

Understanding the European Accessibility Act, as a UK organisation

The European Accessibility Act (Directive (EU) 2019/882) entered into force on 28 June 2025 and is actively enforced across all 27 EU Member States. It applies directly to any UK business offering e-commerce, digital services, or consumer products to EU residents, regardless of where your company is headquartered. Non-compliance risks heavy national administrative fines, sales bans, and severe reputational damage. Additionally, accessible digital design directly aligns with obligations under the UK Equality Act 2010.

[EAA Official Directive ↗](#) • [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) ↗](#)



MAXIMUM FINE

€1.26M

Enforcement is live across all 27 Member States. Maximum penalties vary by country, reaching up to €1.26M or 10% of global annual turnover.

UK “PURPLE POUND”

£274B

The combined annual spending power of disabled consumers in the UK. Inaccessible checkout experiences cost UK businesses over £17B annually in abandoned baskets.

LEGACY INFRASTRUCTURE DEADLINE

2030

New digital products and services must comply immediately. Pre-existing service contracts and infrastructure have a transition window ending 28 June 2030.

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Broad Product & Service Scope

Covers consumer-facing e-commerce, customer web portals, mobile apps, banking, e-books, and POS payments.

Extraterritorial Market Reach

Applies directly to non-EU and UK businesses offering consumer products or services to EU residents.

Harmonised Standards

Compliance requires meeting EN 301 549 technical standards, benchmarked against WCAG 2.2 Level AA.

Mandatory Transparency

Businesses must publish an Accessibility Statement on their platforms and offer an active user feedback channel.

Exemptions & safeguards

Microenterprise Exemption

Businesses with under 10 employees and below €2M annual turnover are exempt from service accessibility rules, though product rules still apply.

B2C Consumer Scope

EAA obligations specifically target B2C consumer-facing products and digital services; pure B2B platforms are generally out of scope.

Disproportionate Burden

Article 14 permits temporary exceptions if full compliance fundamentally alters the service or creates an unreasonable financial burden.

Enforcement & Penalties

EU market authorities hold powers to order forced software updates, issue product recalls, enforce sales bans, or level national fines.

Practical considerations



Audio & Speech Output

Ensuring digital checkouts, POS payment terminals, and kiosks support text-to-speech capabilities and headphone output.



Tactile & Physical Feedback

Equipping hardware touchpoints e.g. card readers with physical keypads, tactile indicators, and accessible mounting heights.



Non-Visual & Keyboard Navigation

Building online tools, forms, and checkouts so every interactive element can be fully navigated via keyboard or screen reader.



Visual Adaptability

Supporting up to 200% text scaling without breaking page layouts, alongside high-contrast modes and non-color cues.

Your first steps

1

Map Scope & Exemptions

Conduct a comprehensive audit of all customer-facing digital touch points across EU markets. Confirm whether B2B exemptions or microenterprise criteria apply to your organisation.

2

Conduct Technical Audit

Test digital touch points against WCAG 2.2 AA and EN 301 549 standards. Evaluate assistive technology compatibility, screen reader performance, keyboard navigation, and visual clarity.

3

Accessibility Statement

Display a compliant Accessibility Statement detailing conformance levels and known exceptions. Provide a user feedback channel to log issues and request alternative content formats.

4

Embed in Procurement

Require third-party vendors to submit valid VPATs (Accessibility Conformance Reports). Update vendor procurement SLAs, train design teams, and audit legacy infrastructure.