



Accessible Information Provision  
for Lifelong Learning  
(i-access)

Report of the Conference held on  
23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> June 2011, Copenhagen, Denmark





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More information on the i-access project is available at the project website: [www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/i-access](http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/i-access)

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## INTRODUCTION

This document provides a detailed report of the project conference held as part of the Accessible Information Provision for Lifelong Learning (i-access) project, conducted by the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (the Agency). The conference was held in Copenhagen on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> June 2011, co-hosted by the Danish Ministry of Education and the Agency.

The Agency is an independent and self-governing organisation, established by the member countries to act as their platform for collaboration in the field of special needs education. The Agency currently has national networks in 27 European countries and is financed by the member countries' Ministries of Education and the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme, as one of the 6 institutions pursuing an aim of European interest in the field of education (Jean Monnet Programme).

In Summer 2010, the Agency submitted an application for the i-access one year project co-financed by a European Community Grant under the Lifelong Learning Transversal Programme, Key Activity 1: Policy Co-operation and Innovation. In Winter 2010, the Agency was awarded the grant and the project began in March 2011 under agreement number: 190583-LLP-2010-DK-KA1-KA1ECETA.

The Agency member countries involved in the i-access project are: Belgium (Flemish and French speaking communities), Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom (England and Scotland).

Within this report the term *i-access* is used to replace the phrase *accessible information provision* or *information accessibility*. The concept behind this term is described in more detail in the following sections.

### **i-access project outline**

#### ***Rationale***

All organisations whose mission is to act as information providers in the field of Lifelong Learning have a duty to make their information accessible for everyone. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) 2006 emphasises:

- The obligation to 'provide accessible information to persons with disabilities' (Art.4);
- The need for 'the design, development, production and distribution of accessible ICT' (Art.9);
- The right to education 'without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity' for persons with disabilities (Art.24).

These duties are also highlighted in the Digital Agenda for Europe (May 2010), which suggests 'Enhancing digital literacy, skills and inclusion' as an action area and facilitating a 'Memorandum of Understanding on Digital Access for persons with disabilities' in compliance with the CRPD as a specific action.

Key information providers within Lifelong Learning – such as the Agency – need clear guidance on translating policy (e.g. Council Conclusions on an Accessible Information Society, 2009) and standards (e.g. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 relating to information accessibility) into practical tasks for implementation, making use of innovative ICT solutions in a sustainable way. Raising awareness of and offering practical



approaches for enhancing effective access to information for people with disabilities and/or special needs is recognised as an essential strategy for Lifelong Learning within the 27 member countries of the Agency.

The Agency argues that a main barrier for providing accessible information is not the lack of flexible ICT solutions, but a lack of clarity on what policy relating to accessibility implies and the necessary ways forward to implementing accessibility standards effectively within organisational processes.

### ***Target group***

The main participants as well as target group for the project are the key information providers within Lifelong Learning from 27 Agency member countries who have been nominated to take part in the conference by the Agency's ministerial representatives.

There are 2 such groups of information providers directly involved in the project:

- National information providers (education decision makers) for Lifelong Learning;
- National multipliers (journalists and researchers) who will have the role of disseminating the conference outputs in their countries.

The project raises awareness of the issue of improving information accessibility within Lifelong Learning by providing these information providers with:

- Opportunities to exchange and share experience with specialists and other key stakeholders in the field of i-access;
- A set of proposed recommendations on i-access policy and its implementation.

The long-term target group for the project outputs are the consumers (end users) of Lifelong Learning related information. This group includes all learners, but impacts more strongly on people who are learners with disabilities and/or special needs and require information to be provided in accessible formats. To ensure equal learning opportunities it is vital that learners with disabilities and/or special needs in particular can find and access relevant information.

### ***Project aims and activities***

The ultimate goal of the project is to raise awareness of the issues surrounding accessible information provision for Lifelong Learning in order to facilitate positive developments towards i-accessibility within the 27 member countries of the Agency.

The main aims are: firstly to use existing European and international policy and standards for information accessibility as a basis for discussing the implications and the practical implementation of i-accessibility within Lifelong Learning; secondly to produce a set of proposed recommendations on i-access policy and its implementation agreed at the European level by key stakeholders that can be used by information providers across Europe to support the provision of accessible information for Lifelong Learning for all learners who need it.

To achieve these aims, there are two specific objectives for the project:

1. To host a European conference that brings together the various stakeholders involved in the provision of accessible information within Lifelong Learning – key information providers, representatives of stakeholder groups working with accessible ICT – to discuss the implications of policy and its implementation for i-access. The involvement of these stakeholders will allow a holistic approach to understanding how to support educational opportunities for all through accessible information provision. The critical factors for



implementing accessibility policy and standards will be identified and a set of recommendations proposed.

2. To disseminate the conference outcomes and recommendations at the European and national levels. This will be achieved through a clear dissemination strategy involving national level multipliers (journalists and researchers nominated by the Representative Board Members of the Agency) by:

- Presenting the national perspective on accessible information provision within debates, ensuring the relevance of conference outcomes for country situations;
- Disseminating the conference outcomes within their national networks, acting as multipliers for the conference outputs and facilitating debate and raising awareness on the national level.

### **The i-access conference, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> June 2011, Copenhagen, Denmark**

The aim of this conference was to identify the implications of international and European policy on accessibility for information providers in the field of education. The processes that organisations need to consider in order to ensure accessible information provision were also identified. The objective was then to collate this information and develop recommendations for the implementation of i-accessibility.

The conference delegates included: key information providers for lifelong learning, including decision makers and multipliers (journalists and researchers in the field) nominated by the Agency's country representatives; representatives of stakeholder groups working with accessible ICT and international organisations (UNESCO and G3ict). They reflected on policy requirements and current practice regarding the accessibility of information relevant for lifelong learning. All parties identified key issues relevant for developing a set of proposed recommendations.

Prior to the conference a survey was sent out to all participants of the conference to collect information on their various work contexts. The survey results were used to prepare conference discussions based on the issues that were raised in the survey.

The survey was used to collect information on what countries are currently doing regarding accessible information provision, what their expectations are from the project and especially what information is vital for their situation to bridge the gap between i-access policy and its implementation. A central question of this survey was:

*What forms of additional information would be useful for you in implementing policy for accessible information in your country...*

- *from accessibility policy beyond what it already offers?*
- *to support the implementation of accessibility policy in your organisation?*
- *from companies that provide accessibility tools (for example text processing, software, PDF generators, content management systems) to enable you to use their products?*

The responses to the above questions were shared with the key speakers, who were asked to address these issues in their input. Observers who visited the workshops were also asked to draw out the key issues discussed and share them with the plenary the following day. In addition, all responses determined the discussion questions for the policy maker sessions planned on the last day of the conference.

The various sessions and activities covered within the Copenhagen conference are presented in Annex 1 of this report.



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Annex 2 presents an overview of all 70 plus participants in the event.

In the following sections, summaries of information collected during different meeting activities and discussions are presented.

All of the presentations and background materials from the meeting are available from the i-access project area on the Agency's website: [www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/i-access](http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/i-access)



## MAIN MESSAGES FROM SPEAKERS' PRESENTATIONS

During the first morning of the Conference in Copenhagen, there were a number of inputs considering policy and practice related to providing accessible information for lifelong learning. The representative of the host country as well as representatives of key international organisations working in the field of accessibility – UNESCO, G3ict, the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and the DAISY Consortium – presented their priorities and work in this field. These inputs contributed to the debates within the workshops and plenary held later in the meeting.

Representatives of Adobe and Microsoft offered information on the relevance of policy for their work and supplied practical information on making information more accessible.

The sections below highlight some of the key messages from the different stakeholders on the policy and practice of providing accessible information.

### Messages from the Opening Session

*Lars Mortensen, President of the National Education Agency of Denmark* welcomed the participants on behalf of the Danish Minister of Education. Denmark and the Ministry of Education consider the topic of this conference, equal access to public information as crucial for democracy and equal access to education. Since 2008 all public authorities in Denmark are legally bound to provide accessible websites and an accessibility platform has been established which freely supplies all students, parents, teachers, headmasters, municipalities and public authorities with information on accessibility relevant for teaching and education. However, there is awareness that 'there is still a lot to do and a lot to learn'. Mr. Mortensen stated that he is not sure if his Agency is aware of what 'policies relating to accessibility actually imply' or that there is true knowledge of 'how to implement accessibility standards effectively in organisational processes', which is why he expressed the view that the i-access conference is of great importance.

*Per Ch Gunnvall, Chair of the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education* stressed that all countries are debating the critical issues related to providing equal access to information for all – especially in the field of education.

The justifications for this concern are clearly highlighted at:

- International level through the 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which states an obligation 'to provide accessible information to persons with disabilities' (Art.4) as well as the right to education 'without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity' for persons with disabilities (Art. 24);
- European level through the Digital Agenda for Europe (May 2010) and
- National levels through the conception and implementation of national policies regarding accessibility.

Mr. Gunnvall stressed that as an organisation that considers itself an information provider for lifelong learning, accessible information provision is a personal concern of the Agency. The Agency sees the access to information not only as a step to equal opportunity in education, but also to social inclusion. Past Agency projects have also shown that what is good for students with special needs is often good for all – a conviction echoed in the Design for All approach which is increasingly supported in the ICT field.

*Harald Weber and Marcella Turner, European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education* gave a general introduction to the Agency highlighting it as a permanent network of ministerial representatives acting as the member countries' platform for



collaboration regarding the promotion of quality and equity in education as a means to achieving social cohesion. Taking account of both the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and the Digital Agenda for Europe (2010), providing accessible information to enable equity in education is a guiding principle of the Agency.

Mr. Weber and Ms. Turner presented the concept of 'i-access', which stands for information accessibility and includes all forms of information:

- Websites and web tools;
- Electronic and print files;
- Various forms of media;
- Contact with the organisation.

i-access is more than technology – it is also about how technology is embedded in suitable organisational processes to provide the organisation's target groups with a fully accessible experience.

A general introduction to the project, its aims and objectives as well as the funding under the European Community Lifelong Learning Programme, Key Activity 1 were presented. When introducing the planned project outcomes, the relevance of the survey results and conference discussions for the development of i-access recommendations were stressed.

### **Messages from the Panel Sessions**

The opening session was followed by a panel session chaired by *Agency Director Cor J.W. Meijer*. This provided reflections on the necessity of i-access policy and practice including the perspective of ICT service providers.

*Cor J.W. Meijer*, introduced the main aim of the panel session: to highlight key issues regarding i-accessibility policy and practice from the perspective of the speakers' organisations.

Key points considered throughout these presentations were:

- The issue of access to information on education as a 'right' embedded within international policies and the implications thereof,
- The need for effective co-ordination and co-operation between different organisations / service providers / ministries in implementing international policy on accessibility.

*Amanda Watkins, Assistant Director, European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education* summarised the results of the preliminary survey sent to all conference participants. These results were based on 25 replies from 14 participating countries and were used to link both inputs and discussion sessions to key issues prior to the conference. These issues were further developed throughout the conference.

Ms. Watkins started with a description of the demographics of the respondents, which included policy makers for education and ICT, information providers for education and ICT as well as researchers from ministries, support organisations and other organisations.

In the eyes of the respondents, the relevance and the personal awareness of international policies for accessible information provision (such as the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities or the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) outweighed the European Guidelines (such as the Digital Agenda 2010 and the European Conclusions on Accessible Information Society). While these documents are considered to cover most relevant areas of accessibility, the following aspects are still considered difficult to implement: web related issues, making content accessible, universal compliance,



procurement, providing sign language interpreters and the lack of awareness and understanding.

While most respondents have a national policy for accessibility as well as an organisational style guide for presenting information (mainly focused on web, electronic and print documents), only half of the organisational style guides include accessibility aspects.

Ms. Watkins concluded that from the respondents' point of view, additional information on levers to encourage compliance, latest research findings, ideas for awareness training and clarity over copyright arrangements, but most of all practice examples would be useful for implementing policy for accessible information. Ms Watkins quoted a survey response: 'We would like to see some best practice from other institutes focussed on how to set up and KEEP the guidelines alive.' As a result, the survey will be reopened following the conference, to collect examples.

The full results of the initial survey are presented in Annex 4.

*Irmgarda Kasinskaite-Buddeberg, Programme Specialist, Information Society Division – Communication and Information Sector – UNESCO* introduced international policies and international commitments such as the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Action Plan, 2003 and Tunis Commitment (2005), the Millenium Development Goals (2000), the Salamanca Declaration (1994), the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1983) and Education for All which all underpin the right of equal access to education information. Special emphasis was given the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified by 101 countries. 61 countries have also ratified the optional protocol<sup>1</sup>. Ms Kasinskaite-Buddeberg also highlighted the vulnerable groups for which this topic is most relevant: women and young girls, elderly people, people living in poverty, children and people suffering from natural disasters, war and post conflict situations.

Within UNESCO the concept of Inclusive Knowledge Societies is built on the fundamentals of human needs and rights, pluralism and inclusion. Consequently such societies can only be achieved if the inequalities caused by poverty, lack of access, illiteracy, unemployment and negative attitudes are overcome.

