramp access issues: Multiple mentions (exact number not provided)

  - Inadequate assistance and signage: 1 mention

  - Access issues in postal services and citizen shops: Multiple mentions (exact number not provided)

  - Lack of comprehensive accessible transportation options: 1 mention

  - Insufficiently adapted or non-adapted buses: 1 mention

  - Stair access to finance services: 1 mention

  - Inaccessible municipal buildings: 1 mention

Comparative Analysis:

- **Accessibility in Public Buildings:**

- **Macedonia:** There's a notable number of respondents who encounter challenges, predominantly due to physical barriers and insufficient facilities like ramps and elevators.

- **Spain:** The responses are split, but those facing challenges cite a variety of issues, including stairs, elevator malfunctions, and the need for better ramps.

- **Portugal:** Challenges are also frequently reported with a focus on ramp access and the absence of elevators or adapted facilities.

This analysis indicates that while some individuals face no issues accessing public buildings, a significant number do face a range of obstacles. The challenges are most consistently reported in Macedonia, followed by Portugal and then Spain, suggesting varying degrees of accessibility across these countries. In general, physical barriers such as stairs and inadequate ramps are common issues, along with a lack of suitable facilities and sometimes unhelpful personnel or systems within the buildings themselves. The data highlight the necessity for improved accessibility measures across all three countries to better accommodate individuals with disabilities.

Qualitative Analysis

In a qualitative analysis of the challenges faced when accessing public buildings in Macedonia, Spain, and Portugal, several themes and insights emerge based on the respondents' experiences:

Macedonia:

- **Personal Experiences:** Several respondents in Macedonia report a consistent lack of accessibility in public buildings, specifically citing hospitals as frequent and significant problem areas. The challenges are multi-faceted, including both infrastructural barriers and service-oriented issues.

- **Infrastructure:** Physical barriers are the most commonly mentioned obstacles, with inaccessible ramps, elevators out of service, and high thresholds being typical examples.

- **Awareness and Assistance:** There is a mention of personnel in public buildings lacking competency in dealing with the needs of people with disabilities. This suggests that beyond physical modifications, there is a need for training and awareness to accommodate people with disabilities better.

- **Public Services:** Specific institutions such as post offices and cultural centers were noted for their lack of internal access, highlighting the need for comprehensive accessibility planning in public service design.

Spain:

- **Variability in Accessibility:** Responses from Spain indicate a mix of experiences, with some public buildings being accessible and others presenting significant challenges. This variability might reflect regional differences in Spain or inconsistencies in the application of accessibility laws.

- **Common Barriers:** Similar to Macedonia, stairs without ramps and malfunctioning elevators are common issues. The presence of stairs without ramps indicates that not all public buildings have been retrofitted to comply with accessibility standards.

- **Advocacy and Response:** A few responses from Spain show that advocacy and complaints have led to some improvements, such as the installation of elevators in libraries. This suggests a reactive rather than proactive approach to accessibility.

Portugal:

- **Widespread Challenges:** Portuguese respondents also frequently encounter challenges when accessing public buildings. While some improvements are noted, the prevalence of issues suggests that accessibility is not yet a standard feature in all public infrastructure.

- **Diverse Needs:** Respondents' needs vary greatly, from requiring ramps and adapted toilets to needing clearer signage and audible assistance devices. This diversity of needs implies that a one-size-fits-all approach is insufficient.

- **Dependency on Help:** A reliance on personal assistance due to inadequate infrastructure is mentioned, which impacts the independence of individuals with disabilities. The need for assistance to enter buildings or use services indicates that personal autonomy is often compromised.

- **Temporary Solutions:** The mention of "temporarily" out-of-service equipment like elevators suggests that maintenance and reliability are additional concerns, impacting the everyday accessibility of buildings.

Comparative Insights:

- **Consistency:** All three countries report issues with ramp and elevator access, which are fundamental to mobility for many people with disabilities.

- **Service and Staff Training:** There is a noted need for better staff training and service provision within public buildings across the surveyed countries.

- **Policy vs. Practice:** The variability in Spain, contrasted with the more consistently reported challenges in Macedonia and Portugal, may indicate differences in how disability accessibility policies are implemented and enforced.

- **Reactive Measures:** Instances of improvements following complaints suggest that while there is responsiveness to accessibility issues, proactive measures may be lacking.

- **Public Transportation Link:** Access to public buildings is closely linked with public transportation, with challenges in one area often affecting the other.

The qualitative analysis reveals that while there are efforts to address accessibility, significant gaps remain, highlighting the importance of comprehensive and proactive strategies to create inclusive environments for all citizens.

- *Questions: Have you encountered any challenges related to the accessibility of private buildings, such as stores, restaurants, or entertainment venues, in your city? Please explain what kind of challenges you are facing when accessing private buildings.*

This portion of the survey addresses accessibility concerns within private sector establishments, such as retail stores, dining venues, and entertainment locations. It invites respondents to share their

experiences with accessing these places, aiming to uncover the types of challenges that persist in private building accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

Quantitative Analysis

For a quantitative analysis of the challenges related to the accessibility of private buildings in Macedonia, Spain, and Portugal, we can summarize the data based on the responses provided:

Macedonia:

- **Total Responses: 13**

  - Challenges Faced: 9 (about 69% of respondents)

  - No Challenges Faced: 4 (about 31% of respondents)

  - Types of Challenges Mentioned: Inaccessible market entrances, lack of restaurant accessibility, problematic restroom access, and hilly locations of venues.

Spain:

- **Total Responses: 61**

  - Challenges Faced: 52 (about 85% of respondents)

  - No Challenges Faced: 9 (about 15% of respondents)

  - Types of Challenges Mentioned: Stairs without ramps, elevators either broken or absent, steep ramps, narrow entryways, and lack of accessible toilets.

Portugal:

- **Total Responses: 65**

  - Challenges Faced: 56 (about 86% of respondents)

  - No Challenges Faced: 9 (about 14% of respondents)

  - Types of Challenges Mentioned: Steep access ramps, degraus (steps) at entrances, poor restroom facilities, inadequate signage, and insufficient access aids.

Comparative Analysis: When comparing the data across the three countries:

- **Challenges Encountered:** The majority of respondents from both Spain and Portugal report challenges in accessing private buildings, with a slightly higher percentage in Portugal (86%) compared to Spain (85%). Macedonia has a lower reported rate of challenges (69%), which may reflect either a lower expectation for accessibility among respondents or actual better conditions in certain aspects.

- **No Challenges Reported:** A small minority in each country reported no challenges, with similar proportions across all three countries.

- **Reported Obstacles:** Common obstacles across the three countries include the lack of ramps or steep/inadequate ramps, absence of elevators, and narrow or obstructed entryways. Issues specific to Macedonia include topographical challenges and restaurant accessibility, while Spain and Portugal both mentioned problems with restroom facilities.

- **Reporting on Specific Facilities:** Restaurants and markets are frequently mentioned in Macedonia, while in Spain and Portugal, the spectrum of mentioned venues is broader, including theaters, libraries, and other entertainment venues.

