

**Partial Agreement  
in the Social and Public Health Field  
Accord Partiel  
dans le domaine social et de la santé publique**



**Resolution ResAP(2001)1**

**on the introduction of the principles of universal design  
into the curricula of all occupations  
working on the built environment**

**(“Tomar Resolution”)**



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(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 15 February 2001,  
at the 742nd meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies)

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### **Council of Europe member states**

Albania	Liechtenstein
Andorra	Lithuania
Armenia	Luxembourg
Austria	Malta
Azerbaijan	Moldova
Belgium	The Netherlands
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Norway
Bulgaria	Poland
Croatia	Portugal
Cyprus	Romania
Czech Republic	Russia
Denmark	San Marino
Estonia	Slovakia
Finland	Slovenia
France	Spain
Georgia	Sweden
Germany	Switzerland
Greece	"the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"
Hungary	Turkey
Iceland	Ukraine
Ireland	United Kingdom
Italy	
Latvia	

### **Candidates for membership**

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia	Monaco
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### **States with observer status**

Canada	Mexico
Holy See	United States of America
Japan	

## I. PREFACE

### 1. The Council of Europe

The Council of Europe is a political organisation which was founded on 5 May 1949 by ten European states in order to promote unity between its members. It now numbers 44 member states. Any European state may be invited to become a member of the Council of Europe, provided that it accepts the principles of pluralistic parliamentary democracy, the rule of law and the enjoyment by all persons within its jurisdiction of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The main aims of the Organisation are to reinforce democracy, human rights and the rule of law and to develop common responses to political, social, cultural and legal challenges in its member states. Since 1989 the Council of Europe has integrated most of the countries of central and eastern Europe into its structures and supported them in their efforts to implement and consolidate their political, legal and administrative reforms.

The work of the Council of Europe has led, to date, to the adoption of over 170 European conventions and agreements, which create the basis for a "common legal space" in Europe. They include the European Convention on Human Rights (1950), the European Social Charter (1961), and the Convention on Human Rights and Bioethics (1997). Numerous recommendations of the Committee of Ministers propose policy guidelines for national governments.

The Council of Europe has its permanent headquarters in Strasbourg (France). It operates through a variety of bodies:

- The governing body is the **Committee of Ministers**, composed of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the 44 member states, which meets twice a year. Between sessions their Permanent Representatives in Strasbourg meet as the Ministers' Deputies. They determine the programme of activities of the Organisation, adopt its budget and oversee the work of the many intergovernmental committees. They also decide the follow-up to be given to the recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly and of the various conferences of specialised ministers which the Council of Europe organises periodically.
- The other statutory organ is the **Parliamentary Assembly** comprising 612 members from the 44 national parliaments, as well as special guests from certain European non-member states. The composition of each national delegation reflects that of its parliament of origin. The Assembly meets in plenary session four times a year.
- The **Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe**, also composed of 612 members, represents the entities of local and regional self-government within the member states. Its aim is to reinforce self-government structures at the subnational level, to promote their co-operation and to ensure their participation at European level.

- The **European Court of Human Rights**, comprising a resident judge from each Contracting Party, is the judicial body competent to adjudicate complaints brought against a state by individuals, associations or other contracting states on grounds of violation of the European Convention on Human Rights.

All these bodies are served by a multinational European Secretariat under the authority of a Secretary General elected by the Parliamentary Assembly for a term of five years. The members of the Secretariat are independent from the states of which they are nationals.

Non-governmental organisations work in close partnership with the Council of Europe, notably in the human rights field.

## **2. The Partial Agreement in the Social and Public Health Field**

The intergovernmental work programme of the Council of Europe includes such fields as the media, local and regional democracy, bioethics, crime prevention and control, migration and refugees, nationality questions, equality between men and women, protection of the environment, as well as social cohesion and health.

When only a certain number of states wish to engage in some action in which not all of their Council of Europe partners desire to join, they can conclude a "Partial Agreement" which is binding on them alone, such as the quality of medicines (European Pharmacopoeia), combating drug abuse ("Pompidou Group"), financing social development projects ("Council of Europe Development Bank"), as well as the health protection of the consumer and the rehabilitation and integration of persons with disabilities ("Partial Agreement in the Social and Public Health Field").

The Partial Agreement in the Social and Public Health Field was concluded on this basis on 16 November 1959. The following states are members: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, as well as a Council of Europe non-member state (Canada), enjoy observer status with the committees operating in the sector integration of people with disabilities.

