Access Austria — The Accessibility Experts

a brand of

Hilfsgemeinschaft der Blinden und Sehschwachen Österreichs

Regulatory framework for Accessibility in Europe

European Accessibility Act and Web Accessibility Directive

Klaus Hoeckner,
Member of the Board of Directors of the HGBS

- ICT Inclusion Specialist since 2001

- Member of Austrian/European Disability Forum, EASPD

- CPACC IAAP

- Reviewer of CSUN, AAATE, ICCHP

- Member of Standardization in CEN/CLC/ISO..

- Ambassador of Zero Project

I am

Austrian Association supporting the blind and visually impaired

Austrian Disability Forum

Some key facts

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines persons with disabilities as

- 'those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others'.

- Around 87 million people in the EU have some form of disability.

- Many persons with disabilities in Europe do not have the same chances in life as other people. Schools or workplaces, infrastructures, products, services and information are not all accessible to them. They may also be treated badly or unfairly.

  - Only half of persons with disabilities are **employed** compared to 3 in 4 persons without disabilities.
  - 28.4% of persons with disabilities are at risk of **poverty or social exclusion** compared to 17.8% of persons without disabilities.
  - Only 29.4% of persons with disabilities attain a **tertiary degree** compared to 43.8% of those without disabilities.
  - 52% of persons with disabilities feel **discriminated** against.
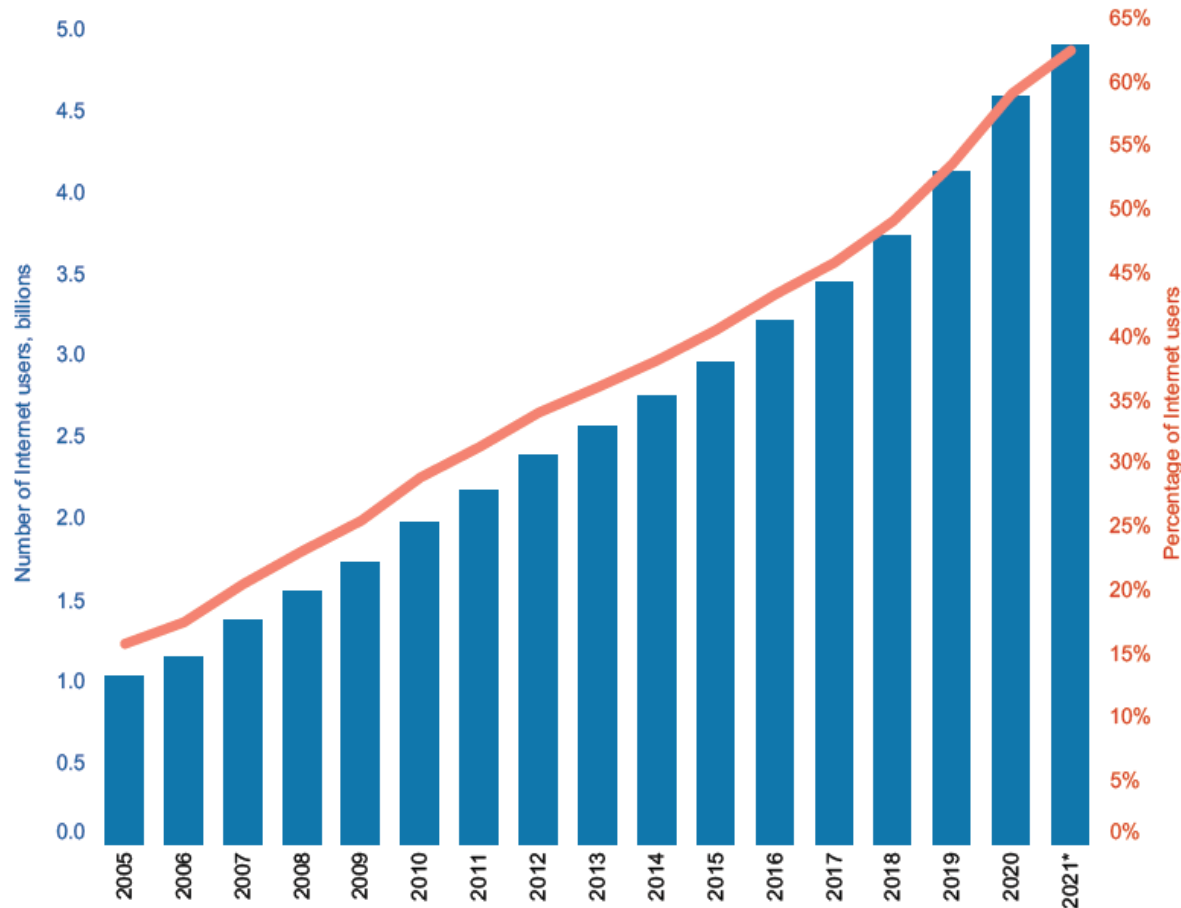
Some key facts

