

ITUEvents

Accessible Europe

ICT 4 ALL - 2019

Knowledge Development Session

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Organized within the framework of the ITU Regional Initiative for Europe on accessibility, affordability and skills development for all to ensure digital inclusion and sustainable development

ICT ACCESSIBILITY

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

WEB ACCESSIBILITY

TV AND VIDEO PROGRAMMING

ACCESSIBLE PROCUREMENT

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

INNOVATION & EMERGING ISSUES

GOOD PRACTICES



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Session 1: International, Europe region and European Union vision

- The United Nation Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) obliges State Parties to take appropriate measures to ensure full and effective participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in society. Article 9 of the UNCRPD sets accessibility requirements for State Parties.
- 90% of countries (180) globally have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) and therefore they committed to create a legislative framework for accessibility.
- Global commitments: SDGs.
- ITU Strategic Goal No. 2 Target 2.9 “Enabling Accessible Environments in all Countries by 2023”.
- ITU resources in ICT Accessibility to support global and regional efforts in developing inclusive digital societies.
- UNDESA published the 2018 Action Document with guidelines to adopt national ICT Accessibility policies and regulations, involve persons with disabilities in all stages of development, involve industry and improve data on ICT Accessibility.



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Session 1: International, Europe region and European Union vision

- ITU is providing training, specialized technical assistance and guidelines to partner states on how to implement accessibility policies and legal frameworks, including the “ITU-G3ict Model ICT Accessibility Policy Report”, the “Web Accessibility – The Cornerstone of an Inclusive Digital Society” and the “Internet for @ll: National Programme in Web Accessibility” self-paced online training courses
- The European Accessibility Act is expected to become a key driver to implement ICT Accessibility in the EU region
- There are EU funds available for ICT Accessibility projects
- Accessible ICT = Equipment + Equality + Equity
- Affordability is currently one of the biggest barriers for many people to come by Accessible ICTs



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Session 2: The concrete role of Regulation and its enforcement

- **Comprehensive European legislation that sets clear rules to create an ecosystem for the ICT Accessibility. It would be good to use leverage this legislation of for non-EU European countries**
- **Once we have legislation, it is very important to have tools, training, monitoring, enforcement so that the law is well developed and applied**
- **The law sets the basic principles and requirements; however, to deliver products and services, you need practitioners to develop the products and services in accessible formats**
- **Need for action plans that may raise awareness and build capacity.**
- **The revised 2019 Audio Visual Media Service Directive now includes media Accessibility provisions (captions, AD, SL Interpretations and Content Interpreters).**

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Session 3: Artificial Intelligence for Accessibility

- Emerging technologies may pose some significant risks: discrimination and bias in AI (running on pre-created data sets), poor accessibility and usability of user interfaces, privacy & security, affordability and lack of digital skills needed.
- Overall, the future looks bright and there are various exciting technologies such as VR to take people with mobility impairment to far away places, Human Language Technologies to allow people to control machines, etc.
- Emerging technologies involve a trade-off between benefits vs risks. Before deploying a technology in a given setting, it is critical to be sure it is safe using it.
- The EC promotes a “human-centric” approach to AI and “ethics by-design principles”, highlighting the need for having people with different abilities involved when creating new AI technologies.
- December 2018 the EC published a Coordinated Plan on AI, calling on Member States to develop national AI strategies by mid-2019



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Session 4: Fostering European digital innovation ecosystem for Assistive Technologies

- It is key to know what accessible and assistive technology already exists and sharing information about projects other organizations worldwide are working on.
- Innovation, collaboration and synergy are key enablers to accelerate funding opportunities.
- Partner organizations different countries participating in innovation projects must seek to address differences between welfare systems, legal frameworks and other regional or national discrepancies.
- It must be ensured that a new Assistive Technology product is ready to be taken to the marketplace only once it has been thoroughly tested and validated by relevant users.
- The EASTIN platform is a valuable resource for Assistive Technology and disability organizations worldwide, as it provide valuable aggregated data from one competent organization in each country.
- The Digital AT Industry Association DATEurope will be launched in March 2020