Ms. Kasinskaite-Buddeberg introduced efforts from UNESCO working towards an Inclusive Knowledge Society:

- Experts meeting on 'Mainstreaming ICTs for Persons with Disabilities to access information and knowledge' (2010) resulting in – amongst other goals – making UNESCO (the organisation and its information) accessible, mainstreaming ICT in education, mobilising resources and international co-operation;
- Recommendations concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace (2003 and 2011);
- Guidelines for Inclusive Access to Digital Office Documents;
- Broadband Commission for Digital Development and
- Introduction of a new employment policy within the organisation providing 'reasonable accommodations necessary to enable a person with a disability to enter into and remain in employment within the Organisation by implementing measures in various areas'<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers reflect the level of ratification on 23.June. 2011

<sup>2</sup> [http://manual-part1.hq.int.unesco.org/EN/ACirculars/ACHR5\\_ENOnly13Oct10.pdf](http://manual-part1.hq.int.unesco.org/EN/ACirculars/ACHR5_ENOnly13Oct10.pdf)



Regarding aspects of accessibility policy which are critical, Ms. Kasinskaite-Buddeberg shared excerpts of their 'Report on use of ICTs in Education for Persons with Disabilities'<sup>3</sup>, a collation of information of the Asia-Pacific, Eastern European and Central Asia, North Africa and Arab States, Latin American and Caribbean and African regional reports:

- Accessibility is included in many national documents, but it is a low priority for many stakeholders;
- There is a lack of accurate statistical data;
- Linkages between existing policies and strategies, such as education and information society policies are lacking;
- Copyright laws need amending, including an exception permitting conversion and sharing of books in accessible formats without cumbersome procedural requirements or delay;
- Introduction of electronic accessibility policy is needed in order to ensure that all information which is digitally available, such as web sites and electronic documents adhere to accessibility standards;
- There is a need for awareness raising and capacity building of media professionals to report accurately on accessibility related issues;
- Inclusive education should be promoted at all levels – all teacher-education programmes should include disability and assistive technologies as integral components of the curriculum;
- Multi-stakeholder participation is needed to oversee monitoring and implementation.

In summary the critical challenges to the use of ICT to access information and knowledge are (1) a lack of technology, (2) availability of resources and (3) capacity building.

*Francesca Bianchi, Director, External Relations, Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ict)* highlighted the uniqueness of the CRPD as 'it is both a policy development and a Human Rights instrument, a policy instrument which is cross-disability and cross sectoral' and a treaty that is 'legally binding'. The massive increase of ICT usage worldwide will have a major impact on ICT accessibility in education, economy, government and cultural opportunities.

G3ict has a mission 'to facilitate the Implementation of the Digital Accessibility Agenda defined by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities'. To collect data on successful implementation worldwide, G3ict surveyed 33 states across the globe. Ms. Bianchi introduced the results which showed:

- 91% have a constitutional article, law or regulation defining the rights of persons with disabilities;
- 72% have a definition of 'Reasonable Accommodation' included in any law or regulation regarding the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- 56% have a definition of accessibility which includes ICTs or electronic media in the country laws or regulations.

However, the accessibility of information infrastructure, for example websites, mobile telephony, ATMs and public kiosks – is not as well implemented. Accessibility tends to be higher in education and rehabilitation but low in mainstream public services, such as eGovernment and community services.

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<sup>3</sup> Report on use of ICTs in Education for Persons with Disabilities, UNESCO



Ms Bianchi highlighted that the affordability of assistive technologies remains the key obstacle, especially in the least developed countries. This barrier presents an unfulfilled mandate of the CRPD which states that State parties are committed to 'Facilitating access by persons with disabilities to quality mobility aids, devices, assistive technologies and forms of live assistance and intermediaries, including by making them available at affordable cost' (Art. 20 (b)).

Concluding on a positive note, Ms. Bianchi described the opportunities within mainstream products being developed in the field of ICT, with accessibility features and assistive technology being available via cloud computing. New technologies have the potential to improve assistive technology development and distribution as well as lowering production and acquisition costs. In addition international co-operation and the sharing of best practice can support this general development.

G3ict aims to support international co-operation on ICT accessibility with its programmes, such as the global network of volunteer experts from the private sector, DPOs, international institutions and governments; the knowledge sharing platform ([www.g3ict.org](http://www.g3ict.org)); the E-Accessibility Policy Toolkit for Persons with Disabilities in co-operation with ITU ([www.e-accessibilitytoolkit.org](http://www.e-accessibilitytoolkit.org)); the capacity building programmes in co-operation with international institutions (UNDESA, ITU, UNESCO, UNESCAP, World Bank), governments, academia; books and publications and continuous research.

*Shadi Abou-Zahra, Web Accessibility Initiative/ World Wide Web Consortium* introduced the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and the Web accessibility Initiative (WAI) with its aim of 'Leading the web to its full potential'. W3C is an international, vendor-neutral consortium, providing open and royalty-free web standards. Within the W3C, WAI develops strategies, guidelines and resources to make the web accessible. To achieve this WAI provides:

- Accessibility support in W3C technologies;
- Guidelines for implementing accessibility;
- Methods for evaluating accessibility;
- Education/training and outreach;
- Co-ordination of research and development.

Mr. Abou-Zahra described the components of web accessibility from developer to user, which include content, authoring and evaluation tools, browsers, media players and assistive technologies - ideally supported by the accessibility guidelines and their technical specifications. There are three specific areas within the accessibility guidelines:

- WCAG - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (<http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/wcag>);
- ATAG - Authoring Tool Accessibility Guidelines (<http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/atag>);
- UAAG - User Agent Accessibility Guidelines (<http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/uaag>).

Since December 2008 the new web standard is WCAG 2.0.

Awareness and basic knowledge of the existing guidelines is required to implement this standard and ensure a clear commitment to these policies, along with the training of developers and other stakeholders and sharing of knowledge to evaluate, monitor and assess the progress made. To support this progress, Mr. Abou-Zahra openly invited the plenary to participate in W3C/WAI and make use of the training material, reviewing and sharing feedback on the resources and translating and promoting resources, thereby actively contributing to the development of a more accessible web.



*Bernhard Heinser, Daisy Consortium* highlighted the possibility of ‘accessibility going mainstream’, especially regarding ebooks, saying that: ‘Every book can be a fully accessible eBook’<sup>4</sup>. Mr. Heinser described accessibility as a complex interplay between the ‘content (books and documents), tools that represent the content (reading systems, web), compatibility with assistive technologies (screen readers) and able and *enabled* users who can manage the technologies’. He said: ‘To achieve accessibility one must integrate navigability of the content with the various perception channels (seeing, hearing, touching) and their synchronisation for both simple and complex content’.

Mr. Heinser introduced in detail two formally approved standards, which offer accessible (navigable and synchronised) information:

1. The DAISY standard ([www.daisy.org/daisy-standard](http://www.daisy.org/daisy-standard)): an open source tool for format conversions, content production and playback of information created on the basis of universal design, which can also be used with MS Word or OpenOffice.
2. EPUB ([www.idpf.org](http://www.idpf.org)): a ‘eBook distribution format standard for digital mainstream publishing’, developed by the publishing industry.

Together these standards offer a solution for both the production (DAISY) and the distribution (EPUB) of accessible digital content.

Mr. Heinser concluded with 5 recommendations to improve the accessibility of information:

1. Strong participation in global (accessibility) standardisation processes;
2. Supporting the mainstream publishing industry as it moves towards digital publishing;
3. Setting mandatory requirements (including public procurement);
4. Investing in education, formation, training and technical support for target groups (for example, publisher, teachers, public administrations);
5. Investing in research and development (especially for non-textual content and text-to-speech technology).

*Harald Weber, European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education* began by describing the context in which one must view web accessibility, including the accessibility of the web itself and also of software, ICT tools, physical access to devices and cognitive access. There is a similar inter-play between various factors within organisations, which are made up of technologies and technicalities and also key *processes* and *tasks* conducted by *people*.

Mr. Weber highlighted these various factors in 3 scenarios of how users can interact or ‘interface’ with the organisation:

1. The users’ ability to *gather information* (e.g. website, promotional material) is influenced by the accessibility of the web and printed materials, the complexity of the language used and the knowledge of the information provider regarding for example, different levels of experience or cultural background of the user.
2. Should a customer/client aim to communicate with the organisation using telecommunication (phone, tele-fax or e-mail), the recipient at the organisation must be able to understand the request, assume responsibility for it if it is valid, know who within the organisation can help or provide supportive feedback.

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<sup>4</sup> Quoted from Mr. George Kerscher, President of the IDPF and Secretary General of the DAISY Consortium.

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3. The challenges for customer traffic (for example, customer centre, helpdesk) are to 'ensure that the whole interaction experience of the customer / client is accessible' with regard to physical accessibility, finding one's way, communication skills of employees, printed material and form sheets.

Following these scenarios, Mr. Weber described an ideal situation where contacting an organisation would allow customers/users to collect information online through high levels of accessibility and also usability of the content; to visit the organisation due to the accessibility of transport and location; to find help due to availability and effective in-house navigation; to interact with employees trained to support diverse communication needs and provide a responsible focus on solutions; and to handle documents and form sheets due to a simple and intuitive structure and personal support if needed.

Mr. Weber concluded with 5 recommendations for organisations wanting to improve the possibility of users/customers/clients having a fully accessible experience with the organisation:

- Identification of the target group(s);
- Identification of the communication needs of the relevant target group(s) and their concerns with regard to the organisation;
- Understanding how the target group(s) expect(s) to interact with the organisation to solve their problems;
- Identification of the areas of the organisation (i.e. task organisation, people, technologies and technicalities) that would need to be re-designed/modified/ qualified;
- Involving customers/clients in the whole process, validating the organisations re-design with them and evaluating the state of usability and accessibility on a regular basis.

*Kiran Kaja, Accessibility Engineer, Adobe* introduced the general barriers to accessing information:

- Proliferation of electronic information sources;
- Inaccessibility of rapidly evolving technology & information consumption devices;
- Inaccessibility of path to information;
- Lack of awareness on part of content authors;
- Outdated assistive technology and
- Lack of training.

Mr. Kaja described how accessible information can be provided using Adobe tools for specific tasks. When creating accessible information it is essential to consider the workflow (from Microsoft Word to PDF for example) and identify problems. The website <http://www.adobe.com/accessibility/products/acrobat/pdf/A9-accessible-pdf-from-word.pdf> supplies practical information to solve problems when creating documents. Supporting videos are also available at [www.adobe.com/accessibility](http://www.adobe.com/accessibility).

*James Thurston, Senior Strategist for Global Policy & Standards, Microsoft Trustworthy Computing* began his presentation by stating the importance of having different perspectives on providing accessible information for learning throughout the conference. Microsoft has a dedicated accessibility business unit which includes a technical group working on the actual programming and an external group working with governments and NGOs around the world to create policies and programmes to foster digital inclusion especially for people with disabilities.



Mr. Thurston pointed out that he would be sharing the technology provider perspective on policy. The last annual Microsoft survey on education and technology showed that although education leaders state it is a priority to provide access to quality education to the under-served, this priority does not influence the purchasing behaviour when spending on equipment. This reflects the gap between a policy commitment and actual behaviour in implementing this commitment.

Mr. Thurston then highlighted how Microsoft defines accessible technology as ‘computer technology, which enables individuals to adjust a computer to meet their visual, hearing, dexterity, cognitive and speech needs’. This needs to work through three elements: accessibility options built into products, assistive technology products or interoperability between assistive technology operating systems and software programmes. Accessible technology is seen as ‘technology for everyone’. As a survey showed, 57 % of adults could profit from accessible technology: people with ‘traditional’ disabilities, temporary conditions (repetitive stress injury, eye fatigue, injury or surgery) and different preferences (colour adjustment, font size, varying input devices).

Considering policy, Microsoft has observed 6 forces driving digital inclusion around the world:

- Demographics
- Social responsibility
- Market demands
- Advancing technology
- Policy and legal activities
- Awareness.

Mr. Thurston closed his presentation by presenting a selection of Microsoft’s resources which can support the implementation of accessibility policy – specifically for the education sector (products, tutorials and training). These can be accessed via [www.microsoft.com/education/enable](http://www.microsoft.com/education/enable). The *Accessibility Guide for Educators* was then introduced in greater depth.

### **Messages from the Workshops Inputs**

In the afternoon a total of 8 workshops were held in two parallel sessions. Each workshop was attended by an observer, nominated by the i-access team to feedback key messages to the plenary. These observers were Dónal Rice, (external project expert), Isabelle Turmaine (International Association of Universities), Amanda Watkins (the Agency) and Harald Weber, (the Agency).

The observers were asked to feedback:

1. A very brief description of the example presented in the workshop.
2. What specific aspects of each workshop example were noteworthy and should be highlighted for further consideration in other situations or contexts.
3. The main messages in relation to:
  - International and national policies for accessibility?
  - Practice, or implementation of policy?

The workshop discussions showed that noteworthy aspects of the workshop examples are difficult to separate from the main messages for accessibility policy and the practice or



implementation of policy. The following section will therefore summarise the feedback from Questions 2 and 3 by presenting key messages for policy and key messages for practice/policy implementation. An overview of the workshops can be found in the annex.

