

EU will make more books available for blind people

- **More books available for blind people by removing copyright hurdles**
- **Better access to special-format books from abroad**
- **Possible compensation for publishers**

New rules will make more books available in formats like Braille and audiobooks adapted for blind and visually impaired people.

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" Today the European Parliament took a major step in giving blind and visually impaired people better access to books that they can read "

Max Andersson (Greens/EFA, SE), rapporteur

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People who are blind or visually impaired will have access to more books, newspapers, magazines and other print material in formats like Braille, audiobooks and large print with the introduction of the new rules, approved by the Parliament on Thursday and previously agreed with Council negotiators in March 2017.

The new rules provide:

- **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,

and

- **optional compensation:** member states will have the option of setting up limited compensation schemes for publishers when their books are adapted 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.

The resolution providing for copyright exceptions of accessible format copies was approved by 609 votes to 22, with one abstention. The resolution on the cross-border exchange of these works was approved by 610 votes to 21, with one abstention.

Quote

[Max Andersson](#) (Greens/EFA, SE), rapporteur, said : "Most of the 285 million blind and visually impaired people in the world have very little access to books. Today the European Parliament took a major step in giving them better access to books that they can read. We stood up against significant lobbying pressure. As the Parliament's negotiator I am glad that the EU is finally going to implement this important reform".

Next steps

The draft law still needs to be formally approved by the EU Council of Ministers. Member states will have twelve months from the date of entry into force of the new legislation to apply the new rules.

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

[Adopted text \(2016/0278\(COD\)\) will soon be available here \(06.07.2017\)](#)

[Adopted text \(2016/0279\(COD\)\) will soon be available here \(06.07.2017\)](#)

[Video recording of debate \(click on 06.07.2017\)](#)

[Video of the press conference](#)

[with rapporteur Max Andersson and Wolfgang Angermann, European Blind Union \(05.07.2017\)](#)

[EP Research: Marrakesh Treaty](#)

Political groups

[News pages of the EPP group](#)

[News pages of the S&D group](#)

[News pages of the ECR group](#)

[News pages of the ALDE group](#)

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[Press release by the Greens/EFA group](#)


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