

**EU Stakeholders Dialogue Memorandum of  
Understanding (MOU) on access to works by people with  
print disabilities**

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**1. About this MOU**

**The undersigned**

- Recognise the need for people with print disabilities to read, and the need to increase the number of accessible publications.
- Are mindful that disabled people's right to read is enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities
- Appreciate the need to find pragmatic solutions, and endorse a system of mutual recognition of Trusted Intermediaries in the EU.
- Emphasise that publishers' efforts to produce accessible works in the normal course of publishing processes must be supported.
- Consider that Trusted Intermediaries should be enabled to provide access to works across borders.
- Commit to develop a network of Trusted Intermediaries in EU Member States.
- Commit to stimulate the creation of an online European accessible e-books service.

**Have agreed on the following:**

1. That our shared goal is to increase the access to works for people with print disabilities and, in the meanwhile, ensure that works converted into Braille or another accessible format, are available in other EU Member States through a network of Trusted Intermediaries.
2. Consent to the cross border transfer in the EU of accessible copies created under copyright exceptions or under licenses, through the network of Trusted Intermediaries and under appropriate conditions.

3. Recommend specific licenses allowing the cross border transfer in the EU of licensed accessible copies, through the network of Trusted Intermediaries.

The rest of this MOU sets out in detail our agreement about how all of this is to be achieved.

## **2. Definition of person with a print disability (i.e. the end-user)**

For accessible copies of works lawfully made under a copyright exception, embodied in a physical medium such as a book or CD, that are to be supplied across borders, the terms of the copyright exception (or other relevant legislation) in the Member State where the accessible copy was first made apply. For the avoidance of doubt, the definition of the persons benefitting from the exception should be the one used in the copyright exception of the Member State where the accessible copy is first made.

For accessible copies of works to be supplied under licence, the following 3-part definition will apply to the extent that it is incorporated either verbatim or by reference in such licence:

Any person

(a) who is blind; or

(b) who has an impairment of visual function which cannot be improved, by the use of corrective lenses, to a level that would normally be acceptable for reading without a special level or kind of light; or

(c) who is unable, through physical disability, to hold or manipulate a work; or

(d) who is unable, through physical disability, to focus or move his eyes to the extent that would normally be acceptable for reading; or

(e) who is dyslexic.

**- - and -**

whose disability results in an inability to read commercially available standard editions of works.

**- and -**

who can be helped to read by reformatting the content (but, for avoidance of doubt, requires only a change to the graphic presentation of the original text and does not require the text itself to be re-written in simpler terms to facilitate comprehension).

This definition will be reviewed annually and may be extended with the consent of all interested parties to cover other beneficiaries with a view to including them as additional categories of persons with print disabilities.

### **3. Definition of rightsholder**

Rightsholders are the creators and/or publishers of published works who own and/or control the copyright subsisting in such works. Reproduction Rights Organisations (RROs) and other rights management organisations may be authorized by the rightsholders to represent rightsholders in dealings with Trusted Intermediaries in order to assist by facilitating the clearance of the necessary rights to other Trusted Intermediaries and persons with print disabilities registered with a Trusted Intermediary.

### **4. Definition of accessible content**

Accessible content is the term used to describe works whose format is usable by a print disabled person. This term can be used to:

- describe works that are originally published in accessible formats
- describe copies of works whose format is modified after publication in order to enable a print disabled person to read the work
- describe works or copies of works that can be adjusted by the user to facilitate accessibility – for example by providing a reader with the tools to increase font size, style or colour.

It is acknowledged that to make some visual content accessible it will be necessary to add information to the accessible version of the work (i.e. a description of the visual content).

### **5. Definition of Trusted Intermediary**

A Trusted Intermediary (TI) is generally any entity that facilitates interactions between two parties who both trust the third party.

The objective of a TI in the context of this MoU is the controlled distribution of accessible copies of works, when these are not commercially available, to persons with a print disability. The rights holders will give their permission provided that the TI can certify that the recipient of an accessible work falls within the definition of person with a print disability above.

These TIs must have the trust of representatives of both persons with a print disability and rights holders and be formally and specifically accredited by the signatories.

The characteristics of an accredited TI are the following:

- They operate on a not-for-profit basis unless otherwise agreed;
- They keep a register of the people they serve under this MoU; and require qualifying service recipients to adhere to appropriate end-user agreements
- They have as part of their mission the provision of accessible content to print disabled people. They might also be providers of specialised services relating to training, education, or adaptive reading or information access needs of persons with a print disability;
- They maintain policies and procedures to establish the bona fide nature of the persons with a print disability that they serve, as well as ensuring full and complete compliance with copyright law.
- They enter into a licence with rightsholder representatives concerning the crossborder distribution of accessible works legally created as envisaged under 6d of this

MoU.

- They agree to the dispute settlement procedures to address concerns of rightsholders regarding the proper distribution or transfer of accessible works as envisaged under 8.

