



The voice of blind and partially sighted people in Europe

European Blind Union

Press release

Paris, 27/09/2018

ACCESSIBILITY ACT: NO MORE SITTING ON THE FENCE

EU Council must show will to bring down everyday barriers in disability

Some governments in Europe want to shrink the European Accessibility Act (EAA) to its minimum, contrary to the European Parliament, which aims to deliver a wide-reaching text. The latest meeting of the EU ambassadors in Brussels on 26 September did not resolve the conflicts on this flagship legislation, raising doubts about the political will to deliver a meaningful Act.

“We now have a unique opportunity to improve the lives of 30 million European persons with visual impairment”, says Wolfgang Angermann, President of the European Blind Union (EBU). “To meet their expectations, the EAA needs to cover multiple areas, such as tourism, public transportation and procurement.”

EBU welcomes the progressive stance taken by the European Parliament and several Member States. We call on the EU Council to finally confirm an ambition to address the needs and rights of persons with disabilities, and to engage in constructive negotiations with the Parliament.

With the European Elections approaching, the window of opportunity for the EAA is closing rapidly and we count on the Austrian Presidency to lead things in the right direction.

EBU co-signed an open letter of the European Disability Forum (EDF) to the EU Institutions today, asking for the negotiations to be completed successfully by 3 December 2018, three years after the European Commission proposed the EEA. This would mark the European Day of Persons with Disabilities with a new milestone in the rights of persons with disabilities.

Ends

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 41 European countries.

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