

Accessibility Policy of the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education

Public Version



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AGENCY ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

This policy document describes all the relevant areas which need to be considered to fulfil the Agency's commitment to achieve its aspiration of being a role model of accessibility.

1. Introduction and Statement of commitment

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) defines 'Accessibility' as encompassing aspects from the physical environment to information and communication technologies:

... to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility, shall apply to, inter alia:

- a) Buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces;*
- b) Information, communications and other services, including electronic services and emergency services ([UN, 2006](#)).*

Although the UNCRPD is addressed to State Parties, the Agency sees the accessibility of the physical environment, working processes and of information and information and communication technologies as a central responsibility of the organisation.

In addition to international policy, the Agency accessibility policy is also in line with European Union (EU) guiding principles and directives, including:

- *the [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. European Disability Strategy 2010-2020: A Renewed Commitment to a Barrier-Free Europe \(2010\)](#), with the aim of empowering people with disabilities and eliminating barriers to full access, participation, equality, education and training, social protection and health services;*
- *the [EU Directive 2016/2102](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies (2016), which EU Member States must incorporate into national law by September 2018;*
- *the [EU Directive 2017/1564](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 September 2017 on certain permitted uses of certain works and other subject matter protected by copyright and related rights for the benefit of persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print-disabled and amending [Directive 2001/29/EC](#) on the harmonisation of certain aspects of copyright and related rights in the information society (2017).*

Once published, the Agency's work on accessibility will also be guided by the new EU [Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the approximation of the laws,](#)



[regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States as regards the accessibility requirements for products and services.](#)

The Agency is already increasingly conscious of issues around accessibility and a lot of effort has been invested into providing accessible information. This policy document aims to formalise this commitment to be an accessible organisation.

Statement of commitment

The Agency has the vision of becoming a role model of accessibility and inclusive practice. Providing a fully accessible experience of the Agency and all its activities is the main goal of the Agency's accessibility policy. This responsibility is accepted and shared by management and by every member of staff and is ensured with the help and support of experts within the Agency.

Within this vision, the Agency understands accessibility as an iterative and developmental process, which will require constant review to monitor progress and account for changes in knowledge on what constitutes best practice for accessibility.

The Agency acknowledges that accessibility is not identical to usability. Accessibility is about ensuring that everyone has access on an equal basis as everyone else. [Usability](#) is about creating an effective, efficient and satisfactory user experience, as well as providing information in a way that is language-appropriate to the audience. However, the Agency understands true accessibility to also include aspects of usability as far as possible.

Accessibility and inclusion go hand-in-hand as, of course, accessibility invites and should support inclusion. By striving to be accessible, we aim to make the Agency experience a more inclusive one.

2. Specification of areas of accessibility

The Agency commits itself to becoming a model of accessibility. This includes objectives linked to the following four areas:

1. Information produced, and the information and communication technology solutions provided and used
2. Organisation and execution of Agency events and meetings
3. All forms of procurement of goods and services
4. The work experience and accessibility requirements of all country representatives and staff members.

This commitment applies to:

- information (including all Agency outputs, communications, presentations, etc.);
- the physical environment;
- all internal and external audiences, including the Agency's network and staff.

The Agency also commits to monitoring progress towards becoming a model of accessibility and to allocate the necessary resources to this long-term strategy.



An Accessibility Policy Action Plan is being drafted to fulfil the objectives presented in this policy.

2.1 Ensuring accessibility of information and communication technology

Accessible is understood as allowing all users to easily orientate themselves within the content and effectively perceive and understand by using different perception channels, such as eyes and/or ears and/or fingers.

Objective 1. The Agency will disseminate all information and produce all materials in an accessible format, as well as provide only accessible ICT tools and solutions, for both internal and external use.

Both the public website and intranet are very prominent for disseminating Agency materials. To this end, they have been developed in compliance with the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) (WCAG) 2.

The website has been developed with the latest accessibility standards and in consideration of its overall usability. The website has its own specific accessibility tool, which includes the ability to increase text size, change the font colour and the background colour.

All content images on the Agency website include an image caption and alternative text that describes what the image represents. Assistive technologies, such as screen readers, will detect and read this text.

The website also provides users with an [Accessibility page](#) outlining all the key accessibility features, aiming to assist users where necessary. Users can send feedback via the accessibility@european-agency.org email address listed on this page.

Objective 2. The Agency website will continue to be a model of accessibility by adhering to international standards and by not only informing users about accessibility features, but also openly encouraging feedback on accessibility.

2.2 Ensuring accessibility at events and meetings

The Agency has an on-going commitment that all meetings and events which are organised for the Agency's network and staff will be completely accessible. Accessibility is an essential element to the organisation of an event, whether this is a small in-house meeting or large international conference.

Objective 3. All Agency meetings will provide an accessible experience for all participants, from the planning phase to the meeting follow-up. This includes both access to information and information technologies, as well as physical access to every location and activity.

2.3 Accessibility as selection criterion for procurement

For all ICT-related procurement, the [Standard - EN 301 549 'Accessibility requirements suitable for public procurement of ICT products and services in Europe'](#) is a basis and standard referred to.

When buying goods or outsourcing services, such as **web or information content production**, the contractors must demonstrate how they will comply with accessibility



requirements and that the final goods or services are accessible. They must also specify the testing tools and methods they will use, as well as certifying the expertise of the staff involved.

Any **subcontractors** of the contractor must equally address accessibility.

As an option, an additional company can be contracted to evaluate the accessibility of the main contractor's goods and services.

Objective 4. The Agency will only procure goods or services which adhere to accessibility criteria.

2.4 Meeting all country representatives and staff members' accessibility requirements

The Agency considers itself responsible for addressing the needs of all country representatives and staff members, whether or not they have a disability and/or special need.

Objective 5. The Agency will develop and grow its accessibility support within the team, including developing a statement/policy on inclusion informing country representatives and staff members on the expected procedure if they develop a special need.

3. Supporting and monitoring progress

The Agency considers accessibility as a process and not a final state. The Agency will ensure on-going support on all issues around accessibility procedures and updates. At the same time, changes in standards, technology and knowledge of effective accessibility solutions will always be considered in a monitoring process.

Objective 6. The Agency will continuously support and, at regular intervals, monitor all activities related to improving the accessibility of the Agency.