- 253 million people are affected by some form of blindness and visual impairment. This represents 3.2% of the world's population. That's twice Mexico's population
- 466 million people have a disabling deafness and hearing loss. This represents 6% of the world's population, that is to say all of the inhabitants of the European Union!
- About 200 million people have an intellectual disability (IQ below 75). This represents 2.6% of the world's population. It covers the number of inhabitants in Brazil!
- 75 million people need a wheelchair on a daily basis. This represents 1% of the world's population. That's twice Canada's population!

Source: https://www.inclusivecitymaker.com/disabled-people-in-the-world-in-2021-facts-and-figures/

Some key facts

Individuals using the Internet

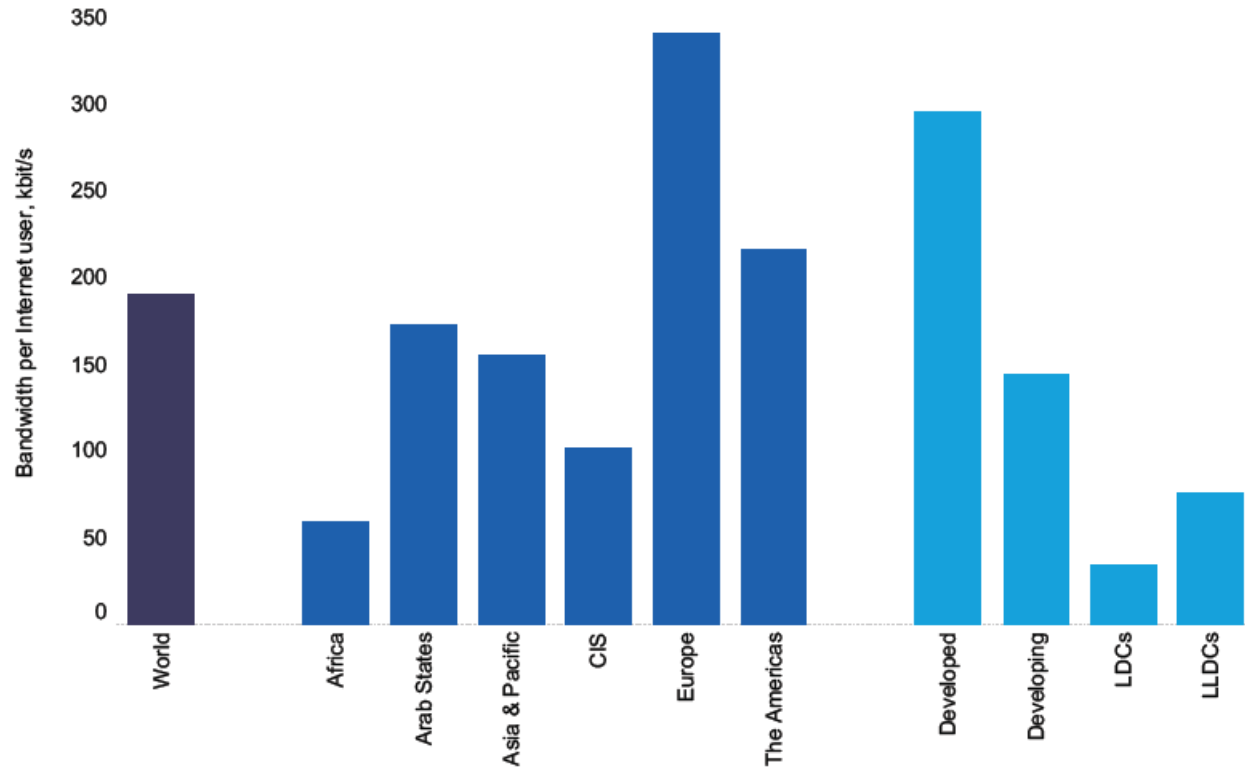Number of Internet users, billions / Percentage of Internet users

Source: ITU
* ITU estimate

- In 2019, 4.1 billion people (or 54 per cent of the world's population) were using the Internet.

