

# **The Web Accessibility Directive of the European Union**

**Gail Kent, Director CNECT G. Data**

**European Commission**

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## European policy on web accessibility

### **Directive (EU) 2016/2102 on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies**

- The Directive was proposed by the European Commission in December 2012 and was adopted by the European Parliament and by the Council in October 2016.
- It entered into force in December 2016.





## The aim of the Directive

- To increase **digital inclusion** by making public sector websites and mobile applications **more accessible** (perceivable, operable, understandable and robust).
- To reduce the fragmentation of the digital accessibility market by **harmonising standards** within the EU and promoting best practices among providers of accessibility-related products and services.





## Innovative aspects

- Measures to boost the accessibility market by reducing barriers in the Digital Single Market, and thereby making web accessibility more affordable
- Harmonising accessibility standards on a European level both for websites and mobile applications
- Information and services provided on websites and in mobile applications of public sector bodies more accessible





## Expected Impact

- EU Member States must bring into force the laws, regulations, and administrative provisions of the directive by September 2018
- Member States have to ensure that
  - all websites of public sector bodies are accessible by September 2020, and
  - all mobile applications of public sector bodies are accessible by June 2021.





## Details

- The directive sets European Standard EN 301 549 as a **minimum standard** for web accessibility (equivalent to WCAG 2.0 Level AA)
- Where it is not possible or would create a **disproportionate burden** to make the content accessible, the public sector body must explain why and provide accessible alternatives.
- Member States must appoint a body responsible for an adequate and effective **enforcement**





## Assurances

- Member States must periodically **monitor** compliance, using a sample, give feedback to public sector bodies on any deficiencies found, and regularly report to the European Commission
- Public sector bodies must provide an **accessibility statement** that needs to be regularly updated
- A **feedback mechanism** makes possible to report accessibility failures and to request information excluded from the Directive's application





## Additional measures, resources

- Member States shall promote and facilitate **training programmes**, and take the necessary measures to **raise awareness**.
- **Cooperation** between Member States and with relevant stakeholders is encouraged in order to exchange best practices.
- Member States provide the necessary **resources** for the implementation of the Directive.





## Next steps

- Member States must transpose the Directive in their **national laws** by September 2018
- The European Commission will adopt **implementing acts** by the end of 2018, regarding the accessibility requirements for mobile applications, the accessibility statement, monitoring and reporting, in order to ensure uniform conditions for the implementation of the Directive.

