

European Accessibility Act

The European Accessibility Act (EAA) signals a major step forward in making products and services usable for everyone. As this landmark legislation takes effect, we explore what it means for businesses, consumers and the journey toward a truly inclusive European market.

July 2025

Executive Summary

The European Accessibility Act (EAA), adopted by the EU in 2019, was formally introduced June 28, 2025. Its goal is to improve accessibility across member states by setting common standards for products and services, ensuring equal access for people with disabilities.

The EAA covers websites, mobile apps, e-commerce platforms, banking services, e-books, transport systems, ATMs, ticketing machines and smartphones. It benefits over 87 million EU citizens with disabilities, along with elderly users and those with temporary or situational impairments.

Digital services must meet the WCAG 2.1 Level AA standard. National authorities will oversee enforcement, with non-compliance resulting in penalties, product bans, or reputational harm. Existing services must comply by June 2027.

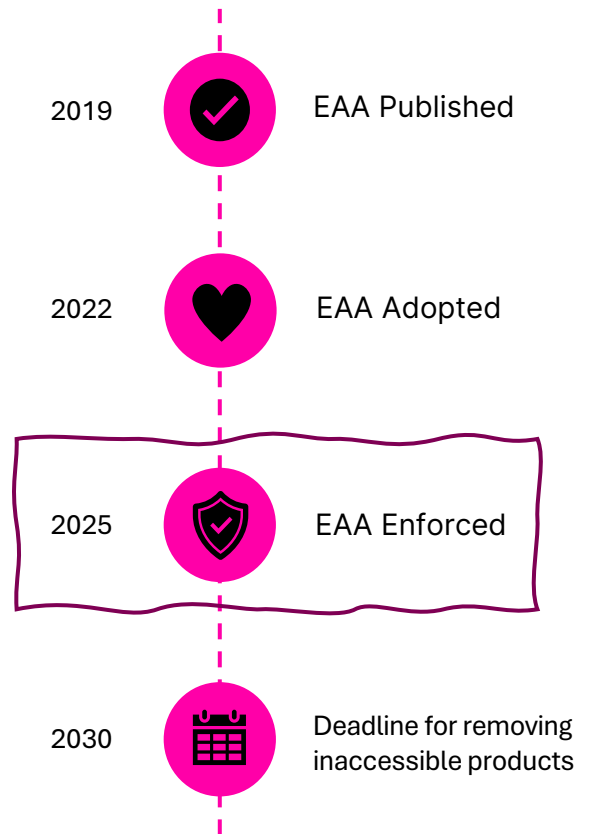


Understanding the EAA

The EAA reflects the EU's commitment to inclusion and equality, aligning with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

It establishes a unified legal framework to promote consistent accessibility across member states, empowering people with disabilities through greater access to everyday products and digital services.

When does it come into force?



The EAA defines what, not how

The European Accessibility Act (EAA) doesn't just say "be accessible" - it legally requires digital products and services to follow the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA.

But to understand WCAG, it's helpful to start with the foundational principles it's built on: POUR.

POUR is the framework that underpins WCAG 2.1 AA - the global standard required by the European Accessibility Act (EAA).

POUR defines the four principles that every accessible digital experience must follow to be compliant: Perceivable, Operable, Understandable and Robust.

Perceivable

Information and user interface components must present to users in a way that they can perceive it.



Content can be accessed through different senses (sight, hearing, touch) and that users can see and hear content clearly.

Operable

User interface components and controls must be operable.



Users should be able to operate and navigate the content using various input methods, including keyboards, voice commands and assistive technologies.

Understandable

Information and the operation of the user interface must be understandable.



Content should be clear, concise and easy to understand and users should be able to predict how the interface will behave.

Robust

Content must be robust enough to be interpreted reliably over time and across a variety of technologies and user agents.



Content should be able to withstand changes in technology and user preferences, ensuring that it remains accessible.

WCAG 2.1 AA brings these principles to life by providing practical criteria - known as success criteria - that ensures content, design and code meet accessibility needs. Every WCAG requirement maps back to one of the POUR principles.

Think of POUR as the four pillars of accessible design and WCAG as the rulebook that tells you exactly how to build on each one.

The Core Requirements of WCAG 2.1 AA

It's the global standard for digital accessibility - and the benchmark the EAA is built on. While the full guidelines are extensive, they're all rooted in one goal: make sure everyone can access, understand and use your content.

To meet WCAG 2.1 AA, your digital content should follow these principles:

Text alternatives

- All non-text content must have meaningful text alternatives.
- Example: Alt text for images, transcripts for audio/video.

Keyboard accessible

- Everything should work without needing to use a mouse.
- Example: Tabbing through menus, using enter to activate buttons.