- Since then the number of users has surged by 800 million to reach 4.9 billion people in 2021, or 63 per cent of the population.[1]

- Nonetheless, this means that some 2.9 billion people remain offline, 96 per cent of whom live in developing countries.

- In 2020, the first year of the pandemic, the number of Internet users grew by 10.2 per cent, the largest increase in a decade, driven by developing countries where Internet use went up 13.3 per cent.

- In 2021, growth has returned to a more modest 5.8 per cent, in line with pre-crisis rates.

Some key facts

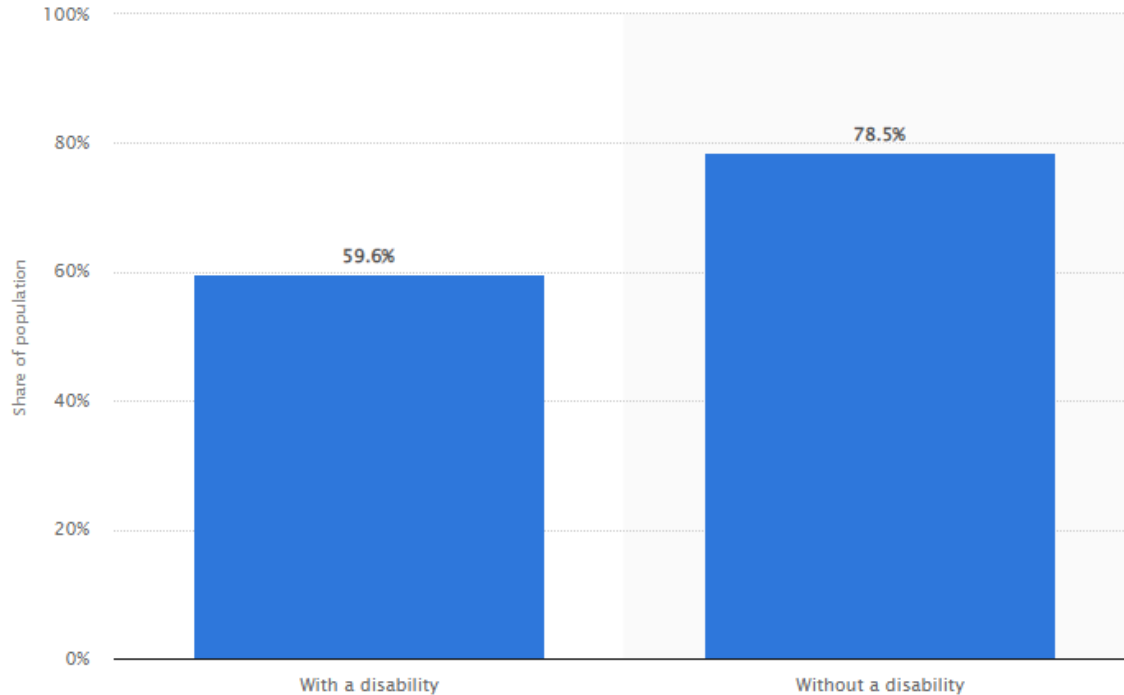International bandwidth per Internet user, kbit/s, 2021*

Source: ITU
* ITU estimate

- On a per-user basis, it is Europe that leads, at 340 kbit/s per Internet user, followed by the Americas at 214 kbit/s and the Arab States at 174 kbit/s

- **_Affordable adequate broadband Internet access:_** Only a few European countries provide for a minimum broadband speed in national law: Belgium, Croatia, Finland, Latvia, Malta, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

