# Experience of Belarusian State University in accessible tourism training and research

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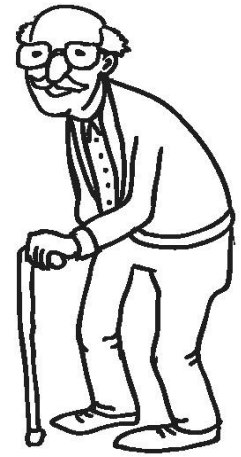
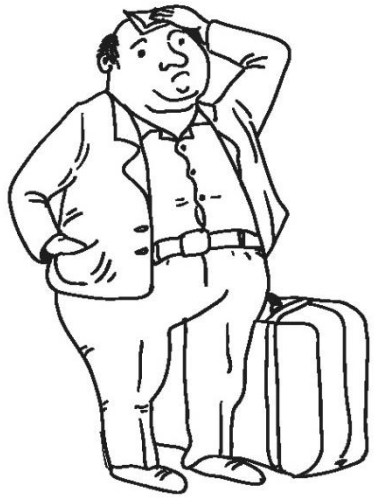
# Accessible tourism in Belarus

# People with access needs

- There are more than 550.000 people with disabilities in Belarus (around 6% of the population)
- **Around 1,9 bln people over 60 years**
- **Around 25%** of adults are obese





**No less than 1/3 of the population needs accessibility**

# Legislation

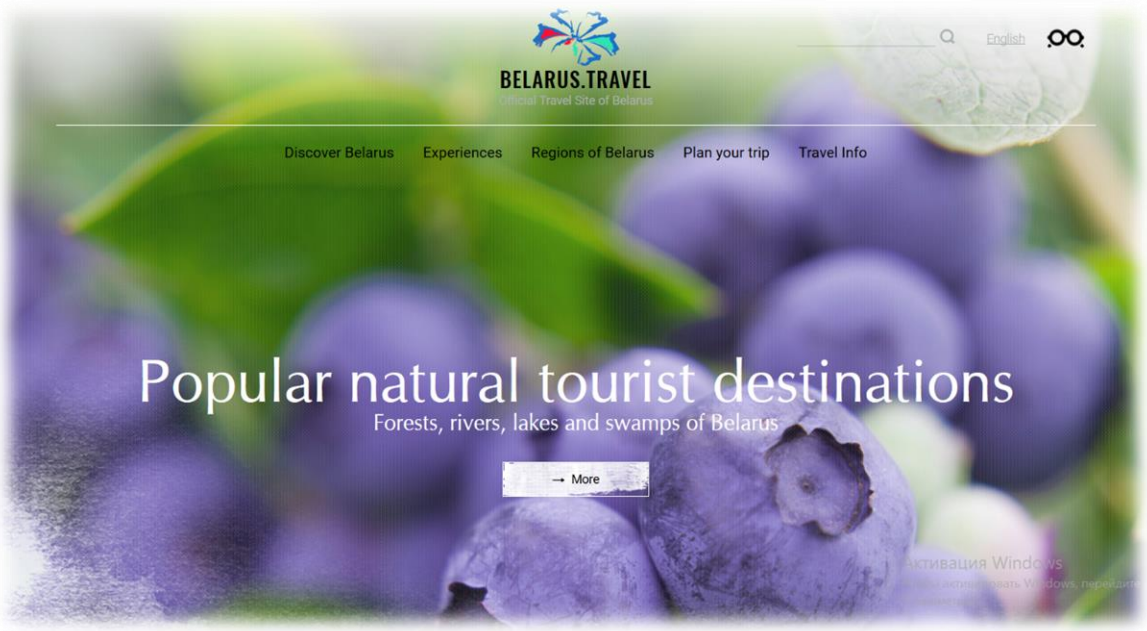
- The Constitution
- Act on the Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities
- State Program on Social Protection and Promotion of Employment for 2016 – 2020
- Around 20 technical regulatory acts in the field of architecture and construction