The activities of the Partial Agreement in the Social and Public Health Field are in particular aimed at:

- raising the level of health protection of the consumer in its widest sense, through constant efforts - with regard to products having a direct or indirect impact on the human food chain as well as in the field of pesticides, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics - to harmonise legislation, regulations and practices governing, on the one hand, quality, efficiency and safety controls for products, and, on the other hand, the safe use of toxic or noxious products;

- integrating people with disabilities into the community: by defining, and contributing to the Europe-wide implementation of a coherent model policy for people with disabilities, taking simultaneous account of the principles of full citizenship and independent living; and by contributing to the elimination of all types of barrier to integration whether psychological, educational, family-related, cultural, social, professional, financial or architectural.

As a general rule, Partial Agreement recommendations (called "resolutions") contain standard regulations, in order to facilitate the incorporation into national legislation and regulations of the provisions of international texts normally drawn up by those actually responsible for their implementation at national level.

Adopted texts are periodically revised in order to reflect scientific and technological developments. They are often of a pioneering nature in the fields concerned.

Partial Agreement bodies closely co-operate with equivalent bodies in other international institutions. They also co-operate with non-governmental organisations competent in similar or related fields.

## **II. Message from the Higher Education and Research Committee (CC-HER)**

The CC-HER Bureau, meeting in Strasbourg on 21-22 June 2001, considered Resolution ResAP (2001) 1 on the introduction of the principles of universal design into the curricula of all occupations working on the built environment, expressed its support for the principles underlying the concept of universal design, namely providing absolute access to buildings and other parts of the built environment for all. While respecting the autonomy of higher education institutions in designing their curricula and study programmes, the Bureau encouraged national delegations to the CC-HER:

- (i) to disseminate the said resolution, with the background material leading to its elaboration, to the higher education institutions of their countries having programmes related to the built environment;
- (ii) to encourage these institutions to take due account of the resolution in designing relevant study programmes;
- (iii) to encourage higher education institutions in their countries to provide examples of good practice in this area to the Council of Europe Secretariat.

### III. Introduction

Resolution ResAP(2001)1 on the introduction of the principles of universal design into the curricula of all occupations working on the built environment was prepared by the Committee on the Rehabilitation and Integration of People with disabilities (CD-P-RR). This intergovernmental committee works under the Committee of Ministers and within the framework of the Partial Agreement in the Social and Public Health Field.

This resolution is the legal instrument, although non-binding, resulting from the CD-P-RR's work on "accessibility". As early as 1972 it promoted the international use of the Access Symbol devised by Rehabilitation International (wheelchair user, white on blue) – today a well-established international practice. In 1979 the committee published specific technical norms and dimensions regarding accessibility. In 1993, its subordinate body, the Committee of Experts on the Training of Personnel other than Health Care Personnel concerned with Rehabilitation (Architects and Town Planners) published the report *Accessibility: Principles and Guidelines*.

From autumn 1998 to summer 1999 the Panel of Experts on Accessibility (P-RR-ACC) elaborated a first draft of this resolution, and submitted it to the CD-P-RR at its 22<sup>nd</sup> session, Strasbourg, 9-11 June 1999. A number of amendments were proposed. After taking account of further comments made by delegations in the course of the year 1999, the Panel submitted a revised text to the CD-P-RR at its 23<sup>rd</sup> session, Tomar (Portugal), 13-16 June 2000. The committee amended the text in the light of comments made by delegations and approved the draft resolution so amended. It decided to submit the draft resolution to the Committee of Ministers who adopted it on 15 February 2001.

The resolution takes as a starting point the right of all individuals, including persons with disabilities, to full participation in the life of the community, which involves the right to access to and use and understanding of all parts of the built environment. It recognises the responsibility and duty of society, and in particular of all occupations working on the built environment, to make it universally accessible to everyone, including persons with disabilities.

Universal design is neither taught at many European universities and schools of architecture, engineering and design, nor practised by many European architects, engineers, designers or town planners. Thus the aim of this resolution is to ensure that the education and training of all occupations working on the built environment be inspired by the principles of universal design.