  In these countries, the minimum speeds defined vary from 1 to 10 Mbit/s for download speeds and from 512 kbit/s to 1 Mbit/s for upload speeds, while several countries have not defined the minimum upload speeds.
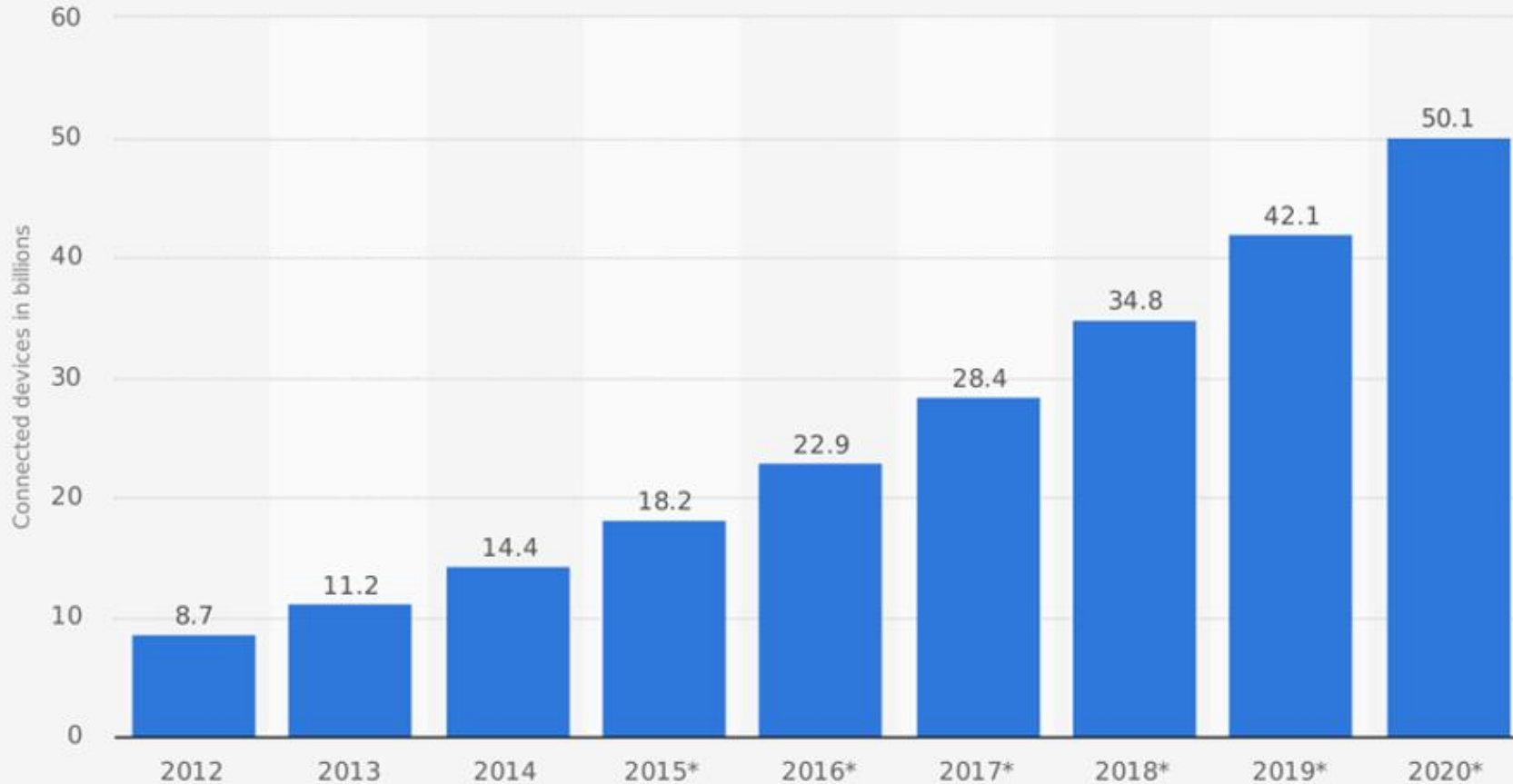
Some key facts

A comparism

Details: United States; US Census Bureau; November 2019   © Statista 2022

- With age, disability becomes more common, affecting about 2 in 5 adults aged 65 and older.

- As the U.S. population continues to age with some 73 million Baby Boomers all reaching age 65 or older by the year 2030, there will be more Americans with disabilities.

