

PRESS RELEASE
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New European Standard on accessibility requirements for public procurement of ICT products and services

The European Standardization Organizations – CEN, CENELEC and ETSI – are pleased to announce the publication of a new European Standard on accessibility requirements for Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) products and services. This new standard (EN 301 549) is the first European Standard for accessible ICT. It is intended in particular for use by public authorities and other public sector bodies during procurement, to ensure that websites, software and digital devices are more accessible – so they may be used by persons with a wide range of abilities.

The new European Standard on 'Accessibility requirements suitable for public procurement of ICT products and services in Europe' (EN 301 549) was produced by CEN, CENELEC and ETSI in response to a request from the European Commission (Mandate 376). It was developed by an international team of experts, with the participation of the ICT industry and organizations representing consumers, people with disabilities and older persons.

The new European Standard is complemented by a series of three Technical Reports (TR 101 550, TR 101 551 and TR 101 552). Together, these documents set out accessibility requirements that can be applied to a wide range of products and services related to ICT, including computers, smartphones and other digital devices, ticketing machines, websites and emails. The aim is to ensure that ICT products and services are accessible either directly or through compatibility with assistive technologies such as text-to-speech, so that everyone can access information and use services that are being delivered electronically.

The new European Standard and its accompanying Technical Reports provide a framework for developing a wide range of applications that will make ICT products and services more accessible for the 80 million Europeans who are living with various types of disability. Potential applications include audio and/or tactile interfaces that can be used by visually impaired persons, or hardware such as smartphones and laptops that can be operated using one hand.

EN 301 549 is the most up-to-date standard for ICT accessibility, and it was developed through an inclusive process with the active involvement of relevant stakeholders. While the accessibility requirements are defined in a form that is suitable for use in public procurement, they could also be used in other contexts such as procurement in the private sector.

Luis Jorge Romero, ETSI's Director General said: *"Addressing accessibility is now becoming an important market-driven necessity and ETSI aims to help industry and operators to avoid creating technologies that exclude users from the information society. We also aim to help increase the quality and usability of products and services for everyone, with standardization processes that ensure consideration of 'Design for All' issues in every newly developed standard if appropriate."*

Elena Santiago Cid, Director General of CEN and CENELEC, said: *"In CEN and CENELEC, we believe that including accessibility requirements in European standards will deliver both societal and economic benefits – by helping to expand the market for accessible products and services. Public authorities are making significant efforts to ensure that their services can be used by all, and they have entrusted the European Standardization Organizations to support these efforts. We hope that this new European Standard will be widely used, not just by the public sector and ICT suppliers, but also by other companies and organizations."*

CEN, CENELEC and ETSI have made sure that the accessibility requirements contained in their documents are consistent with other global accessibility requirements. This will help to expand and open-up the international market for accessible ICT products and services.

Notes

The European Standard EN 301 549 is available (in English) on the ETSI website: www.etsi.org/technologies-clusters/technologies/human-factors?tab=2

During the next six months it will be published (in various languages) by the members of CEN ([National Standards Bodies](#)) and CENELEC ([National Electrotechnical Committees](#)) in 33 European countries (including all Member States of the EU and EFTA).

The future challenges of ICT accessibility will be discussed during an [ETSI workshop on 'The Human Side of Technology'](#) which will take place at the ETSI in Sophia-Antipolis (France) on 2 & 3 June 2014. Registration is free and open to all.

CEN, CENELEC and **ETSI** are officially recognized by the European Union as European Standardization Organizations, as defined by [EU Regulation 1025/2012](#).

European Standards facilitate cross-border trade and strengthen the European Single Market. They enable businesses and other organizations to ensure quality and performance, to protect health and safety, and (in certain cases) to comply with relevant regulations.

CEN (European Committee for Standardization) and **CENELEC (European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization)** are organizations that develop and adopt European standards in relation to a wide range of materials, products, services and processes.

The members of CEN and CENELEC are the National Standards Bodies and National Electrotechnical Committees of 33 European countries including all 28 EU Member States plus 3 EFTA countries (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland) and 2 EU candidate countries (Turkey and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). European Standards (ENs) that have been adopted by CEN and CENELEC are accepted and recognized in all of these countries.

CEN and CENELEC collaborate with the international standardization organizations ISO and IEC.

For more information about CEN and CENELEC, please see: www.cencenelec.eu

ETSI produces globally-applicable standards for Information and Communications Technologies (ICT), including fixed, mobile, radio, converged, aeronautical, broadcast and internet technologies. ETSI is an independent, not-for-profit association whose more than 700 member companies and organizations, drawn from 62 countries across 5 continents worldwide, determine its work programme and participate directly in its work.

For more information about ETSI, please see: www.etsi.org

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