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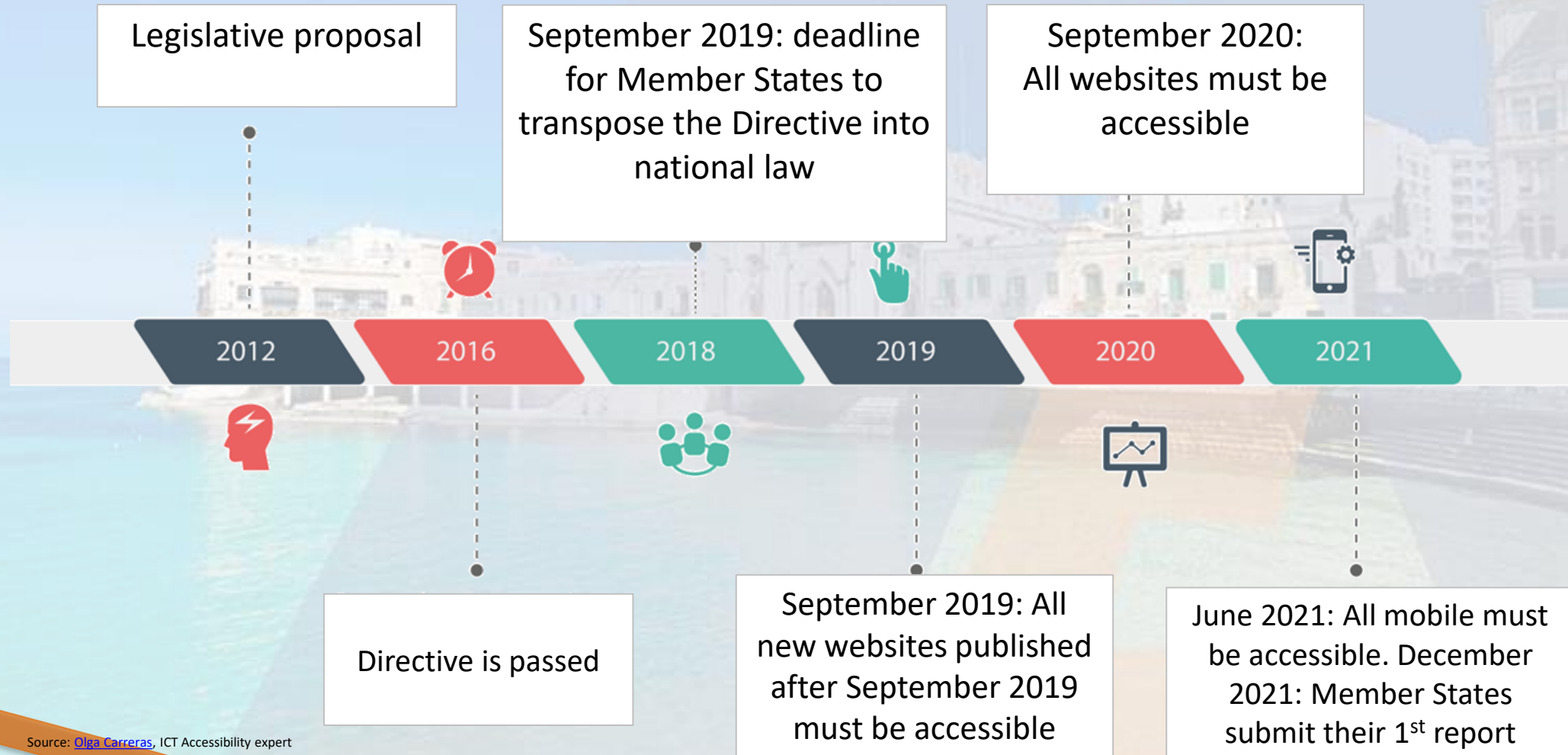
Session 5: Accessibility in Education

- **Students with disabilities often face a number of challenges in an education setting, e.g. online information not accessible, accommodations (including Assistive Technologies) are not always provided in a timely manner or are insufficient.**
- **Mainstreaming the process of determining, producing and delivering the right accessible digital document to a students is often a lengthy, costly and complex process.**
- **Having to learn how to create accessible digital documents, is often perceived by faculty members as an added burden.**
- **It is key to build and promote life-long ICT accessibility learning programs among students, faculty and publishers.**
- **Building a repository of re-usable accessible digital textbooks that could be shared cross-border (under the provisions of the Marrakesh Treaty) could benefit larger numbers of students with disabilities in different countries and generate huge cost savings.**



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Session 6: Advancing Implementation of Web Accessibility Across Europe