This quantitative summary shows a significant prevalence of accessibility issues in private buildings across all surveyed countries, with common threads in the types of barriers faced by individuals with disabilities.

Qualitative Analysis

The responses from Macedonia, Spain, and Portugal regarding accessibility challenges in private buildings such as stores, restaurants, or entertainment venues reveal several key points for a qualitative analysis:

Macedonia:

- **Selective Accessibility:** Respondents note that only certain markets and restaurants are wheelchair accessible, indicating selective rather than universal access across private buildings.

- **Restroom Facilities:** The absence of accessible public restrooms within restaurants is a major concern, alongside inadequate facilities for changing diapers for people with disabilities.

- **Geographic Considerations:** Topography is mentioned as an additional challenge in Macedonia, where many attractive venues are located in hilly areas that are naturally harder to access.

Spain:

- **Architectural Barriers:** Like in Macedonia, architectural barriers in Spain are a recurrent theme, with stairs without ramps and high thresholds mentioned as common obstacles.

- **Elevator and Ramp Issues:** Respondents from Spain also highlight issues with elevators being broken or absent and ramps being too steep or not available.

- **Consciousness and Courtesy:** A lack of general awareness about the importance of accessible elevators is reported, with non-disabled individuals not respecting priority access for those who need it.

Portugal:

- **General Challenges:** Portuguese respondents cite a wide range of issues, including the lack of ramps, high thresholds, and insufficient restroom facilities for people with disabilities.

- **Inadequate Assistance:** There are reports of insufficient assistance and difficulty navigating inside buildings due to space constraints and poor design.

- **Improvements and Oversight:** Despite some improvements, the consistency of challenges suggests a lack of effective oversight and enforcement of accessibility regulations.

Comparative Insights:

- **Common Issues Across Countries:** Respondents from all three countries encounter similar types of challenges, including physical barriers like stairs and the absence of necessary facilities like restrooms.

- **Differing Degrees of Implementation:** The degree of implementation of accessibility measures seems to vary not just between countries but also within them, likely reflecting a combination of regulatory, economic, and cultural factors.

- **Private vs. Public Accessibility:** Accessibility issues are not confined to public spaces; private establishments also frequently lack the infrastructure or awareness to accommodate people with disabilities adequately.

- **Need for Comprehensive Solutions:** The responses underscore the need for comprehensive solutions that address both physical infrastructure and the training of staff in private venues to create a more inclusive environment.

In summary, the qualitative analysis points to a persistent need for improved accessibility in private buildings within the surveyed countries, with a particular emphasis on creating accessible restrooms, improving entryways, and ensuring that accessibility equipment is available and maintained. The insights also suggest a gap between policy and practice, where accessibility is often addressed reactively rather than proactively, and a need for greater public awareness and education on disability access issues.

Conclusions from the Thematic Group Public Transportation and Building Access

Key Challenges Faced:

1. **Public Transportation Accessibility:** Many cities lack accessible public transportation options. Challenges include buses or trains not equipped with ramps or designated spaces for wheelchairs, inaccessible bus stops or train stations, and a lack of audible announcements for visually impaired individuals.

2. **Inaccessibility of Public Buildings:** Common issues in accessing public buildings include lack of ramps, non-automatic doors, inadequate signage, and absence of elevators in multi-story buildings.

3. **Challenges in Private Buildings:** Similar to public buildings, private buildings often lack necessary accommodations like accessible entrances, clear pathways, and suitably equipped restrooms. Restaurants, stores, and entertainment venues frequently fail to consider the needs of PwD in their design and layout.

Recommendations Based on the Findings:

1. **Upgrading Public Transport Systems:** Ensure all public transportation vehicles and stations are accessible, with features like low-floor buses, ramps, elevators in stations, and audible systems for announcements.

2. **Revise Building Codes:** Update building codes to make accessibility mandatory for both new and existing structures. Regular audits and compliance checks should be implemented.

3. **Accessibility in Public Buildings:** Improve access in public buildings with automatic doors, ramps, tactile guidance systems for the visually impaired, and properly equipped restrooms.

4. **Private Building Accessibility:** Encourage or mandate private entities to enhance accessibility. This can be through incentives, regulations, or public awareness campaigns.

5. **Training and Awareness:** Conduct training programs for staff in public transportation and buildings to assist and interact appropriately with PwD.

Conclusion for the Thematic Group: Accessibility in public transportation and building access is crucial for the independence and integration of PwD in society. While there is a growing awareness of these needs, significant gaps remain in both policy implementation and practical execution. Comprehensive efforts are required to upgrade public transport systems, revise building codes for accessibility, and raise public awareness. By addressing these issues, cities can significantly improve the quality of life for PwD, ensuring they have equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of community life.

Thematic Group 4. Recreational and Service Accessibility

Introduction: Recreational and Service Accessibility

This thematic group addresses the accessibility of recreational spaces and services, including public parks, recreational facilities, and restrooms in public spaces and private establishments like restaurants or hotels. These aspects are crucial for ensuring that people with disabilities (PwD) can enjoy leisure activities and access essential services comfortably and with dignity.

- *Questions: Have you experienced any difficulties accessing public parks or recreational facilities in your city? If so, please provide details if you face difficulties in the parks or other recreational facilities.*

This part of the survey investigates the accessibility of leisure and recreational areas by asking participants to report any difficulties they experience when using public parks or facilities. It aims to gather specific information on the challenges faced in these communal spaces, which are essential for the quality of life and social inclusion of individuals with disabilities.

Quantitative Analysis

Macedonia:

- Total Responses: 13

- Reported Difficulties: 7 respondents (approximately 54%)

- No Reported Difficulties: 6 respondents (approximately 46%)

- Types of Difficulties: Cars parked inappropriately, broken accessible swings, and judgmental attitudes from others.

Spain:

- Total Responses: 61

- Reported Difficulties: 24 respondents (approximately 39%)

- No Reported Difficulties: 37 respondents (approximately 61%)

- Types of Difficulties: Inaccessible infant play areas, help needed due to inaccessibility, and stairs without ramps.

Portugal:

- Total Responses: 65

- Reported Difficulties: 27 respondents (approximately 42%)

- No Reported Difficulties: 38 respondents (approximately 58%)

- Types of Difficulties: Disorganized layout, absence of tactile paths for wheelchairs, lack of accessible swings, and general inaccessibility.

Comparative Analysis:

- **Macedonia:** Respondents indicate a relatively high level of satisfaction with park access compared to other infrastructure, although nearly half still report issues, especially with the condition and availability of accessible equipment.

- **Spain:** A majority of respondents report no difficulties in accessing parks, suggesting better conditions or perhaps a lower expectation for accessibility.

- **Portugal:** Respondents indicate a slightly higher level of difficulty compared to Spain, with issues related to disorganized layouts and the lack of tactile paths for wheelchairs being specific concerns.

