



FEP open position paper on technical specifications for ebooks for the European Accessibility Act

The Federation of European Publishers represents 29 national publishers' associations, gathering books, learned journals and educational content, in all formats. FEP is the voice of European publishers.

FEP welcomed the adoption of the European Accessibility Act EAA and has since worked with its members and the industry standard setting bodies to make sure that the formats and metadata used by publishers are adequately fitting the EAA requirements and technical specifications.

June 2025 will soon be upon. It is thus crucial for the publishing industry to start now to get ready to comply in time with the Directive. To achieve this objective, publishers must know that the formats they are using fulfill the technical requirements.

Publishers invented and promoted ISBN more than 50 years ago and, when e-books appeared, they decided to work again collectively and with organisations serving persons with disabilities to promote the adoption of joint industry standards. The work done in these instances has had accessibility as one of its main elements.

To provide all the interested players with information on the compliance of the publishing standards with the EAA requirements FEP, with the collaboration of accessibility experts, has prepared a very detailed mapping to foster their possible adoption as technical specifications for its implementation. The document has been verified with the collaboration of the W3C Accessibility task force in the EPUB 3 Working Group, responsible of setting the accessibility requirements for the EPUB standard. The mapping is available upon request for members of FEP.

We trust that the already existing publishing standards comply with 1. The production of accessible e-books; 2. The production of metadata to describe with detailed information the accessibility of products and services standards to adopt to produce web sites, apps and e-commerce. These are EPUB for the production of e-books as well as ONIX and Schema.org for metadata.

We call on the European Commission to approve these industry standards as technical specifications fulfilling the requirements of the EAA.

Regarding websites, apps, and e-commerce the publishing industry is already adopting W3C standards that are in line with the accessibility requirements of the EAA and with the already existing EU Harmonized Standard EN 301 549 V2.1.2 (2018-08).

FEP members gathered for its general assembly on 10 & 11 June will be informed of this position paper.

FEP wishes to specially thank Cristina Mussinelli, Luc Audrain and Gregorio Pellegrino for their work on this topic and on the mapping.



Brussels, 9 June 2021