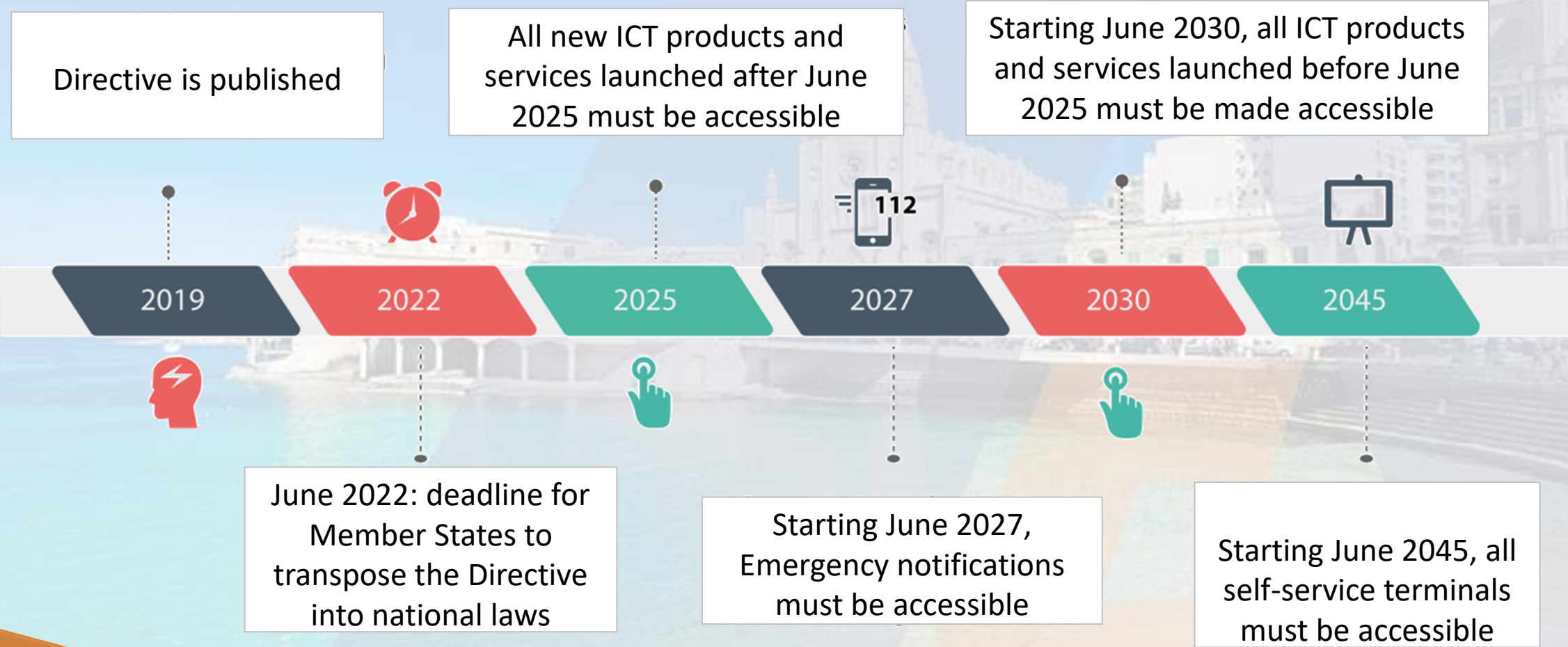


Source: [Olga Carreras](#), ICT Accessibility expert



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Session 6: Advancing Implementation of Web Accessibility Across Europe



Source: [Olga Carreras](#), ICT Accessibility expert



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Session 7: Future of Accessible Audiovisual media services, TV and video programming

- Barrier-free access to audiovisual services has been recognized as a fundamental human right established under UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, thus necessitating the use of subtitling, audio subtitling, audio description, and signed programs.
- The Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) establishes the right of persons with an impairment and of the elderly to participate and be integrated in the social and cultural life through the provision of accessible audiovisual media services
- Collaborative efforts can help to solve these challenges through a mix of cross-platform solutions, capacity building, as well as tailoring international policies and standards to national contexts.



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Session 8: Universal Design, Procurement and Standards

- Public Procurement of ICTs can be a key driver to accessible products and services
- Awareness raising is key
- Audio description is an example for universal design as it works at best only when it is part of the process from the design stage of the product that needs to be produced.
- The procurement laws must contain specifications of liability because sometimes it is very hard to understand where and to whom complaint and this is achieved with provisions for contract management
- The existing standards and regulations in Europe cover many aspects, what is missing is the internalization of Universal Design principles within organizations themselves, in their DNA. That way, accessible is naturally included in all design steps. EN 17161 is a step in that direction.
- Universal design should be included from inception of products and services. For audiovisual content, such as movies, this means that accessibility requirements should included already in the script writing phase.



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Session 9: Telecom relay services: Practical experiences, challenges & opportunities in Europe

- ITU Resolutions establish that access to media is a right and set a roadmap to raise awareness and mainstream telecommunication/ICT accessibility standards and to develop programmes that enable developing countries to introduce services that allow persons with disabilities and persons with specific needs to utilize telecommunication/ICT services effectively.
- Telephone Relay Service (TRS) is the only way for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people to make voice telephone calls, and an essential part of Accessible telecommunication for an inclusive society.
- In Telecommunication Relay Services, Video Relay Services (VRS) and Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) are especially important for Deaf signers. European deaf citizens are equipped with ICT devices that support access to text- or video-based TRS, though they are not always able to use the service of their choice.
- Functional Equivalency in TRS, especially access to an Emergency call (112), is essential
- CA (Communication Assistant) who mediates “Voice” is an important part of TRS, to guarantee “accuracy”, etc.



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4 - 6 December 2019
St Julian's, Malta

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