

2 December 2015

## The European Accessibility Act Is Finally Published

### What does it mean for 80 million people with disabilities in Europe?

Brussels, 2 December 2015 | Today the European Commission published the European Accessibility Act (EAA). Autism-Europe welcomes this long-awaited Directive that will have a major influence on ensuring that innovative, affordable and accessible goods and services will be available for persons with disabilities in the EU internal market.

The publication of the proposal follows the [recommendations made by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) earlier in September calling on the EU to adopt the Accessibility Act as a step towards better implementation of the Convention.

Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, **Marianne Thyssen**, commented: “Disability should not be a barrier to full participation in society, nor should the lack of EU common rules be a barrier to cross-border trade in accessible products and services. With this Act, we want to deepen the internal market and use its potential for the benefit of both companies and citizens with disabilities. In fact, we all may benefit from it”.

The European Disability Forum (EDF) President, **Yannis Vardakastanis**, reacted to the publication: “We highly appreciate that Commissioner Thyssen has delivered on her commitment to publish the Act this year. Tomorrow is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities focusing on access and empowerment. The Act can contribute to the empowerment of persons with disabilities to better enjoy their freedom of movement”.

#### What next?

Autism-Europe and EDF will participate in the initial **consultation** in which stakeholders can give their feedback over the next 8 weeks, and prepare a detailed analysis of the text. It will be followed by the regular legislative procedure involving the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.

**Autism-Europe aisbl** is an international association whose main objective is to advance the rights of people with autism and their families and to help them improve their quality of life. It ensures effective liaison among more than 80 member autism organisations in more than 30 European countries, including 25 Member States of the European Union, governments and European and international institutions. Autism-Europe is a member of the European Disability Forum.

**Autism** is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with, and relates to, other people. It also affects how they make sense of the world around them. It is a spectrum condition, which means that, while all people with autism share certain difficulties, their condition will affect them in different ways. Some people with autism are able to live relatively independent lives but others may have accompanying learning disabilities and need a lifetime of specialist support. People with autism may also experience over- or under-sensitivity to sounds, touch, tastes, smells, light or colours.

**For more information and interviews**, please do not hesitate to contact Aurélie Baranger, Director of Autism-Europe, in Brussels. Tel: +32 (0)2 675 75 05 Email: [aurelie.baranger@autismeurope.org](mailto:aurelie.baranger@autismeurope.org).

**Follow the updates on twitter:** [@AutismEurope](https://twitter.com/AutismEurope) – hashtags #AccessibilityAct and #EAA

#### Additional information:

- [European Commission's proposal of the Accessibility Act](#)
- [European Commission's press release](#)
- [Video of Commissioner Thyssen announcing the Accessibility Act](#)
- [EDF position paper on the EAA \(2014\)](#)
- [EDF position paper on the EAA \(2013\)](#)