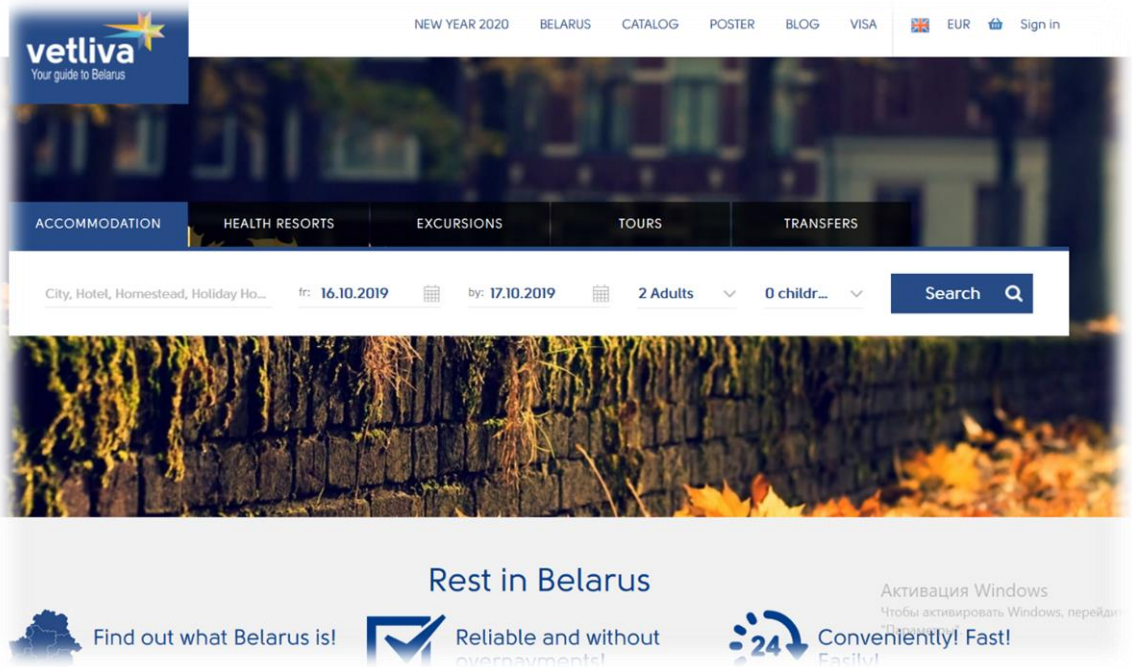
# «National Action Plan for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Belarus»

- Task 2. Creating conditions for the integration of people with disabilities in all spheres of society:

17. Taking measures to create conditions and increase the participation of persons with disabilities in tourism, sports and leisure activities