- 4.98 billion people use the internet worldwide today, some 63.2 percent of the global population, according to broadbandsearch.net.

- **Pandemic showed that use of the net is possible for all persons, but there is a need for accessibility**

- **No consideration of the largest minority in the world on COVID – related sites, apps etc.**

Internet of Things (IoT): number of connected devices worldwide from 2012 to 2020 (in billions)

50.000.000.000 units

Yes, also your washing machine

Some key facts

- As early as 2008, there were more internet-enabled devices than people on the planet.

- By 2020, around 50 billion devices will be connected to the Internet.

- It is expected that by 2020, 75 percent of new cars will be networked, i.e. they will be able to exchange data with other networked cars or receive commands via a smartphone app.

- It is estimated that between 2016 and 2021 companies will invest a total of 4.8 trillion US dollars in IoT projects worldwide. This also means that the IoT is a gigantic growth market.

THE COMING FLOOD OF DATA IN AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES

RADAR ~10-100 KB PER SECOND
SONAR ~10-100 KB PER SECOND
GPS ~50KB PER SECOND
CAMERAS ~20-40 MB PER SECOND
AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES 4,000 GB PER DAY... EACH DAY
LIDAR ~10-70 MB PER SECOND
intel

Policy Answers

European Pillar of Social Rights

*   Principle 17 of the **European Pillar of Social Rights** stresses that people with disabilities have the right to income support that ensures living in dignity, services that enable them to participate in the labour market and in society, and a work environment adapted to their needs.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

*   **The European Union and all its Member States are party to the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)](#)**. This important treaty has guided the content of the **[Strategy for the Rights of Persons of Disabilities 2021-2030](#)** and its predecessor, the **European Disability Strategy 2010-2020**.

Policy Answers

Disability Platform

- The Commission regularly discusses the implementation of the Convention at EU and Member State level in the **Disability Platform** expert group, consisting of:

  - the European Commission

  - experts from EU Member States

  - representatives of several EU-level NGOs, including organisations of persons with disabilities (DPOs)

Funding

- The EU provides financial support through an annual grant to a number of EU-level organisations of persons with disabilities and NGOs (under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme) to build their capacity and make their participation in EU-level processes easier (e.g. by providing views on the development of EU legislation and policies). These bodies were selected through a call for proposals and signed a Framework Partnership Agreement for the period 2022-2025

- The European structural and investment funds (ESIF) are the EU main financial instruments to strengthen economic and social cohesion. They help ensure social inclusion of the most vulnerable citizens, including those with disabilities.

Policy Answers

European Semester

* The **European Semester** provides a framework for the coordination of economic and social policies across the EU and provides information on the situation of persons with and without disabilities in the Member States.

Analytical Support

* The **European Disability Expertise** **(EDE)** provides the European Commission with analysis of data and policies from the EU Member States. It manages DOTCOM, a database which monitors policy instruments related to the UN Convention in the EU and Member States.

Awareness-raising

* The European Commission is committed to raising awareness on the living conditions of persons with disabilities, the challenges they encounter in everyday life and tools to improve their lives. To achieve this goal, the European Commission organises every year

    - the European Day of Persons with Disabilities conference
    - the Access City Award, which rewards European cities which have made outstanding efforts to become more accessible

Regulations and frameworks for Europe

Commitments:

- UNCRPD/+optional protocol

- Marrakesch Treaty

- Recognition of Sign Language

- Website Accessility (Directive (EU) 2016/2102 on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public-sector bodies (Web Accessibility Directive).)

- Electronic Communicaton (Directive (EU) 2018/1972 on establishing the European Electronic Communications Code (EECC).
  - Affordable adequate broadband access
  - Emergency Services
  - Text/video relay Services

- Audiovisual media services (Directive (EU) 2018/1808 amending Directive (EU) 2010/13 on audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive).
  - Subtitles/live/audio
  - Signing
  - Audio description

- Public procurement of ICT products and services (HEN standard EN 301 549, V2.1.2 (2018-08) (based on and in line with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1, Level AA)

- Accessibility requirements for products and services
Accessibility requiremens for ICT in education Directive (EU) 2019/882 on the accessibility requirements for products and services, also known as the European Accessibility Act.