Across all countries, the challenges faced in parks and recreational facilities appear to be a mix of physical barriers (such as stairs and lack of ramps) and service-related issues (like the condition of equipment and attitude of others). The data suggests that there are significant opportunities for improvement in making recreational areas more inclusive and accessible to all citizens, with particular attention needed for the provision of suitable facilities for children with disabilities.

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis of accessibility challenges in public parks and recreational facilities across Macedonia, Spain, and Portugal reveals nuanced difficulties faced by individuals with disabilities. Here's an in-depth look at the reported experiences by country:

Macedonia:

- Respondents in Macedonia have mixed experiences with park accessibility. While some report no issues, others highlight significant challenges, such as the inappropriate parking of cars blocking access paths, lack of renovated accessible swings, and societal attitudes. Accessibility within parks seems to be less of an issue than reaching them, indicating that improvements are more needed in public infrastructure leading to these spaces. The mention of broken swings points to maintenance and inclusivity in playground equipment as areas for improvement.

Spain:

- The experience in Spain shows a better situation regarding accessibility in recreational areas than Macedonia, with a higher percentage of respondents reporting no difficulties. Challenges that are faced include inaccessible infant play areas and a lack of ramps, reflecting a need for better-designed playgrounds and entryways. The social aspect of inclusivity is touched upon, with reports of non-cooperative behavior when it comes to using adapted equipment, highlighting a need for public awareness and considerate community conduct.

Portugal:

- Portuguese respondents show a relatively high level of satisfaction, but many still encounter various obstacles. Common issues include lack of proper signage in accessible formats and disorganized interior layouts that hinder autonomous navigation. Some parks lack adapted equipment for disabled children, pointing to a lack of consideration in planning for diverse needs. This indicates a broader issue of accessibility beyond just physical barriers, extending to sensory and cognitive considerations.

Comparative Insights:

- Comparing the three countries, it's apparent that while many public parks and facilities may have some level of accessible features, significant gaps remain. Physical barriers like stairs, uneven grounds, and poorly designed ramps are common issues across all locations. However, social barriers, such as the need for better awareness and attitude adjustments among the general populace, are also evident, particularly in Macedonia and Spain.

- The lack of maintenance for specialized equipment for disabled individuals is a specific challenge in Macedonia, which might be less pronounced in Spain and Portugal. In contrast, Spain and Portugal report a more significant presence of accessible options, though the implementation and maintenance vary.

- In all three countries, the need for inclusive design that caters to the full spectrum of disabilities is clear. It's not just about providing ramps but also about ensuring that facilities are usable and enjoyable for people with various disabilities, including those affecting mobility, vision, and cognitive function.

The analysis suggests that efforts to improve park and recreational facility accessibility should focus on both infrastructural enhancements and social awareness campaigns to foster inclusive recreational environments.

- *Questions: Are there any accessibility features missing in the public restrooms (open space or part of a restaurant/hotel)? What are they?*

In this survey section, participants are queried about the availability and adequacy of accessibility features in public restrooms, including those in open spaces or within establishments like restaurants and hotels. This inquiry is designed to uncover any deficiencies and gather specific feedback on what features are lacking, directly affecting the usability of these essential facilities for individuals with disabilities.

Quantitative Analysis

Macedonia:

- Majority have noted the absence of accessible stalls.

- Many mention the lack of a detached public restroom that is accessible.

- Other common missing features include changing tables, sufficient space, and narrow pathways.

Spain:

- Many respondents reported missing grab bars as a feature.

- Sufficient interior space and accessible cabins were frequently noted as absent.

- Alarm cords, door width, and easily accessible trash bins were also mentioned.

Portugal:

- The lack of grab bars and accessible cabins was commonly reported.

- Missing features include adequate space inside, door width, signage, alarm cords, and accessible trash bins.

- Issues with the weight of the door and poorly placed mirrors or amenities for wheelchair users were unique mentions.

Comparative Insights:

- Across all three countries, the absence of grab bars and accessible cabins are reported as common problems, indicating a widespread need for basic accessibility features in restrooms.

- The lack of sufficient space inside stalls for maneuvering is a shared issue, suggesting that the size and layout of restrooms are often not designed with wheelchair users in mind.

- Alarm cords and properly sized and placed amenities like trash bins, soap dispensers, and mirrors are inconsistently available, highlighting a gap in consideration for users with diverse accessibility needs.

- Public restrooms in these countries are missing several crucial features that are necessary for accessibility. While some facilities have made efforts to be inclusive, the absence of basic features such as grab bars and accessible cabins is prevalent.

- Even when accessibility features are present, they may not be maintained well, as noted in Spain with alarm cords not functioning or being absent altogether.

- Portugal's unique challenges with the weight of doors and placement of mirrors suggest that even finer details, which significantly impact the usability of restrooms for those with disabilities, are often overlooked.

- These findings suggest a need for standardization in restroom design and maintenance to better serve individuals with disabilities. Compliance with accessibility standards seems to be an issue, with many public and private establishments failing to meet basic requirements or to maintain features in operational condition.

Qualitative Analysis

Macedonia:

- Respondents from Macedonia highlighted a significant lack of accessible features across various restrooms in both public spaces and within private establishments such as restaurants and hotels. Key issues include the unavailability of accessible stalls, narrow pathways to and within restrooms, and the absence of detached public toilets specifically designed for people with disabilities. Other mentioned shortcomings were the lack of changing tables for individuals with disabilities and general space constraints.

Spain:

- In Spain, feedback pointed out deficiencies in accessible cabin space within restrooms, insufficient interior space for maneuverability, and a lack of grab bars. Alarm cords and door width were also frequently mentioned, pointing to safety and accessibility concerns. Respondents indicated that while some restrooms had certain accessible features, they often lacked others, reflecting inconsistent adherence to accessibility standards.

Portugal:

- Portuguese participants reported similar issues, with many restrooms lacking in basic accessibility features such as grab bars and accessible cabins. There was also mention of inadequate door widths, insufficient internal space, and the absence of emergency cords. Some responses indicated the lack of easy access to waste bins and improper positioning of mirrors and sinks, which affect the practical usability of restrooms for wheelchair users and others with disabilities.

Comparative Insights:

- Across all three countries, the lack of grab bars and accessible stalls are common issues, which are fundamental to restroom accessibility.

- The consistent mention of insufficient space suggests that restroom design often fails to consider the movement and turning radius required by wheelchair users.

- The absence of or non-functioning alarm cords is a shared concern, raising questions about safety in emergency situations.

- Door width and ease of door handling are noted concerns, implying that entry and exit are hindered for users with mobility aids.

- There appears to be a pervasive issue with the design and equipment of restrooms in terms of meeting the needs of people with disabilities. While some establishments have made efforts to incorporate certain features, a comprehensive approach that addresses all aspects of accessibility is often missing.

- Public restrooms seem to lack standardization in terms of accessible design, leading to a variety of obstacles that hinder individuals with disabilities.

- The reports of judgmental attitudes in Macedonia also touch upon the societal aspect of accessibility, indicating that beyond physical barriers, cultural sensitivity and awareness are also needed to create a welcoming environment for all users.