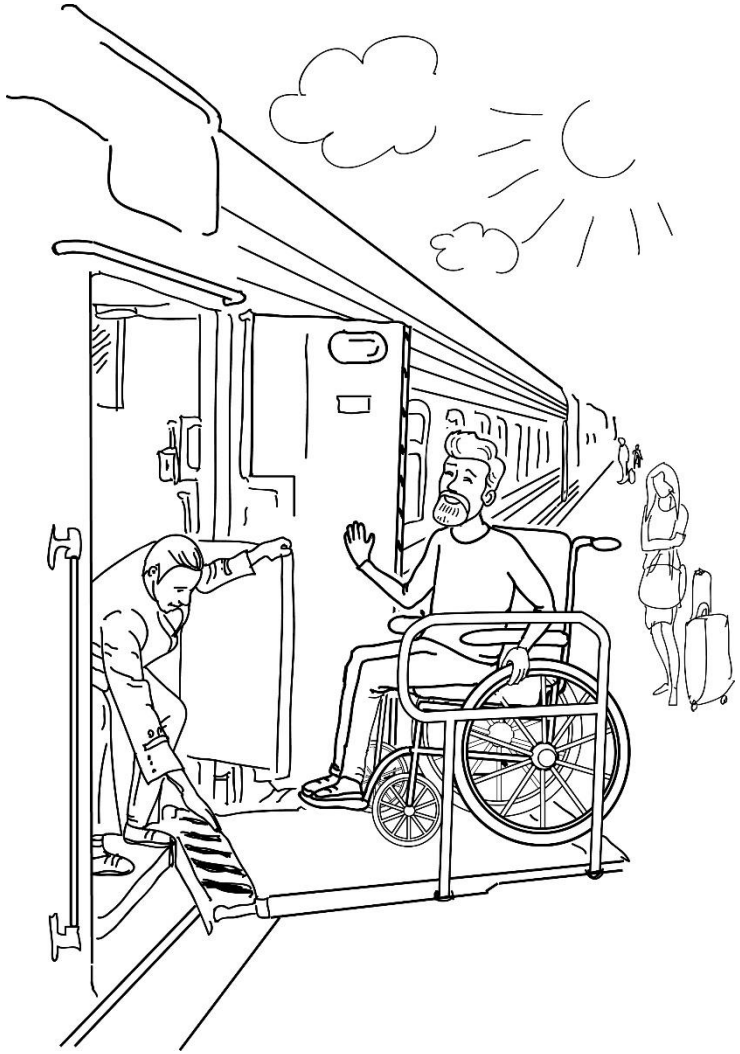
# Challenge #1: Information

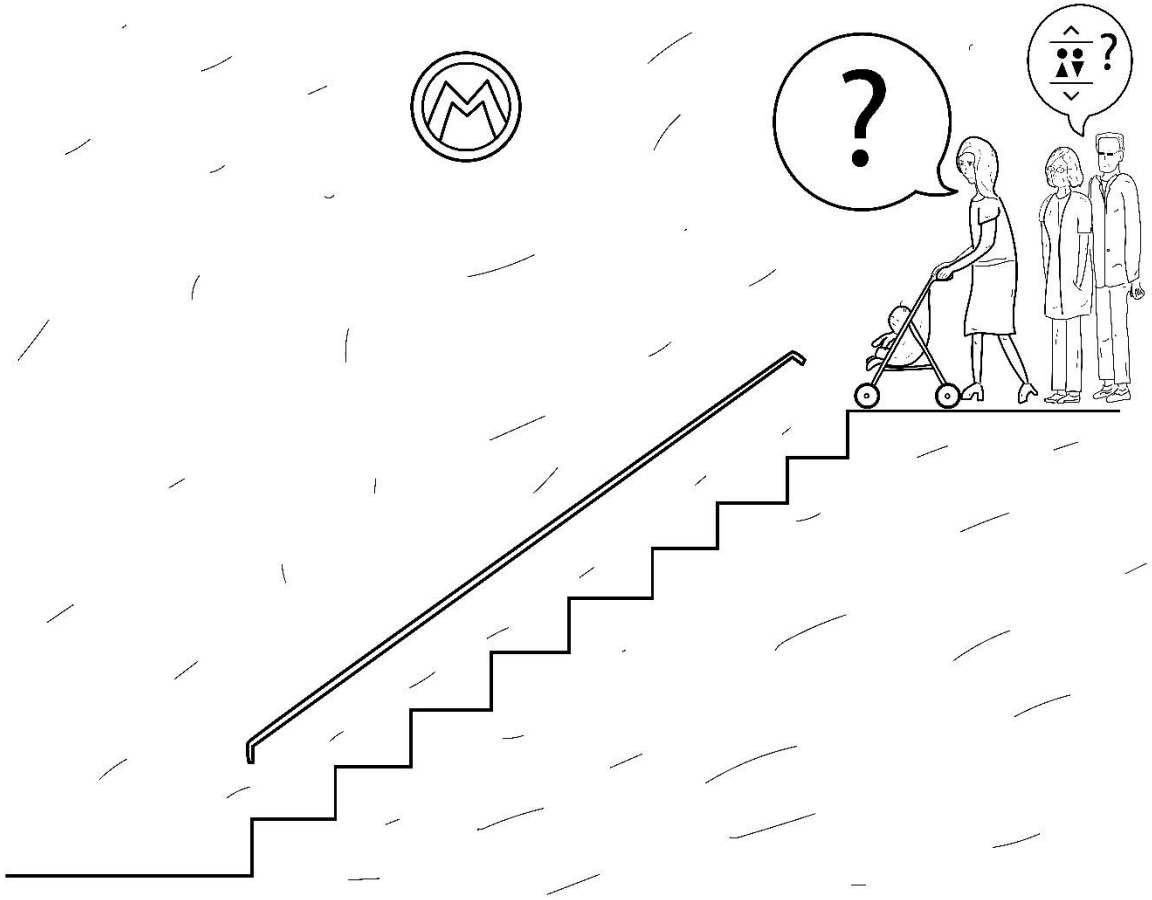


Very little or no information about accessible travel

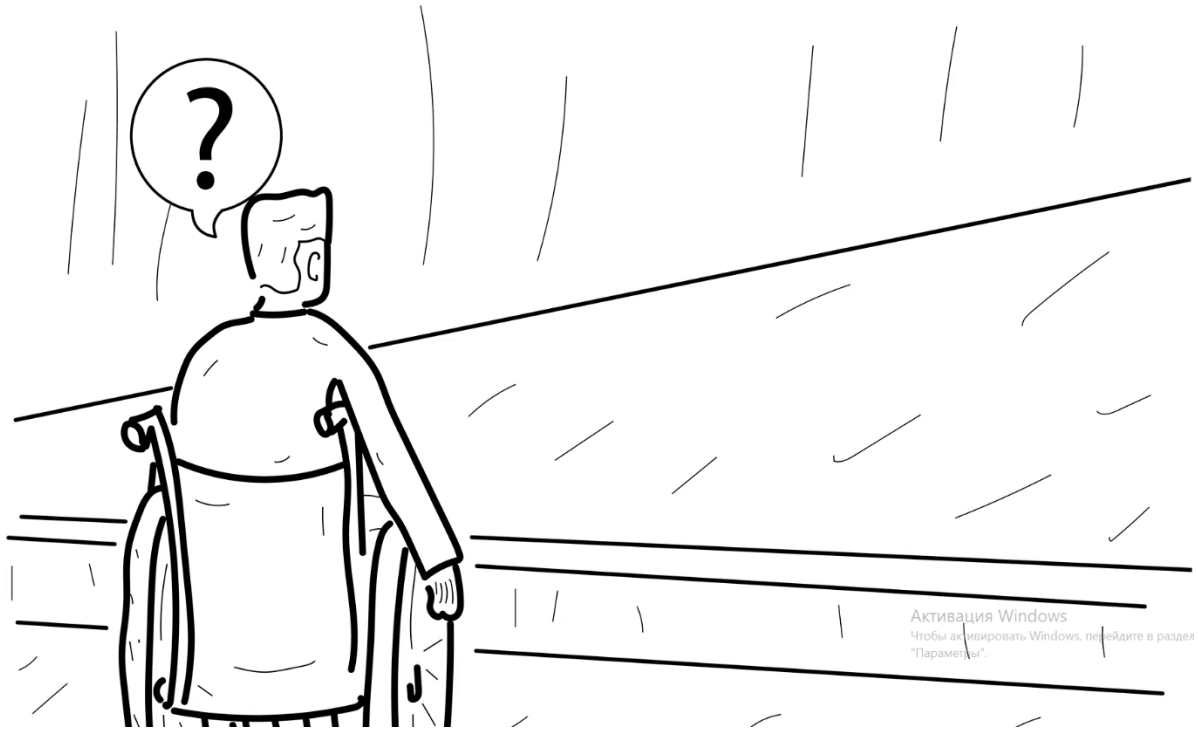
# Challenge #2: Infrastructure





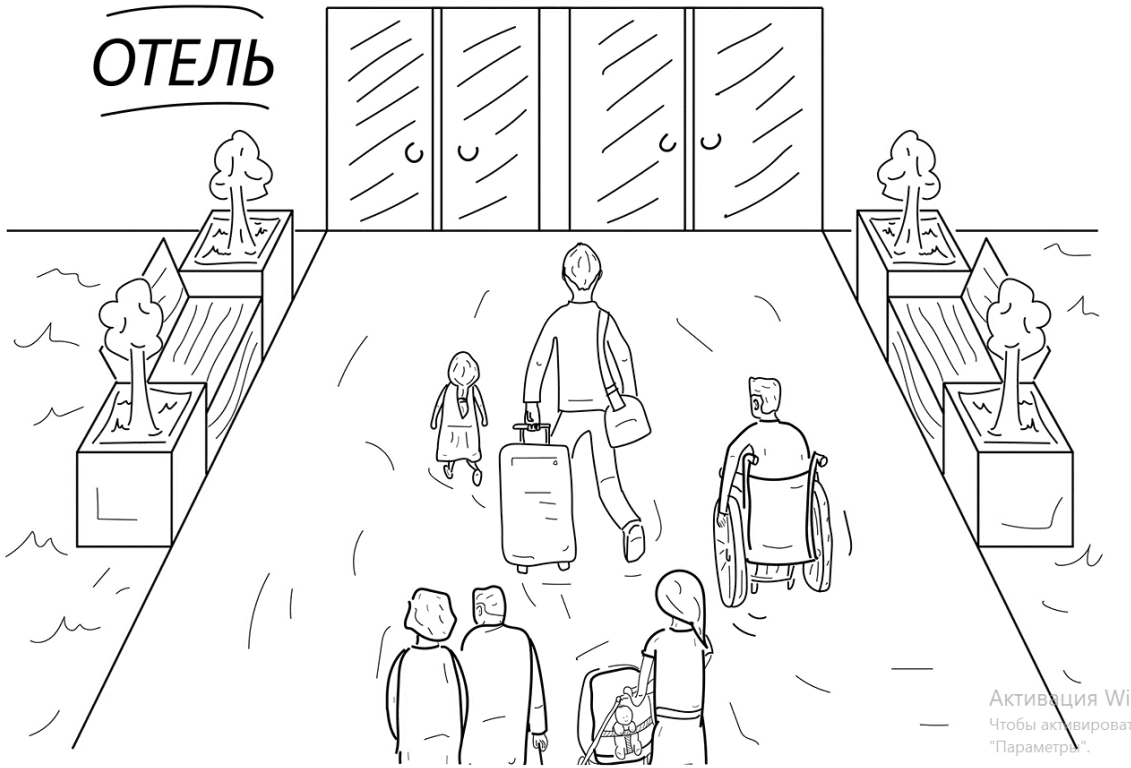