### ***Key messages for international and national policies for accessibility***

The workshop content included: an overview of accessibility of learning in Europe's schools (European Schoolnet); National accessibility portals (Denmark); Learning platforms (UK England) and Research on (tele)communication tools for people with disabilities (Poland). All workshops highlighted the importance of considering the following key issues in international and national policies:

- *Impact of models of disability*: focusing on capabilities instead of disabilities;
- *Development of evidence based policy*: availability of data and how it is used;
- *Monitoring compliance with policy and standards / goals*: e.g. for websites;
- *Procurement*: key methods of influencing the market and implementing policy;
- *Co-ordination of cross-sectoral policies*: e.g. e-government, other educational policy;
- *Availability and production of accessible content*;
  - o Defining what this is for various users of the policy;
  - o Having inclusive content as an end goal;
  - o Matching learners with content e.g. meta-data.
- *Availability of in-country assistive technology*: e.g. speech engines;
- *Motivators for implementing policy*:
  - o Arguing the moral case and using legislation as a lever;
  - o Letting market forces act as drivers for change;
  - o Focussing on added value instead of the costs of providing accessible information.

### ***Key messages for accessibility practice and policy implementation***

To enable the successful implementation of accessibility policy in practice, the workshop observers noted the importance of the following recurring issues throughout the 8 workshops:

- Awareness raising – fostering and sharing positive strategies;
- Ensuring procurement policies include clear requirements for people with disabilities and/or special needs;
- Producing accessible content;
- Pushing publishers for eBooks / market demand;
- Compiling of national policies;
- Clarifying copyright issues;
- Involving users in developing/implementing practical policy;
- Informing educators of accessible content;
- Awareness raising for everyone; basic training for some; specialised training for a few;



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- Setting clear goals e.g. WCAG2.0;
  - Looking beyond Europe for examples;
  - Opening up national policies for feedback and debate;
  - Identifying who to contact for accessible services/support;
  - Opening up education content;
  - Ensuring that mass produced technologies are compatible with assistive technologies.



## RAISING AWARENESS AND DEVELOPING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING I-ACCESS POLICY

The following sections summarise the discussions regarding the two main project aims:

1. Raising awareness of the importance of providing information for learning which is accessible for all;
2. Developing recommendations for implementing accessibility policy for information relevant for learning.

The 2 nominated delegates from each participating country – one education policy expert and one multiplier (researcher or journalist) – were identified in order to contribute to the fulfilment of the aims above. To collect information from the countries on both the development of a set of proposed recommendations and awareness raising and dissemination of information, one session was prepared for the policy makers and one for the multipliers. The information collected in these sessions has been used to write the i-access recommendations. The following section summarises the discussions in the two groups.

### **Raising awareness of the importance of providing accessible information for lifelong learning**

The multipliers are responsible for disseminating conference and project outcomes within their national networks. Therefore the session began with general information on the i-access project as well as its financing under Key Activity 1, Policy cooperation and innovation, Support for European co-operation in Education and Training (ECET 2010), Part A) Raising national awareness of LLL strategies and of European co-operation in Education and training. Details were shared regarding possible dissemination strategies and information that the Agency could provide for this dissemination.

The discussion which followed, focused on three sets of questions:

1. Are the suggested dissemination materials useful for you? What additional materials for dissemination would be useful?
2. Is the information the Agency suggests is collected regarding national dissemination useful? What additional or other information would you suggest collecting?
3. What additional or other dissemination ideas do you have?

The discussions are summarised in the following three sections.

### ***Useful dissemination materials***

Examples of strategies the Agency uses for dissemination were presented to the multiplier group. These included press releases, the EuroNews magazine, electronic bulletins, web pages and web news feeds, dissemination both at conferences and to key contacts in co-operating organisations. Suggested dissemination strategies proposed to the group were:

- Production of articles in printed or electronic form;
- Speaking at conferences or events;
- Forwarding of i-access project outputs to national network via newsletters and emails.

To support the multipliers dissemination efforts the Agency can offer:

- Template texts on:



- Organisational information on the Agency;
- i-access project information;
- i-access project outcomes;
- All conference material (available at [www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/i-access](http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/i-access));
- i-access recommendation translations;
- i-access graphic templates (logo, poster).

The participants agreed that practical examples from different areas related to the provision of accessible information would be essential in addition to the suggested material. Practical examples of case studies should demonstrate the importance of accessibility and highlight how the i-access conference, the recommendations and the project in general will impact on this. From a journalist's point of view the proposed information is useful, however, One delegate stated that 'Case studies would make this information more exciting'. Consequently the dissemination may focus more on the 'cause' – the issue of i-access (providing accessible information for lifelong learning) – and less on the Agency and the project details.

The participants suggested collecting examples of implemented policy for accessibility. The focus could then be more on practice with a broad range of disabilities and/or special needs. The recommendations would need to be very practical in terms of suitability for implementation. It would also be interesting to disseminate commitments made by individuals, teachers and networks; therefore participants suggested including a request for commitment to the final recommendations on the website.

The multipliers also highlighted the importance of defining the target audience who might require different approaches to dissemination. Communication and dissemination must be bi-directional, giving the target audience the possibility to comment and feedback.

A schedule with different elements for dissemination (target groups, tasks) was also perceived as useful.

Once examples of practice are available, it would also be possible to disseminate them via storytelling, videos and/or by translating various examples into national languages. Practical examples combined with government action and policy information could be very effective. Ideally this could also be combined with relevant interviews.

### ***Collecting national level dissemination examples***

The role of the multipliers was described in more depth by the Agency team. When disseminating the conference outcomes within national networks the target groups should be educational policy makers, educational institutions, ICT experts and the general public. The aim of this dissemination is to facilitate debates and raise awareness on a national level. Information on how the outcomes were disseminated should be provided to the Agency team. The i-access project team suggested that dissemination examples should include the following information:

- Date of dissemination;
- Type of dissemination;
- Approximate amount of people reached;
- Type of target audience;
- Photos;



- Links.

Overall, there was agreement about the data that the Agency suggests is collected regarding national dissemination. Additional suggestions included:

- Information on the impact of the dissemination action (does it change practice?);
- Any feedback received;
- Channels used in different countries (e.g. web, facebook, internet radio, meetings).

Finally, the multipliers committed themselves to start dissemination activities for i-access and to send feedback and ideas to the Agency to share with other multipliers by October.

### ***Additional dissemination ideas***

The main additional dissemination ideas were to:

- Request a practical example in the re-launch of the i-access survey;
- Use digital storytelling;
- Meet again within a year to discuss progress;
- Show good practice to parents to act as role-model within student services/early intervention;
- Disseminate stories in languages/ translations.

Three additional questions/comments were raised within the discussion:

1. How to choose and/or summarise examples? A pre-selection by the i-access team could have negative effects.
2. How do we plan to sustain this project and its outcome beyond the one year project duration?
3. It is important not to forget disabilities and/or special needs which are usually not the focus of assistive technologies or discussions about accessibility in general. One example given was accessibility for deaf people and awareness of issues such as acoustics and related problems.

### **Developing recommendations for implementing i-access policy**

The outcome of the i-access project will be the development recommendations for key decision makers on how to interpret and implement European and international standards on providing accessible information. This will include *a set of proposed recommendations for i-access policy* (provision of accessible information) and the *identification of the critical factors for implementation*. The information collected during the conference sessions will contribute to drafting the i-access recommendations.

In the i-access survey there was a call for *examples and case studies* in regard to i-accessibility and more specifically for:

- Information on the experiences of other countries;
- Best practice;
- Legislation in other countries;
- Co-operation and co-ordination;
- Case studies on successful implementation of policies;
- How to transfer good or best practice;



- Raising awareness.

Despite the existence of policies the survey shows there is still a need for *guidelines and guidance*, particularly for procurement, improving the exchange of information between different stakeholders, raising awareness and policy making. Guidance is also needed on the implementation of policy, such as support strategies for the systematic implementation of i-access, raising awareness and practical ideas for implementation.

Other requests were

- Levers to encourage compliance to standards;
- The rationale for compliance (cost benefits and technical guidance – easy to follow and implement);
- Latest research findings;
- Ideas for accessibility awareness training;
- Clarity over copyright arrangements for easy read versions of copyright text.

Further information was collected in the session aimed at the policy makers. Due to the size of this participant group, the session was divided into two separate groups with the same discussion points. The results presented below are a summary of these two groups.

The following questions were discussed in the policy maker sessions:

1. What sort of information is most useful in an 'example'?
2. What sort of information is most useful within a 'guideline' or recommendation?
3. Are there other aspects of i-accessibility you think need considering within the recommendations
4. How do you think the project can usefully contribute to the standards debate?

### ***What sort of information is most useful in an 'example'?***

In order to answer this question, the purpose of the examples needs to be elaborated: what should the case studies/examples exemplify? It is probably not possible to create a universal case study, however, if a description of the context is provided, users can extract the information they find useful.

For an example to be useful a conceptual framework is needed. It would be helpful to look at different types of needs and different scenarios and technology, and draw up matrices showing existing technology solutions for these different needs in a form that could be easily used by teachers, parents etc. The examples should include instructions or clear recommendations on what worked well and what was less successful and should ideally include a list of resources.

To be useful, an example will also include a clear definition of the target group. In the case of i-Access, the target group may range from legislators to teachers. The target group will also include pupils, who should be empowered to be active participants, able to make their needs clear to their educators. In the case of users who have the most severe needs or who are still very young, parents might also be involved and might also be a target group for these examples.

Depending on the target group, the examples will need to refer to different contexts. Suggestions for useful examples were collected:

- Examples of how teachers can create accessible documents for all learners as part of their standard class preparation and teaching would be helpful.



- The procurement process is essential for i-accessibility. If no examples can be collected in the area of education, then it would be useful to collect some examples of accessible web pages.
- It would be useful if the costs of all examples were shown. However, specific examples of the costs and potential savings (in a case study) would be useful where available. Some groups have made calculations on monetary benefits of accessibility approaches on society as a whole (e.g. SROI – Social Return On Investment): such an analysis might include calculations/ estimated costs and financial benefits for people with disabilities who had the chance to attend higher education and who were able to work and then pay taxes at later stages in their life.
- Examples on how to involve different target groups.

### ***What sort of information is most useful within a ‘guideline’ or recommendation?***

The policy makers suggested that the difference between *recommendations* and *guidelines* must be clarified. It was argued that the i-access project work should work in line with the following operational definitions:

- Recommendations are targeted at policy makers and key decision-makers in the field and focus upon what needs to be included within a written policy in order to implement i-access in organisations;
- Guidelines are targeted at practitioners and focus upon how the policy can be implemented in a practical way, including tools such as checklists and indexes for monitoring action.

Within the policy maker group there was a general consensus that the tone, format and content of recommendations and guidelines needs to be different depending on the target group. Recommendations that make sense at a policy level are often difficult to translate into actual guidelines for classroom practice, therefore it is important to use language specifically suited to the needs of the target group. Teachers may be more concerned about practical ‘low tech’ solutions, for example how to increase font size.

Checklists can support implementation by listing what certain target groups have to do to make things accessible. They can also be aligned with scenarios, serve as an audit tool or allow the screening of organisations for accessibility and may also be used as a benchmark, enabling organisations to learn from each other.

In the case of procurement it would be useful to have recommendations which:

- Urge bidders to publish accessible documents (e.g. text books for schools) in addition to the ‘normal’ versions;
- Show bidders how to make use of the available technologies (proactive approaches are cheaper than reactive approaches).

Currently there is a lack of monitoring tools and materials linked to clear guidelines. It would be desirable to have a collection of examples, which show evidence of success.

User testing (e.g. via focus groups) might be more widespread if it were included in recommendations or guidelines.

### ***Are there other aspects of i-access you think need considering within the recommendations?***

The recommendations could go beyond Lifelong Learning and be placed in a broader context – such as information for life. The policy makers would also like more specific



references in the recommendations extending the idea of accessibility to sign language or embedding teaching and training about accessibility in web designers' training.

Issues that cannot be dealt with economically on a national level should be directed to the European level, which highlights the need to target some recommendations to multiple stakeholders: users (pupils) or teachers, technical providers, parents, carers and policy makers. When formulating the recommendations it is important to keep in mind that they will not only be read by experts, but also by generalists, who might not need to *understand* technology but need to know *how to use* it.

The policy makers highlighted that the proposed recommendations should be non-binding. In order to bring about a change in legislation, political support or an agreed 'higher level' binding document is needed. A reference to the UNCRRPD, indicating that 'These recommendations will help governments to implement the convention ...' should be added. The intention of the recommendations needs to be stated very clearly.

### ***How do you think the project can usefully contribute to the standards debate?***

The first general agreement was the need to build on existing policies and guidelines, not to re-invent the wheel. However, the possibility of setting goals that enable the quality or level of accessibility to be measured and labelled was discussed. Practically the guidelines could be based on the resources/documents collected. The aim of the project is not to benchmark, but to share references and examples from different countries.

It is also important to keep in mind the complete 'eco-system' involved in providing accessible information for lifelong learning. Here, it is vital to formulate recommendations for teacher education – making accessibility and assistive technology a part of initial teacher education across Europe.

Finally the recommendations must also show that they will not only benefit learners with disabilities and/or special needs, but will benefit all learners.



## REFLECTIONS ON OVERALL MESSAGES FROM THE CONFERENCE

The overall messages of the conference can be divided into three general areas:

1. General guiding principles
2. Framework for the i-access recommendations
3. Content of the i-access recommendations

### General Guiding principles

The conference participants agreed that *access to information is a fundamental right, which applies to lifelong learning*. This right is underpinned by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Digital Agenda for Europe and National Policies.

