

## EU rules to make more books available for blind people informally agreed with Council

**New rules to make more books available in formats designed for blind and visually impaired people were informally agreed by Parliament and Council negotiators on Wednesday.**

The agreed legislation aims to ensure that people who are blind, visually impaired or have other problems reading print have access to more books, journals, newspapers, magazines and sheet music in formats like Braille, audiobooks and large print.

Parliament and Council negotiators agreed on:

- **copyright exceptions:** blind people and their organisations will no longer need to ask permission from the holder of copyright to make accessible format books and other print material,
- **improved cross-border circulation:** blind people will have access to more special format books from EU and non-EU countries that have signed the Marrakesh Treaty; in this context, Parliament's negotiators ensured that **no commercial availability checks** prior to the exchange of accessible format books will be required, and
- **optional compensation:** member states will have the option of establishing limited compensation schemes for publishers when their books are turned into accessible format copies.

The new rules will bring the EU's laws into line with its international commitments under the [Marrakesh Treaty](#), signed by the EU in 2014.

### Quote

Rapporteur Max Andersson (Greens/EFA, SE) said: "I am happy that we were able to reach a compromise that secures the cross-border exchange of published works for people who are blind or visually impaired. Now, it is important that the ratification process can start as soon as possible, so that the EU can join the rest of the countries that have already ratified the Marrakech treaty. It is time for the blind and visually impaired to finally get improved access to books in accessible formats."

## Next steps

The agreed text now needs to be formally approved by the Legal Affairs Committee, Parliament as a whole and the Council before entering into force. EP plenary is scheduled to vote on the agreed text in July (TBC).

## Quick facts

The European Blind Union estimates that there are upwards of 30 million blind and partially sighted persons in Europe, and the World Blind Union puts the worldwide figure at 285 million. While estimates of the share of published books available in accessible formats for visually impaired persons range from 7% to 20% in the EU, in developing countries it is estimated to be as low as 1%.

## Further information

[Rapporteur Max Andersson \(Greens/EFA, SE\)](#)

[Procedure file: Permitted uses of works protected by copyright for the benefit of persons who are blind](#)

[Procedure file: Cross-border exchange between the Union and third countries of accessible format copies](#)

[Committee on Legal Affairs](#)

[EPRS Study: Marrakesh Treaty](#)

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