

Accessibility: Essential for Some, Useful for All

On the eve of European Parliament elections, on Global Accessibility Awareness Day (a global grass-roots movement to raise awareness of digital inclusion and accessibility), the European Commission joins the global awareness effort with an infographic highlighting 'Digital Economy and Society' legislation showing how Europe is there for you, regardless of your ability.

The infographic (PDF) portrays situations that people with disabilities encounter every day and how the European Union helps overcome these digital access issues, via an array of pieces of legislation.

Promoting digital inclusion, the European Union has taken measures in a variety of areas including electronic communications, digital public services, audio-visual media services, ebooks, eCommerce and ICT equipment:

1. The Web Accessibility Directive establishes common accessibility requirements enabling everyone to read, understand, and complete administrative procedures on public sector websites and mobile applications.
2. The European Electronic Communications Code ensures that everyone has access to affordable electronic communications services, including emergency services.
3. The recently revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) covers the means to achieve accessibility such as with sign language, subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing and audio descriptions for both television broadcasting (i.e. linear services) and video on demand (VOD).
4. The eIDAS Regulation (on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market) requires that trust services provided and end-user products be accessible for persons with disabilities, such as with eSignatures which aid in signing legal documents and email in a paperless manner.
5. The Marrakesh Directive and Regulation (2017) aim to facilitate the access to print works, including e-books, in formats adapted for persons who are blind, visually impaired or those who have difficulties reading.
6. Whilst complementing the above legislative measures, the European Accessibility Act, sets common accessibility requirements including a number of key ICT products and services.

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