

Brussels, 27 SEPTEMBER 2018

## EU Leaders: get your Act together

20 organisations demand agreement on ambitious Accessibility Act before 3 December.

**We, along with 19 other organisations, published an open letter today urging Member States to significantly improve the European Accessibility Act ahead of the next negotiations (2 October). We demand that a strong European Accessibility Act is agreed upon before the next European Day of Persons with Disabilities.**

The European Accessibility Act was proposed by the European Commission in 2015. It aims to add common minimum requirements on accessibility for a range of products and services. It's meant to dramatically improve Europeans' lives, especially the lives over 80 million persons with disabilities and 190 million people aged 50 or older. Unfortunately, negotiators, **especially Member States**, are trying to **erase essential elements**. The exclusion of public procurement and micro-enterprises will mean that the vast majority (93%) of products and services will be excluded. The exclusion of emergency services means that **persons with disabilities will continue to die because they cannot reach or contact emergency responders**. The exclusion of the built environment means that millions of products and services will still be out of reach for millions of Europeans. **It will mean that the Act is meaningless.**

The European Commission wants the Act adopted this year. The Austrian Presidency wants the Act adopted this year. We wanted it adopted years ago. We also want it to make a real difference. This is why 20 organisations, including the **European Disability Forum, AGE Platform, and ANEC** are coming together now.

**Yannis Vardakastanis**, President of the European Disability Forum stated "A strong Act is not a wish, it's a need. Member States, especially 3 of them, are putting money ahead of people. They are putting lives at risk by watering the Act down. Our patience and diplomacy have limits. We know which countries are behind this. If we don't see real change soon, the public will know too."

He added: "The Act is not inventing new rights. All Member States already signed a UN treaty that demands accessibility[1]. The EU is just acting on it. It is small minded to dilute the Act."

Two negotiation meetings are scheduled: on 2 October and 8 November. We hope to see significant progress in both.

## Notes to editors

1. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is an international treaty intended to protect and promote the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. It adopts a broad categorization of persons with disabilities and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. States parties to the convention are required to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities. It has been ratified by 177 State Parties, so far.

[Article 9](#) of the Convention states that “States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas.”



The [European Disability Forum](#) is an independent NGO that defends the interests of 80 million Europeans with disabilities. EDF is a unique platform which brings together representative organisations of persons with disabilities from across Europe. It is run by persons with disabilities and their families. EDF is a strong, united voice of persons with disabilities in Europe.

## Related information

- Open letter [PDF](#) | [Word](#) | [Webpage](#)
- [European Accessibility Act Campaign page](#)

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