The argument for providing information that is accessible for all therefore must mainly be a moral and 'rights' argument. Although business cases have been made of the financial benefits of e-accessibility, these are difficult to prove and recommendations can lose their credibility if these business cases are overstated. A more effective argument is *the long-term advantages of designing technology and processes based on a universal design approach, which avoids costly 'add-ons' for accessibility's sake at later times*.

One main tool for achieving accessible information provision is information and communication technology. However, *it is vital for any policy or recommendation not to see technology as an end in itself, without considering the systemic factors which determine the usage of this tool for lifelong learning*.

Most current recommendations and guidelines focus on specific disabilities and/or special needs. For example, regarding the web, guidelines often only touch upon the needs of people with visual impairments. The participants stressed that *i-access needs to be considered in its widest interpretation including all forms of disabilities and/or special needs* and to also include for example the needs of the deaf and people with learning difficulties. In this discussion the relevance of universal design was again stressed – designing technology to accommodate the needs of all users. *What benefits users with disabilities and/or special needs, may often benefit all users*.

### Framework of the i-access recommendations

One of the main concerns was that the *i-access recommendations should 'not re-invent the wheel'* by repeating existing information, but rather synthesise it or refer to it where appropriate. The *information should also be appropriate to the target group* it is aimed at. Guidelines aimed at teachers would need a different focus and language to recommendations aimed at policy makers, for example.

In addition to the recommendations, participants agreed that the need for examples or scenarios that demonstrate the implementation of i-access policy would be extremely useful – not only to learn from and show evidence of success, but also as a vehicle to raise awareness of the issue. This also underlines the call for *the set of proposed recommendations to be clearly applicable to practice in countries*.

### Content of the i-access recommendations

As a result of an analysis of all of the information collected before and during the conference, seven key thematic areas for proposed recommendations are apparent:

1. Raising awareness of and sensitising all stakeholders to the importance of i-access



2. Multi-stakeholder approaches and international co-operation;
3. Accessibility issues covered in education and training for professionals in lifelong learning;
4. Accessibility issues covered in education and training for professionals in ICT;
5. Procurement;
6. Promoting research and developing an evidence base for future policy design, implementation and evaluation
7. Monitoring of compliance to accessibility policy.

### ***Raising awareness of and sensitising all stakeholders to the importance of i-access***

It is vital for the implementation of policy, that the issues related to i-access are familiar and understood by all stakeholders involved in providing information for lifelong learning. Policy makers, organisations and professionals in lifelong learning, ICT specialists, people with disabilities themselves and their family and support system should be aware of the guiding principles presented in the previous section. Most of all, all stakeholders must be aware of how essential the provision of accessible information is for learners with disabilities and/or special needs to enable them to participate in educational opportunities. The aim of awareness raising activities would be to achieve adherence to i-access policy through a moral lever – a change of attitude, where accessibility is not an add-on but an integral part of information provision. Raising awareness and sensitising all stakeholders may also support a bottom-up approach to achieving i-access.

### ***Multi-stakeholder approaches and international co-operation***

Policies or single interest groups alone cannot achieve the provision of accessible information for lifelong learning. This is an issue spanning both educational and ICT policy; international, European and national policies; as well as policy makers, ICT specialists, teachers, support organisations and special interest groups. In some areas there is an overlap of policy and in some areas there are gaps. Teachers must be educated in the use of ICT for education and ICT specialists must have knowledge of disabilities and/or special needs connected to the use of ICT in general. The examples of practice shared during the conference effectively show how multi-stakeholder approaches can support the implementation of accessibility policy. Sharing experiences and knowledge across borders is strongly supported by the participants of the i-access conference.

### ***i-access issues covered in education and training for professionals in lifelong learning***

Another priority for successful implementation of policy for i-access is a specific focus on teachers. For the successful implementation of accessibility policy in educational settings, it is essential that teachers have knowledge of how to use ICT in general and how to use ICT and assistive technology to support students with disabilities and/or special needs in particular. They also need to be on board emotionally with the idea of using ICT as a tool for inclusive education.<sup>5</sup> In order for teachers to achieve this they must be educated in initial teacher education and supported beyond in the use of ICT. The development of the

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<sup>5</sup> UNESCO Institute for Information Technology and the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, ICTs in Education for People with Disabilities: Review of Innovative Practice, 2011



right knowledge, skills and attitudes for all teachers is crucial and is not specific only to teachers in special education<sup>6</sup>.

### ***i-access issues covered in education and training for professionals in ICT***

ICT specialists (web designers, programmers, etc.) must also be sensitised regarding the accessibility of technology early in their training. With ICT specialists educated on the disabilities and/or special needs people may have when using ICT, it is possible to develop more accessible technology from design to production, avoiding the need to make the finished product more accessible. Built in accessibility features in ICT products often benefit a larger group of users than the original target group.

### ***Procurement***

There are existing directives aimed at encouraging accessibility issues in public procurement on international and European level. The recommendations should refer to these, highlighting that in all areas of public procurement aspects of accessibility must be considered.

### ***Promoting research and developing an evidence base for future policy design, implementation and evaluation***

The discussions in the conference point towards the need for systematic, long-term collaboration and research, involving the input of different groups of i-access stakeholders. Long-term research efforts in this area would inform policy making and monitoring, but, more importantly, would aim to identify areas for development and future work.

### ***Monitoring of compliance to policy***

Considering accessibility when providing web pages or documents for example is often a task within organisations with a fixed beginning and end. However, this should be considered as a continuous cycle due to the fast paced changes of today's technology.

Two aspects should be considered

- Monitoring the compliance to accessibility policy;
- User participation in the development of the processes relevant for accessible information provision.

While the first issue could focus on data, benchmarks or audit tools, the second stresses the involvement of the users for whom accessibility is essential.

The key messages from the i-access conference reflected upon within this section will inform the drafting of the set of proposed recommendations for i-access policy and its implementation. Additional future tasks resulting from the i-access conference in addition to planned tasks are described in the next section.

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<sup>6</sup> European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2011. *Teacher Education for Inclusion Across Europe – Challenges and Opportunities*, Odense, Denmark: European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education



## NEXT STEPS IN THE I-ACCESS PROJECT

### Tasks resulting from the i-access conference

As a result of requests during the conference the *i-access survey* has been a) re-launched to give all participants – who haven't already done so – the opportunity to share their national experience on accessible information provision and b) extended to include a section which collects practical examples regarding accessible information provision. The results will be collected and collated with the initial responses and will be considered in the finalising of the i-access recommendations.

Based on the feedback from the survey and the discussions during the conference the *i-access recommendations*, a set of proposed recommendations on i-access policy and its implementation, will be drafted by the Agency. This will include key messages from the conference on the guiding principles, framework and content of the recommendations as outlined in the previous section.

Acting on the request not to re-invent the wheel in relation to recommendations, a review of key international policy relating to accessibility will be completed as reference material contributing to the proposed recommendations.

Following the discussion particularly in the multiplier session, the content of the *dissemination package* (including press release texts and template presentations) must be partly reconsidered, as there was a clear demand for basing the dissemination strategies on practical examples demonstrating accessible information provision. Therefore collecting examples will be a first step in the dissemination process. These examples will be checked and agreed on by the Agency country representatives, prior to publicly sharing them.

### Next steps planned within the i-access project

The *Project web area* ([www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/i-access](http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/i-access)) will be updated to include all conference materials and the conference report. Once the i-access recommendations are finalised these will also be shared via the project web area.

The *i-access conference report* will be shared with and feedback collected from all nominated conference participants, conference speakers and country representatives. The finalised report will then be shared via the project web area mentioned above.

A *set of proposed recommendations on i-access* will be drafted taking into account the key messages of the conference, the survey results and a policy review. Before finalising the recommendations feedback on the draft will be collected from all experts.

The *dissemination package* will be distributed in phases. The first will include the publicity texts and templates, as well as the collection of examples. In the second and third phase the agreed recommendations and their translations will be distributed. As a parallel task, a *collection of the national level dissemination examples* will begin.

### Building upon the i-access project work

The questions of sustainability and continuation of the i-access project were voiced throughout the conference. As described in previous sections the current project will result in recommendations, not guidelines, aimed at policy decision makers in lifelong learning, not practitioners. Developing guidelines would be a next step to take, however, this is beyond the scope of this one-year project.

The validation of the i-access recommendations as well as the collection of examples linked to practical guidelines for other target groups would be a potentially beneficial



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development activity. The examples collected for dissemination purposes in the current project could be expanded upon, systematically linking them to guidelines and showing successful practice in specific areas of i-access.

Beyond the Agency's commitment to exploring how the i-access recommendations can be implemented in its own work, other possibilities for project continuation activities are being discussed and opportunities for a continuation project to investigate the above-mentioned areas considered.

It is hoped that the final outcomes of the i-access project will clearly set the agenda for developing work beyond the project's lifetime.



## ANNEX 1 – CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

### **Wednesday, 22 June**

#### *Participants' arrival*

19.00 Registration and welcome session

### **Thursday, 23 June**

09.00 – 09.20 **Welcome and opening of the Conference**

Director General of the National Education Agency in Denmark: Lars Mortensen

Per Ch Gunnvall, Chair of the Agency

9.20 – 9.50 **Introduction to the programme**

Harald Weber and Marcella Turner (Agency project team)

9.50 – 11.00 **Panel Presentations: Why do we need i-access? Policy viewpoints**

Chaired by Cor Meijer, Director of the Agency

i-access country survey - interim results: Amanda Watkins (the Agency)

Accessibility policies and the work of UNESCO: Irmgarda Kasinskaite-Buddeberg (UNESCO)

Supporting the work of policy makers for accessibility: Francesca Bianchi (G3ict)

11.00 – 11.30 *Coffee*

11.30 – 12.30 **Panel Presentations: Why do we need i-access? Practice viewpoints**

Chaired by Cor Meijer, Director of the Agency

Web Accessibility: Shadi Abou-Zahra (WAI/W3C)

Electronic and Printed Materials: Bernhard Heinser (DAISY)

Accessible contact with organisations: Harald Weber (the Agency project team)

12.30 – 14.00 *Lunch*

14.00 – 15.15 **Workshops First Session**

Workshop 1: Towards greater accessibility of learning in Europe's schools – European Schoolnet

Workshop 2: A web-portal about accessibility of education in Denmark – Danish Ministry of Education



Workshop 3: Books for All: a model for delivering accessible information in alternative formats to print disabled pupils – UK (Scotland)

Workshop 4: e-accessibility monitor: an educational model to monitor e-accessibility of public websites – Belgium (Flemish speaking community)

15.15 – 15.45

*Coffee*

15.45 – 17.00

### **Workshops Second Session**

Workshop 5: Making the Agency accessible: efforts to implement accessibility within all areas of the organisation's work – The Agency project team and the Institute for Learning, Technology and Research, UK

Workshop 6: A Swedish perspective on i-access: Accessible Information Provision – Sweden

Workshop 7: Learning platforms; possibilities for learning, challenges of access – UK (England)

Workshop 5: Research on (tele)communication tools for people with disabilities – selected topics – Poland

## ***Friday, 24 June***

09.00 – 10.00

### **Panel: Reflections upon key issues from the previous day**

Chaired by Marcella Turner, Agency project team

Dónal Rice (Project external expert)

Isabelle Turmaine (International Association of Universities)

Caroline Bélan-Ménagier (Equal Opportunities and Anti-Discrimination Office (MIPADI))

Harald Weber (Agency project team)

10.00 – 10.30

### **Panel of ICT service providers**

Chaired by Amanda Watkins (the Agency)

Kiran Kaga (Adobe)

James Thurston (Microsoft)

10.30 – 11.00

*Coffee*

11.00 – 12.30

### **Parallel Sessions**

1. Multipliers (Ole Lissabeck Nielsen, András Lénárt and Marcella Turner)

2. Policy Makers Group 1 (Harald Weber)

3. Policy Makers Group 2 (Dónal Rice and Amanda Watkins)

12.30 – 13.00

### **Plenary**



## **UPDATANNEK 2 – CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS**

### **Opening Session speakers**

Mr. Lars Mortensen, Director General of the National Education Agency in Denmark

Mr. Per Ch Gunnvall, Chair of the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

Ms. Marcella Turner, European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

Mr. Harald Weber, European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

### **Panel Session speakers**

Ms. Amanda Watkins, Assistant Director, European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

Ms. Irmgarda Kasinskaite-Buddeberg, Programme Specialist, Information Society Division - Communication and Information Sector – UNESCO

Ms Francesca Bianchi, Director, External Relations, Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ict)

Mr. Shadi Abou-Zahra, Web Accessibility Initiative/ World Wide Web Consortium

Mr. Bernhard Heinser, Daisy Consortium

Mr. Harald Weber, European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

Mr. Kiran Kaja, Adobe

Mr. James Thurston, Microsoft

### **Plenary Session speakers**

Mr. Dónal Rice, G3ICT expert advisor and National University of Ireland, Galway

Ms. Isabelle Turmaine, International Association of Universities

Mr. Harald Weber, European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

Ms. Amanda Watkins, European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

### **Workshop presenters**

Mr. Stuart Aitken, UK (Scotland)

Mr. Chris Bailey, Institut for Learning and Research Technology (ILRT)

