

(Translated from Russian)

**Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation
to the United Nations Office and other
international organizations in Geneva**

No. 2385

The Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and, with reference to letter AL RUS 3/2020 of 10 June 2020 containing a joint enquiry from the special procedures of the Human Rights Council regarding the provision to deaf and hard-of-hearing persons of information on restrictions introduced in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, has the honour to transmit herewith information from the Russian Federation.

The Permanent Mission takes this opportunity to convey to the Office the renewed assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 27 July 2020

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights

Geneva

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Reply of the Russian Federation to the joint enquiry of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council regarding problems with the provision to deaf and hard-of-hearing persons of information on the restrictions introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Ref: AL RUS 3/20

In the context of the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Russian Federation is committed to fulfilling its international obligations as regards the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities. All provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including the right of access to information, are fully realized, including for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons.

To ensure that information is accessible for persons with hearing impairments, television channels work to provide closed captioning for the television programmes of most interest to deaf citizens, while adaptations such as open captions and scrolling news tickers are used for news and factual programming.

This work is performed with ongoing input from the State and the All-Russian Society of the Deaf, a national organization of persons with disabilities. The number of adapted programmes on various subjects has significantly increased in recent times, in view of the additional requirements in terms of accessibility of television programmes for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons, which entered into force on 1 January 2020.

In preparation for the entry into force of these requirements, the television channels selected closed captioning as their preferred means of adaption of televisual content because it may be activated only by those who need it, not inconveniencing other viewers.

In the Russian Federation, an effective system has been established for adapting television broadcasting to the needs of hard-of-hearing citizens. The captioning of television programmes is based on careful editorial work, ensuring the captioning not only of dialogues but also of other sounds and noises, and optimizing the text of the captions to balance completeness of information with a comfortable reading speed. The captions produced on Russian television ensure access to the maximum amount of information for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons, and their quality has been confirmed by organizations of hard-of-hearing persons, including the All-Russian Society of the Deaf.

To meet the needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing persons for urgent information, the federal news channel Russia-24 accompanies its 24-hour broadcasts with a scrolling news ticker and open captions. Some news programmes of other leading federal television channels also have captions or a scrolling news ticker.

All televised addresses to the nation by President Vladimir Putin, including those related to the measures taken in the Russian Federation to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19, are accessible to deaf and hard-of-hearing persons on the website www.kremlin.ru. Similarly, the Mayor of Moscow, Sergei Sobyenin, has a website (www.sobyenin.ru) on which he provides information, including on the introduction of any pandemic-related restrictions in the city.

Moreover, a special COVID-19 website (www.стопкоронавирус.рф), containing up-to-date information on the subject, has been created by order of the Prime Minister, Mikhail Mishustin.

Whenever it is necessary to communicate information to the public in emergency situations, urgent information may also be broadcast on television and radio in audiovisual or text format. This method is usually used in remote regions with limited or no Internet access.

The distribution of print media has continued countrywide throughout the pandemic, with the publication of highly detailed and up-to-date information about the COVID-19 situation.

To stop the spread of COVID-19 in the Russian Federation and protect public health in the country, as well as to take steps to uphold the right of persons with disabilities to social protection, the Government adopted decision No. 467 of 9 April 2020 on a temporary

procedure for recognition as a person with a disability. The decision provides for fully remote determination of disability without the need for in-person participation, based on information submitted by health-care organizations, until 1 October 2020. Under the temporary procedure, an automatic six-month extension of the disability category is also provided for those citizens, including minors, whose recertification deadline falls within the period from 1 March to 1 October 2020.

Moreover, these groups of citizens are informed of the possibility of submitting a request for assistive technology without having to apply in person at the offices of the Social Insurance Fund.
