

# Revised EU regulatory framework for electronic communications – what has changed for users with disabilities?

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••• 1 *Disclaimer: This presentation represents the views of the speaker only and may not in any way be regarded as an official position of the European Commission.*

## Revision of EU telecoms package

- Latest revision of the 5 Directives of the EU regulatory framework for electronic communications adopted in 2009
- The transposition deadline was 25 May 2011. The framework transposed or under transposition by Member States:
  - Framework Directive
  - Access Directive
  - Authorisation Directive
  - ePrivacy Directive
  - Universal Service Directive

- **Most relevant regarding disabled end-users:**

Framework Directive – inclusion of issues related to users with disabilities in the general policy aims

Universal Service Directive – universal service and end-user rights – specific provisions disabled end-users

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## Universal service *mandatory provisions*

- Universal Service: safety net of minimum set of services defined at EU level to be available to all, independently of geographical location, at an affordable price.

Provision universal service by designated undertakings may be financed from public funds/sector specific funding.

- **Universal service for disabled end-users:**

### New mandatory provisions

- **equivalent access** and affordability of publicly available telephone service provided over network connection at a fixed location

- equivalent access and affordability of comprehensive directories and directory enquiry services

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## Universal service *other provisions*

### Other provisions

- measures to allowing disabled end-users to take advantage of the choice of undertakings and service providers

- accessibility of public payphones to disabled end-users

- National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) for electronic communications in Member States may assess the general need and design specific requirements

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## End-user rights *transparency*

- Transparency and publication of information:
  - regular information to disabled subscribers on details of products and services designed for them
  - publication of information on measures taken to ensure equivalent access for disabled end-users
  - information on quality of service parameters so that (disabled) end-users have access to comprehensive, reliable, comparable and user-friendly information(possible NRA requirements on providers of electronic communications networks/services)

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## End-user rights *harmonised numbers*

- **112** and emergency services
  - equivalent access for disabled end-users to emergency services, including measures enabling access to emergency services while travelling in other MS (e.g. SMS service, text-relay, video-relay or other real-time functionalities)
- **116xxx** numbers for harmonised services of social value
  - access for disabled end-users to services provided under '116' numbering range (to the greatest extent possible), incl. when travelling
  - Commission may adopt technical implementing measures
- Must carry obligations
  - possibility to impose transmission of complementary services, particularly accessibility services to enable appropriate access for disabled end-users

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## **End-user rights** *equivalent access and choice*

Requirements that may be imposed by relevant national authorities on **all** undertakings providing electronic communications services:

- Ensuring **equivalence in access and choice** for disabled end-users
  - access to electronic communications service equivalent to that enjoyed by majority of end-users (i.e. functionally equivalent access allowing same usability of services but by a different means, e.g. accessible information on services, billing, customer services, design for all, terminal equipment)
  - benefit from choice of undertakings and services available to majority of end-users (i.e. consumer protection requirements such as e.g. equivalent terms and conditions of services, incl. prices and tariffs)

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## **End-user rights** *terminal equipment*

- MS to encourage availability of **terminal equipment** offering necessary services and functions (i.e. better end-to-end solutions for disabled and more incentives to invest in new technology and services for manufacturers of goods and service providers)

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## **Disabled end-users** *Implementation developments*

### **Developments regarding effective implementation measures for disabled end-users:**

- Inclusive Communications Experts Group (**INCOM**)
- **BEREC**'s report on ensuring equivalence for disabled end-users  
[http://www.erg.eu.int/doc/berec/bor\\_10\\_47Rev1.pdf](http://www.erg.eu.int/doc/berec/bor_10_47Rev1.pdf)

### **Conclusion**

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### **Revised EU regulatory framework for electronic communications – what has changed for users with disabilities?**

*Thank you for your kind attention!*

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