# Infrastructure & Services

- The percentage of accessible rooms in Minsk hotels is 1,5%
- In sanatoriums – 1,6% of rooms are accessible for wheelchair users
- Three sanatorium «Belaja Vezha» (Brest region), «Jaselda» (Brest region) and «Vjazhuti» (Minsk region).



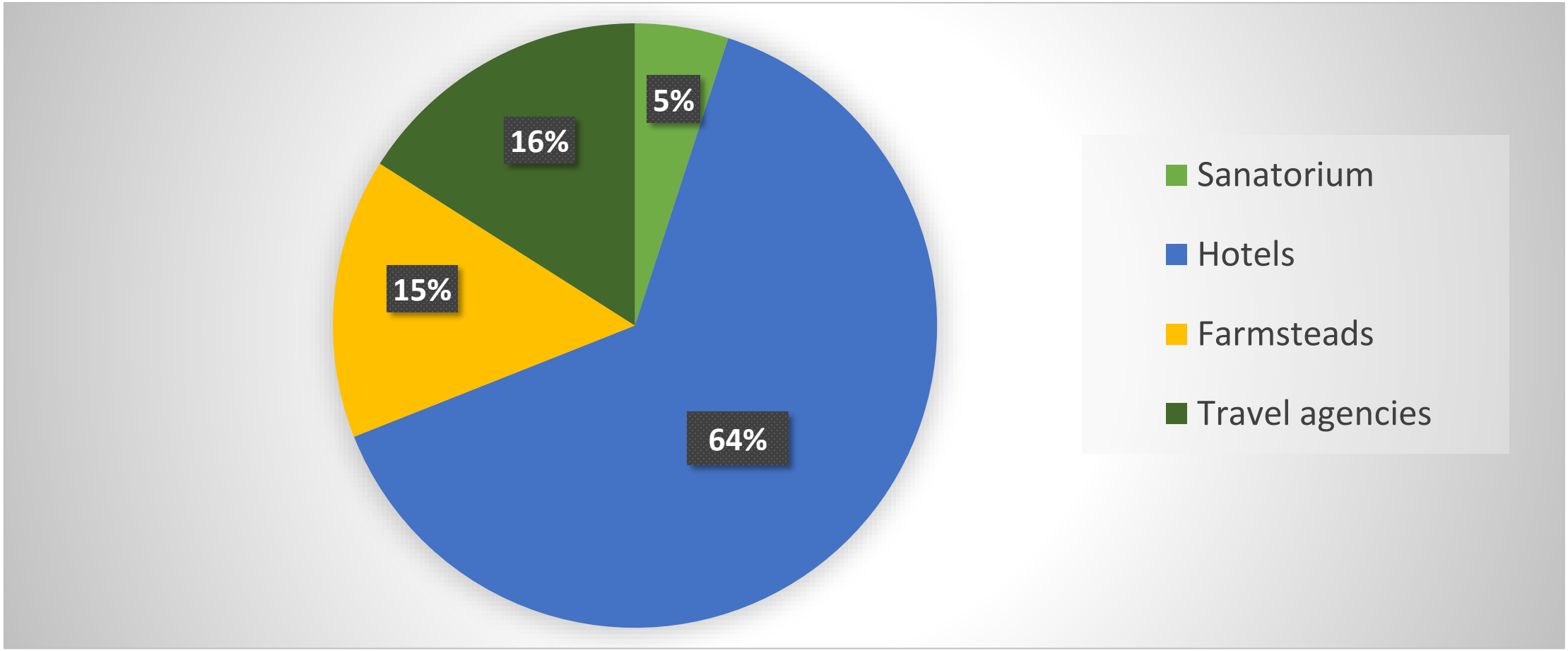
# Infrastructure & Services

- **423 rooms in sanatoriums** for people using wheelchair
(in 2016 - 273 rooms, in 2010 - 40)
- **63 rooms in 30 Minsk hotels in 2019**
(in 2016 - 55 rooms в 24 hotels)
- **185 rooms** in hotels all over Belarus (2017)
- Around **20 farmsteads** provide some accessible services
- **3-4** travel agencies