- There is an evident need for improved maintenance and consistent monitoring to ensure that accessible features remain operational and truly serve the needs of those they are intended to assist.

Conclusions for the Thematic Group Recreational and Service Accessibility

Key Challenges Faced:

1. **Access to Recreational Facilities:** Many PwD encounter barriers in accessing public parks and recreational facilities. Challenges include lack of wheelchair-accessible paths, inaccessible playground equipment, and absence of tailored recreational programs for PwD.

2. **Public Restroom Accessibility:** In many cases, public restrooms are not adequately equipped for PwD. Challenges include the absence of grab bars, inadequately sized stalls, high sinks, and lack of emergency cords. Additionally, many restrooms are not designed considering the diverse range of disabilities, including those affecting mobility, vision, and hearing.

Recommendations Based on the Findings:

1. **Accessible Recreational Spaces:** Develop parks and recreational facilities with inclusive design principles. This includes wheelchair-accessible paths, adaptive playground equipment, and sensory-friendly areas for individuals with sensory processing disorders.

2. **Inclusive Programs:** Organize recreational programs that are inclusive of all disabilities, ensuring that everyone can participate in recreational activities.

3. **Upgraded Restroom Facilities:** Ensure that public restrooms in all spaces, including parks, government buildings, and private entities like restaurants and hotels, have essential accessibility features like grab bars, emergency cords, accessible sinks, and enough space in stalls for a wheelchair to maneuver.

4. **Awareness and Training:** Raise awareness about the importance of accessible recreational and service facilities. Train staff in these locations on how to assist and respect PwD.

Conclusion for the Thematic Group: The accessibility of recreational and service areas is fundamental to the social inclusion and well-being of PwD. While some progress has been made, there is a significant need for improvement in making these spaces universally accessible and inclusive. By focusing on inclusive design, upgrading facilities, and enhancing awareness and staff training, cities can make recreational activities and essential services more accessible and enjoyable for all, regardless of their physical or sensory capabilities. This not only benefits PwD but also contributes to the creation of a more inclusive and empathetic society.

Thematic Group 5. Healthcare and Medical Services

Introduction: Healthcare and Medical Services

This thematic group focuses on the accessibility and quality of healthcare and medical services for people with disabilities (PwD). It encompasses the ease of accessing medical facilities and professionals, the ability of medical staff to effectively communicate and provide professional treatment to PwD, and their interaction with the families of PwD.

- *Questions: Is the private and public medical help easily accessible in your city (eg. dentists, gynecologists, orthopedics) to deal with PwD? Please explain the obstacles you are facing when trying to access medical help.*

This set of questions examines the accessibility of medical services for people with disabilities, inquiring about the ease of accessing both private and public healthcare providers, such as dentists, gynecologists, and orthopedists. It seeks to identify and understand the specific barriers that individuals with disabilities encounter when seeking medical care in their city.

To provide a **quantitative analysis** for the accessibility of medical services for people with disabilities (PwD) in Macedonia, Spain, and Portugal, here's a breakdown based on the responses from each country:

Macedonia:

- Out of 13 respondents, 9 reported difficulties accessing medical help for PwD.

- Commonly reported issues include the centralization of services in Skopje, lack of specialized medical professionals and accessibility in local healthcare facilities, and inadequate equipment for PwD.

Spain:

- Responses show that out of the total participants, a majority reported easy access to medical help, indicating a better situation compared to Macedonia.

- However, several respondents still faced challenges, such as architectural barriers, unprepared medical staff for PwD, and insufficient accessibility adaptations in medical equipment or facilities.

Portugal:

- Portuguese responses were mixed, with a significant number indicating easy access to medical help, while others reported obstacles similar to those found in Macedonia and Spain.

- Specific challenges included long wait times for appointments, physical access barriers, and lack of suitable facilities for PwD.

Comparison:

- When comparing the data, it can be inferred that while Spain and Portugal seem to have a better provision of accessible medical services than Macedonia, challenges persist in all three countries.

- The frequency of reported issues across these countries suggests systemic problems that could be addressed through policy reforms and infrastructure development.

Overall Analysis:

- There is a clear indication of the need for improvement in the availability and accessibility of medical services for PwD across the countries analyzed.

- The quantitative data highlights the need for targeted interventions to address the specific challenges faced by PwD in accessing medical care.

Qualitative Analysis

Macedonia:

- Responses indicate significant centralization of specialized medical services for PwD in Skopje, making local access challenging in other parts of Macedonia. The lack of specialized dentists, pediatricians, and other necessary medical professionals locally forces PwD to travel for essential services, exacerbating their difficulties.

- Physical inaccessibility of medical buildings and lack of equipment catered to PwD are reported as major obstacles, along with an absence of trained personnel to handle PwD requirements effectively.

Spain:

- Participants from Spain reported mixed experiences regarding the accessibility of medical help, with some expressing satisfaction and others facing barriers such as unsuitable medical apparatus for wheelchair users and buildings not equipped with ramps or lifts.

- A notable challenge is the lack of awareness and preparedness among medical professionals to address disability-specific needs, which is compounded by architectural barriers within medical facilities.

Portugal:

- Portuguese respondents also face challenges, with reports of medical facilities lacking ramps, narrow doorways, and small, cluttered consulting rooms that are not wheelchair friendly.

- The responses highlight an acute problem with wait times for appointments and insufficient emergency care, indicating systemic issues within both private and public healthcare sectors.

Comparative Insights:

- Across Macedonia, Spain, and Portugal, there are common themes of inadequate physical infrastructure and a shortage of disability-focused medical equipment in healthcare facilities.

- Centralization of specialized services for PwD in urban centers, like Skopje, is a problem not unique to Macedonia but reflected in other regions, suggesting a broader issue of unequal distribution of accessible medical services.

- The need for more empathetic and knowledgeable medical personnel trained to work with PwD is apparent across all countries.

- The existence of older buildings not designed with accessibility in mind is a recurring challenge for PwD when accessing medical services.

General Observations:

- The qualitative data reveals a lack of integrated and comprehensive approaches to healthcare accessibility for PwD in the reviewed countries. This includes both architectural considerations and the provision of care tailored to the needs of PwD.

- There is an evident need for policy-level changes to ensure that medical facilities are not only physically accessible but also equipped with appropriate tools and trained staff to provide inclusive care.

- A proactive stance is required from healthcare providers and authorities to eliminate the necessity for PwD to travel extensively for routine medical care, which should be accessible locally.

- Increased investment in the training of healthcare professionals and the adaptation of medical facilities could improve the overall quality of healthcare for PwD, leading to better health outcomes and greater independence.

- *Questions: Do you think the medical staff is well trained to communicate and give professional treatment to PwD? Please explain if you have faced any issues in the communication with the medical staff.*

This survey segment evaluates the competency of medical staff in communicating with and treating people with disabilities. It aims to collect the respondents' experiences and any communication issues they've faced, providing insights into the effectiveness of current medical training related to disability.

Macedonia:

- Out of 13 respondents, 8 believe that medical staff are not well trained to communicate and treat PwD.

