



AGAINST ISOLATION.

TELECOMS' POTENTIAL FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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About the European Disability Forum

- Umbrella organisation
- 80 million Europeans with disabilities in Europe (15% EU population)
- Organisation OF persons with disabilities, RUN BY persons with disabilities
- Fight against discrimination and promote the Human Rights of persons with disabilities
- Advocacy organisation at European level
- Closely work with the EU, the Council of Europe and the UN



What is the potential of telecommunications for persons with disabilities?

- Independent living
- Autonomy in decision-taking
- Inclusion in all aspects of life
- Participation in society
- Safety

Equal access and choice to, and affordability of:

- networks and services
- equipment

Comply with the UN CRPD obligations
(explanatory remarks UN CRPD
Committee General Comment No. 2)

Potential to create new barriers and discrimination



“Study on assessing and promoting e-Accessibility” (MeAC 3)

November 2013

Article 23a of the Universal Service Directive (2009)

27 Member States + 4 non-EU countries (US, CA, NO, AU)


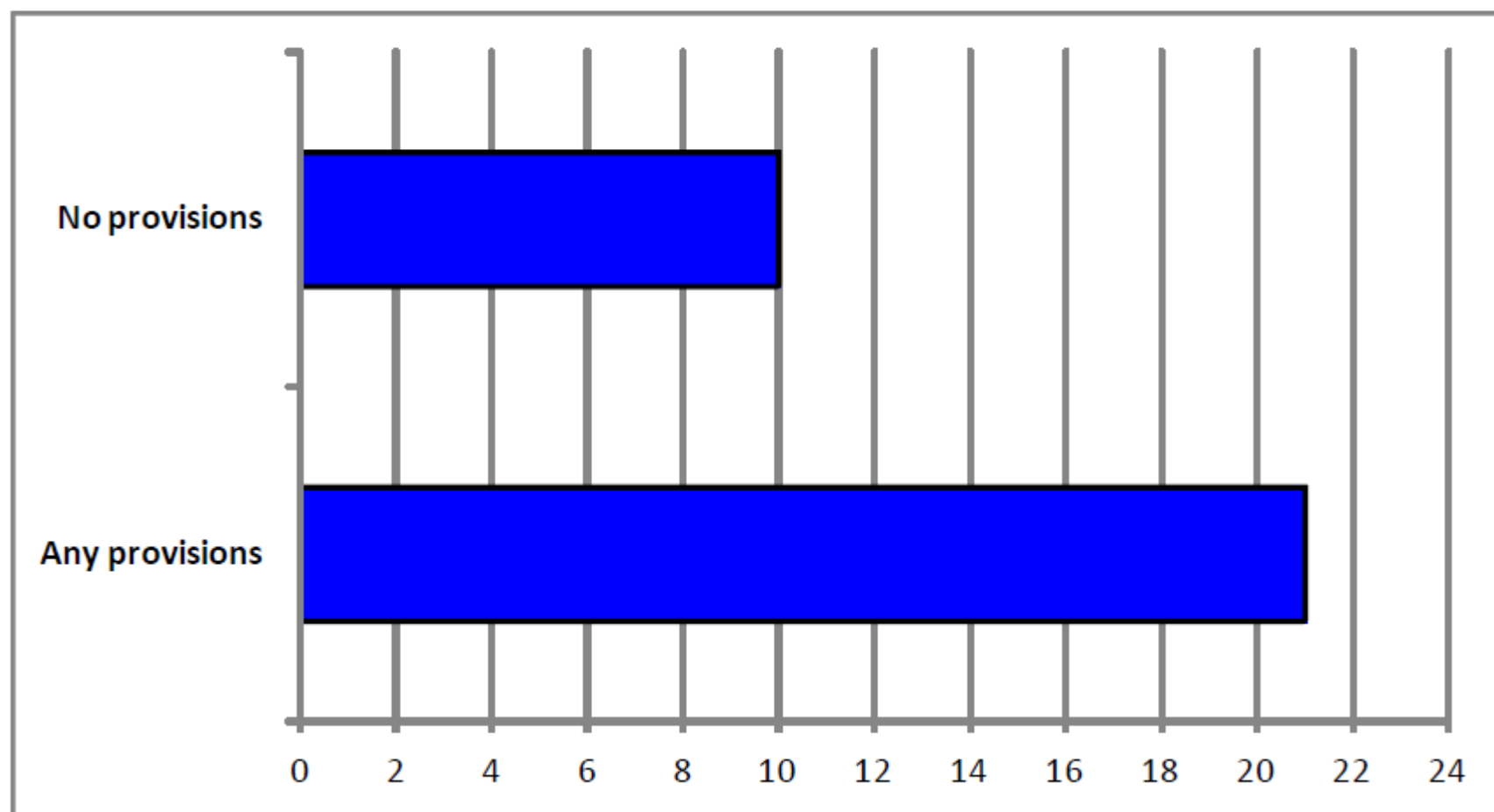
- accessible directory services,
 - payphones
 - provision of relay services (text and video)
 - provision of special equipment.
 - emergency services
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Figure 3-1 No of countries with any provisions concerning
accessibility of directory services (n=31)



