

Commission welcomes Member States' agreement on the European Accessibility Act, but calls for more ambition on responsibilities of public authorities.

The European Commission welcomes the general approach found by the Member States at the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumers Council today on the Commission's proposal to make many everyday products and services accessible to people with a disability ([European Accessibility Act](#)).

Following the agreement, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne **Thyssen**, said:

"Last Sunday, we celebrated the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. There can be no doubt: we need to do more to ensure equal opportunities for the increasing number of people with disabilities in Europe.

Two years after I put this proposal on the table, Member States have finally come to an agreement. Today's general approach is a very important signal to 80 million people with disabilities in the European Union. The Accessibility Act will establish the world's largest market for accessible products, which will not only bring down prices, but will contribute to enabling disabled persons to participate in society and the labour market. It also responds to our shared responsibility to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

This being said, I would have wished for a more ambitious approach by the Member States. In particular, I regret that the agreement does not include harmonised requirements to be used by public authorities when buying accessible products and services or when spending EU funds, nor to make the 112 emergency number fully accessible. This is a missed opportunity for public authorities to take the lead on accessibility.

This agreement is of course not the end of the process and I look forward to starting the final negotiations between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission as soon as possible. This initiative will bring concrete improvements to so many people's lives. Therefore 2018 must be the year of delivery for the Accessibility Act.

Last but not least, following the agreement found in July, I am very happy with the Council's final approval to add 13 new or stricter exposure limits to EU legislation to better protect workers from cancer-causing substances. This is a milestone in the protection of workers' health and safety, in particular against cancer at the workplace which is the first cause of work-

related deaths in the EU. I am now looking forward to a swift deal between the European Parliament and the Council on the second list of substances, which we have submitted in January 2017.”

Next steps

The agreement on the Accessibility Act between Member States paves the way for final negotiations with the European Parliament, which already adopted its position in September 2017.

As for the final adoption of the first revision of the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive, this will now be published in the Official Journal of the European Union. The Directive will enter into force as of the 20th day following the publication. Member States will then have 2 years to implement the updated rules.

For More Information

[Press release: Commission proposes to make products and services more accessible to disabled persons](#)

[Press release: Commission welcomes agreement by Parliament and Council to protect workers better against cancer-causing chemicals.](#)