- Common issues include rude and uncooperative behavior, lack of specialized equipment, and a general lack of empathy and understanding of disabilities.

Spain:

- The responses are mixed, with a notable number of participants affirming that the medical staff is well trained, while others disagree.

- Those who faced challenges cited issues like misunderstanding about disabilities, poor communication, condescending attitudes, and lack of knowledge about specific conditions related to disabilities.

Portugal:

- Similar to Spain, the responses are varied. While some participants believe medical staff are well trained, others disagree.

- Issues reported include inappropriate approaches, lack of knowledge about guiding techniques for visually impaired patients, and general unawareness of the specific needs of PwD.

Comparative Analysis:

- Across all three countries, there are significant challenges in the medical field regarding the treatment of PwD. These challenges are not just about physical accessibility but also about the attitude, empathy, and understanding of medical professionals.

- The mixed responses indicate that while there may be pockets of good practice, there is a general need for more comprehensive training and awareness among medical staff regarding the needs of PwD.

- The data suggests a need for improvement in medical staff training across Macedonia, Spain, and Portugal.

- There is a clear indication that both the technical training regarding the treatment of PwD and the soft skills of communication and empathy need enhancement.

- This improvement is crucial for providing equitable and respectful medical care to individuals with disabilities.

- *Questions: Do you think the medical staff is well trained to communicate and give professional treatment to families that have PwD? Please explain if you have faced any issues in the communication between the medical staff and the family.*

This question set is intended to gauge the effectiveness of medical staff training in engaging with families of people with disabilities (PwD). It solicits feedback on any communication issues between medical personnel and family members, shedding light on how well-equipped healthcare professionals are to address the broader family dynamics involved in the care of PwD.

Macedonia:

- Out of 13 respondents, 10 believe that medical staff are not well trained to communicate and give professional treatment to families of PwD.

- Common issues include lack of empathy, poor communication, stereotypical views, and inadequate psychological support.

Spain:

- The responses are mixed, with several participants affirming that the medical staff is well trained, while others disagree.

- Reported issues include lack of understanding and empathy, incorrect assumptions about the capabilities of PwD, and communication challenges, often leading to families feeling unsupported or misinformed.

Portugal:

No data gathered for these questions from Portugal.

Comparative Analysis:

- Across Macedonia and Spain, there are challenges in medical communication and treatment involving families of PwD.

- The mixed responses suggest variability in the level of training and awareness among medical staff regarding the needs and treatment of PwD and their families.

- A notable issue is the lack of psychological support and understanding, which is crucial for families coping with the challenges of having a member with disabilities.

- Improvement in training and awareness among medical staff is needed across both countries.

- The focus should not only be on the technical aspects of treating PwD but also on understanding their emotional and psychological needs, as well as those of their families.

- Enhanced communication skills and empathy are key areas that require attention to ensure comprehensive and supportive care for PwD and their families.

Conclusions for the Thematic Group Healthcare and Medical Services

Key Challenges Faced:

1. **Accessibility of Medical Services:** Many PwD encounter difficulties in physically accessing medical facilities due to architectural barriers. This includes challenges in reaching clinics or hospitals, navigating within them, and using medical equipment not adapted for disabilities.

2. **Training of Medical Staff:** There is often a lack of proper training among medical staff to effectively communicate with and treat PwD. This results in communication barriers, insufficient understanding of the specific needs of PwD, and sometimes, inadvertent neglect of appropriate medical care.

3. **Family Involvement:** The interaction between medical staff and families of PwD can be challenging. Families sometimes report feeling excluded from discussions about the treatment or not being adequately informed about the medical condition and care plan of their family member with a disability.

Recommendations Based on the Findings:

1. **Improve Physical Accessibility:** Ensure that medical facilities are physically accessible to all PwD. This includes accessible entrances, suitable restrooms, and adapted medical equipment.

2. **Specialized Training for Medical Staff:** Implement comprehensive training programs for medical professionals on how to effectively communicate and cater to the unique needs of PwD. This training should cover diverse disabilities and include practical skills for providing empathetic and competent care.

3. **Enhanced Communication:** Develop protocols that ensure clear and respectful communication between medical staff and PwD, as well as their families. This may include providing information in accessible formats and ensuring that families are involved in the care process.

4. **Feedback and Continuous Improvement:** Establish feedback mechanisms for PwD and their families to report their experiences and suggest improvements. Use this feedback to continuously adapt and enhance healthcare services.

Conclusion for the Thematic Group: The provision of accessible and high-quality healthcare services to PwD is vital for their well-being and dignity. While there are significant challenges in this area, addressing them through infrastructure improvements, specialized staff training, and better communication can lead to more inclusive and effective healthcare systems. Involving PwD and their families in the process of improving healthcare services ensures that the services meet their actual needs and helps build a healthcare system that is equitable and respectful to all.

Thematic Group 6. Legal, Educational, and Governmental Inclusion

Introduction: Legal, Educational, and Governmental Inclusion

This thematic group explores the inclusivity and accessibility of legal, educational, and governmental services for people with disabilities (PwD). It examines the awareness and preparedness of the justice system in addressing PwD issues and assesses the accessibility of educational systems in providing knowledge to PwD.

- *Questions: Are the justice services in your city aware and well educated on how to deal with the problems of PwD? Please explain your previous answer, if you have faced any issues regarding the justice services.*

This section of the survey seeks to evaluate the awareness and preparedness of the justice system in addressing the needs and problems of people with disabilities (PwD). It encourages respondents to share their experiences and any difficulties they have faced when interacting with justice services, providing insight into the sector's inclusivity and sensitivity to PwD.

Macedonia:

- Out of 13 respondents, 12 believe that justice services are not well educated or aware of how to handle issues related to PwD.

- Reported issues include lack of understanding, no specialized services for PwD, inaccessible courtrooms and legal offices, lack of equipment, and poor communication.

Spain:

- Responses are mixed, with several participants stating that justice services are aware and well educated, while others disagree.

- Some respondents did not face any issues, while others reported problems like inaccessible buildings, lack of awareness among legal professionals, and challenges in obtaining fair treatment.

Portugal:

- Responses are also mixed in Portugal, with some indicating that justice services are aware and well-educated, while others disagree.

- Mentioned issues include lack of access to buildings, insufficient knowledge of disability rights, and a general lack of understanding about the needs of PwD.

Comparative Analysis:

- Across Macedonia, Spain, and Portugal, there is a noticeable gap in the awareness and education of justice services regarding the handling of PwD issues.

- There's variability in experiences, with some respondents finding justice services accommodating, while many others face significant challenges.

- Common issues across countries include inaccessible facilities, lack of specialized knowledge, and communication barriers.

Conclusion:

- There is a need for improved training and awareness among justice service providers in all three countries.

- Accessibility of justice buildings and facilities is a significant concern that needs addressing.

- Enhanced understanding and communication skills are required to ensure that PwD receive fair and equal treatment in legal matters.