**Figure 3-2 No. of countries with provision of any accessibility features
with public pay phones (n=31)**

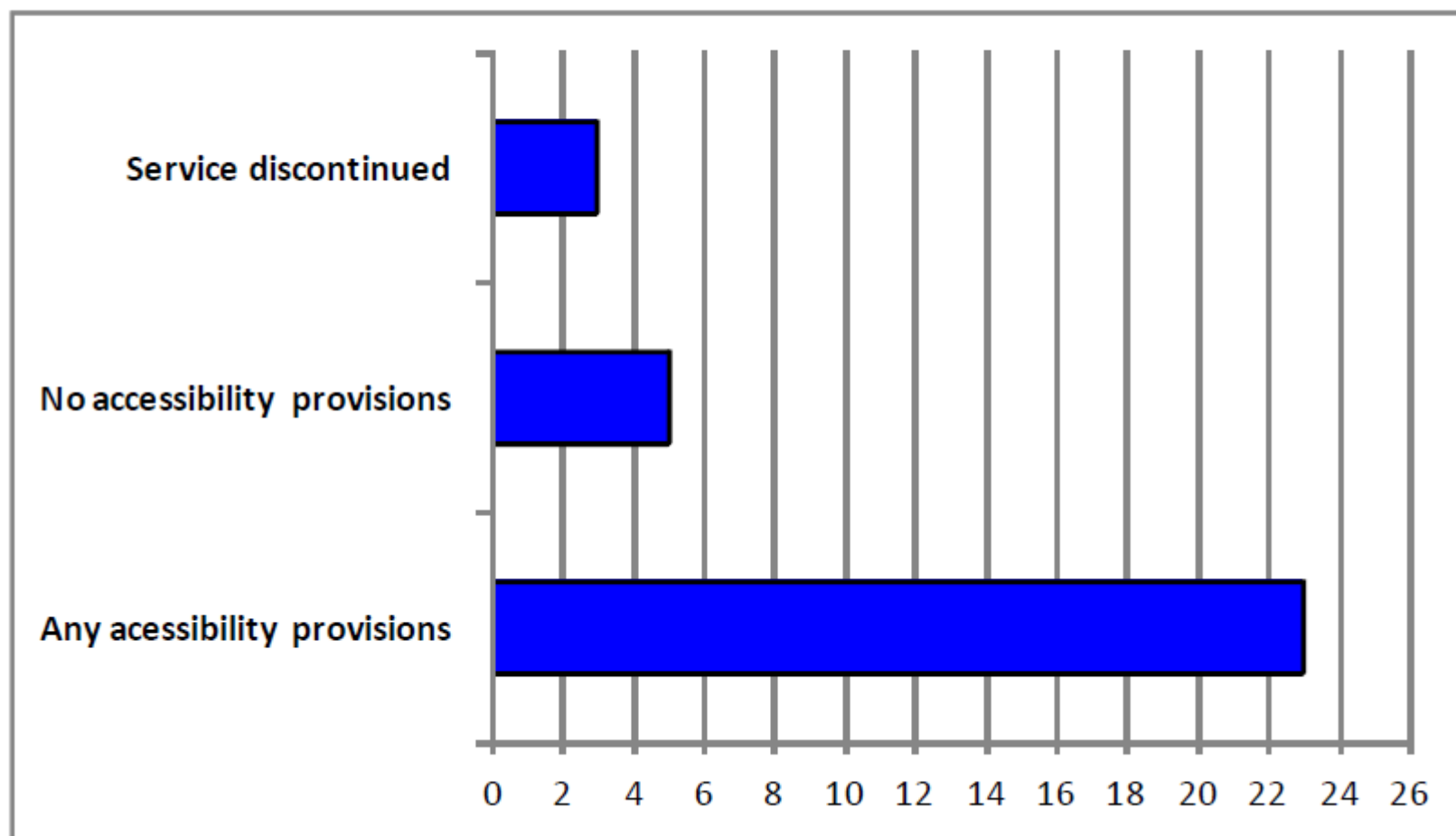


Figure 3-3 No. of countries in which a relay service is available (n=31)