Readable & clear

- Use clear headings, labels and plain language.
- Example: Avoid jargon; keep reading level accessible.

Visible & adaptable

- Content must be easy to see and usable on any device or screen.
- Example: High contrast, resizable text, mobile-friendly layouts.

Error-tolerant

- Help users avoid and recover from mistakes
- Example: Clear form errors, validation instructions

Compatible

- Code must work well with assistive tech
- Example: Semantic HTML, ARIA roles, screen-reader support

What do businesses need to do to comply with the EAA?

To ensure digital experiences meet the requirements of the EAA, you need to take a structured, ongoing approach. This includes auditing, documentation, inclusive design and long-term governance:

1. Assess and audit your current accessibility status

- Run automated tests (e.g. axe, Lighthouse) to identify technical gaps.
- Conduct manual expert reviews and assistive technology testing (e.g. screen readers, keyboard navigation).
- Include accessibility checks in existing QA and UX processes.

2. Document findings and communicate transparently

- Publish a public accessibility statement outlining your compliance level, limitations and planned improvements.
- Maintain records of audit results, known issues and remediation efforts.
- Include accessibility as a formal requirement in product and platform documentation.

3. Design & Test inclusively

- Involve people with disabilities in UX research, design validation and usability testing.
- Ensure design systems and components follow WCAG 2.1 AA guidelines.
- Review user journeys with an inclusion-first lens - specially forms, navigation and CTAs.

4. Build accessibility into ongoing operations

- Schedule regular audits (annually or at major release points).
- Train staff across product, content, design and development on accessibility best practices.
- Implement a change management process that embeds accessibility into updates and new features.

Compliance is not a one-time fix. The EAA requires an ongoing commitment to accessibility - across tools, people and processes.

Compliance at the national level, accountability through consumer action

While the EAA is EU-wide, enforcement is handled locally - and accountability can come directly from consumers. Here's how the process works in practice:

It's a member state responsibility

Enforcement is handled at the national level, with each country choosing relevant bodies to monitor compliance and resolve issues.

Complaint mechanism for consumers

Users can file complaints about inaccessible products or services. Authorities must investigate, with legal or alternative resolutions also available.

Sanctions and penalties

Non-compliance can lead to fines, mandatory fixes, or removal from the market, depending on each country's chosen enforcement measures.

From compliance to competitive edge: How accessibility drives performance

Accessibility improvements often align with existing performance goals. Marketers and digital leaders should view accessibility not as a constraint, but as a strategic enabler - one that future-proofs digital platforms, enhances brand equity and drives measurable business value.

While accessibility is commonly framed as a compliance requirement, its impact on digital performance is both significant and well-documented. A SEMRush study of 847 websites found that implementing accessibility remediation led to a marked increase in organic traffic:

- 73.4% of sites experienced traffic growth.
- 66.1% saw monthly organic traffic increase by between 1% and 50%.
- 7.3% reported gains of over 50%.

Many of the actions required to meet accessibility standards also align with what drives better discoverability, usability, conversion and audience reach. In this way, accessibility becomes not just a moral or legal imperative, but a commercial one. We see accessibility delivering measurable impact across four key performance areas:

Discoverability (SEO)

Accessible content is structured content and search engines reward structure.

Usability (UX)

Inclusive design reduces friction for all users, improving task completion and satisfaction.

Conversions (CRO)

Accessibility improvements reduce user abandonment and unlock greater revenue potential.

Enhanced inclusive reach and brand trust

Accessibility broadens your audience and strengthens brand reputation. An estimated 87 million people in the EU live with some form of disability - a group often underserved by digital channels.

Final thoughts

Now that the EAA is in effect, many organisations are looking not only for compliance, but for partners who can help turn accessibility into a performance advantage.

Our teams are experienced in delivering detailed, prioritised accessibility audits - combining automated testing, expert manual analysis and actionable reporting.

But our support doesn't end there: with a deep understanding of SEO, UX and content strategy, we help brands build inclusive digital experiences that are not just compliant, but discoverable, intuitive and engaging for all users. For more information on how your website can enhance accessibility for all users, please reach out to Emilie at Emilie.Cavaillero@kinesso.com.

Further reading:

[Level Access: European Accessibility Act \(EAA\)](#)

[Ten10: Explained: The European Accessibility Act](#)

[European Commission: European Accessibility Act](#)

[Semrush: Is Web Accessibility Key to Driving Organic Traffic?](#)

[Accessibility Checker: Does Web Accessibility Have a Positive Impact on SEO?](#)



Performance Marketing

**Agency of the
Year '24/'25**

#1 Digital Agency
of the year 2024

Prolific North
TOP50
DIGITAL AGENCIES