

Emergency Resolution on the European Accessibility Act Adopted at EDF Board on 17 November 2013 in Vilnius, Lithuania

Considering the importance of the European Accessibility Act for the Disability Movement;

Recalling that there are 80 million persons with disabilities in the EU and that an accessible Internal Market would not only benefit persons with disabilities but it would respond to the demographic change and take into account the needs of all consumers;

Acknowledging the effort that the Commission has already undergone in order to gather information and establish the Impact Assessment;

Highlighting the fact that the legislative proposal for the Accessibility Act was already mentioned in the Commission's Work Programme for 2012 and the publication of the proposal has already been postponed several times;

Considering that the issues at stake are of great importance for persons with disabilities who would benefit greatly from a strong piece of legislation;

Underlining that freedom of movement is one of the four basic freedoms under the EU-Treaties and that persons with disabilities can currently not exercise this right fully and freely;

Keeping in mind that the EU, having concluded the UNCRPD, is obliged to adopt appropriate legislative measures to ensure the right to accessibility under Article 9 of the Convention;

Stressing that action at EU level would be the most appropriate as it would ensure a common level playing field for both consumers with disabilities and industry;

Highlighting that the EU Treaties entail freedom of movement for all EU citizens but that significant barriers hamper this right for persons with disabilities;

Recalling that our priorities for the legislative proposal are:

- A strong and binding legislation
- Links with International and European standards as tools to guarantee accessibility. They back up and strengthen the legislative proposal and are an appropriate reference in the areas where they exist

European Disability Forum



- A clear and comprehensive definition of “accessibility”
- A holistic and broad approach to cover as many services and goods as possible whilst respecting the competence of the EU to act
- A proposal that will be future proof by focusing on areas of action rather than on too specific goods and services
- Underlining the needs to cover both goods and services and their built environment aspects
- Stressing that Information and Communication Technologies (including hardware, software, applications, peripheral devices websites, Telecommunications, Audio-visual content and media), Transport, Healthcare, Education and training, Housing services, Emergency services, Cultural services, Recreation, Leisure and Sport, Tourism related services, Banking, Insurance, Household appliances, Retail, Social Services, Legal matters and Justice should be included
- Ensuring that training requirements are included in the legislation
- To take into account the societal benefits and the consumer point of view as well as the Internal Market benefit
- Consistency with other EU actions and pieces of legislation
- An adequate and effective implementation and enforcement mechanism enabling NGOs and consumer groups to effectively challenge non-compliance in all EU Member States.

EDF calls on the European Commission to present its legislative proposal as soon as possible and before the end of the current term of the European Parliament in order to respond to the rights and expectations of the 80 million European citizens with disabilities.

We call on the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union to take appropriate steps for a swift consideration of the proposal.