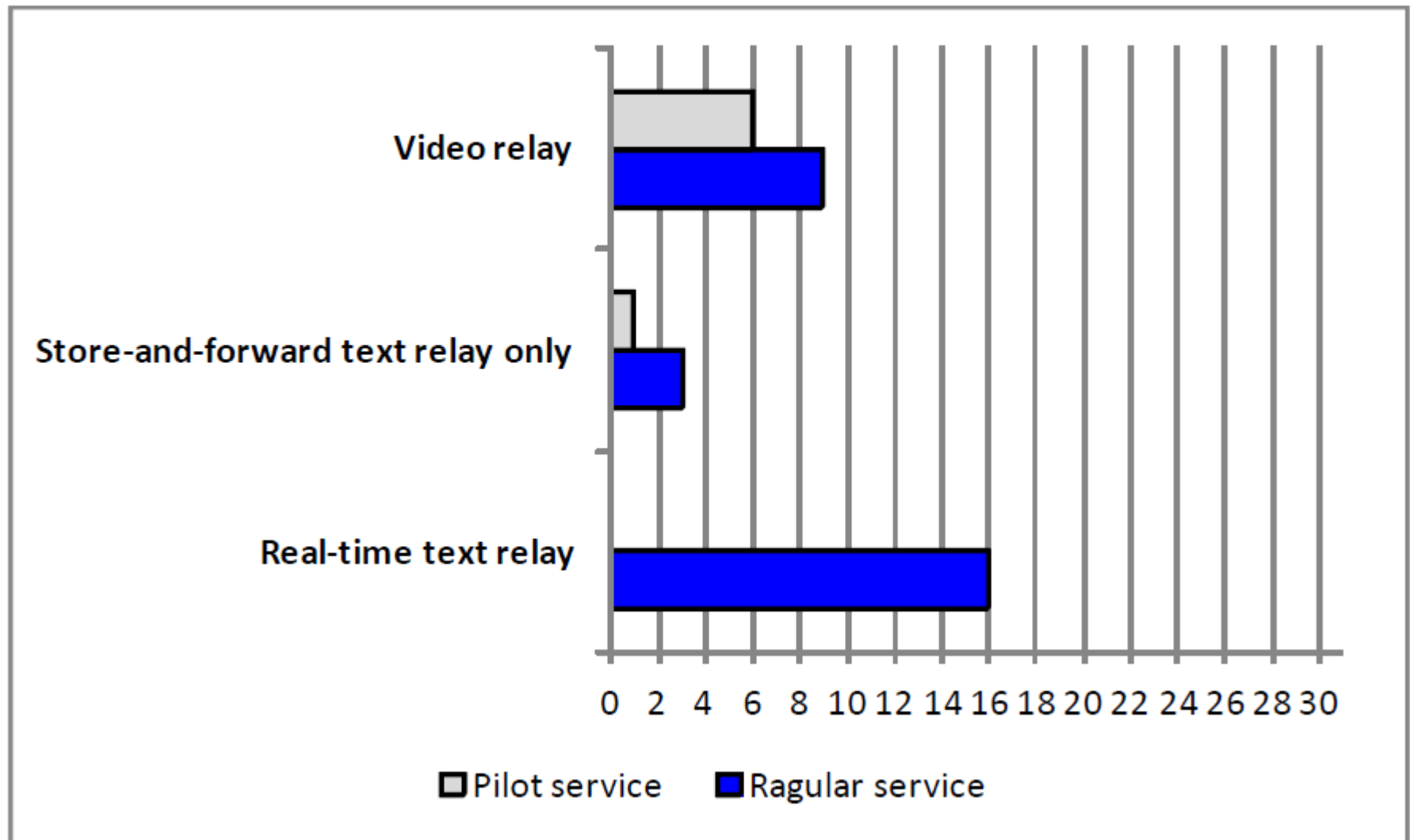
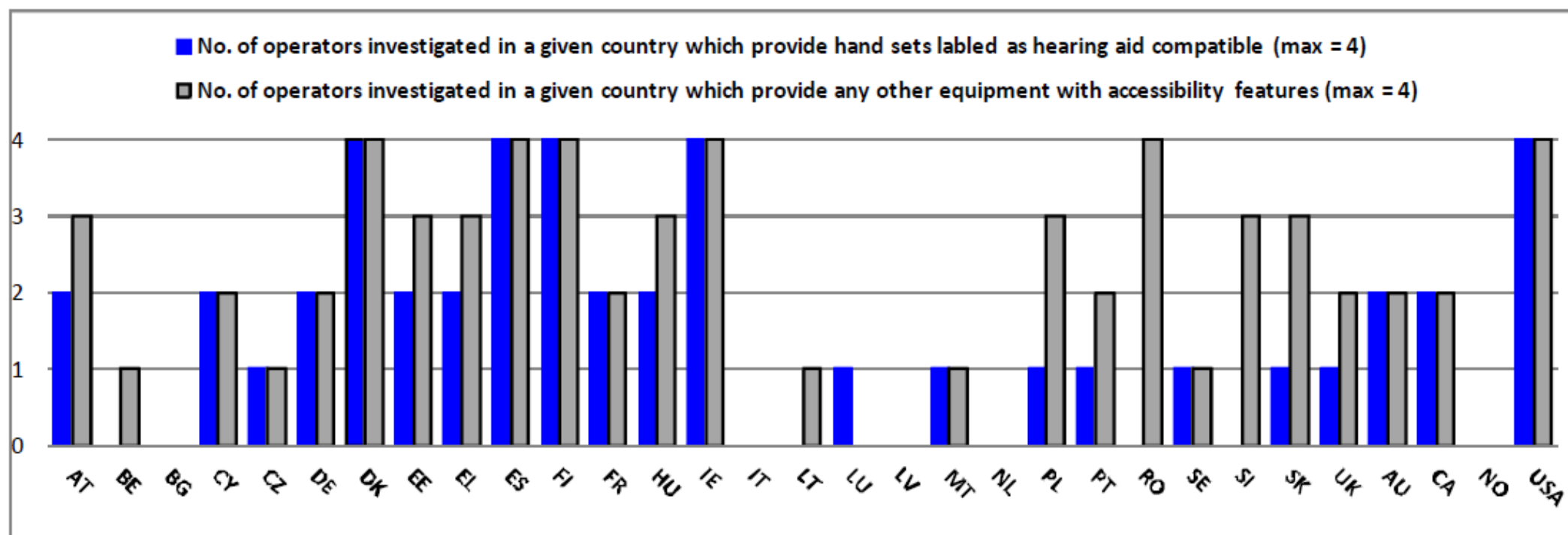