Mr. Ola Balke, Sweden

Mr. Tim Bevan, European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

Mr. Roger Blamire, European Schoolnet,

Mr. Jan Dekelver, Belgium (Flemish speaking community),

Mr. John Galloway, UK (England)

Mr. Antoni Grzanka, Poland

Mr. Lars-Åke Larsson, Sweden

Mr. Preben Siersbaek, Danish Ministry of Education,

Ms. Klára Somogyi, European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education



Ms. Mette Thrane Pedersen, European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

Ms. Marcella Turner, European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

Mr. Terry Waller, UK (England)

### **Representatives of international organisations**

Ms. Irmgarda Kasinskaite-Buddeberg, Programme Specialist, Information Society Division – Communication and Information Sector – UNESCO

Ms Francesca Bianchi, Director, External Relations, Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ict)

Mr. Shadi Abou-Zahra, Web Accessibility Initiative/ World Wide Web Consortium

Mr. Bernhard Heinser, Daisy Consortium

Mr. Kiran Kaja, Adobe

Mr. James Thurston, Microsoft

### **Country Representatives**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
<b>Belgium (Flemish speaking community)</b>	Mr Jan Dekelver	Policy expert
<b>Belgium (French speaking community)</b>	Mr Thierry Jongen	Policy expert
<b>Cyprus</b>	Ms Kalomira Ioannou	Policy expert, National Co-ordinator
	Ms Maria Papageorgiou	Multiplier
<b>Denmark</b>	Ms. Julie Kock Clausen	Policy expert
	Mr. Søren Aalykke	Multiplier
<b>Estonia</b>	Ms Mai Kolnes	Policy expert
	Ms Tiina Kangro	Multiplier
<b>France</b>	Mr Vincent Lochmann	Multiplier
<b>Germany</b>	Mr Christoph Degen	Policy expert
	Mr Joachim Klaus	Multiplier
<b>Iceland</b>	Ms Salvör Gissurardóttir	Policy expert
<b>Ireland</b>	Mr Shane T. Hogan	Policy expert
	Ms Madeline Hickey	Multiplier
<b>Italy</b>	Ms Leandra Negro	Policy expert
	Ms Mirella Della Concordia	Multiplier
<b>Latvia</b>	Ms Guntra Kaufmane	Policy expert
	Ms Baiba Bērziņa	Multiplier
<b>Lithuania</b>	Ms Irma Ciziene	Policy expert, Representative Board member
	Ms Lina Palacioniene	Multiplier
<b>Malta</b>	Ms Mervin Vella	Policy expert
	Ms Amanda Muscat	Multiplier

Country	Name	Role
Netherlands	Mr Marco Zocca	Policy expert
	Mr Dick Lunenburg	Multiplier
Norway	Ms Maren Hegna	Policy expert
	Ms Elin Kragset Vold	Multiplier
Poland	Mr Antoni Grzanka	Multiplier
	Ms Elżbieta Neroj	Policy expert, Representative Board member
Portugal	Ms Filomena Pereira	Policy expert, Representative Board member
	Ms Bárbara Wong	Multiplier
Slovenia	Ms Irena Lavrič	Policy expert
	Mr Bogdan Dugonik	Multiplier
Spain	Ms Yolanda Jiménez Martínez	Multiplier, National Co-ordinator
	Ms Carmen Sáinz Madrazo	Policy expert
Sweden	Mr Lars-Åke Larsson	Policy expert
	Ms Ola Balke	Multiplier
Switzerland	Ms Helena Zimmermann	Policy expert
	Mr Andreas Fehlmann	Multiplier
United Kingdom (England)	Mr Terry Waller	Policy expert
	Mr John Galloway	Multiplier
United Kingdom (Scotland)	Mr David Thompson	Policy expert, Representative Board member
	Mr Stuart Aitken	Multiplier

### Ministry of Education Guests and Public Visitors

Guests	Organisation
Mr Bo Bech	Leader of the National Centre on knowledge about Disability and Social Psychiatry
Mr Thomas Bech Hansen	Ministry of Education, Communications Officers
Mr Tue Byskov Bødtkjær	Head of the Danish Disability Council
Ms Helle Bjarnø	Servicestyrelsen / The National Board of Social Services
Mr Jacob Hess	Ministry of Education, Agency Representative Board Member
Mr Thomas Holmstrøm Frandzen	National IT and Telecom Agency, co-ordinator of accessibility initiatives
Ms Line Knudsen	Agency of Danish students' Grants and Loans Scheme
Mr Stig Langvad	Chairman of Disabled Peoples Organisations Denmark (DPOD)
Mr Preben Siersbæk	Ministry of Education, Agency National Co-ordinator
Mr Finn Togo	Chief editor of the national website on education (EMU)

### Agency i-access Project Team

External project expert	
Mr Dónal Rice	External project expert, National University of Ireland, Galway, G3ict expert advisor



<b>Project Advisory Group</b>	
Mr András Lénárt	Project Officer
Mr Dónal Rice	External project expert, National University of Ireland, Galway, G3ict expert advisor
Ms Marcella Turner	Project Officer
Mr Harald Weber	Project Scientific Advisor
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Mr Per Ch Gunnvall	Chair of the Agency
Mr Cor J.W. Meijer	Director of the Agency
Mr Tim Bevan	Graphic Designer
Mr Ole Lissabeck Nielsen	Assistant Director of the Agency
Ms Mellie Schultz	English Language Editor
Ms Klára Somogyi	Information Dissemination Officer
Ms Mette Thrane Pedersen	Financial Department
Ms Amanda Watkins	Assistant Director of the Agency

## ANNEX 3 – i-access WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

Session 1	Session 2
Workshop 1: Towards greater accessibility of learning in Europe's schools – European Schoolnet	Workshop 5: Making the Agency accessible: efforts to implement accessibility within all areas of the organisation's work – The Agency project team and ILRT
Workshop 2: A web-portal about accessibility of education in Denmark – Danish Ministry of Education	Workshop 6: A Swedish perspective on i-access: Accessible Information Provision – Sweden
Workshop 3: Books for All: a model for delivering accessible information in alternative formats to print disabled pupils – UK (Scotland)	Workshop 7: Learning platforms; possibilities for learning, challenges of access - UK (England)
Workshop 4: e-accessibility monitor: an educational model to monitor e-accessibility of public websites – Belgium (Flemish speaking community)	Workshop 8: Research on (tele)communication tools for people with disabilities – selected topics – Poland

### Workshop 1

Towards greater accessibility of learning in Europe's schools

*European Schoolnet, Roger Blamire*

In this session the work of European Schoolnet, a consortium of 30 ministries of education, to support educational change using technology, will be described, leading to an open discussion on concrete actions to improve the cross-border sharing of efforts and experience between schools and ministries of education as regards learners with special needs. Issues are likely to include:

- Raising teacher awareness and competence: online training on integration of special needs pupils into mainstream education: what exists in different countries, how can it be transferred, etc.?
- Mechanisms to provide accessibility to digital learning resources by all students: what are the new problems/issues when using multimedia resources for impaired pupils to access it?

### Workshop 2

A web-portal about accessibility of education in Denmark

*Danish Ministry of Education, Preben Siersbaek*

Denmark has an inclusive education system, in which everybody, including people with disabilities, has the same rights and opportunities to study. A web-portal, hosted by the Danish Ministry of Education as a guide to accessibility services for disabled students in Denmark, will be introduced. The main target groups are students, parents and professionals, and user organisations. The portal deals with all sorts of access to education.



### **Workshop 3**

Books for All: a model for delivering accessible information in alternative formats to print disabled pupils

*Scotland, Stuart Aitken*

Using Scotland's school population and curriculum as an example the workshop will identify:

- numbers of pupils who have some form of print disability,
- the nature of their difficulties,
- the type of materials needed,
- the range and quantity of materials,
- accessible alternative formats required,
- what gaps exist, what needs to be done to fill these gaps,
- liaison work with publishers and UK copyright agency,
- influencing the law and policy.

We will use recent work done to convert assessment resources into accessible information in alternative formats for: worksheets, Word documents, images, task descriptors and answer boxes. The examples will demonstrate both demand and some of the steps needed for information to be made accessible in alternative formats. The examples will also indicate the scale of the task ahead.

A workflow model will be described that considers preparation of intermediate formats and conversion to more specialised formats. An outline specification for accessible information will be presented. We will indicate skills people need to do this work and how they can acquire these skills.

Throughout, the workshop will integrate policy and practice, identifying the questions that Scotland saw as a challenge that public policy makers and practitioners, by working together, are helping to address.

We have been hugely encouraged by policy makers at all levels of Scottish Government in helping to develop this work and we are now seeing it beginning to bear fruit.

### **Workshop 4**

e-accessibility monitor: an educational model to monitor e-accessibility of public websites

*Belgium (Flemish speaking community), Jan Dekelver*

The e-accessibility monitor offers a didactical model to screen a large amount of websites, after teaching students the basics of e-accessibility, and produce a yearly report on e-accessibility of public websites.

Inaccessibility of websites causes major barriers for e-inclusion of people with disabilities. While WCAG is providing guidelines for website developers to make any website more accessible, in practice, these guidelines are not followed most of the time.

Different actions are undertaken to tackle this problem. One of the ways is to make sure that the webmasters of the next generation are aware of accessibility guidelines. That is why we invested in educating ICT students in website accessibility principles and at the same time present a public report that provides figures on the accessibility of the most important websites in Flanders.



This approach serves different purposes:

- it instructs students, future website developers, in the basics of website accessibility,
- it gives a yearly indication of public website accessibility and generates public attention for this issue,
- it offers governments opportunities to evaluate their own accessibility.

We will explore options for collaboration with other EU-partners to transfer this model to other EU-countries.

### **Workshop 5**

Making the Agency accessible: efforts to implement accessibility within all areas of the organisation's work

*The Agency and ILRT (Klára Somogyi, Tim Bevan, Mette Thrane Pedersen, Marcella Turner and Chris Bailey)*

The aim of this workshop is to:

1) to show what the Agency is currently doing to provide accessible information as far as possible:

- web and web tools,
- electronic files,
- graphics and printing,
- organising conferences.

2) to get feedback on what we do and to also raise controversial issues around accessible information provision.

### **Workshop 6**

A Swedish perspective on i-access: Accessible Information Provision

*Sweden, Ola Balke and Lars-Åke Larsson*

The presentation was made by Swedish representatives from two different Governmental Authorities – The National Agency for Special Needs Education and schools and The Swedish Agency for Disability Policy Coordination, Handisam.

The National Agency for Special Needs Education offers support to school managements in matters relating to special needs education, promote access to teaching materials, run special needs schools and allocate government funding to pupils with disabilities in education and to education providers. Increase schools and teachers ability to meet pupil's diverse conditions in various teaching situations.

The Swedish Agency for Disability Policy Coordination, Handisam, promotes a strategic realization of the Swedish Disability Policy and supports accessibility development.

Two videos were shown: 'How do we create a school for all' and 'Accessible information'. A discussion about the definition on accessible information, e-accessibility and i-accessibility started. How do we find the Design for all concept? What is vital for 10 percent will make it easier for 50 percent and be convenient for 100 percent.

### **Workshop 7**

Learning platforms; possibilities for learning, challenges of access

*UK (England), John Galloway, Terry Waller*



UK schools have been embracing learning platforms as a way of connecting learners and providing learning opportunities for students. However, with 20% of the school population identified as having some form of special educational needs, there are challenges in ensuring that all students can benefit from them. This seminar will discuss how learning platform use has developed, the issues that this has raised, and how these have or have not been addressed.

### **Workshop 8**

Research on (tele)communication tools for people with disabilities – selected topics.

*Poland, Antoni Grzanka*

1. General introduction to human voice production;
2. Dimensions of voice in human perception;
3. Technologies of speech acquisition by computers;
4. Combination of acoustical and video information in machine speech perception;
5. To control the computer without hands; blink browser;
6. Modern methods of intervention in hearing problems (screening, amplification, cochlear implants, partial deafness treatment, brainstem implants);
7. Brain Computer Interface; is it the future?



## ANNEX 4 – COUNTRY SURVEY – INTERIM RESULTS

### 1. Which country do you represent?

*Number of respondents: 29*

*Number of countries: 18 [Belgium (Flemish speaking community) (1), Cyprus (2), Finland (1), Germany (2), Ireland (2), Latvia (2), Lithuania (1), Malta, Netherlands (2), Norway (2), Poland (2), Portugal (2), Slovenia (2), Spain, Sweden (2), Switzerland (1), UK (England) (2), UK (Scotland)]*

### 2. How would you describe your main professional role:

Policy maker for education	9
Policy maker for ICT	4
Information provider for education	11
Information provider for ICT	4
Researcher	1
Other	10 ...

- Advisor at the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools, National Coordinator for the European Agency
- Advisor
- Educational administration national ministry
- ICT advisor special education
- Inform policymaking
- Journalist
- Policy maker (accessibility)
- Special Educational Needs Coordinator
- Standards Officer
- To coordinate on the municipal and school level functioning of the special pedagogical support system

### 3. How would you describe the organisation you work for:

Ministry of education	10
Other Ministry	2
Support Organisation	5
Other	12 ...

