

UsableNet

The European Accessibility Act in Action: Practical Strategies for Compliance

Presented September 17, 2025



UsableNet

About UsableNet

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENTS

1,000+

FULLSERVICE OFFICES

New York, Austin, Italy

CLIENT INDUSTRIES

Retail, travel & hospitality, technology, education, government, financial services, and healthcare

INDUSTRY RECOGNITION



- 20+ years of experience in accessibility
- Launched first in-authoring accessibility testing with Macromedia Dreamweaver (now Adobe)
- Initiated partnerships with leading disability community organizations such as the American Foundation for the Blind, Access Works, and Helen Keller Services for the Blind
- Recognized as an industry leader in diversity, inclusion and accessibility

Our Panelists

Dr. Patrick Viktor Born

Associate, Fieldfisher – Munich

Dr. Patrick Viktor Born is an Associate in Fieldfisher's Munich office, advising on all legal matters relating to commercial and distribution law. He supports international companies on drafting and negotiating commercial contracts across the supply chain, including purchasing, sales, logistics, production, and distribution, and also advises on e-commerce, consumer protection and regulatory matters.

Merel van Aar

Associate, Fieldfisher – Amsterdam

Merel van Aar is an Amsterdam-based technology lawyer advising domestic and international clients on intellectual property, data protection, privacy, AI and IT. She has a particular focus on legal challenges at the intersection of law and emerging technologies.

Michele Lucchini

Vice President of Product Management at UsableNet

Michele Lucchini is the Vice President of Product Management at UsableNet, where he is instrumental in shaping the company's product roadmap and vision.

About Fieldfisher

Fieldfisher is a European law firm with market-leading practices in many of the world's most dynamic sectors.

Our legal specialists service some of the world's largest international corporations including major technology firms, pharmaceutical and life sciences companies, energy suppliers, infrastructure companies, global banks and financial institutions.

We also work with small businesses, charities and governments and provide pro bono support to not-for-profit organisations. As an entrepreneurial, pragmatic and socially conscious firm, we embrace our purpose as a trusted, client-focused corporate citizen.

Key practice areas by size

(% of FY22 integrated office billings)



Alternative Legal Services

Condor is a unique platform, offering clients a range of customisable and process-efficient services beyond the traditional law firm offering.

DLC provides bespoke and cost-efficient support with the drafting, review, negotiation and execution of legal documents.

r|r Roscoe Reid is a specialist law firm that helps individuals make claims against large companies and organisations.

-X Fieldfisher X delivers precise, cost-effective and time-efficient management of mass litigation and other legal services.



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Key industry sectors

Technology

We operate at the forefront of international tech law with a deep understanding of how it impacts business from a regulatory, legal or commercial standpoint.

Financial Services

With expertise in asset management, banking, FinTech, market infrastructure and service provision, we offer solutions to global investment and commercial banks, institutional asset managers, hedge funds and non-bank lenders.

Energy & Natural Resources

We work with clients across the energy and natural resources spectrum, with a particular focus on power, renewables and the energy transition.

Life Sciences

We advise clients throughout the life sciences industry on a range of matters as this sector grows and evolves to meet the changing medical and healthcare needs of global society.

*Intellectual Property and Technology, Protection and Enforcement **Personal Injury & Medical Negligence ***Employment, Pensions, Immigration and Compliance

Agenda

- EAA: A Review of Purpose, Scope, and Exceptions
- Compliance, Enforcement, and the French Notices
- Key Strategies for Digital Accessibility Now
- Understanding the Technical Requirements
- How to Build a Sustainable Accessibility Program

Accessibility in the Physical World



Accessibility in the Digital World

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EAA Compliance Blueprint

Building an Accessibility Testing Program

March 12, 2025

Welcome to EAA Compliance Blueprint webinar

2025-03-12 11:59:00

March 12, 2025

Compliance Blueprint webinar

Welcome to EAA

Purpose EAA

Make Europe a more inclusive society by improving access to products and services for people with disabilities.

