

## Impact of the Regulation

The aim of the Regulation is to ensure equal opportunities for the whole population to participate in society and to achieve independent self-realisation throughout a person's life. The Regulation clarifies the scope of application, which will result in greater clarity for all parties involved, including the authorities competent to carry out procedural actions. The extension of the scope to residential property improves people's self-reliance and personal fulfilment, which in turn will lead to savings in both state and local government spending on the provision of home, housing, support, care or similar services (including nursing homes, aids, psychological counselling, rehabilitation, job-search assistance, etc.). Therefore, the draft Regulation will have a significant impact on both the recipients and providers of the service.

Below is a brief overview of the main impacts.

1. The Regulation has a strong social, including demographic impact, as the implementation of the draft will primarily affect the most vulnerable groups of the population – children, the elderly and people with disabilities. The draft will promote social inclusion, equal treatment and support demographic developments related to the increasing need of an ageing population for an accessible living environment and housing. This is specified in detail in the final report of the Accessibility Task Force, which is also briefly discussed in the explanatory memorandum above. The report of the Task Force, together with the sectoral reports, is available on the website of the State Chancellery.<sup>1</sup>

2. The Regulation will have both short-term and long-term effects on the economy. In the short term, the new requirements may increase the construction and development costs, but in the long term the accessibility of buildings will have a positive impact on expanding the usability and multifunctionality of buildings, the availability of services, jobs and housing, and enhancing the overall quality of the living environment, thus benefiting the entire population. Several studies, including the analysis of minimum accessibility criteria for planned apartment buildings (2022), commissioned by the State Chancellery and compiled by MTÜ Ligipäasetavuse Foorum<sup>2</sup> and the analysis of the accessibility of apartment building measure (2021)<sup>3</sup> by KREDEX, confirm that ensuring accessibility does not have an excessive impact on construction costs, remaining within a few per cents (the estimate presented in the KREDEX apartment building study does not include the cost of installing a new lift). The study suggests that the inclusion of the accessibility aspect in the sales information of new apartments by the developers has attracted the attention of customers and buyers have found accessible apartments faster. Accessible apartments are more competitive, buyers' awareness has increased, and accessible living space is preferred, even at a slightly higher price. According to the study, as the standard of living improves, comfort is becoming increasingly important, including among people without special needs. For example, a lift makes an apartment more attractive and brings in customers.

3. The Regulation has some impact on the organisation of state agencies and local governments. The new accessibility requirements may have an impact on the activities of state agencies and local governments, as they may require some administrative resources for the processing of permits and exercising supervision, especially in matters related to residential real estate. In addition, the state and the local government must set an example by improving

---

<sup>1</sup><https://www.riigikantselei.ee/accessibility>

<sup>2</sup> [https://kliimaministeerium.ee/sites/default/files/documents/2023-06/Miinumunouded\\_loppraport\\_2022.pdf](https://kliimaministeerium.ee/sites/default/files/documents/2023-06/Miinumunouded_loppraport_2022.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> <https://riigikantselei.ee/sites/default/files/documents/2021-10/KREDEX%20korterelamute%20meetme%20ligip%C3%A4%C3%A4setavuse%20anal%C3%BC%C3%BCsi%20aruanne.pdf>.

the accessibility of the buildings they own. Since the majority of the basic accessibility requirements have been in force since 2003, the expected impact on the organisation of state agencies and local governments is not significant.

4. The Regulation has a neutral or negligible impact on regional development. The regional impact depends above all on the extent and nature of the construction activities in various areas. Improving the accessibility of buildings, including homes in apartment buildings, can contribute to reducing regional disparities by making services, workplaces and housing accessible to a broader population also outside bigger cities. This could increase the attractiveness of smaller regions as places to live and work, and encourage younger people to return to their home regions. The direct impact will be felt in particular in areas with more reconstruction and new construction activity, i.e. in larger cities. Therefore, the impact on regional inequality is neutral in the short term, but a certain positive impact can be expected in the long term.

The Regulation has no significant impact on national security and foreign relations (the accessibility of buildings is first and foremost a matter of domestic policy, construction and social affairs), nor does it have any impact on the living and natural environment (it is related to above all fundamental principles of high-quality space, which include accessibility). The indirect impact can be seen as increased awareness among the younger generation, which in turn can have an impact on social attitudes and preferences, for example when choosing a place to live.