**IV. Resolution ResAP(2001)1 on the introduction of the principles of universal design into the curricula of all occupations working on the built environment**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 15 February 2001,  
at the 742nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, in its composition restricted to the Representatives of Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, member states of the Partial Agreement in the Social and Public Health Field,

Recalling Resolution (59) 23 of 16 November 1959, concerning the extension of the activities of the Council of Europe in the social and cultural fields;

Having regard to Resolution (96) 35 of 2 October 1996, whereby it revised the structures of the Partial Agreement and resolved to continue, on the basis of revised rules replacing those set out in Resolution (59) 23, the activities hitherto carried out and developed by virtue of that resolution; these being in particular aimed at:

- a.* raising the level of health protection of consumers in its widest sense, including a constant contribution to harmonising – in the field of products having a direct or indirect impact on the human food chain as well as in the field of pesticides, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, legislation, regulations and practice governing, on the one hand, quality, efficiency and safety controls for products; and, on the other hand, the safe use of toxic or noxious products;
- b.* integrating people with disabilities into the community; defining – and contributing to the implementation at European level – of a model of coherent policy for people with disabilities, which takes account simultaneously of the principles of full citizenship and independent living; contributing to the elimination of barriers to integration, whatever their nature, whether psychological, educational, family-related, cultural, social, professional, financial or architectural.

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of facilitating their economic and social progress;

Bearing in mind the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and in particular the freedom of movement (Article 2 of Protocol No. 4);

Bearing in mind the principles embodied in the revised European Social Charter, namely the right of persons with disabilities to independence, social integration and participation in the life of the community, in particular through measures aiming to overcome barriers to communication and mobility and enabling access to transport, housing, cultural activities and leisure (Article 15, paragraph 3);

Bearing in mind Recommendation No. R (86) 18 on the “European Charter on Sport for all: disabled persons”;

Bearing in mind Recommendation No. R (92) 6 on a coherent policy for people with disabilities;

Bearing in mind Recommendation 1185 (1992) of the Parliamentary Assembly on rehabilitation policies for the disabled;

Bearing in mind Recommendation N° R (98) 3 on access to higher education;

Bearing in mind the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities;

Having regard to the Council Directive 85/384/EEC of 10 June 1985 on the mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates and other evidence of formal qualifications in architecture, including measures to facilitate the effective exercise of the right of establishment and freedom to provide services;

Having regard to the Resolution of the Council of the European Union and of the representatives of the governments of the member states meeting within the Council of 20 December 1996 on equality of opportunity for people with disabilities;

Having regard to the European Concept for Accessibility, March 1996, elaborated by the Central Co-ordinating Commission for the Promotion of Accessibility (CCPT);

Having regard to the Barcelona Declaration: The City and the Disabled of 24 March 1995, signed by 150 European cities following the Congress on The City and the Disabled, Barcelona, 23 and 24 March 1995;

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe can be pursued, *inter alia*, by the adoption of common legislation and practice conducive to the creation of a society for all;

Considering that failure to promote the rights of citizens with disabilities and ensure equality of opportunities is a violation of human dignity;

Considering that equal opportunities for members of all groups in society can contribute to securing democracy and social cohesion;

Emphasising the almost total lack of compulsory training programmes with a universal design dimension for all occupations working on the built environment;

Acknowledging the work carried out in the field of accessibility policies by the Council of Europe's Committee on the Rehabilitation and Integration of People with disabilities and its subordinate body, the Committee of Experts on the Training of Personnel other than Health Care Personnel concerned with Rehabilitation (Architects and Town Planners), and considering the urgent need for such training;

Convinced that universal design and accessibility have a key role to play in the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and should therefore be incorporated into all levels of the education and training programmes of all occupations working on the built environment,

Recommends that the governments of the member states of the Partial Agreement in the Social and Public Health Field, having due regard to their specific constitutional structures, and national, regional or local circumstances, as well as education systems:

- a.* when formulating national policy, take into account the principles of universal design and measures to improve accessibility, in the widest sense of the term, as set out in the appendix to this resolution in so far as they concern curricula and other matters of education, training and awareness-raising for which governments are directly responsible according to the allocation of responsibilities in each country;
- b.* take such steps as they consider appropriate towards the application of the principles and measures contained in the appendix in fields where these are not the direct responsibility of governments, but where public authorities have a certain power or play a role;
- c.* promote implementation of these measures by universities and institutions responsible for higher and further education, as well as vocational training;
- d.* ensure the widest possible dissemination of this resolution among all interested parties, particularly those concerned with education and training, as well as the users.