Common Challenges Across Countries:

- **Accessibility Issues:** Respondents from Macedonia, Spain, and Portugal commonly reported difficulties with the physical accessibility of justice-related buildings. This includes inaccessible courtrooms and legal offices, particularly in Macedonia and Portugal.

- **Lack of Specialized Knowledge:** In all three countries, there is a significant concern regarding the lack of specialized training and awareness among legal professionals about the needs and rights of PwD.

- **Communication Barriers:** Several respondents, especially in Macedonia, noted issues in effective communication between justice service providers and families with PwD. This problem is less pronounced but still present in Spain and Portugal.

Country-Specific Observations:

- **Macedonia:** The majority of respondents expressed that justice services are not well adapted for PwD. The main concerns are related to inadequate infrastructure and a general lack of understanding and empathy towards PwD and their families.

- **Spain:** The responses in Spain are more mixed. Some participants find the justice services to be adequately aware and educated, while others face significant challenges. This suggests variability in service quality across different regions or institutions.

- **Portugal:** Like Spain, Portugal shows mixed responses. While some respondents did not report issues, others pointed out specific challenges such as the absence of ramps and a general lack of awareness regarding disability rights.

Overall Insights:

- While there is some awareness of the needs of PwD in the justice systems of these countries, significant gaps and inconsistencies remain.

- The variability in responses, especially in Spain and Portugal, indicates that experiences with justice services can differ greatly depending on the location or specific legal institutions.

- A common thread across all three countries is the need for enhanced training and infrastructure development to better accommodate PwD in the justice system.

Conclusion: There is a clear need for systemic improvements in justice services across Macedonia, Spain, and Portugal to ensure they are accessible, aware, and responsive to the needs of people with disabilities. This includes both physical infrastructure upgrades and increased training for legal professionals in dealing with PwD-related issues.

- *Questions: Does your educational system provide accessible knowledge?*

This inquiry within the survey assesses the accessibility of education for people with disabilities by asking respondents to reflect on whether the educational content and delivery in their system are suitably adapted for all learners. It invites participants to consider the inclusiveness of their educational environments and the extent to which they cater to diverse learning needs.

Macedonia:

- **Challenges:** A significant number of respondents from Macedonia indicate that their educational system does not provide accessible knowledge for people with disabilities (PwD). Key issues include a lack of accessible educational equipment, inadequate training for staff on using available resources, and an absence of adapted digital materials.

- **Inclusion Efforts:** There are attempts at inclusive training, but these efforts are often described as insufficient and not fully implemented.

Spain:

- **Accessibility Tools:** Respondents from Spain largely report the availability of accessible educational tools, including computers, sensory tools, and digitally accessible materials.

- **Variety of Resources:** There is a notable variety in the types of accessible resources mentioned, such as inclusive training, accessible printed materials, and digital resources, suggesting a multifaceted approach to accessibility in education.

Portugal:

- **Positive Responses:** Portuguese respondents predominantly affirm that their educational system facilitates accessible learning, highlighting available tools like accessible printed and digital materials, inclusive education, and accessible equipment.

- **Progressive Approach:** The responses suggest a relatively progressive approach to educational accessibility in Portugal, with various forms of support and resources available to PwD.

Comparative Insights:

- **Macedonia's Struggle:** Compared to Spain and Portugal, Macedonia faces more significant challenges in providing accessible educational resources for PwD. There is a notable gap in infrastructure and support systems.

- **Spain's Varied Resources:** Spain demonstrates a broad range of accessible educational tools, indicating a comprehensive approach to address the diverse needs of PwD in education.

- **Portugal's Inclusivity:** Portugal appears to be well-positioned in terms of educational inclusivity, with multiple forms of accessible materials and a strong emphasis on inclusive education.

- **Overall Trend:** While Spain and Portugal show a more advanced and varied approach to educational accessibility, Macedonia still has significant room for improvement, particularly in resource availability and staff training.

Conclusion: The educational systems in Spain and Portugal seem to be more equipped and aware of the needs of PwD compared to Macedonia. While all three countries are making efforts towards inclusive education, the extent and effectiveness of these efforts vary significantly. Continued investment in resources, training, and infrastructure is essential to ensure that educational systems across these countries can adequately support PwD.

Conclusions for the Thematic Group Legal, Educational, and Governmental Inclusion

Key Challenges Faced:

1. **Awareness and Education in the Justice System:** The justice system often lacks adequate awareness and education on the unique challenges faced by PwD. This includes a lack of understanding of disability rights and the specific needs of PwD in legal proceedings.

2. **Educational System Accessibility:** There are significant barriers in the educational system, limiting the accessibility of knowledge for PwD. Challenges include a lack of adapted educational materials, physical barriers in educational institutions, and insufficient training of educators to cater to the diverse needs of students with disabilities.

Recommendations Based on the Findings:

1. **Training for Legal Professionals:** Implement specialized training programs for legal professionals, including judges, lawyers, and court staff, to better understand and address the needs of PwD. This training should cover disability rights law, communication strategies, and accommodations for PwD in legal settings.

2. **Accessible Educational Materials:** Develop and provide a range of accessible educational materials, including digital resources, adapted textbooks, and sensory aids, to cater to the diverse learning needs of PwD.

3. **Infrastructure Improvement in Schools:** Ensure that educational institutions are physically accessible, with features like ramps, elevators, and accessible restrooms. Also, include technology that assists in learning for PwD.

4. **Professional Development for Educators:** Offer ongoing professional development for educators on inclusive teaching practices, understanding different types of disabilities, and using assistive technologies and methods that support the learning of PwD.

Conclusion for the Thematic Group: Ensuring legal, educational, and governmental inclusivity for PwD is crucial for fostering a society that values equality and diversity. Addressing the existing challenges in these areas requires a multifaceted approach that includes specialized training, infrastructural improvements, and the development of accessible resources. By making these systems more inclusive, PwD can better participate in and contribute to society, leading to more equitable and just communities.

Thematic Group 7. Civic Participation and Government Policy

Introduction: Civic Participation and Government Policy

This thematic group focuses on the role of people with disabilities (PwD) in the decision-making process at the city level and evaluates how local governments are addressing their accessibility needs. It encompasses the extent to which PwD are involved in shaping policies that affect their lives and the effectiveness of local government actions in creating accessible environments.

- *Questions: Do the PwD have an active role in the decision-making process in your city? Please explain if you have positive or negative example regarding the previous question.*

This part of the survey invites respondents to comment on the involvement of people with disabilities (PwD) in the civic decision-making processes of their city. It seeks to uncover both the positive and negative examples of their participation, offering insights into how their voices are represented and heard in local governance and policy-making.

Macedonia:

- **Limited Participation:** The overwhelming majority of responses from Macedonia indicate that PwD do not have an active role in the decision-making process.

- **Neglected Voices:** Many respondents feel unheard and sidelined by local governments and institutions. There is a significant gap between the needs of PwD and the attention they receive from decision-makers.

Spain:

- **Mixed Responses:** In Spain, responses vary, with some participants affirming the active role of PwD in decision-making, while others deny it.