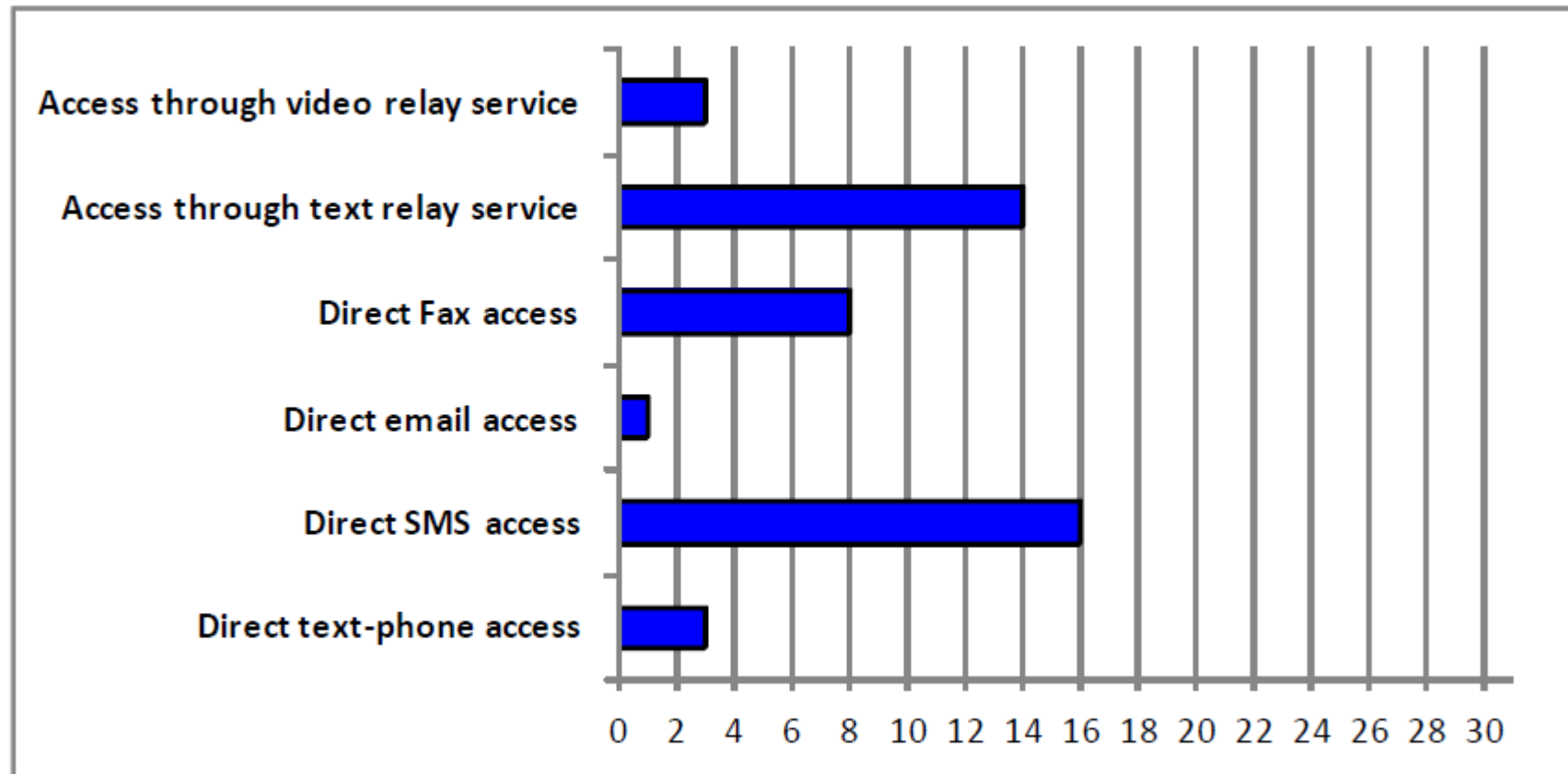