## **Appendix to Resolution ResAP(2001)1**

### **1. General principles**

The right of all individuals, including persons with disabilities, to full participation in the life of the community involves the right to access to and use and understanding of the built environment.

It is the responsibility and duty of society, and in particular of all occupations working on the built environment, to make it universally accessible to everyone, including persons with disabilities.

A coherent and global policy in favour of people with disabilities or who are in danger of acquiring them should aim at, *inter alia*, guaranteeing full citizenship, equality of opportunity, independent living and active participation in all areas of community life.

To implement this policy states should take steps to, *inter alia*, avoid and remove, wherever possible, all obstacles in the built environment and to improve the information of all policy makers and other stakeholders whose decisions concerning the manmade environment affect the quality of life of people with disabilities.

Such policy includes the education and training of key players in this process.

Through a co-ordinated set of measures introducing the concept of universal design into the curricula of all occupations working on the built environment, people of all ages, sizes and abilities should be enabled to have as much mobility and access to buildings, as well as means of transport, as possible, so that they can play a full role in society and take part in economic, social, cultural, leisure, and recreational activities.

### **2. Definitions**

“Universal design” is a strategy, which aims to make the design and composition of different environments and products accessible and understandable to, as well as usable by, everyone, to the greatest extent in the most independent and natural manner possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design solutions.

The intent of the universal design concept is to simplify life for everyone by making the built environment, products, and communications equally accessible, usable and understandable at little or no extra cost. The universal design concept promotes a shift to more emphasis on user-centred design by following a holistic approach and aiming to accommodate the needs of people of all ages, sizes and abilities, including the changes that people experience over their lifespan. Consequently, universal design is a concept that extends beyond the issues of mere accessibility of buildings for people with disabilities and should become an integrated part of architecture, design and planning of the environment.

For the purpose of this resolution the terms “integral accessibility”, “design for all” and “inclusive design” are understood to have the same meaning as the term “universal design”, which is used in this text.

The term “everyone” means that no difference will be imposed by the environment upon individuals regardless of their age, size or other physical features, abilities or disabilities.

The term “independent” means the ability to act without having to rely on outside help, thus avoiding dependency.

The term “natural” stresses the integral aspect of the definition. It implies that provisions for access and usability are perceived as normal.

The term “built environment” means all buildings, traffic provisions and places or spaces open to the public.

### **3. Aims, objectives, and strategies**

To ensure equal chances of participation in economic, social, cultural, leisure and recreational activities, everyone of whatever age, size and ability must be able to access, use and understand any part of the environment as independently and as equally as possible.

Education and training of all occupations working on the built environment should be inspired by the principles of universal design.

For the purpose of taking early action to promote a coherent policy to improve accessibility, the concept of universal design should be an integral and compulsory part of the mainstream initial training of all occupations working on the built environment, at all levels and in all sectors.

Adequate further training should be made available for active professionals, such as architects, engineers, designers and town planners. Their attendance should be strongly encouraged.

Curricula should be developed with the co-operation of users, including organisations of and for people with disabilities.

The concept of universal design should be brought into focus for other professions working with the built environment, such as regional planners, property developers, estate agents, landscape architects and landscape gardeners, as well as interior designers. It should also be brought to the attention of users, customers and clients, including organisations and bodies representing them.

Awareness of the difficulties people with disabilities encounter in the built environment should be raised as early as possible.

Education, training and awareness-raising should provide everyone dealing with the built environment with the necessary understanding, knowledge, skills and values to instil new attitudes and behaviour towards achieving a built environment that is universally accessible.

#### **4. Higher education**

Curricula of architects, engineers, designers, and town planners at under-graduate and post-graduate level should develop the following skills:

- that of perceiving the relationship between human beings and their constructural creations and between the latter and their environment,
- that of understanding the need to accord constructural creations and space in compliance with human needs,
- that of mastering problem-solving techniques in order to increase the usability of all their constructural creations, taking into account human diversity.

Public authorities, educational institutions, the bodies for the professions concerned and the organisations representing those professions should review education and training in architecture, engineering, design, and town planning in order to ensure that it enshrines the universal design concept as an integral part, including appropriate examinations on the subject.

Moreover, they should take steps to ensure that continuing education based on the universal design concept be organised, encouraged and followed by architects, engineers, designers, and town planners.