- Daily Newspaper
- Education – university
- I do not work for an organisation - I am a former member of the state parliament of Hessen and work currently as a teacher
- Independent Consultant but previously worked for a government agency



- Independent state agency - National Disability Authority
- Local authority
- National Centre for education (an institution subordinated to Ministry of Education)
- National Centre for Education - an institution subordinate to the Ministry of Education and Science
- Specialist Centre for the Visually Impaired
- Swedish Agency for Disability Policy Co-ordination
- Technical University
- University

#### **4. Were other professionals involved in completing this survey:**

No 18

Yes 8 ...

- Dr Dariusz Radomski, Rector for disabled students, Mrs Elżbieta Neroj - my partner from Ministry of Education
- Berthold van Leeuwen, head of our Special Needs department and National Coordinator on Special Needs in the Netherlands and Jessica van de Vee, head of our communication department
- Engineer educational technologist
- Eric Velleman Director Accessibility
- Information department, National Agency for Special Need Education and Schools.
- A researcher
- Yolanda Jiménez Martínez; Technical Adviser

#### **5. Which of the following international policies, guidelines and standards on accessibility are relevant for your work and why ...**

*5a UN Convention in the Rights of People with Disabilities (2006)*

Not aware of this policy 2

No: 2

Yes: 25

*If yes, why is relevant for you?*

- All international and national guidelines respecting rights and support measures addressed to pupils with disabilities are important
- All policy documents set by our department are guided by this convention
- All UN conventions Norway has ratified are relevant as a reference in policy making, especially where regulations are concerned
- Base document



- Communication, access, literacy & learning (CALL) Scotland works in assistive technology and augmentative and alternative communication - all aspects of Convention integral to our work
- Cyprus Special Educational Law reflects the provisions of this Convention
- Different articles in this convention are of importance for accessibility. Also, when it is signed by the Dutch government it will be part of governmental policy and will define the accessibility rights of people with disabilities in the Netherlands
- I didn't know and I think it should be brought to attention
- I work with public awareness on inclusive education
- I work with school students with special needs
- In Germany the UN Convention has strong influence on changes in education policies
- Ireland is working towards ratification of the UN convention
- It gave a warning about the rights and needs of people with disabilities that it is still valid and necessary
- It includes the right to an education for all citizens
- It is relevant because it has to do with the rights of people with disabilities as expressed in our law
- It serves as a platform for policy making
- Our Centre is responsible for the development of support system for learners with special needs
- Poland signed the Convention in 2007. Adoption of the Convention is likely to require specific legislative changes to make and re-evaluation of attitudes. Currently we are preparing to ratify the Convention
- The advisers try to raise awareness of the Rights of People with Disabilities in each advising in schools by asking if the child have been heard and are involved
- The centre is responsible for the development of support systems and for learners with special needs
- To be informed
- Underpins entitlements
- Is a guiding principle: The right to education' without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity' for person with disabilities.
- Up to date it has not been ratified by Switzerland

#### *5b Digital Agenda 2010*

Not aware of this policy	8
No	5
Yes	16

#### *If yes, why is relevant for you?*

- ICT knowledge and skills in primary and secondary education
- In co-operation with the responsible work units of the Ministry



- In Poland, the program document in the information society is the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of 23 December 2008, 'The development strategy of information society in Poland to 2013 (SRSI2013). Publication of the European Digital Agenda coincides with the work carried out in Poland related to the reorganization of the strategic documents for the development of the country, taking into account the vision presented in the report, Poland 2030. According to the assumptions of the plan of arrangement strategy, adopted in 2009 by the Council of Ministers, by mid-2011 there will be reorganized these documents. Nine key areas presenting a vision of development will be created. In each of these documents would be represented an area of the information and communication technologies and an information society development issues
- It helps to make politicians aware of the importance of the issue and define the key role that the use of ICT will have to play if we want to succeed in our goals in education
- My work encourages use of technology for all
- National Programme 'ACCESSO' complies with Digital Agenda 2010-2020 and is engaged in making public websites (basic services to citizens) accessible by 2015. The National Strategy for Disability (ENDEF 2011-2013) includes also measures of web accessibility
- Relevant in terms of over-arching framework
- The Digital Agenda is important for the implementation of e-Inclusion in Europe. The Digital Agenda includes a road map and will urge governments throughout Europe to implement. e-Accessibility in a harmonized way
- The Government is aware that cooperation between authorities needs to be developed further, both for efficiency reasons and for citizens and businesses expect the State acting jointly. The National Agency for Special Need Education and Schools is expected to provide an equivalent level of support to the school principal
- To be informed
- The federal council follows up developments concerning information society and gives recommendations. These have effect on the budget and the strategies of educa.ch

#### *5c European Commission Conclusions on Accessible Information Society*

Not aware of this policy	11
No	4
Yes	14

#### *If yes, why is relevant for you?*

- Again useful as over-arching but translation into classroom practice requires much more detailed work
- I didn't know and I think it should be brought to attention
- It helps to apply accessibility criteria in our procurement of ICT goods and services as a public body
- It is our department's practice to ensure accessibility of information for all
- My work encourages the exploitation of ICT for vulnerable learners particularly those with special educational needs or persons with disabilities
- Only in principle, is deliberated by the colleagues of another Unit in the Ministry



- The Communication and Riga Declaration are important for us. They are in need of follow up. This will probably be in the form of activities in the Digital Agenda and road map
- The conclusions are taken into account when creating strategic plans for national development and national law-making process
- To be informed
- Accessibility to special education materials for person with special education needs.

#### *5d Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)*

Not aware of this policy	7
No	1
Yes	19

#### *If yes, why is relevant for you?*

- All Irish accessibility guidelines would be based on WAI WCAG.
- An important element of providing accessible information but only one element of a holistic approach to accessible information
- As the main initiative on web accessibility it is natural to look to these guidelines when considering regulations of recommendations in this area
- I work with schools on online accessibility
- In my advices I try to don't forget these guidelines
- It helps to have a common European approach
- It is a work material of other colleagues in ministry (department for public relations)
- Know in some detail, use to compare implementation of our own as well as nationally delivered projects
- National Programme ACCESSO highlights in its website WCAG resources (tutorials, evaluation tools, etc)
- One of our aims is to implement this into our national provisions
- The government website is guided by these guidelines
- The importance of making material accessible to all citizens
- The information department follow the guidelines. The goal is to raise awareness of the Agency's activities and to strengthen the authority's identity. This is done by giving the visitor knowledge: our knowledge area, our services, how they can get in touch with us by providing contact details
- These guidelines are extremely important for our students. Accessibility of the web is crucial for their ability to take part in society
- WCAG 2.0 standards are included in the Polish proposal for a regulation on minimum requirements for public records and exchange of electronic information and minimum requirements for ICT systems
- As from 2010 websites by federal, cantonal and communal organisations are to WCAG 3.0 with AA. <http://www.access-for-all.ch/en/guidelines/law-switzerland.html> is the leading organisation in this respect.



*Other policies and guidelines that are relevant for you ...*

- British Standard 8878 Disability Discrimination Act 2004 Equalities Act 2010
- Citizens Information Board (Ireland) - Accessible information for all (2009) RNIB UK's See It Right
- Declaration of 11 June 2006, signed in Riga. According to this declaration, which was signed by the Ministers of the Member States of the European Union, representatives of countries applying for accession and candidate countries as well as representatives of the countries belonging to the Free Trade Association (EFTA). Ministers declared promoting inclusive eGovernment by ensuring the availability of all public websites by 2010 by ensuring compliance with relevant general standards and accessibility guidelines laid down by the W3C
- The Salamanca Statement
- The Work inside Mandate 376 is important as it will offer a standard for e-Accessibility and instruments to help in the implementation. Digital accessibility is important for our students
- We work very much for and with the Ministry of Education. In the Netherlands a lot of guidelines are setup for ICT 'e-civilian'

**6. Do you have a national policy for accessible information in your country?**

No	8 (28%)
Yes	21 (72%)

*If yes ...*

*6.a Please provide the full name of the policy in your national language and in English (If you have more than one policy to list, please number them and use the same number to answer question b.)*

- 1) Basic Law - Polish Constitution 2)ustawa z dnia 16 lipca 2004 r. Prawo telekomunikacyjne - Telecommunication Act 3) ustawa z dnia 17 lutego 2005 r. o informatyzacji działalności podmiotów realizujących zadania publiczne - Act on the computerization of entities pursuing public tasks 4) 4) Strategia rozwoju społeczeństwa informacyjnego - The Strategy for the Development of the Information Society in Poland until 2013 5) ustawa z dnia 7 września 1991 r. o systemie oświaty - The Education System Act
- 1. Equal Opportunities Act 2. Standard Document On Website Standards
- Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information provided by Public Bodies
- Diskriminering og tilgjengelighetsloven The law of discrimination and accessibility
- Gesetz zur Gleichstellung behinderter Menschen (Law on Equal Opportunities for Disabled People) See: <http://www.netzwerk-artikel-3.de/tagung/bgg-leicht.php>
- Gesetz zur gleichstellung behinderter Mwenschen/ BGG; Verordnung zur barrierefreien Zugänglichmachung von Dokumenten für blinde und sehbehinderte Personen im gerichtlichen Verfahren; Verordnung zur Schaffung barrierefreier Informationstechnik nach dem Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz <http://www.e-overheidvoorburgers.nl/> is new website from the government where Dutch citizen can find information about policy, standards etc. But it only in Dutch



- I PLAN NACIONAL DE ACCESIBILIDAD 2004-2012 Por un nuevo paradigma, el Diseño para Todos, hacia la plena igualdad de oportunidades 1ST NATIONAL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2004-2012 Achieving Equal Opportunities and Full Participation through Design for All

- Law on Information Publicity Regulations on Publishing information on the Web

- Norge universelt utformet 2025 - Regjeringens handlingsplan for universell utforming og økt tilgjengelighet 2009-2013 (No official translation. My own translation would be 'Norway Universally designed 2025. The Norwegian Government's action plan for universal design and accessibility 2009-2013)

- PROGRAMA ACESSO (Access Programme) - <http://www.acesso.unic.pt/> ENDEF 2011-2013 (National Strategy for Disability) <http://www.acesso.unic.pt/>

- Regulations on publishing information on the web (Cabinet of Ministers Law of information of publicity)

- UK national policy (i.e. it applies to all countries in UK) is Equality Act 2010. A number of relevant clauses apply in particular Section 20 (6) £requirement to provide information in an accessible format. 'Auxiliary aids and services' requirement to commence Sept 2011. In Scotland: Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002.

- We have British Standard 8878

- We have the 'Web Gelijke behandeling Chronisch zieken en gehandicapten'. There is also the 'Rijksbesluit' and recently the Minister of the Interior (BIZA) declared that all communities in the Netherlands should be fully accessible (level WCAG AA and more) by 2015. They should reach level A by 2012.

- Zakon o izenačevanju možnosti invalidov Act on Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities

- Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz (federal act on equal right for people with special needs), see [http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/151\\_3/](http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/151_3/) German, French, Italian

- Švietimo informacinių technologijų centras/'Centre of Information Technologies in Education' (CITE) Svietimo portalas/Educational portal

*6.b What are the main aims of this policy:*

- 'Handlingsplanen skal støtte opp under implementeringen av ny diskriminerings- og tilgjengelighetslov, ny plan- og bygningslov og annen ny lovgivning som omhandler universell utforming. Handlingsplanen skal også bidra til å oppfylle Norges forpliktelser ved en ratifisering av FN-konvensjonen om rettighetene til personer med nedsatt funksjonsevne.' (No official translation. My own translation would be ' The action plan shall support the implementation of the new law against discrimination and for accessibility, new law on building and planning and other regulations concerning universal design. The action plan shall also contribute to meet Norway's obligations towards ratification of the UN Convention in the Rights of People with Disabilities.)