Regulations an Frameworks for Europe

Commitments:

Web Accessibility Act ([Web-Zugänglichkeits-Gesetz](#) – WZG)

- Transposes Directive (EU) 2016/2102 on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies
- Entered into effect in July 2019
- Since 23 September 2020, it applies to all public sector websites.
- Since June 2021, it now also applies to mobile applications such as apps of public sector bodies.
- Stipulates that all digital information services provided by public authorities must be accessible
- WCAG 2.1 AA and some additional criteria serve as the technical benchmark
- An accessibility statement must also be published as a legal requirement.
- The Act provides for the use of a monitoring and service agency.

Hilfsgemeinschaft
der Blinden und Sehschwachen Österreichs

Regulations and frameworks for Europe

Most importantly - EAA

What

- Covers the following products and services:
  - computers and operating systems
  - ATMs, ticketing and check-in machines
  - telephones and smartphones
  - TV equipment related to digital television services
  - telephony services and related equipment
  - audiovisual media services, such as television broadcast and related consumer equipment
  - services related to air, bus, rail and waterborne passenger transport
  - banking services
  - e-books
  - e-commerce

When

- Transposition Phase: Effective June 28, 2022, member states must have a reasonable plan in place for incorporating the EAA into their national legislation

- Implementation: Effective July 28, 2025, member states' national laws must be applied

How

- All products and service must comply to the rules listed in Annex I of the EAA

- If products and services are in conformity with existing harmonized standard, they comply to the EAA

- New harmonized standard will be created to cover accessibility requirements not stated in the law or in other standards

- Creation of a market surveillance authority

- CE marking

Regulations an Frameworks for Europe

Transposition of EAA

Draft standardisation request to the European standardisation organisations as regards harmonised standards in support of Directive (EU) 2019/882

- To be revised:
  - EN 301 549 Accessibility requirements for ICT products
  - EN 17161:2019 Design for All Accessibility following a Design for All approach in products, goods and services - Extending the range of users
  - EN 17210 Accessibility and usability of the built environment - Functional requirements

- New harmonised standards to be drafted:
  - Harmonised standard(s) setting up requirements on the accessibility of non-digital information related to products
  - Harmonized standard for the accessibility of support services related to products and services (help desks, call centres, technical support, relay services 1and training services)
  - Harmonized standard for the accessibility and interoperability of emergency communications and for the answering of emergency communications by the PSAPs (public safety answering point) (including to the single European Emergency number 112)

Regulations and frameworks for Europe

Accessibility obligations- EU ICT related legislation

- Accessibility obligations to economic operators
  - European Accessibility Act
  - Electronic Communication Code
  - Audio Visual Media Services Directive

- Accessibility obligations to public authorities
  - Web Accessibility Directive

- Accessibility obligations in Public Procurement
  - Public Procurement Directives

- Accessibility obligations when using EU Funds
  - Structural Funds regulations
  - Trans-European Networks
  - Common Implementing Regulation External Action and contract procedure

- Standardization:
  - Mandate 376: Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services also to be used in Public Procurement. EN 301 549
  - Mandate 473 standard addressing accessibility following Design for all in the manufacturing and service delivery processes EN 17161
  - Mandate 420: Accessibility requirements for the Built Environment also to be used in Public Procurement prEN 17210 s

Links to the resources

How to find all the organisations/Conferences I mentionned

Links

My Organisation: [Hilfsgemeinschaft der Blinden und Sehschwachen Österreichs](#)

The following makes no claim to being complete.

Organisations

- Important Organisations in the field of ICT and Persons with Disablities in Europe
  - [EDF](#)
  - [EASPD](#)
  - [Access Israel](#)
  - [Zero Project](#)

Conferences

- Important conferences in the field of ICT and Persons with Disabilities.
  - [ICCHP](#) – International Conference on Computers helping People with special needs
  - [AAATE](#) - Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe
  - [Zero Project Conference](#)
  - M-enabling, in [Europe](#) and in the [USA](#)
  - [ATIA](#) – Assistive Technologies Industry Association

Hilfsgemeinschaft
der Blinden und Sehschwachen Österreichs

Thank you

Klaus Höckner 👤

+ 43 1 330 35 35 0 📱

hoeckner@hilfsgemeinschaft.at ✉

https://www.hilfsgemeischaft.at 🔗