



## European Accessibility Act: What it means for marketers

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### Background

The [European Accessibility Act \(EAA\)](#) is an EU Directive aiming to improve the accessibility of key products and services for people with disabilities across the EU. It applies to a range of physical and digital products and services, including computers and operating systems, smartphones, TV equipment related to digital television services, access to audio-visual media services such as television broadcast and related consumer equipment, banking services, e-books, and e-commerce, among others. As of 28 June 2025, all products and services offered in the EU will be required to meet accessibility standards. Products and services already on the market before June 2025 must comply by 30 June 2030.

### What are the requirements?

Outlined in Article 4 and Annex I, products and services must be designed and manufactured to maximise their foreseeable use by people with disabilities. They should be accompanied by accessible information on their functioning and accessibility features, where possible. For example, this includes ensuring that information is available via more than one sensory channel and presented in an understandable way as well as in ways users can perceive.

It is also important to note that the EAA does not specify how a company must meet these requirements, leaving considerable leeway for them in designing and manufacturing their products and services to be compliant. There are, however, several European standards on accessibility that can assist companies in ensuring they comply with the EAA:

- [EN 301 549](#): Accessibility Requirements for ICT products and services
- [EN 17161](#): Design for All – Accessibility following a Design for All approach in products, goods, and services – extending the range of users.

### How it applies to marketing

- **Digital content accessibility:** All digital marketing materials, including websites, mobile apps, emails, and social media content, must be accessible. This involves providing alternative text for images; ensuring video content includes captions or transcripts; designing content that is navigable via keyboard and compatible with screen readers; and using clear and simple language, among other elements.
- **E-commerce platforms:** Marketing elements within e-commerce platforms, such as product descriptions, promotional banners, and checkout processes, must be accessible. This ensures that all users, including those with disabilities, can complete transactions without barriers.
- **Email marketing:** Emails should be designed with accessibility in mind, using proper heading structures, descriptive link texts, and ensuring compatibility with assistive technologies.
- **Social media:** When using social media platforms for marketing, brands should include alternative text for images and provide captions for video content.
- **Third-party tools:** Ensure that any third-party marketing tools or platforms used (e.g. email marketing services, content management systems) support accessibility features and comply with the EAA requirements.

### Implementation of the EAA

Because the EAA is transposed into national law by each EU Member State, the exact rules can vary slightly from country to country when it comes to exemptions and penalties for non-compliance. See Annex for an overview of how some Member States have transposed the EAA.

### Key resources

- European Commission's [AccessibleEU page](#):
  - [Accessibility Legislation at European Level](#)
  - [Accessibility Standards at European Level](#)
- European Disability Forum's [Accessibility Act Toolkit for Transposition](#)

## Annex

OVERVIEW OF EAA IMPLEMENTATION		
Member State	Exemptions	Penalties
<u>Germany</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Businesses that qualify as microenterprises (services only)</li> <li>- Certain types of archived and legacy digital content</li> <li>- Cases where compliance would cause a disproportionate burden or fundamental alteration</li> <li>- Products and services used exclusively for internal business purposes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Up to €100,000 for major violations (e.g. failing core accessibility requirements)</li> <li>- Up to €10,000 for minor offences (e.g. incorrect accessibility documentation)</li> <li>- Product or service bans</li> <li>- Legal action: Consumer protection groups or competitors can file lawsuits under Germany's Unfair Competition Act.</li> </ul>
<u>France</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Businesses that qualify as microenterprises (services only)</li> <li>- Cases where compliance would cause a disproportionate burden</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A first 'class 5' offence, which typically refers to significant accessibility barriers on websites or digital services, incurs an initial fine of €1,500.</li> <li>- If the violation remains unresolved after one year, the penalty increases to €3,000.</li> <li>- Should the non-compliance persist for another year, the fine can escalate even further, potentially reaching up to ten times €3,000, resulting in a maximum penalty of €30,000.</li> </ul>
<u>Ireland</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Businesses that qualify as microenterprises (services only)</li> <li>- Certain types of archived and legacy digital content</li> <li>- Cases where compliance would cause a disproportionate burden or fundamental alteration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minor offences → up to €5,000 or up to 6 months in prison</li> <li>- Major offences → up to €60,000 or 18 months in prison</li> </ul>
<u>Italy</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Businesses that qualify as microenterprises (services only)</li> <li>- Cases where compliance would cause a disproportionate burden or fundamental alteration</li> <li>- Products and services used exclusively for internal business purposes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fines ranging from €5,000 up to €40,000. For large companies (over €500M annual turnover), this can be up to 5% of annual turnover for digital accessibility violations.</li> <li>- Authorities can order product removal from market or shut down non-compliant services.</li> </ul>
<u>Spain</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Businesses that qualify as microenterprises (services only)</li> <li>- Cases where compliance would cause a disproportionate burden or fundamental alteration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minor offences → up to €30,000</li> <li>- Moderate offences → between €30,000 to €150,000</li> <li>- Major offences → up to €600,000</li> <li>- Authorities can order product removal from market or shut down non-compliant services.</li> </ul>
<u>The Netherlands</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Businesses that qualify as microenterprises (services only)</li> <li>- Cases where compliance would cause a disproportionate burden or fundamental alteration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Dutch Media Authority, which oversees audiovisual media services, can issue fines of up to €90,000.</li> <li>- The Authority for Consumers and Markets, which supervises sectors like e-commerce and telecommunications, can impose fines up to €900,000.</li> <li>- For larger companies, the ACM may apply fines between 1% and 10% of annual turnover, depending on the scale of the violation.</li> <li>- Non-compliant products may be removed from the market, and services can be suspended until they meet accessibility requirements.</li> </ul>
<u>Belgium</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Businesses that qualify as microenterprises (services only)</li> <li>- Cases where compliance would cause a disproportionate burden or fundamental alteration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fines can go up to €200,000 per breach.</li> <li>- Non-compliant products can be banned from sale in Belgium or recalled if already on the market.</li> </ul>