- 1) All are equal before the law. All are entitled to equal treatment by public authorities. A citizen has the right to obtain information about the activities of public authorities and persons exercising public functions. Public authorities shall provide assistance to disabled persons to ensure their subsistence, adaptation to work and social communication. Universal and equal access to education. 2) defines universal service as providing all end-users throughout the country, that is, regardless of their location, access to basic telephone services, in the required quality and at affordable prices. The set of these



services include, among others, the maintenance of subscriber connection with the digital network of integrated services, in readiness to provide telecommunications services and the provision of facilities for the disabled. For some eligible bodies, defined by law (such schools, learning centers, libraries, universities), the service is connecting to the network in order to provide a service broadband Internet access. These expenditures are financed from state budget. From 1 January 2011, the required bit rate bandwidth for broadband Internet services for entitled bodies - not less than 2Mbit/s (to) nad 1 Mbit/s (from). 3) obligation to the insertion of electronic public information in a form accessible to persons with disabilities by local governments and entities performing public tasks; Implementing Regulation (draft) sets out standards for adapting websites for the disabled - requirements for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) of the level of AA. Implies a period of 2 years on the to adapt existing services. 4) The development of the information society in Poland should have the following permanent attributes: - Availability, security and confidence – access to reliable information or a secure service that is indispensable to citizen and businesses. - Openness and diversity – no preferences in access to information; especially to public information. - Universality and acceptability – efforts to ensure that participation in the information society is obvious and common to the maximum extent feasible, and that the information society products and services are as broad as possible. - Communicativeness and interoperability – searching for and access to the desired information are secure, quick and simple. 5) provides access to education suited to the needs and psychophysical abilities of children and youth with disabilities in every type and kind of school; access to teaching aids (manuals, books, aids) and specialized equipment needed because of the type of disability

- Consolidate Design for All and ensure this approach is followed for all new products, services and built environments. Raise awareness of and implement accessibility. 2. Introduce accessibility as a basic quality criterion for public management. 3. Establish an effective, comprehensive regulatory system to promote accessibility throughout the whole of Spain. 4. Progressively adapt products, services and built environments to Design for All criteria. 5. Promote accessibility through new technologies

- Equal opportunities in all areas of society for persons with a disability 2. This document establishes the standards and guidelines applicable to Public Service websites and other websites hosted under the gov.mt domain

- Bundesgleichstellungsgesetz - <http://bundesrecht.juris.de/bundesrecht/bgg/gesamt.pdf>); (Zugänglichmachungsverordnung - ZMV)

<http://bundesrecht.juris.de/bundesrecht/zmv/gesamt.pdf>;

<http://bundesrecht.juris.de/bundesrecht/bitv/gesamt.pdf> (ict-strategie of federal ministry:

<http://www.bmbf.de/de/398.php>)

- Equality Act: to integrate all aspects of equality legislation into one act. Regarding disability: to improve equality in all areas and to ensure policy designed for majority do not impinge adversely on disabled people. Disability Strategies Act: to ensure that identified responsible bodies plan to improve pupils' access to information, physical environment and the curriculum

- Equalization of opportunities

- Information for citizens but also a link to other websites where by example you can check if your website is sufficient to 125 rules

- PROGRAMA ACESSO - dealing specifically with web accessibility ENDEF - cross sector policies for the integration of people with disabilities



- The aim of the policy is to provide society with information. Policy regulates how an individual can obtain information from institutions and use it

The aim of the policy is to provide information for society and how individual can obtain information from institutions and use it

- The code has been developed in order to support public bodies in fulfilling their statutory obligations under section 16,27 and 28 of the Disability Act 2005 (Ireland)

- The law applies to the government administration: - Right to use sign language and other communication aids - Rules for the design of business forms - Provisions for an accessible information technology

- To cross policies for the integration of people with disabilities

- To ensure that services and information from public bodies are accessible for people with disabilities

- To provide access to online information

- Universell utforming (Universal Design)

- Web accessibility and equal rights to information and education

- Its strategic aim is to participate in creation of the strategies and programs on ICT implementation in education, and to implement these programs' projects dealing with the Centre's mission. The strategic tasks of the Centre are: •to collect, store and structure information on the Lithuanian education and science system, and to analyse the data on ICT in education; •to implement, develop and manage the educational data bases, registries and information systems, and to coordinate their usage; •to warrant the provision of the education community with the necessary information to create, communicate and collaborate; •to organise and coordinate the in-service training of teachers and other employees of the educational institutions and organisations in the area of the application of ICT. 2.Education Portal is - being able to access educational information and to provide electronic services to educators, students and their parents 2. Educationa portal are: curriculum to make available in a digital environment; enable the education community to communicate effectively among themselves electronic communication means; to publish information about events, news and educational publications; allow users to create their own personal space portal.

- Main focus is to provide information and services of federal agencies as defined in WCAG 3.0 AA. Cantonal and communal services are less strict in the level of accessibility.

*6.c Which types of information are covered by the policy:*

Websites	19
Electronic text documents	16
Printed documents	15
Audio files	11
Videos	11
Other	4 ...

- All in general

- Please visit the Homepage of the federal Ministry for Education and Science: <http://www.bmbf.de/de/equalification.php>



- Equality Act: does not specify which types of information but to the broadest range. Disability Strategies: all those listed are identified
- The plan includes all accessibility areas, including transport and buildings, and now has specific on the elements included in accessible ICT/information

6.d *Are there areas of information you feel the policy should cover that it does not currently?*

Yes	7 (33.3%)
No	14 (66.6%)

*If yes, which areas should be covered by the policy and why ...*

- Information should be accessible in simple language
- Parts of the educational arena
- Policy refers to information and communication, but does not explicitly refer to transacting business on a website, e.g. paying motor tax
- The policy framework is good in intention but open to interpretation requiring both detailed guidance and examples
- The website is new so I have study it well enough yet
- There is nothing arranged for industry key sectors. Banks, electricity and Internet providers etc
- This particular Act is new and its results should be seen in future
- Provision of financial means

6.e *Which aspects of implementation of policy for accessible information are perceived to be most difficult?*

- According to UMIC (Knowledge Society Mission Unit, integrates ACESSO Programme) report of 2008

([http://www.unic.pt/images/stories/publicacoes2/Rel\\_Acess\\_AP\\_Fev\\_2008.pdf](http://www.unic.pt/images/stories/publicacoes2/Rel_Acess_AP_Fev_2008.pdf) ), the most complex issues to overcome are:

- Websites with «frames» structures
- Separation of style and structure (usually identified as deprecated elements)
- To convert all menus (vertical/horizontal) into lists with element <ul>. Introduce style using CSS properties and make sure Javascript is accessible with or without a mouse
- To eliminate layout tables, using CSS properties
- Costs, when/if guidelines are made obligatory through regulations. And reaching individual teachers who publish information on school learning platforms
- Enforcement of accessibility in all areas of life including ICT is a process that can be implemented gradually, as all sectors of society are affected
- For websites and applications: that it is more than a project, but a continuous process. It does not stop when the website is delivered by the builder. That is where it actually begins. And it concerns all people active with the website



- I don't know
- Implementing Regulation on the requirements of web accessibility is not in force yet
- Lack of awareness and understanding; lack of detailed guidance on who is covered (which disabilities); lack of materials; duplication of effort; poor interpretation of copyright guidance and legislation
- Liability for any providers
- Mental barriers, social education, stereotypes
- New technology is going too fast. How can we make sure that new technology like Apps can fit within these guidelines
- Procurement - ensuring that goods and services procured by public bodies are accessible
- Providing interpreters for Irish Sign Language (ISL)
- Sometimes institutions classify information as 'restricted' when in reality it is 'general'
- Sometimes we have problems reaching the beneficiaries of the policy. They are so used to suffering from discrimination that they don't use the policies on accessibility to its full potential
- This shall be seen in the future
- To make content accessible
- Universal compliance
- Websites
- There isn't one institution providing information and support, the system is quite fragmented and it proves difficult to address and inform all key players
- Virtual learning environment for practical exercises, group work between specialists (teaching staff, pedagogues), specialists and parents.

*Please indicate reasons why these aspects are perceived to be difficult:*

- 1. Over-emphasis on one disability - visual impairment - at the expense of others. 2. Lack of joined up policy. 3. Need for integrated view taken by with publishers, educators, local authorities and others
- A shortage of highly skilled Irish Sign Language (ISL) interpreters
- Because procurement people don't really think about accessibility issues - because there is no enforcement or penalty
- People are unaware of their obligations
- They are not part of thinking about accessibility and the web
- It requires from specialist competences of information accessibility.

**7. Do you have a corporate style guide or corporate identity (CI) policies for information presentation in your organisation?**

No	9 (31%)
Yes	20 (69%)



*If yes, which areas types of information are covered by the style guide or CI policies?*

Websites	19
Electronic text documents	15
Printed documents	17
Audio files	7
Videos	7
Other	4 ...

- The British government publishes guidelines for public websites (i.e. government and local authorities and other bodies funded by taxes)
- There is general agreement that all documents and applications, software and the web should be accessible for people with disabilities, specifically the visually impaired
- Use of symbols
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 (W3C 2008) is a recommended standard for all governmental websites

**8. Do you have an accessibility policy in your organisation?**

No	14 (48.3%)
Yes	15 (51.7%)

*If yes, please answer the following questions ...*

*8.a Is this policy for:*

Your department/branch/unit	2 (13.3%)
Your whole organisation	13 (86.6%)

*8.b Is the accessibility policy:*

Part of the corporate style guide (if you have one)	7 (46.6%)
The main focus of the corporate style guide (if you have one)	1 (6.6%)
A separate policy	7 (46.6%)

**9. Do you currently have any activities targeted to your employees regarding awareness raising focussing towards increased accessibility of information provision?**

No	15 (51.7%)
Yes	14 (48.3%)

*If yes, please indicate which activities are involved and what their main focus is upon ...*

Internal newsletters	7
Bulletins	5
Accessibility training	7



Other 7 ...

- A magazine
- e.g. Web-hosting as a demand by the BMBF-funded research and development projects and programmes
- General training is provided to all public employees with training courses and information related with the issue of accessibility
- Social media
- Support in equipment for disabled students, institution of the personal assistant.
- We are a small organisation and so we read this as efforts we undertake to promote awareness across Scotland. Others include: - external newsletters - training
- We present an 'Interaction Model' on our website.

*For each of the activities indicated focused on awareness raising of accessible information provision, you have indicated above, please indicate what topic area they focus upon:*

- 1. Legislation and policy documents - The current accessibility legislation and links to national and international policy documents on education. 2. Learning - The school's mission 3. Education - Information on tools to use in planning and educational work. 4. Physical Environment - Information about how the physical environment in schools can be an aid to students in the learning situation 5. Availability based on disability
- From print to alt formats
- The Ministry of Public Administration, for public employees of all Ministries, carries out specific training courses on the subject or modules within other courses that include accessibility as a topic.
- Website, electronic text and video captioning.
- Training IT students the principles of WCAG

**10. Does your organisation provide information in any of the following formats ...**

*Braille*

All	2 (8.7%)
Some	4 (17.3%)
None	9 (39.1%)
Only if requested	8 (34.8%)

*Large print*

All	1 (5.9%)
Some	11 (64.7%)
None	4 (23.5%)
Only if requested	1 (5.9%)



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### *Accessible word files*

All	11 (42.3%)
Some	5 (19.2%)
None	6 (23%)
Only if requested	4 (15.4%)

### *Accessible pdf files*

All	9 (36%)
Some	6 (24%)
None	6 (24%)
Only if requested	4 (16%)

### *Easy to read text*

All	3 (11.1%)
Some	15 (55.5%)
None	4 (14.8%)
Only if requested	5 (18.5%)

### *Sign video*

All	2 (7.7%)
Some	7 (26.9%)
None	12 (46.2%)
Only if requested	5 (19.2%)

### *Does your organisation provide any other format than the ones listed above?*

- 'Plain English' versions of some legislation
- Accessible video
- Auto generated audio-files of text provided on websites.
- Daisy
- Interactive PDF Text to speech (audio) MS Word text-to-speech Coloured paper Symbol support (PCS, Widgit, other)
- My organisation does not but the Education Department does provide information in part in a range of accessible of formats - my response above is for the Department for Education and other government departments.
- Other languages, such as minority languages as mentioned in the Swedish language law
- Translation for sign language
- Video text captioning



**11. Do you assess the information accessibility needs or expectations of your users with regard to how they need to access (e.g. read, search, perceive) information which you provide?**

Yes 19 (65.5%)

No 10 (34.5%)

*If yes, how do you assess their needs?*

Survey 7

Consultation with users/Participation of users 15

Other 5 ...

- Assessing users needs is not done methodically- it is ad-hoc, from project to project
- At school I diagnose through observing and testing.
- Collecting of opinions by e-mail, skype and other communicators
- Interest Council (SPSM) national guidelines
- We use a framework of literacy support needs – seeing, understanding, reading, lifting, turning pages, navigating

*If no, please give the reasons for this:*

- All print material is also published on web. The web-site should be in accordance with WCAG 2.0 AA.
- As a department we still need to set a practice policy
- I don't know
- It is not my role
- There is no such legal requirement now, but it will change when the implementing regulation will be in force
- To complex to undertake. Prefer to provide an increasing number of accessible content and web options
- We have done some experiments in the past but at the moment the priorities have changed. We are still struggling to find a good balance for e-communication policy (and budget)
- At our university, this is not yet common
- Users and target group consist mainly of teachers and decision makers who rarely are people with special needs

**12. What forms of additional information would be useful for you in implementing policy for accessible information in your country:**

*12. a. ... from accessibility policy beyond what it already offers?*

- Clarity over copyright arrangements for easy read versions of copyright text. Full implementation of the Equality Act across the UK.
- Examples of legislation in other countries; examples of cooperation between public entities and non-governmental organisations



- Information is required to develop policy
- Levers to encourage compliance including cost efficiency arguments
- Provide us with the latest research findings in the field of accessibility awareness and training
- Since we do not have a policy on accessibility, we need as much information as we can get
- Sorry, don't understand the question
- There is enough information available in the national Access Programme, the action required is to raise awareness/train webmasters to make the websites accessible. Demonstration sessions addressing technical issues regarding accessibilities might be useful. One of the measures included in the national Strategy «ENDEF» regards accessibilities of schools websites
- We don't think there is a need for more information on this topic. The problem is to get the information through
- We would like to see some best practices from other institutes focussed on how to set up and KEEP the guidelines alive
- An accessibility commitment in the mission statement of the organisation

*12. b. ... to support the implementation of accessibility policy in your organisation?*

