

# "eACCESSIBILITY"

## IMPROVING THE ACCESS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES TO THE KNOWLEDGE BASED SOCIETY



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## 2003 European Year of People with Disabilities

### Council of the European Union : policy steps

2002

2-3 December, Resolution unanimously adopted :  
***“eAccessibility : improving the access of people with disabilities to the knowledge based society”***

25 March, Resolution on the eEurope Action Plan 2002:  
***“accessibility of public web sites and their content”***

2001

3 December, Decision ***2003 = EYPD***

8 October, Resolution

***“e-Inclusion : exploiting the opportunities of the information society for social inclusion”***

## Background

### **Lisbon European Council, March 2000**

- the EU to become the world's most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy and society... with more and better jobs and greater **social cohesion**.

- every citizen should have the right skills to live and work in an **Information Society for all**; ... **access** must prevent info-exclusion; special attention must be given to **disabled** people.

> Commission Communication, May 2000

*“Towards a Barrier Free Europe for people with Disabilities”*

### **Feira European Council, June 2000**

> **eEurope 2002 Action Plan**

- **participation for all** in the knowledge-based economy.

## eEurope2002 Action Plan - participation for all :

1/ Policies to avoid info-exclusion to be more effectively coordinated at European level through benchmarking of performance and exchange of best practice between Member States.

2/ Adoption of the **Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)** guidelines for **public websites**.

3/ Review of relevant legislation and standards to ensure conformity with accessibility principles.

4/ Ensure the establishment and networking of national centres of excellence in Design for all.

5/ Publication of “Design for All” standards for **accessibility of IT products**, in particular to improve the employability and social inclusion of people with special needs.

# THE ACCESSIBILITY OF PUBLIC WEBSITES RESOLUTION

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1/ STRESSES the need to increase efforts to speed up accessibility to the Web and the content it offers;

2/ ENCOURAGES the Member States to implement specific and adequately-resourced measures to achieve the underlying objective of the eEurope 2002 Action Plan for accessibility of public websites at all levels of government;

3/ INVITES the High Level Group on the Employment and Social Dimension of the Information Society (ESDIS) to monitor progress in the adoption and implementation of the Guidelines and to develop common methodologies and comparable data so as to facilitate the evaluation of progress;

# THE ACCESSIBILITY OF PUBLIC WEBSITES

## RESOLUTION

4 / ENCOURAGES the Member States and the Commission to take account of the need for **digital content to be accessible**, for example by, when funding development of websites, requiring those websites to implement the Guidelines;

5/ CALLS on the Member States and the Commission to participate in the European Year of People with Disabilities in 2003 and to **improve Web accessibility, awareness and training**, and on the Commission to submit in the first half of 2004 a report giving an overview of progress made;

6/ URGES the Member States and the Commission to further a permanent dialogue with representative organisations of people with disabilities and organisations representing older persons, so that their reactions to these matters may be taken into account.

# THE eACCESSIBILITY RESOLUTION

\_\_\_\_\_ Calls on Member States and invites the Commission to:

- 1/ Tap the Information Society's potential for people with disabilities.
- 2/ To consider taking particular measures identified in the Commission staff working Paper on "delivering eAccessibility" parting to:
  - i) technical instruments and standards
  - ii) moral / persuasive and legislative devices
  - iii) educative and informative instruments

# TAPPING THE INFORMATION SOCIETY'S POTENTIAL

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- a) Promote a more coordinated and focused approach.
  - b) European Commission to set up and maintain a dedicated **eAccessibility web portal**.
  - c) Encourage and empower people with disabilities to take more control over **eAccessibility delivery mechanisms** and support their increased participation in projects, technical committees and standardisation bodies.

## AMONG AREAS HIGHLIGHTED FROM THE “DELIVERING eACCESSIBILITY” PAPER

### **Technical instruments and standards:**

- i) Promote common methodologies and data for ‘public websites’ implementation and use of the the Web Access Initiative (WAI) guidelines.
- ii) Promote a feedback of standardisation activities and their impact on the elderly and people with disabilities.
- iii) Ensure that the 6th Framework Programme for RTD supports actions to promote eAccessibility.

## ...”DELIVERING eACCESSIBILITY” PAPER (ctd)

### **Moral / persuasive and legislative devices:**

- i) Consider provision of an “**eAccessibility mark**” for goods and services complying with the relevant standards.
- ii) Seek greater harmonisation of public procurement rules to persuade more suppliers to offer more **eAccessible goods and services**.
- iii) Promote measures to encourage private enterprises to make products and services accessible.
- iv) Promote the dissemination of copyright protected material in formats accessible to people with disabilities.

... “DELIVERING eACCESSIBILITY” PAPER (ctd)

**Educative and informative instruments:**

- i) Ensure that the network of Centers of Excellence in Design-for-All covers all Member States.
- ii) Provide the development of Design-for-All curricula.
- iii) Raise awareness of the opportunities of ICT and **the Internet** among people with disabilities and the elderly.
- iv) Improve the employability of people with disabilities through vocational programmes.

## **Educative and informative instruments *(continued)*:**

v) Promote lifelong learning for people with disabilities.

vi) Ensure multimedia and ICT do not create new barriers to the integration of students with disabilities into schools and universities.

vii) Ensure that the eAccessibility becomes a regular part of all educational programmes and use the e-learning initiative.

# CONCLUSIONS

As Europe evolves into the knowledge-based economy, no section of the population should be excluded from the Information Society.

New technologies offer fresh scope for people with disabilities to integrate into society.

The Council Resolutions commit governments to ensure this.

# WWW

## Disability

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/disability/index\\_de.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/disability/index_de.html)

## eAccessibility

[http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/topics/citizens/accessibility/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/topics/citizens/accessibility/index_en.htm)

## Employment and Social Affairs

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/index\\_de.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/index_de.htm)

## ESDIS

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/knowledge\\_society/esdis\\_de.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/knowledge_society/esdis_de.htm)

## Information Society-eEurope

[http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/eeurope/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/index_en.htm)