



FLASH REPORT

Date: 23 January 2009
Expert: Manuel Malheiros
Title: Implementation of measures to promote accessibility to information for visually impaired people
Country: Portugal

Context

Issue at stake: Labelling of goods in Braille at the retail sector
Ground of discrimination: of disability
Source: INR and newspapers (TSF online), *País Positivo* magazine
Field: Access to goods and services at retail sales areas
Legislative provisions: Law 33/2008 of 22 July 2008 establishing measures to promote the accessibility to information about specific goods for visually impaired people

Short analysis:

Law 33/2008 of 22 July 2008 “establishing measures to promote the accessibility to information about specific goods for blind and visually impaired people” requires large retail areas to implement, by 22 January 2009, equipments that provide blind and visually impaired people with the necessary Braille information about the product they plan to buy. According to articles 2 to 6, this law is applicable to retail sellers who own at least 5 establishments each one with an area superior than 300m² and where alimentary and non-alimentary goods are sold. These retail sellers should at least in one of their establishments assure the individual supervision of visually impaired people so that they can buy the products in an easier way. These labels will be attached to products so that these can be identified by visually impaired people. The labels will include the description of the product, its principal characteristics and expiration date. It is foreseen that the associations representing people with disabilities will give their agreement on this new system.

The integration of new technologies in the large retail surfaces introduces the development of solutions that improve the buying experience of persons with disabilities. This new application of Braille labelling at the retail sector will meet the needs of people with serious visual impairments and also represents the visible face of the social responsibility of retail.

Sofia Antunes, manager of Associação dos Cegos e Amblíopes de Portugal (ACAPO) [Portuguese Association of Blind and Visually Impaired People] stated «that citizens with visual deficiencies face countless challenges and barriers daily, including the whole process of purchasing at retail. Without suitable labeling it is very difficult to distinguish between a tube of toothpaste and a tube of glue, or between a tin of pickles and a tin of floor wax. Solutions as this will render the buying experience at retail easier for the more than 160,000 persons with severe visual impairment estimated to live in Portugal».

The Portuguese retail sector is now within all efforts beginning to label all goods in Braille.

Internet link source and additional information:

Law 33/2008 available at Instituto Nacional para a Reabilitação (INR) [National Rehabilitation Institute] - http://www.inr.pt/bibliopac/diplomas/lei_33_2008.htm