- A partnership between Programme Acceso and the ICT Resources Centres for Special Needs might contribute for this purpose
- Additional information re corporate style guides and corporate identity policies.
- As the role of my organisation is external, and there is a great need and lack of awareness, support required is to deliver sustainable, accredited training.
- Case studies on successful implementation of policies
- Examples of best practice. Implementation guidance
- Examples of good practice
- Good practice and examples
- Governmental service related to LLL for disabled people
- Ideas for accessibility awareness training
- Information on the experiences of other countries would be helpful
- Procurement and other forms of guidance - possibly the rationale for compliance (cost benefits and technical guidance - easy to follow and implement). An agreed set of EC/international standards that goes beyond W3C
- Support strategies for the systematic implementation of accessibility through the transfer of good or best practice
- We think there is a need of good European practices on co-ordination among the different ministries and administrations for the implementation of this policy
- What kind of know how do you need to have within your own organisation?
- An EFQM like tool for accessibility
- In our organization we will implement COMPUTER PROGRAM ACTIVITIES pedagogical-psychological services document in standard electronic form (for PPC



specialists) PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION The program is designed for educational psychological assessment services, counselling, education, prevention of a unified data entry, document preparation and printing of forms. User to easily use the program because of its functionality. Preparation of assessment documents manually at a significant cost of time. Computer programs greatly reduces document preparation time and eliminates the cost of training of human factors in calculating the results of the evaluation - the development of SEN minutes of starting WISC-III, the SDQ, the CPM results. The program will enable the necessary documents and reports printed at one time and the desired form (lists, tables, graph form), thereby increasing user productivity. It is important issue to use it in operative efficient accessible way for specialists

*12. c. ... from companies that provide accessibility tools (for example text processing, software, PDF generators, content management systems) to enable you to use their products?*

- A centralised knowledge base that is kept up to date on how to easily produce or exploit accessibility options within the tools they provide
- Access to full range of accessibility production tools
- Available products / services
- Fact sheets and templates on the latest software available
- Information about the new technology, equipment, ways of training
- Maybe, but jurisdictional sake, this is mainly relevant for Internet Representative of the Ministry
- Production of accessible PDFs
- Simple guidelines
- We have started with the implementation of Sharepoint for our websites. It would be nice to hear what kind of tools and documents are suitable for us
- We think, in general, companies provide information about the new products, so there is not a great need for information on this area
- What they can offer to help our organisation implement policy

**13. What type of outcomes would you like to get from the i-access project in order to support you in implementing policy for accessible information in your country:**

- Guidelines on how to set up a new communication guideline for our projects and our communication department
- Recommendations for accessible information provision - strategies for implementation
- pdf -video
- Best-practise-examples from other countries
- EU wide standards that have leverage to be implemented
- Exchange of experiences, good practices, recommendations on technology
- Good examples of how to work with information become readily available. How can an organisation increase their knowledge?



- Guidelines how to improve exchange of information among parents, learners and institution, local authorities, how to make information more accessible for people with disabilities
- Guidelines for raising awareness and policy making
- I would like to be in a stronger position to promote accessibility awareness and training in my organisation and country
- I would like to hear about projects that have been able to raise awareness with teachers/schools on how to publish information in an accessible way
- I'd like to hear case studies of how other organisations or countries have successfully introduced accessible information policies
- Improved knowledge sharing and easy to follow guidelines based on agreed principle of 'what good looks like'. A move towards a consensus on what should be mandatory, good practice, basic in all information outputs. Persuasive argument for a decentralising administration to promote this practice and spread as good practice. Examples that can be shared - across the whole field, from content creators, designers, publishers, legislators and administrators
- Partnership approaches with other EU countries - to share approaches and understanding of common problems. EU support to influence the priority needed to achieve accessible information across schools and lifelong learning. Detailed information on delivery approaches and workflow models that provide alt formats within cost effective and efficient systems
- Recommendations for accessible information provision and strategies for implementation
- Standards as recommendation supporting LLL
- Support strategies for the systematic implementation of accessibility
- To gain knowledge and awareness of developing a departmental policy for accessible information
- To get new ideas on how to better implement policy for accessibility in my country
- We think we are missing a good compilation of best practices on Europe to help us to implement all the measures
- We would like guidelines for policy and implementation, as well as examples of good practice. It would be good to know what other countries are doing as far as this issue is concerned and how many countries actually do have policy
- We would like support for making accessible documents. This is very difficult for companies and government agencies
- We would like to obtain up to date information on how policies on information accessibility can be developed and implemented. Especially regarding the experiences of other countries and the problems they had to overcome

**14. If you have any further remarks or comments, please add them here:**

- In the federal ministry there are a special Representative for Internet; a department for ICT and education and an entire department (Abteilung) that deals with key technologies and research innovations. Among them are several departments they deal with issues relating to IT systems, communication systems and electronic systems and issues of human-technology cooperation, as well as IT security.

## ANNEX 5 – MEETING FEEDBACK SUMMARY

Feedback forms were distributed to the participants after the i-access conference. In all 38 forms were returned by experts. This represents all but 10 of the nominated experts and speakers who took part in the meeting. The results are summarised below. Comments are reproduced as stated on the feedback forms.

Not all respondents answered all options.

Aspects of the meeting	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Usefulness of materials sent out in advance of the meeting	16	19	1	1	
Practical organisation of the meeting	34	3			
Organisation of the working sessions	23	9	3		
Quality of the workshops	9	20	6	2	
Focus of group discussion tasks	10	12	10		
Quality of the venue	18	14	3		
Opportunities for networking	26	10			
Quality of materials available at the meeting	16	15	5		
Accessibility of the conference materials	18	11	5		
Accessibility of conference (location, rooms, presentations)	19	12	3		

***Please give us your reflections on the following points:***

1. What was your impression of the general structure of the programme; balance of input/discussions, timing of sessions etc.

- *Ok*
- *Good planning and timing*
- *Excellent*
- *Structure of programme was fine. Many of the information sessions were at introductory level so I didn't learn a lot from these as I have good experience in accessibility.*
- *There was good organisation, balance between input and discussion. Timing was strictly kept at almost all sessions.*
- *The general structure was very appropriate and so was input and discussions, timing of sessions etc.*
- *Very good, not too long or too short. Lots of time for discussion in workshops.*
- *Ok*
- *Good*
- *Everything was very carefully prepared, very interesting presentations, new information and great timing.*
- *Everything was carefully planned, timing was good.*



- *The Agency staff has done great, making the time at the conference really enjoyable and making it very easy to be here. Everything is happening on time and the conference itself has really been full of knowledge and great experiences.*
- *Programme ok, but would have liked more time for discussions on the panel presentations. Only able to participate in 2 workshops – would have liked to have attended one or two more.*
- *Very well organised.*
- *The organisation is very good. All the timing was perfect.*
- *Very good. Important to opening 22.06.11 to give running start to conference.*
- *Proposal to focus discussions and establish clear objectives for the Working group, some of them had only 'free' discussions.*
- *The general idea of such a conference and to improve the national input and output and to close the gaps between ministries, institutions and the disabled community.*
- *Time management was very good. Some of the workshops were more like lectures, with little time for discussions.*
- *Good balance.*
- *I would have liked to hear and discuss more about accessibility in printed information. Content, layout, how to reach our target groups.*
- *Generally very good but would have been nice to have another set of workshop sessions (Friday pm?) to give people opportunities to attend more sessions.*
- *The am sessions were necessary to ensure we all had the same level of understanding of the current position. But, they slowed things down.*
- *Timing was agreeable.*
- *Exactly what I had expected.*

2. Do you feel that the expected outcomes of the conference have been achieved? If not, why not?

- *Yes*
- *Yes, all excellent*
- *Yes, but I'm not sure that objective is sufficient. I wonder how many participants will be able to effect significant change in their own countries. Participants are not generally at senior level.*
- *Yes, in my situation awareness on what is available has been raised.*
- *Yes.*
- *Yes. Raising awareness of the importance of providing info for learning and assessable for all.*
- *Looking forward to having more clear recommendations to follow when back in my own country.*
- *Maybe more detailed explanations of i-access would have helped having a more focused conference.*
- *I think and hope so.*
- *Yes.*
- *Yes, need to make them more concrete.*
- *Judging from the presented activities by project co-ordinators, I think the expected outcomes were achieved.*
- *The knowledge received in the conference is and will be very useful and there was a lot of great experience to take in. The most difficult thing probably is to gain equal success in every country.*
- *Still not sure what the actual outcomes will be?*



- Yes.
- *Since I haven't attended until the end, I don't know. However, I miss some practical examples, some good practices.*
- Yes
- *... – it's like a starting point!*
- Yes.
- Yes.
- *Expected more concrete outcome, how to implement i-access strategies in my country.*
- Yes.
- *I'm sure the material presented will be disseminated raising issues across the EU.*
- *I don't think we have an appreciation of i-access across Europe.*
- *I still am missing common and mutual recommendations addressing diverse stakeholders. Will they be formulated following this meeting?*
- Yes.
- Yes.

3. Are there areas of content which could be further developed, or are there follow up activities that could be planned in the future?

- I would like to see 'the acoustic conditions of classrooms' addressed. Many deaf/hearing impaired students have access to sound using digital aids to cochlear implants, but the acoustic conditions of classrooms and the problems of noise create difficulties in accessing information. Many of these students do not use sign language.
- Accessible procurement – case studies on innovative approaches.
- One area that I feel needs further development is accessibility for learners with very severe learning disabilities. Such as making information about post 16 provision on the web in an easy to read version or in symbols etc.
- Collect good examples. Films would be good. A lot of people talk about tools and we have to show what we have and how we use them. I prefer films which can be analysed.
- Sharing of good practices and practical resources.
- Yes
- I'm very much interested in good practice about web accessibility.
- Make future workshops more distinct from plenary/panels, i.e. discussion participation, not only ppt's.
- All i-access content should be developed further and introduced in participating countries.
- Every area can be developed further, the main thing is to keep up this development and have the best possible updates in every area of content.
- I would have liked more focus on the 'how to' practical, down to earth aspects of e-accessibility.
- More good practices. What are the countries doing.
- Covered in by issues raised
- More clear in the session of policy makers and multipliers.
- Concrete strategy e.g. laws that already exist in some countries to achieve accessibility of information.
- More opportunities to have information about the situation in our home countries.



- Could i-access serve as a discussion panel for questions coming from the individual countries. E.g. which set of meta-data can /should be used for accessible content? Answers came from the network.
- Training of making the information accessible.

4. What did you find the most useful aspects of the meeting and why?

- *Workshops/ICT service providers session*
- *Networking and having the opportunity to contribute as a European citizen.*
- *Books for All presentation from Scotland – knowledgeable presenter, truly innovative approaches.*
- *The opportunity for networking. This provided useful information that would or may have been otherwise overlooked.*
- *The broad aspects on i-accessibility.*
- *I think the connection to education and LLL was weak. We have to define the problems before we try to solve and formulate recommendations.*
- *Workshops – as they gave me a change to focus on areas of relevance.*
- *The multi-stakeholders format.*
- *Networking, building/start to the bridge between special needs and DAISY.*
- *The possibilities to meet people from other countries with the same problems and interest.*
- *Networking, learning about issues, views and solutions.*
- *Working groups sessions. It was possible to exchange views and get good ideas for further work.*
- *The workshops are a very good way of focusing on smaller groups of people to discuss issues and problems on national levels.*
- *The networking part and it was really good to have the dinner on Wednesday evening – that we sort of knew each other when the actual conference started.*
- *Workshops*
- *All the information. To know more about this topic.*
- *Wide ranging.*
- *Meeting colleagues, exchange of background, ideas, co-operation.*
- *I come home with lots of questions that I have to find out at home – have we thought of this, what to do about that etc. Very useful!*
- *Networking. Useful for my own job, materials, software and guidelines.*
- *Very good information and very good contacts for further networking.*
- *Networking, meeting experts.*
- *Opportunities for networking.*
- *The information sessions were very useful. The quality of the workshops variable.*
- *Meeting people and ideas.*
- *Personal contacts to see technologies developed by various centers.*
- *Sharing of the experience, meet people who work in the same problem issue. Presentation very useful and current.*

5. Have you any suggestions for improving organisation/content of future Agency meetings?

- *None – all excellent.*
- *Better quality control over workshop content – when you ask for volunteers, you don't always get high quality, e.g. workshop 7.*



- *The context is diverse between our countries and we need to formulate the problem first. The first step takes time. I/we don't spend time on this – we got bad results.*
- *A suggestion would be to include content e.g. curricular different ... curricula frameworks, early years practices and approaches.*
- *No*
- *I'm new to the Agency and I have not formed an opinion. I have no elements to judge but what I've seen has pleased me a great deal. Thanks.*
- *No, because everything seems ok.*
- *I feel that the staff has already done everything very well. If there are some things to improve, it has already been mentioned at the workshops when talking about specific things.*
- *No.*
- *Continuing in the field of experts and a correspondent network.*
- *Stronger guidelines for presentations in workshops.*
- *More structural information sharing sessions. Seek out useful, practical examples from across Europe to lead workshops.*
- *Correct use of the definitions of workshops and presentations: most of the workshops were in fact presentations limited time for input, more opportunities for result focused discussions.*
- *No.*
- *Everything was organised very professionally.*

If you have any further remarks or comments, please write them below:

- *Well done to organisers. It was truly an eye-opener.*
- *The workshops were not workshops but presentations.*
- *Thank you.*
- *Send out assigned workshops prior to the sessions themselves. Is there any difference between accessibility for education and accessibility for LLL?*
- *The quality of the vegetarian food at the hotel was disappointing.*
- *Hopefully, i-access can be extended in time.*



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