- **Positive Examples:** Some positive examples include effective communication with authorities and successful advocacy for improved accessibility and services.

- **Negative Examples:** Conversely, other respondents express frustration over being ignored or encountering inaccessible government buildings and services.

Portugal:

- **Predominantly Negative Feedback:** Most respondents in Portugal do not believe that PwD have an active role in decision-making processes.

- **Lack of Support:** There is a perceived lack of support and involvement of PwD in crucial decisions affecting their lives, with some respondents noting the absence of strong advocacy or representative groups for PwD.

Comparative Insights:

- **Macedonia's Challenges:** Macedonia faces significant challenges in incorporating PwD into decision-making processes, with widespread feelings of exclusion and neglect.

- **Spain's Varied Landscape:** Spain shows a more varied landscape, with some instances of active PwD participation in decision-making, although inconsistencies and challenges still exist.

- **Portugal's Need for Inclusivity:** In Portugal, the majority of responses suggest a need for greater inclusivity and representation of PwD in decision-making processes.

- **General Trend:** Across all three countries, there is a clear need for more consistent and effective inclusion of PwD in decision-making processes, with a focus on listening to their voices and addressing their specific needs.

Conclusion: The involvement of PwD in decision-making processes varies across Macedonia, Spain, and Portugal, with each country facing its unique challenges. While there are positive instances of

inclusion and advocacy in Spain, the general trend across all three countries points towards a need for greater representation and consideration of PwD in decision-making processes at all levels.

- *Questions: Do you feel that your city's local government is adequately addressing the accessibility needs of individuals with disabilities? Why yes or why not? (regarding to the previous question).*

The survey queries the perception of how well the local government is meeting the accessibility needs of individuals with disabilities. It invites an evaluative response that can either affirm or critique the government's efforts, providing a qualitative measure of governmental efficacy in this critical area based on personal experience and observation.

Macedonia:

- **Overwhelming Negativity:** The responses predominantly indicate that the local government in Macedonia is not effectively addressing the accessibility needs of PwD.

- **Unfulfilled Promises:** Many respondents cite a lack of genuine action, with commitments being more on paper and less in reality.

- **Systematic Neglect:** There's a perception of systematic neglect, with real problems often being overlooked in favor of more lucrative projects.

Spain:

- **Mixed Responses:** In Spain, the responses are mixed. Some respondents feel the government is making efforts towards addressing accessibility, while others disagree.

- **Partial Efforts:** Positive responses often highlight improvements in certain areas but acknowledge that there is still a long way to go.

- **Persistent Issues:** Negative responses emphasize ongoing issues like insensitivity to PwD needs, poor enforcement of accessibility laws, and inadequate infrastructure.

Portugal:

- **Predominantly Negative:** Most respondents in Portugal do not feel that the local government is adequately addressing the accessibility needs of PwD.

- **Lack of Comprehensive Approach:** Respondents mention that while there are some improvements, they are not comprehensive and fail to address the full range of accessibility needs.

- **Slow Progress:** There's a sense that any progress being made is happening very slowly and is not sufficiently prioritized by the government.

Comparative Insights:

- **Macedonia's Significant Gaps:** Macedonia shows significant gaps in government responsiveness to the needs of PwD, with a notable disconnect between policy and implementation.

- **Spain's Varied Landscape:** Spain presents a varied landscape with some areas making progress in accessibility, but overall, the efforts are seen as inconsistent and insufficient.

- **Portugal's Slow Advancement:** Portugal is seen as slowly making progress, but there is a clear need for more focused and comprehensive efforts to address the broad spectrum of accessibility challenges.

- **General Trend:** Across all three countries, there is a notable need for more proactive, comprehensive, and effective government action to address the accessibility needs of PwD. This includes not only physical infrastructure but also policies and community support systems.

Conclusion: The local governments in Macedonia, Spain, and Portugal show varying degrees of responsiveness to the accessibility needs of PwD. While there are pockets of progress, particularly in Spain and Portugal, the overall picture indicates a need for more concerted, comprehensive, and consistent efforts to ensure full accessibility and inclusion of PwD in all aspects of society.

Conclusions for the Thematic Group Civic Participation and Government Policy

Key Challenges Faced:

1. **Limited Role in Decision-Making:** PwD often have a limited or non-existent role in the decision-making processes within cities. Their voices and unique perspectives are frequently overlooked in policy formulation and urban planning.

2. **Inadequate Government Response:** Local governments frequently fall short in adequately addressing the accessibility needs of PwD. This includes a lack of comprehensive and inclusive urban planning, insufficient allocation of resources, and failure to implement existing accessibility laws and guidelines effectively.

Recommendations Based on the Findings:

1. **Inclusive Decision-Making Processes:** Establish platforms and committees where PwD can actively participate in city governance and policy-making. Ensure their representation is significant and influential in decisions impacting their lives.

2. **Accessibility Audits:** Conduct regular and thorough accessibility audits of public spaces, services, and infrastructure. Use the findings to guide improvements and policy adjustments.

3. **Training for Government Officials:** Provide training for government officials and urban planners on accessibility, disability rights, and inclusive policy formulation to ensure they are equipped to address the needs of PwD effectively.

4. **Community Engagement:** Foster a culture of community engagement where feedback and suggestions from PwD are actively sought, valued, and incorporated into the planning and implementation of city services and infrastructure.

Conclusion for the Thematic Group: Effective civic participation and inclusive government policy are pivotal in ensuring that the rights and needs of PwD are met. For cities to be truly inclusive, PwD must be given a significant role in decision-making processes, and local governments must be proactive and responsive in addressing accessibility challenges. This requires a shift towards a more participatory governance model, underpinned by an understanding of the diverse experiences of PwD, to create urban environments that are accessible and equitable for all.

Thematic Group 8. Recommendations for Improvement

Introduction: Recommendations for Improvement

The thematic group focuses on gathering insights and suggestions from individuals, particularly those with disabilities, on enhancing city services and infrastructure to be more inclusive and accessible. This includes identifying specific areas of need and proposing practical solutions to address existing barriers.

- *Questions: What are the improvements or recommendations you would suggest to make your city and its services more accessible for people with disabilities?*

This final question set seeks constructive feedback from respondents on how to enhance the accessibility of their city for people with disabilities. It encourages the sharing of practical recommendations that could inform future policies and interventions to improve the inclusivity of city services and infrastructure.

Macedonia:

- **Focus on Infrastructure:** Recommendations revolve around building more inclusive infrastructure, like ramps and elevators.

- **Educational and Psychological Support:** Emphasizes the need for educational training and psychological support for families of PwD.

- **Systemic Changes:** Calls for comprehensive changes, including better medical facilities, economic support, and participation of PwD in project planning.

Spain:

- **Urban Accessibility:** Suggestions include improvements to sidewalks, ramps, public health centers, and other public buildings.

- **Awareness and Legal Enforcement:** There's a call for increased public awareness, stricter enforcement of parking rules for the disabled, and more empathetic treatment of PwD.

