Information society, eEurope 2002: accessibility of public web sites especially for disabled people

2002/2032(COS) - 13/06/2002 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted the resolution drafted by Bastiaan BELDER (EDD, NL) on the Commission's communication. It welcomed the communication and reiterated the need to avoid any from of exclusion from society and therefore form the information society, and called for the integration of the elderly and disabled in particular. Parliament felt that the WAI initiative, which is voluntary in nature, should be strengthened to require, on a mandatory basis, all public websites of EU institutions and the Member States to be fully accessible to disabled people by 2003. It called for compliance with the authoring tools accessibility guidelines (ATAG) 1.0 by 2003 in order to ensure that disabled people can read and manage the content of webpages. Translations authorised by the W3C should be made available in the languages of all Member States as soon as possible. The Commission is asked to verify the cost-benefits achieved by compliance with "the guidelines" for web designers and web site providers. Parliament noted that incorporating accessibility criteria in the product-development phase is more cost-effective than re-designing web sites and related technology afterwards. Compliance with the guidelines could have positive commercial benefits as the service will therefore be accessible to a wider audience. The Commission is asked to place specific emphasis on Guideline 14 of the web content accessibility guidelines that requires documents to be clear and simple in order to counter the further exclusion of people with reading problems or intellectual disability from e-Government and the web.