Basic information

2002/2032(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Information society, eEurope 2002: accessibility of public web sites especially for disabled people **Subject** 3.30.25 International information networks and society, internet 4.10.06 People with disabilities	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ITRE Industry, External Trade, Research, Energy	BELDER Bas (EDD)	22/11/2001

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
CULT Culture, Youth, Education, Media and Sport	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Transport, Telecommunications and Energy	2374	2001-10-15
Transport, Telecommunications and Energy	2420	2002-03-25

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Communications Networks, Content and Technology	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
25/09/2001	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2001)0529	Summary
15/10/2001	Debate in Council		
27/02/2002	Committee referral announced in Parliament		

25/03/2002	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
23/04/2002	Vote in committee		
23/04/2002	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0147/2002	
13/06/2002	Decision by Parliament	T5-0325/2002	Summary
13/06/2002	Debate in Parliament		
13/06/2002	End of procedure in Parliament		
30/10/2003	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2002/2032(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ITRE/5/15933

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

2002/2032(COS) - 25/09/2001 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : to improve the accessibility of public web sites and their content. CONTENT : the eEurope Action Plan 2002, adopted by the Feira European Council in June 2000, is a wide-ranging initiative designed to speed up and extend the use of the Internet to all sectors of European society. The action plan seeks to bring European citizens on-line in all aspects of their lives, allowing them to participate in and benefit from the possibilities offered by digital technologies. This increased use of the Internet will, in turn, fuel the development of the new, knowledge-based economy. These actions comply with the principle of non-discrimination set up in the Treaty on the European Union. One of the action plan's specific targets is to improve access to the Web for people with disabilities: this is the subject of this Communication and its recommendations. This Communication on the accessibility of public Web sites and their content is but one example of the concerted effort which is required to remove access barriers and to ensure that future technologies and information systems do not create new, additional difficulties for people with disabilities. The following conclusions can be drawn from the experiences to date of adopting the existing Web Accessibility Guidelines for public Web sites in the Member States and the European institutions: 1. The Member States and the European institutions are on a dynamic path to achieving adoption of these Guidelines for all public Web sites before the end of the year 2001; 2. National administrations should seek constantly to improve the accessibility of their Web pages and explore new and better ways to deliver Web content and services as new technologies and new versions of these Guidelines are developed. Adoption and implementation of these Guidelines for public Web sites may thus be seen as a first, decisive mechanism towards ensuring an increasingly inclusive Information Society; 3. The Commission will propose to the other European institutions the establishment of an inter-institutional group to promote and ensure the adoption, implementation, and regular updating - following the World Wide Web Consortium/Web Accessibility Initiative developments - of these Guidelines within the European institutions; 4. The resulting accessibility of public Web sites should be monitored and best practices identified. The Commission will compile and disseminate the results of this action. Under the auspices of the High-Level Group on Employment and the Social Dimension of the Information Society (ESDIS), assisted by the eAccessibility expert group, the Member States and the European Institutions have agreed to exchange information and to benchmark their progress to be based on mutually agreed criteria in the areas of adoption and implementation of these Guidelines; 5. The eEurope Web site will present the progress towards adoption and implementation of these Guidelines by the European institutions and the Member States; 6. Measures for awareness-raising, dissemination, education, and especially training in Web accessibility should be promoted in both the European institutions and the Member States; 7. Organisations receiving public funding from the European institutions or the Member States should be encouraged to maketheir Web sites accessible; 8. Within the framework of the eEurope action plan, the Member States could encourage not only national public Web sites but also local and regional public Web sites to comply with the Guidelines; 9. There should be a major initiative devoted to achieving overall accessibility of both public and private Web sites during the year 2003, the European Year of Disabled People; 10. The Member States and European institutions should develop an ongoing dialogue with persons with disabilities and their representatives in order to ensure regular and consistent feedback on these issues.

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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.