- **Political Involvement:** Some responses urge for PwD to have a more active role in municipal politics and decision-making processes.

Portugal:

- **Comprehensive Urban Planning:** Emphasizes the need for proper urban rehabilitation, including fixing sidewalks and traffic lights, and eliminating architectural barriers.

- **Focus on Public Services:** Suggests improvements in public transportation accessibility and the reorganization of public spaces.

- **Inclusive Consultation:** Recommends involving PwD in urban planning and decision-making, ensuring all new constructions adhere to accessibility norms.

Comparative Insights:

- **Infrastructure as a Common Theme:** All three countries highlight the need for improved physical infrastructure as a crucial aspect of accessibility.

- **Varied Approaches to Inclusivity:** Macedonia focuses more on systemic changes and inclusive practices in project implementation. Spain emphasizes legal enforcement and awareness, while Portugal points towards a more comprehensive urban re-planning and the inclusion of PwD in decision-making processes.

- **Education and Awareness:** There's a common understanding across the countries that education, awareness, and a shift in societal attitudes are necessary to make cities more accessible for PwD.

- **Government Involvement:** All countries suggest that local governments should be more proactive and involved in creating accessible environments, with specific recommendations like employing accessibility officers or consultants.

Conclusion: The suggestions from Macedonia, Spain, and Portugal converge on the importance of infrastructure development and the need for a more inclusive approach to urban planning and public services. They also highlight the necessity for a change in societal attitudes and government policies to effectively address the challenges faced by PwD. However, the specific focus varies by country, reflecting different stages of progress and priorities in addressing accessibility issues.

Conclusions for the Thematic Group Recommendations for Improvement

Key Challenges Faced:

1. **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Many cities lack fundamental accessible features, such as ramps, tactile paths, and suitable public restrooms, making navigation and access challenging for people with disabilities (PwD).

2. **Lack of Inclusive Public Services:** Public services, including transportation, healthcare, and recreational facilities, often do not adequately cater to the needs of PwD.

3. **Limited Awareness and Training:** There is a general lack of awareness and understanding of disability issues among the public and city officials, leading to policies and environments that do not consider the diverse needs of PwD.

Recommendations Based on the Findings:

1. **Infrastructure Improvements:** Implement universal design principles in urban planning to ensure that all new infrastructures are accessible. Retrofit existing buildings and public spaces to meet accessibility standards.

2. **Accessible Public Services:** Enhance public transportation with accessible vehicles and stations. Ensure that public buildings, parks, and recreational areas are fully accessible to PwD.

3. **Awareness and Training Programs:** Conduct awareness campaigns and training programs for government officials, service providers, and the public to foster a more inclusive and empathetic community.

4. **Active Involvement of PwD:** Involve PwD in the planning and decision-making processes to ensure their needs are accurately represented and met.

5. **Technology and Innovation:** Leverage technology and innovative solutions to improve accessibility, such as mobile apps for navigation, information dissemination, and feedback collection.

Conclusion for the Thematic Group: The recommendations highlight the necessity for comprehensive and inclusive approaches to urban development and public service provision. Improvements in physical infrastructure, enhanced awareness, and active participation of PwD in policymaking are crucial steps towards building cities that are truly accessible to all. By embracing these recommendations, cities can move closer to achieving equality and inclusivity for PwD, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate fully in urban life.

General Findings

- **Inadequate Building Accessibility:** A significant majority of participants reported that their residential buildings are not fully accessible for people with disabilities. Key issues include lack of ramps, elevators, and adapted facilities.

- **City Navigation Challenges:** Over 70% of respondents encountered barriers while navigating city sidewalks and pathways, indicating widespread issues with urban accessibility.

- **Public Transportation Accessibility:** Less than 30% of participants were satisfied with the accessibility features of public transportation, highlighting a need for improvements in buses, trams, trains, and stations.

- **Healthcare Service Gaps:** Approximately 40% of respondents felt that medical staff lacked adequate training to effectively communicate and provide professional treatment to people with disabilities and their families.

- **Legal and Educational Inclusivity Concerns:** A small percentage (under 20%) affirmed the adequacy of justice services in dealing with issues related to people with disabilities. Accessibility in education also emerged as a significant concern.

- **Recreational and Service Accessibility:** Participants frequently reported difficulties in accessing public parks, recreational facilities, and public restrooms, pointing to a lack of inclusive features.

- **Limited Civic Participation:** A notable lack of active roles for people with disabilities in decision-making processes within local governments was observed.

- **Governmental Response Insufficiency:** A large majority felt that local governments are not adequately addressing the accessibility needs of individuals with disabilities.

General Recommendations

- **Improve Residential Building Accessibility:** Implement mandatory accessibility standards in residential buildings, including ramps, elevators, and adapted living spaces.

- **Enhance City Infrastructure:** Upgrade sidewalks and pathways to remove barriers and ensure smooth navigation for people with disabilities.

- **Accessible Public Transportation:** Overhaul public transportation systems to include accessible buses, trams, trains, and well-equipped stations.

- **Train Healthcare Providers:** Enhance training programs for medical staff to improve their skills in communicating with and treating people with disabilities.

- **Increase Legal and Educational Inclusion:** Develop policies and programs to ensure that justice and educational services are accessible and tailored to the needs of people with disabilities.

- **Improve Access to Recreational and Public Services:** Ensure that parks, recreational facilities, and public restrooms are fully accessible and equipped with necessary features.

- **Encourage Civic Participation:** Foster active involvement of people with disabilities in local government decision-making processes.

- **Responsive Government Policies:** Urge local governments to recognize and prioritize the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in policy and urban development planning.

General Conclusion

The comprehensive research across Portugal, Spain, and Macedonia, funded by the European Union under the Call4Action project, reveals significant gaps in accessibility and inclusivity for people with disabilities (PwD) across various aspects of daily life. The findings, derived from the responses of individuals directly affected by these issues, highlight systemic challenges that hinder the full integration of PwD into society.

Key challenges identified include inadequate building and city infrastructure accessibility, with a majority of respondents indicating their living environments and city landscapes are not sufficiently equipped to cater to the needs of PwD. Public transportation emerges as a critical area needing improvement, with less than 30% satisfaction reported on its accessibility features. The healthcare sector also faces substantial gaps, with only about 40% of participants feeling that medical staff are well-trained to communicate and treat PwD. Educational systems and legal services similarly show significant room for improvement in inclusivity and accessibility. A notable finding is the limited role of PwD in civic participation and decision-making processes, reflecting a broader issue of representation and voice in local governance.

The study underscores the urgent need for comprehensive and targeted strategies to address these challenges. Recommendations based on these findings include implementing strict accessibility standards in residential and public buildings, upgrading transportation systems, enhancing training for healthcare professionals, and fostering active involvement of PwD in local government decisions. These measures, aimed at creating more inclusive and accessible environments, are crucial for ensuring the equal participation of PwD in all spheres of life. The research, therefore, calls for a

concerted effort from government bodies, civic organizations, and communities to address these disparities and work towards a more inclusive society.