

First Media Accessibility Platform International Conference

5-6 October 2017, Vigo, Spain

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the discussion during the first Media Accessibility Platform International Conference, the participants identified the following set of recommendations which may serve as a base for planning and implementing future actions in the area of media accessibility in Europe. The set of recommendations advanced by the community gathered at this meeting are all equally important.

1. The EU should change its approach in the area of media access service, from (what is at least perceived to be) the primacy of the needs of European industry to the primacy of the needs of the European individual.
2. In order to increase quality and quantity of media access services in Europe, the EU should encourage content providers to progressively improve year by year to 100% – through the development of specific means for making this happen.
3. There are different views on whether, to achieve the best results, regulation for media access services should be “hard” or “soft”¹, and whether it should be European wide legislation or based on national “subsidiarity”. The EU needs to clearly decide this, and then define and implement a specific strategy.
4. There are situational and cultural differences in the various EU countries which means that “one-size-fits-all” regulations will be difficult to define and implement. The EU should find a regulation package that is harmonised yet allows differences, possibly with a long term goal for quotas and quality.
5. The EU should take steps to create greater awareness of the need and value of media accessibility by all the stakeholders, especially content providers, users, and governments. For large media projects, a specific `access coordinator` should be assigned to ensure adequate measures are taken.
6. EU funding programmes should promote projects to improve the flexible use of new technologies, such as cloud services, crowdsourcing, automatic generation as well as remote provision of media access services, many of which could lower costs and increase media access service availability, while preserving quality.
7. The EU should define the basic philosophy for the content of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) and the European Accessibility Act (EAA) so that the “requirements” (the “what”) are given in the AVMSD and the “systems for achieving them” (the “how”) are given in the EAA.

¹ The terms “soft” and “hard” are not precisely defined by their proponents, but “hard” means that there would be mandatory quotas for access services and timetables to achieve them, and “soft” means that access services are strongly encouraged but there are no mandatory requirements for quotas or timetables.

8. The EU should not forget the value of worldwide consensus in access services, and should actively have dialogues between bodies such as the ITU, IEC/ISO, and IGF, as a means of enlarging the application of European ideas and expertise.
9. The EU should support the creation of a European Media Access Hub (possibly, in the form of an open group, platform or network) that brings together all the actors in the media accessibility value chain. For an access service to be successful all actors in the chain should benefit by introducing media access services from the outset.
10. The EU should further improve funding for training, research and trials in the area of media accessibility.

To be sent to

- Council of Europe
- European Parliament
- EU Commission
- Directorate-General CONNECT (Communications Networks, Content and Technology)
- Directorate-General EAC (Education, Youth, Sport and Culture)
- Directorate-General EMPL (Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion)
- Service department EPSC (European Political Strategy Centre – in house think-tank)
- Executive agency ERCEA (European Research Council Executive Agency)
- Executive agency EASME (Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises)
- Executive agency INEA (Innovation and Networks Executive Agency)
- Directorate-General GROW (Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs)
- Directorate-General RTD (Research and Innovation)
- Executive agency REA (Research Executive Agency)
- SG (Secretariat-General)
- ITU
- IMCO (Internal Market Consumer Protection)
- European Broadcasting Union
- ACT
- Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom
- ERGA
- Digital Europe
- European Disability Forum
- European Cable Communication Association
- Google
- Facebook
- Netflix
- BEREC
- TeachAccess
- (agencies and bodies dealing with minority languages and multilingualism – to be added)