



The voice of blind and partially sighted people in Europe

European Blind Union

Press release

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EBU Urges Austrian Presidency to Engage in Constructive Negotiations on Flagship European Accessibility Act

Bulgaria is handing over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union to Austria at a moment when the informal negotiations on the proposed European Accessibility Act (EAA) are stalled. “We count on the Austrian Presidency to bring new momentum to the talks and facilitate an adoption of the Act by the end of this year”, says Wolfgang Angermann, President of the European Blind Union (EBU).

EBU acknowledges the progress made under Bulgarian presidency to start the informal negotiations between the European Parliament, the Member States and the Commission (‘Trilogue’). However, the last Trilogue at the end of June was cancelled with the future of the EAA hanging in the balance. “Sadly, the political will to compromise is lacking among some Member States today”, says Markus Wolf, President of the Austrian Federation of the Blind and Partially Sighted (BSVÖ), “but the Austrian Presidency can turn the negotiations around with a constructive approach.”

EBU welcomes that the Work Programme of the Austrian Presidency, running from 1 July to the end of the year, indicates that it will “endeavour to conclude the negotiations on the EAA”. EBU urges the Austrian Presidency to open the Council’s General Approach for negotiations and compromises on the scope of the EAA. Like the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights and the European Disability Forum, EBU calls for a swift adoption of the EAA with a comprehensive scope.

The EAA, which aims to reduce barriers in a European market of accessible goods and services, is of great importance for the social inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities. 30 million blind and partially sighted persons in Europe stand to benefit from this

flagship directive. EBU therefore calls for a strong and effective EAA which should have a broad scope also covering the built environment, tourism, urban transport and public procurement.

More information on the EAA can be found in the [EBU Position Paper for the Trilogue negotiations](#) and the [EBU Fact Sheet on the impact of the EAA](#).

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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 42 European countries.

For further information, please contact:

Antoine Fobe, Head of Campaigning

6 rue Gager Gabillot 75015 PARIS (France)

Tel: +33 1 47 05 04 84 (9 am to 12:30 pm and 13.30 pm to 17 pm)

ebucampaigning@euroblind.org

www.euroblind.org

Twitter @euroblind