Governments may examine appropriate ways of creating incentives, such as student grants, scholarships and awards, to stimulate such innovation in design that will lead to the creation of environments and products that incorporate universal design principles.

#### **5. Further education and vocational training**

Universal design issues should be included in all types and levels of education influencing our physical environment. Achieving a universally designed environment requires competence and skills in all parts of the production and construction process. Since architects and engineers are not involved in all building projects, as many are carried out by craftsmen, such as bricklayers, carpenters, plumbers, and electricians, the initial vocational training of all professions concerned should include universal design principles.

The new inclusive perspectives of universal design should become a compulsory part of the education and training for everyone working on the built environment.

Governments may examine appropriate ways of creating incentives, such as prizes, to stimulate practical solutions to design questions that incorporate universal design principles.

## **6. Teaching methods and materials**

Education and training should take an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach, covering all disciplines relevant to the built environment. Linkages to other courses should offset the problem of isolating the subject in the curriculum.

Learners of all ages should be given the possibility to personally experience the difficulties encountered by people with disabilities in the environment, using appropriate interactive, participatory and collaborative methods, such as field trips, on-site observations, case studies, direct and personal contact with people with disabilities and people across the age span, as well as simulation of certain impairments.

Theoretical and cognitive-intellectual learning should be complemented by practical and emotional learning.

The perception of “normality” and “difference” should be studied; stereotypes and prejudices should be examined.

Teaching and learning through projects should be encouraged and developed. A real-life supervised project could be an appropriate completion of a training period.

Positive attitudes towards people with disabilities should be created as early as possible to overcome psychological barriers to their active participation and to lay the foundations for the removal of physical barriers.

The new curricula should be accompanied by appropriate teaching methods and materials adapted to the various educational needs, paying particular attention to audio-visual material and new technologies, notably information technology and computer-based training and simulations.

Every member state should appoint or set up a governmental body, promote the creation of a professional centre of expertise or use other bodies with competence to disseminate information and documentation as well as to give advice, assistance and support.

## **7. Training of trainers**

Since the awareness of lecturers, teachers and trainers is crucial to all action in this field, basic and further training in the concepts of universal design should be provided to those who are required to implement provisions under chapters 4 to 6, as well as this one.

Staff development programmes to raise awareness and support universal design issues should be encouraged, as should full staff involvement in the development and delivery of universal design strategies.

Special attention should also be paid to the training of non-teaching staff, such as school heads and administrators.

## **8. User participation**

Curricula should be developed with the co-operation of users across the age span, including people with disabilities. Curriculum developers should draw on their expertise. They should be considered as a source of information, first-hand experience and professional competence. User participation should take place as early as possible.

## **9. Evaluating teaching effectiveness**

Since the effectiveness of teaching measures cannot be determined without systematic analysis, the degree of success of each measure should be considered and emerging problems identified.

Institutional evaluation of teaching effectiveness should be seen as an integral part of curriculum development or revision and as a key professional tool for management and planning.

## **10. International exchange of information and good practice**

Member states should exchange information and research findings on the strategy of universal design and the standards of accessibility achieved.

Governments should promote and/or facilitate co-operation across borders and foster contacts between professionals in this field. These activities should include co-operation between universities and other educational or training institutions, the exchange of lecturers, teachers and trainers, as well as study visits of teaching staff and students/trainees.

The bodies referred to in chapter 6, paragraph 8, should be called upon to communicate with corresponding bodies and institutions in other states.

An international exchange of good practice should be developed to illustrate the major themes of the resolution with practical examples in some detail, making the best possible use of new information technologies, such as the Internet.

The examples, although set in specific contexts, should be sufficiently transferable to demonstrate that solutions and good practice can be shared. They should inspire creative imitation in the spirit of the resolution.

The examples should include action by the member states to revise curricula of the different educational institutions and to enhance the work of the bodies referred to in chapter 6, paragraph 8. It should also include action by the different educational and training institutions as well as professional and vocational groups.

## **V. BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO RESOLUTION ResAP(2001)1**

### **1. General commentary**

Within the framework of the Council of Europe's Partial Agreement in the Social and Public Health Field the word "resolution" is synonymous with "recommendation". A resolution/recommendation is a pronouncement of legal and political significance, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, recommending certain special action which member states should take. It is not legally binding.

The resolution is addressed to the governments of member states, which are recommended to implement the resolution and its appended principles "having due regard to their specific constitutional structures, and national, regional or local circumstances as well as education systems". This reflects the discretion of member states to take into account their specific situation and circumstances.

