

To whom it may concern, Luxembourg, 27th September 2018

OPEN LETTER TO THE EU INSTITUTIONS: WE NEED A STRONG EUROPEAN ACCESSIBILITY ACT AND WE NEED IT NOW.

On behalf of over 150.000 Cochlear Implant Users and 80 million Europeans with disabilities and 190 million people aged 50 and older we EURO-CIU, European Cochlear Implant Users Association, as well as the undersigned, call on EU leaders to agree on an ambitious European Accessibility Act before the 3rd December, European Day of Persons with Disabilities.

The European Commission's proposal for a European Accessibility Act, published in 2015, was a response to the demands of millions of Europeans. Demands that stretched back more than ten years. It was a good start but now we are tired of waiting for its adoption.

We urge all EU institutions to reach a political agreement before the European Day of Persons with Disabilities, 3rd December. This day also marks three years and one day since the proposal was published.

The agreement needs to ensure a strong, effective and future-proof Accessibility Act. We demand that it covers a wide-range of accessibility requirements, especially in the following areas:

- Fully accessible emergency services: This is a life or death issue. Millions of Europeans are effectively denied fast, life-saving medical assistance. The Act must ensure universal accessibility of emergency services.
- Inclusion of micro-enterprises: Up to 93% of products and services are created by micro-enterprises. Having those products covered by the European Accessibility Act is essential.
- Inclusion of accessibility in Public Procurement, EU Funds, and TEN-T regulation: we want the Accessibility Act to apply to Public Procurement, EU Funds, and TEN-T. 16% of Europe's GDP is generated by Public Procurement. Public authorities and offices employ up to 30% of the labour force, thus yielding immense innovation potential. Public procurement can give incentives for new developments in the field of accessibility.
- Accessibility of the Built environment: The Act covers many digital products and important services, but not the built environment that surrounds them. This means that many products and services will remain inaccessible, even if they comply with the Accessibility Act. It is paramount that the EAA includes the built environment, therefore we call for a mandatory provision on the built environment in the final text.
- Accessibility of Urban Transport: Accessible urban transportation is essential. Millions of Europeans rely on public transport lead their daily lives. They use it to get to work, to go to the hospital, to meet friends. Persons with disability need to have the same right. They need to have the same access.

We especially call on all Member States that are most opposed to improvements to overcome their objections. They need to guarantee strong provisions that will improve the lives not only of over 80 million persons with disabilities and 190 million people aged 50 and older, but of all Europeans.

Teresa Amat

EURO-CIU PRESIDENT

European Disability Forum
 AGE Platform Europe
 ANEC - European consumer voice in standardisation
 IFSBH - International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus
 EURO-CIU – European Association of Cochlear Implant Users
 ARFIE - Association for Research and Training on Integration in Europe
 EBU - European Blind Union
 ENIL - European Network on Independent Living
 EASPD – European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities
 EAMDA – European Alliance of Neuromuscular Disorders Associations
 EDA – European Dyslexia Association
 EFHOH – European Federation of Hard of Hearing People
 Alzheimer Europe
 MHE – Mental Health Europe
 Social Firms Europe
 Inclusion Europe
 ECCE – European Cooperation in anthroposophical Curative Education and Social Therapy
 EUD – European Union of the Deaf
 ENUSP – European Network of (ex)-Users and survivors of psychiatry
 Autism Europe