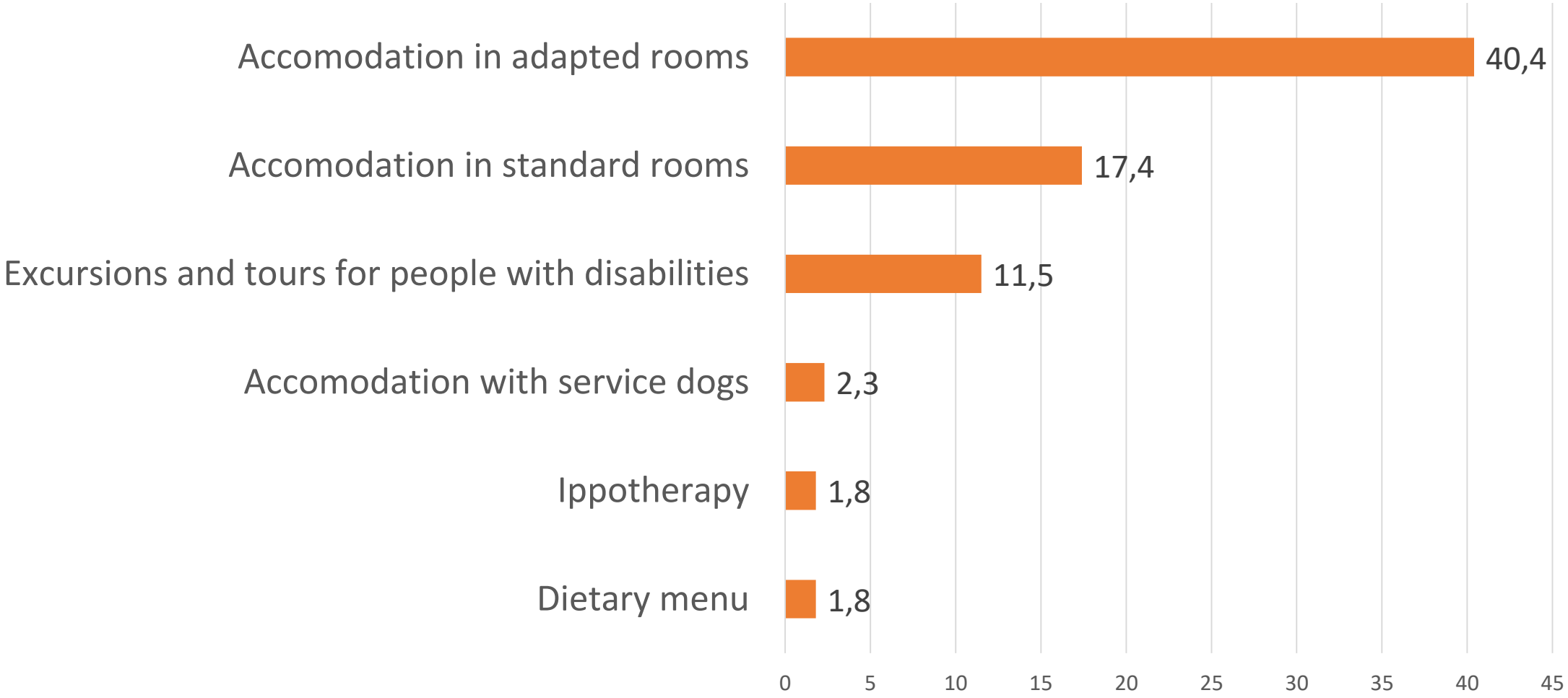



Активация Win
Чтобы активировать
"Параметры".

