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**European Blind Union
Press release
Paris, 27.10.2016**

# An Accessibility Success Story

**After a long period of campaigning, lobbying and negotiation the European Parliament yesterday adopted the ‘Directive on the Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications of Public Sector Bodies’ (Web Directive). This means that all public authority websites and mobile applications, including electronic and multimedia publications have to be accessible.**

This is huge achievement for EBU, and blind and partially sighted people throughout Europe, but also for all the other organisations representing 80 million Europeans with disabilities. It is a crucial step towards an inclusive digital society in which people with disabilities and other users have access to online services and information on an equal basis; this is a right enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) that the EU has ratified.

Regular monitoring and reporting by EU member states has been agreed, which is an indispensable step for the success of this legislation. The Directive does however still allow for certain exceptions such as public broadcasters’ websites and live audiovisual streaming which EBU sincerely hopes will be covered in the future by other EU legislation in progress, such as the European Accessibility Act or the Audiovisual Media Services Directive.

For the time being, let us savour the moment which was the result of much hard work and vigilance, especially considering that the European Commission’s initial proposal for the Web Directive, in 2012, included only 12 categories of online services and soft enforcement measures. Thanks to insistent lobbying to the Parliament and the Council, an improved text of a genuinely future proof, meaningful Directive has now been adopted. For this EBU would particularly like to acknowledge the implication of all the MEPs and Commission members who worked with us tirelessly on this issue. As states MEP Dita Charanzová on the [Euractiv Website](https://www.euractiv.com/section/digital/opinion/web-accessibility-will-now-be-the-law-of-the-land-in-europe/) "This is an important first step towards full equality for all in our digital world, but it cannot be the last."

This is a link to the [pdf file showing the full text of the Directive](http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9389-2016-REV-1/en/pdf).

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**About EBU**

EBU is a non-governmental, non-profit making European organisation founded in 1984. It is one of the six regional bodies of the World Blind Union. It protects and promotes the interests of blind and partially sighted people in Europe. It currently operates within a network of national organisations of the visually impaired in 44 European countries.

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