



The voice of blind and partially sighted people in Europe

European Blind Union

Press release

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AUDIO-VISUAL MEDIA SERVICES ON THE SPOT

Broadcasters now obliged to cast a wider net to include persons with visual or hearing disabilities

On 6 November the EU Council approved the text for the revised Directive on audio-visual media services (AVMS Directive), leading to its adoption. The resulting stronger obligations on accessibility for people with a visual or hearing disability largely meet the expectations of the European Blind Union (EBU).

“The previous non-legislative approaches to addressing the needs of blind and partially sighted persons have failed and it is high time to have a binding legal requirement for broadcasters”, says Wolfgang Angermann, President of the European Blind Union (EBU).

Until now EU countries only had to “encourage gradual improvements” in accessibility. Under the revised version of Article 7, they will now have to “ensure continuous and progressive improvements” and put in place reporting obligations and contact points to handle complaints.

The revision of the AVMS Directive brings significant progress and the new obligations will apply not only to broadcasters, but also to video-on-demand and video-sharing platforms.

The European Parliament had approved on 2 October the text agreed on 26 April 2016 in informal negotiations with the Council. The Commission had published its proposal for a revised AVMS Directive on 25 May 2016.

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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