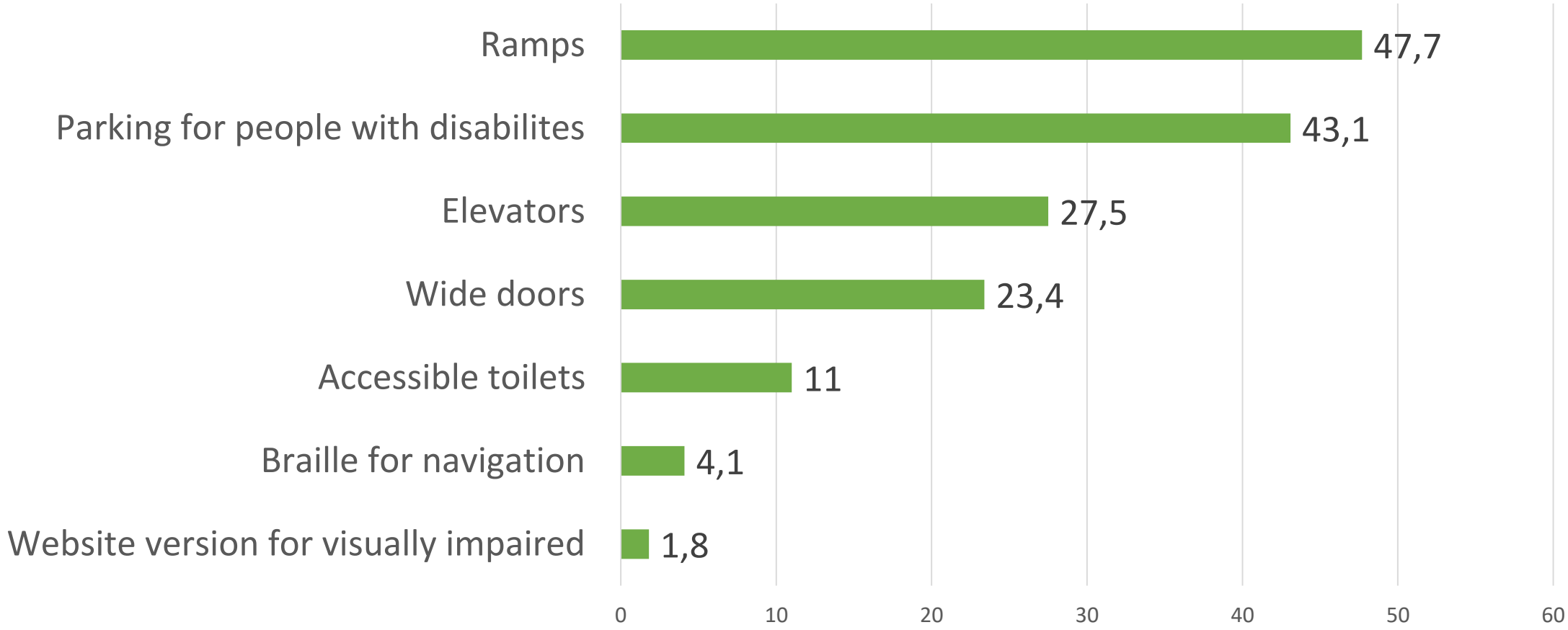
# The list of travel agencies, farmsteads and hotels that provide services for people with disabilities



# Most widespread services (%)



# Elements of infrastructure(%)



# Transport accessibility

National Airport ‘Minsk’ is quite accessible

# Belarusian Railway

- 30 railway stations
- 20 railway carriages
- 25 trains

# Accessible tourism projects

- ‘Volozhin without barriers’ project
- Financially supported by the EU
- Involved 4 partners (Local authorities and NGOs)

# Accessible rural tourism

- 5 farmsteads received small grants for developing accessible tourism products

# Accessible eco-trail

- 1,3 km long
- 9 interactive stands
- 6 tactile maps
- 3 accessible shelters
- 3 accessible toilets

# Challenge #3: Tourism providers

Believe that accessibility makes tourist sites more attractive to visitors

**BUT**

**Only 34,7%** are ready to invest in accessibility

# Key barriers

Lack of finances for improvement (81,8%)

Lack of information about the requirements of people with access needs (71,3%)

Lack of barrier-free environment (69,9%)

# Challenge #4: Training

- Non-governmental organizations
- Belarusian State University

# Belarusian State University

- Main Belarusian University
- 100 year old
- 27 faculties
- 28.5 thousands of students

# Faculty of International Relations

- International Tourism Department – one of 13 departments
- 22 years old
- Bachelor and Master’s programs in tourism and event-management

ACCESSIBLE TOURISM
Training
Research
Bachelor program
Master program
Student research laboratory
Individual research
Accessible tourism: practice and solutions
Making events accessible for all
Cooperation with NGO's and public institutions