The ways and means of implementing the resolution and its principles are not specified in the text. This enables member states to select any appropriate means of implementation according to their own margin of appreciation. Such means might comprise national law and practice or other initiatives.

The resolution does not seek to address directly the private sector. It is up to member states themselves to define any appropriate arrangements for ensuring that the private sector takes part in the implementation of this resolution. In addition, local and regional authorities might be instrumental in the implementation of the principles of this resolution.

### **2. Observations section by section**

#### **2.1. Preamble**

The first four clauses of the preamble are standard. The next eleven clauses cite major conventions, recommendations and declarations of the Council of Europe and other organisations that deal with the rehabilitation and integration of people with disabilities or with issues of accessibility. The last six clauses reiterate the main reasons for a concerted policy towards more inclusive participation of persons with disabilities in the life of the community by making the environment accessible to everyone.

#### **2.2. Operative paragraphs**

Paragraphs a. and b. follow standard Council of Europe practice, with the exception of a distinction between the areas where government is competent and those where it is not directly responsible. The division of responsibilities varies between countries and over time. The resolution makes no attempt to harmonise

practice in this regard, and it is worded so as to take account of the existing diversity. Government competence may in particular be limited where matters fall within the scope of the autonomous decision-making universities. However, various steering instruments allow governments to take steps as proposed in paragraph b. in favour of the application of the principles and measures put forward in the appendix, even where legal responsibility lies with educational institutions or with intermediary bodies.

In paragraph d. member states are held to disseminate widely this resolution and bring it to the attention of all interested parties. Dissemination of the resolution is a prerequisite for its proper implementation, as this will help public authorities, the private sector and users to understand the principle of universal design and contribute actively to its application.

### **2.3. Appendix to the resolution**

The specific recommendations and principles are appended to the resolution. This appendix forms an integral part of the resolution itself.

#### **2.3.1. General principles**

The resolution takes as a starting point the right of all individuals, including persons with disabilities, to full participation in the life of the community, which involves the right to access to and use and understanding of all parts of the built environment.

It recognises the responsibility and duty of society, and in particular of all occupations working on the built environment, to make it universally accessible to everyone, including persons with disabilities.

#### **2.3.2. Definitions**

The definitions are made for the purpose of the resolution and are not of general application.

The resolution focuses on questions of universal design and accessibility. It should be noted, however, that "egressibility", i.e. the ability to leave a building or reach an area of safety in cases of emergency, is also a subject of concern.

#### **2.3.3. Aims, objectives and strategies**

Traditionally, architects and engineers measure how the built environment meets the needs of its users using anthropometric data, more often than not based on the average young male without any functional limitations. A large part of the population, however, does not correspond to this imaginary "standard user". Present education and training continues to segregate and stereotype people who

do not fit "the norm" by ignoring their existence or, at best, teaching about them as a separate subject matter. Research sometimes furthers this separate treatment through its focus on specific groups, or rather social constructs (e.g. elderly people, persons with disabilities) having unique design needs (e.g. ramp, lift, wider door, larger toilet stall). All specialised solutions, however, reinforce stereotypes, segregation and stigmatisation.

Universal design is a holistic approach to creating built environments that are accessible and understandable to, as well as usable by, everybody regardless of age, size, ability or other physical characteristics. Universal design, by definition, does not exclusively address the needs of people with disabilities but it is inclusive of their requirements. By not thinking about separate user groups but about the whole spectrum of human-environment interaction, it increases the number of people whose needs are being met. It encourages an integrative approach rather than multiple separate solutions and is thus an essential component of any social inclusion policy.

Paradoxically, universal design is most successful when it is not apparent. Good universal design may not be noticeable as are ramps next to steps or larger toilet doors.

Universal design is a "design-in-time" consideration rather than an afterthought that may lead to subsequent adaptations. Following the principle of early intervention to address the cause rather than the symptom, this Resolution recommends introducing the concept of universal design into the curricula of all occupations working on the built environment, in order to enable everyone to play a full role in society and take part in economic, social, cultural, leisure, and recreational activities. People of all ages, sizes, abilities or any other physical characteristics would therefore have as much mobility, and access to buildings as well as means of transport, as possible.

Universal design is neither taught at many European universities and schools of architecture, engineering and design, nor practised by many European architects, engineers, designers or town planners. Thus the aim of this resolution is to ensure that the education and training of all occupations working on the built environment be inspired by the principles of universal design.