Figure 3-5 No. of telecoms operators offering accessible end user equipment per country




Note: The two main fixed line operators and two mobile operators were investigated in each country.

Figure 3-6 No. of countries where access to emergency services is provided by alternative communication modes (n=31)



Note: More than one access option may exist in a given country

Barriers encountered by EDF members:

- Persons with disabilities living in remote areas – less choice of accessible services and/or not aware of the their availability
 - Products and services for persons with disabilities are procured outside the mainstream procurement of products and services
 - Lack of involvement of organisations representing persons with disabilities in the NRA's
 - Some NRA's too business-oriented
 - Non-accessible information, e.g. websites of Telecoms providers – no requirement by NRA's
 - NRA's lack of guidance for users and providers in understanding accessibility provisions
 - Lack of monitoring on accessibility
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Recommendations:

To NRA's:


- Refer to the **EN 301 549**: web, software, documents, ICT with two-way voice communication, ICT with video capabilities, ICT providing relay or emergency services, etc.
- Add conditions to the general authorization to deliver e-communication services
- Ensure a wide definition of terminal equipment intended for PwD
- Place requirements to all communication service providers, including new ways of communication (e.g. mobile apps)
- Provide guidance to users and companies
- Involve persons with disabilities
- Regular monitoring
- Raise awareness of the accessibility provisions adopted in the country

Recommendations:

At EU level:

- Ongoing mechanism to provide guidance to NRA's
 - Regular and harmonised benchmark reporting exercise both on access and choice – publicly available and in accessible formats
 - Involve users' organisations in BEREC Working Groups
 - Raise awareness on the rights of EU citizens concerning accessibility on e-communications
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Related documents:

- [UN CRPD](#), and [General Comment No. 2 – Article 9](#)
 - [EDF presentation at the BEREC Accessibility Workshop](#), October 2013
 - [EDF Position on Indicators to Check and Assess Accessibility of Telecommunications for Persons with Disabilities](#), April 2012
 - [EDF Toolkit on the Telecoms Package](#), September 2011
 - [ANEC/EDF Answer to the BEREC public consultation on Electronic Communications Services: Ensuring Equivalence in Access and Choice for Disabled End-Users](#), November 2010
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THANK YOU

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