Scope:

- Products
- Services



Scope EAA: focus on digital business

- Any app and/or website
 - If provided "with a view to a consumer contract"
- **The whole website? Or only "sales parts"?**
- Special exceptions inter alia for
 - Pre-recorded time-based media and office file formats **published before 28 June 2025**
 - Third-party content beyond the control of the service provider



Other exceptions

Exceptions apply to micro-enterprises

Likely not applicable:

Disproportionate burden on and/or

Fundamental change to the service

Transition periods, e. g. to June 28, 2030, likely not applicable



Compliance



- EAA is a European Union Directive and **very abstract**
- It must be implemented in national law in each EU Member State
- Therefore, national deviations possible
- **EN 301 549 is your friend: compliance indicates EAA compliance EU-wide**
- Formal aspects of EAA compliance more dependent on **local law: Accessibility Statements**

Consequences of Non-Compliance

Fines

Claim or Cease
and Desist
Letters

Restrictions and
prohibitions

Mediation
Proceedings

Loss of
Reputation

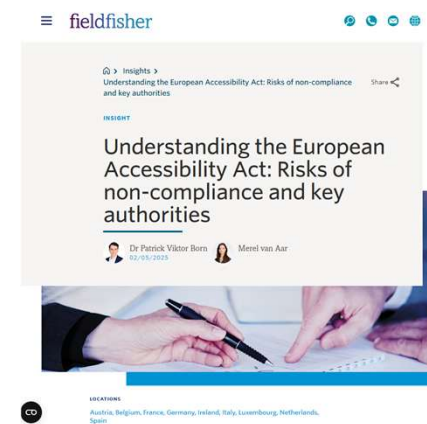
Liability risks

France: first EAA enforcement notices (July 8, 2025)

Who & what: Two French associations for the visually impaired sent formal legal notices to Auchan, Carrefour, E. Leclerc, Picard demanding them to make online grocery services accessible by Sept 1, 2025. Failure to do so will result in legal actions.

Mentioned barriers: unable to tick certain boxes on website; unable to navigate between different sections or selected products; lack of contrast

Why it matters: the EAA has been enforceable since June 28, 2025; complaints can trigger action—waiting for a notice is already too late.



Key Strategies Now

- 1 **Assign owner and review contracts**
- 2 **Decide how to best execute:** Will you use an internal team, vendor, or outsource?
- 3 **Implement an Accessibility Program:** Test, prioritize, remediate, confirm & user test, monitor & maintain
- 4 **Communicate:** Add an accessibility statement or policy

Understanding the Technical Requirements

EAA compliance is based on EN 301 549, which mirrors WCAG 2.1 AA(*) The EAA also requires:

- Proof of compliance (documentation, testing reports, transparency in accessibility statements).
- Process-oriented compliance (ongoing accessibility integration, not just a one-time audit).

(*) EN 301 549 update draft mirroring WCAG 2.2 AA is already available

Embed Accessibility into Workflows

Operate a simple loop:
Audit → Fix →
Evidence →
Accessibility
Statement → Monitor.

Standards-led: build to
EN 301 549 aligned
with WCAG 2.1 AA;
adapt local formalities
via statements.

Objective: proof-of-
diligence (docs, logs,
training, third-party
audits).

Creating an Effective Testing Program

Fit for Automation — development, QA verification, site-wide regression monitoring.

Fit for Manual — design reviews, focused audits on modified components, representative sample assessments, user testing with people with disabilities.

Balancing Automated and Manual Testing

	Automated Testing	Manual Testing
Scope/Scalability	Highly scalable, can analyze large volumes quickly	Limited scalability, requires significant effort
WCAG coverage	Limited	Comprehensive
Timing	Fast and efficient	Time-consuming
Context evaluation	Limited ability to interpret context	Accurately assesses context and meaning
False positives	Can produce false positives	No false positives
Subjectivity	Fully objective, based on predefined rules	Some subjectivity, depending on tester expertise and interpretation
User experience	Typically focuses on static pages	Accurate and comprehensive

Testing Program Across the Lifecycle

Design → Accessibility design review; document patterns in the design system.

Coding → Continuous automated tests in CI; linters and component checks.

Content → Automated checks + team best practices for editors.

QA / Monitoring → Automated scans, expert manual checks, user testing.

Complaint Handling

- Evidence to keep: latest audit mapped to EN 301 549/WCAG; defect & decision logs; training records; statement versioning; monitoring outputs.
- Complaint-driven enforcement: publish an accessible contact form; name an owner; set response SLAs.
- Triage flow: classify, assign, remediate, and close the loop with the reporter; log outcomes for audits.

What are the best practices for achieving accessibility?

Automated testing is not enough

Automated testing can identify scalable issues, but manual testing ensures the content is both appropriate and usable, capturing nuances that automation may miss.

Accessibility should not be itemized

Accessibility is not about ticking boxes – none of the WCAG 2.1 AA criteria can be tested entirely by automation.

Work on Process

Accessibility should be a continuous, iterative part of the product lifecycle, not a one-time task. Regular checks and updates are key to maintaining compliance.



Q&A



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