# «Accessible tourism: practice and solutions»

- Since 2016
- In frames of bachelor program in International tourism management
- The first such discipline at the level of higher education in Belarus
- More than 200 students went though this course at the moment

Practical training within the course

Practical training within the course

# «Making events accessible for all»

- Since 2019
- In terms of Master's Program in Event Management
- 45 students went though this course at the moment

# Student Research Laboratory «Innovative technologies in tourism»

- Works since 2013
- Since 2016 students are actively involved in accessible tourism research
- In average 10-15 students are involved yearly
- Was acknowledged as one of the best student research laboratories in BSU

# Activities of the Student Research Laboratory

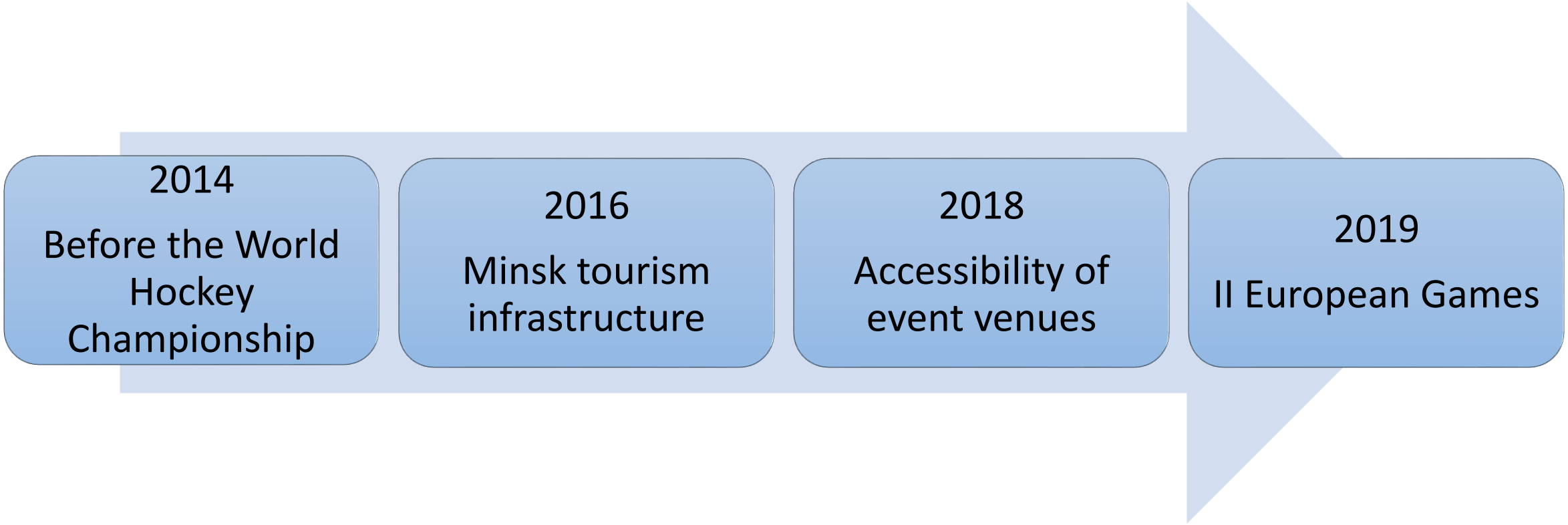
- Creation of the video "Tourism for All“
- Participation in annual Accessibility Week organized by disability NGO’s
- Organization and participation in various events (conferences, round tables, discussions, meetings with experts in the field of accessible tourism, etc.)

Прочти
МЕНЯ

# Research areas

- Accessibility assessment of tourist sites in partnership with the "Office for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities“ (NGO)
- Readiness of Belarusian tourism market to provide accessibility
- Economic impact of accessible tourism
- Access to information about cultural events and services for people with disabilities in the national Internet segment

# Independent monitoring of accessibility




In general around 15% of tourist sites and infrastructure have basic level of accessibility

# Main achievements of BSU

- Raising awareness of various tourism stakeholders (research community, representatives of governmental institutions, tourism providers) about accessibility and inclusion
- Training for future specialists in tourism and event-management
- Proposals on improvement of tourism legislation
- Cooperation with key disability NGOs in Belarus
- Ministry of sports and tourism contacts us when they organize events dedicated to accessible tourism

# Thank you for your attention!

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