Attitudinal barriers still remain to be one of the biggest obstacles to equal opportunities for and full participation of people with disabilities. They may even be harder to eliminate than architectural barriers. Consequently, awareness of the needs of people with disabilities must be raised at all levels.

The resolution also promotes the development of appropriate teaching methods and materials, training of trainers, user participation, teaching programme evaluation and the international exchange of information and good practice.

The following points in the resolution are addressed to governments and educational or training institutions, according to the allocation of responsibilities in each country.

#### **2.3.4. Higher education**

The provisions concerning higher education form the core of the resolution, since the education of architects, engineers, designers and town planners usually falls within the remit of universities or other higher education institutions.

#### **2.3.5. Further education and vocational training**

However, architects, engineers and designers are not always involved in all building projects. Many are carried out by (master) craftsmen alone, such as bricklayers, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, etc. For these reasons, and as a potential for quality control, the initial vocational training of all professions concerned should include universal design principles.

In many countries vocational training is carried out by means of apprenticeship. However, it is recognised that not all educational systems distinguish between further and vocational, or even secondary education, vocational training sometimes being regarded merely as a particular type of secondary education. Consequently, the wording of this section takes account of the differences in systems of vocational training.

#### **2.3.6. Teaching methods and materials**

A wide range of teaching strategies should be explored; the aim is not to develop one single curriculum.

Institutions may develop a wide variety of strategies for teaching universal design, ranging from single courses to cross-department and cross-curriculum infusions.

Teaching methods and materials should be tailored to the specific strengths and weaknesses of students, faculty and curriculum, and be in compliance with the “culture” of the educational institution.

Strategies infusing universal design principles throughout the whole curriculum will have the greatest likelihood of changing students’ attitudes, behaviour and decisions. Such an infusion approach would reinforce the notion that universal accessibility is a way of thinking about user accommodation that permeates all architectural decision-making.

If universal design were to be taught as a stand-alone course, it would risk being regarded as a specific skill area and marginalized as non-essential matter. (In that case, at least linkages should be made to other courses.) Furthermore, single exposure is not enough for most students to fully appreciate the value of inclusiveness. The long-term strategy for making the education of architects, engineers, designers, and town planners more inclusive rests, in some part, on the extent to which issues of universal accessibility are infused across the curriculum, giving students repetitive exposure to that inclusive approach.

Teleteaching and teletraining modules should be made available to those learners whose professional or private circumstances inhibit regular attendance of traditional teaching or training courses.

### **2.3.7. Training of trainers**

The training of lecturers, teachers and trainers in universal design concepts is an essential component of the successful dissemination of universal design values. Staff development and awareness courses should also be addressed to personnel at decision-making and administrative level.

### **2.3.8. User participation**

Involving users could be seen as the single most valuable strategy for teaching universal design, since the best teachers are often people who are stakeholders and whose needs are not sufficiently met by current environments. Users are most valuable in giving students the opportunity to view the architectural product from a different perspective.

User accommodation is not merely the third element in design, alongside aesthetics and technology, but it is in fact the context within which all factors of architectural design should be placed. User participation may help to place clients closer to the centre of the design process.

Particular attention should be paid to including the broad diversity of users who interact on a daily basis with the creations of architects, engineers, designers and town planners.

### **2.3.9. Evaluating teaching effectiveness**

It should be evaluated whether the teaching approach has been effective in teaching students the values and principles of universal design. Faculties could use their own evaluative instruments (e.g. simple “before” and “after” questionnaires), but university statisticians could also conduct a more rigorous assessment of changes in knowledge and attitudes comparing groups with different degrees of exposure to universal design values, including a control group with no exposure.

However, the most important issue is whether students actually incorporate their awareness and knowledge into their concrete architectural projects. Consequently, a more reliable indicator of student learning would come from reviewing students' work in subsequent semesters/terms to see how well they are able to integrate what they have learned about universal design into other projects that do not place particular emphasis on universal design.

#### **2.3.10. International exchange of information and good practice**

The goals of the resolution can in any case only be attained if sound law and policy are accompanied by good practice throughout the daily life of education and training. This chapter invites countries to continue to draw on each other's experience. The transborder exchange of information and good practice being proposed would contribute to that aim by developing relations and co-operation across national frontiers.