If the accredited Trusted Intermediary is a network of organisations, then all organisations which are members of this network must adhere to all of the above mentioned characteristics.

## **6. Aim**

The MOU should foster a pragmatic approach, recommending a system of mutual recognition of Trusted Intermediaries in the EU. The MOU provides a practical solution to improving accessibility for the print disabled that is in line with the Berne 3-step test, and does nothing to undermine publishers' own activities to increase the accessibility of publications.

Specifically, the Stakeholder Dialogue aims to do the following

- a) Support publishers' efforts to produce accessible content in the normal course of their publishing processes.
- b) Identify a rightsholder representative body in each Member State to act as the point of liaison between the Trusted Intermediary (or Intermediaries) and the rightsholder community.
- c) Develop a network of Trusted Intermediaries in EU Member States and/or regions.
- d) Enable these Trusted Intermediaries to create and provide accessible works across borders.
- e) Stimulate the creation of an online European accessible e-books service.

### **6a) Support publishers' efforts to produce accessible content in the normal course of their publishing processes**

It is important to support publishers' efforts to make publications readily accessible from the outset. Our shared objective is to have the vast majority of works accessible, and for that accessibility needs to become mainstream.

Signatories to this MOU will encourage training and support for rightsholders and TIs in Europe to implement WIPO's Enabling Technologies Framework and the outputs of WIPO's Trusted Intermediaries Pilot Project. Rights holders and user groups in Europe will also build on work that has been done in this field already, for example the EUAIN platform and the PROACCESS project.

Publishers are committed to a market where people with a print disability can access the same work at the same time and same price as other readers.

However it is neither easy nor cost-free for publishers to transform their processes and formats to achieve this goal.

Support and recognition for this investment to improve document accessibility would be helpful, and could take the form of specific calls for projects.

A particular barrier is that electronic works and other digital publications attract VAT while print works do not. It would be helpful if in Europe electronic works and other digital publications attracted reduced VAT to facilitate purchase by people with print disabilities.

**6b) Identify a rightsholder representative body in each Member State to act as the point of liaison between the Trusted Intermediary (or Intermediaries) and the rightsholder community**

Organisations that provide support to people with print disabilities would find it helpful to liaise with a single point of contact to the rightsholder community in each country.

Rightsholders may appoint any organisation to provide this single point of contact, for example an RRO or other rights management organisation or a trade body. The representative body would assist in facilitating the clearance of the necessary rights for TIs and persons with print disabilities registered with a TI. TIs wish that information on the single point of contact be widely available to the network of TIs.

Signatories will work together to identify a rightsholder representative for each Member State, as well as model agreements to appoint representatives and best practices and model agreements to be followed by them.

**6c) Develop a network of Trusted Intermediaries in EU member states and/or regions**

Signatories will develop specific Guidelines for Trusted Intermediaries to include:

- a description of a system of accreditation and removal of accredited status of TIs with a set of procedures
- rules on transparency
- a description of the role of the TI
- guidelines for data collection and content security

Signatories will also identify the group that will provide accreditation and removal of accredited status – which should include a balance of representatives of the main stakeholders (publishers, publishing trade associations, collecting societies, authors associations, national organisations supporting persons with a print disability, the European Blind Union, European Disability Forum).

A list of the different scenarios which could be carried out by TIs should be drawn up as a parallel exercise.

To be clear, there could be more than one TI per Member State subject to specific accreditation.

#### **6d) Enable these Trusted Intermediaries to create and provide accessible works across borders**

If commercially available in an appropriate accessible format, it is accepted by all signatories that the work should be purchased through commercial channels by persons with print disabilities.

It is accepted by all signatories that a commercially available abridged accessible version of a work cannot be considered a fully accessible version of that work.

Responsibility for ensuring the legality of the creation and transfer of accessible formats of works under EU single market rules rests with the supplying organisation.

A TI may supply accessible formats of works that were made legally.

In line with current transcription practices the producer of an accessible version of a work will not re-write its content in simpler terms to facilitate comprehension, or eliminate parts of the work, or translate the work into a language different from the original source of the work used to produce accessible content. To do so would undermine the integrity of the work and the creator's other moral rights. For the avoidance of doubt, the transcriber may make small changes to the work purely to ensure its accessibility.

For example, exclusion of images if, for example, they either can not be captioned or can not be affordably captioned.

The purposes for which the copies will be used must be strictly non-commercial.

It is the responsibility of the TI which delivers the accessible copy to the end-user to ensure that works go to individuals certified as persons with a print disability.

TIs are responsible for ensuring that there is an appropriate end-user agreement in place to ensure that the copy is to be used by that individual user only.

In case an end-user is in breach of his or her obligations, the TI would be required to act diligently to secure compliance.

Creation, distribution and use of the accessible copies of the work must comply with the terms of the licence in the country where the first accessible copy of the work is produced.

#### **6e) Stimulate the creation of an online European accessible e-books service**

To aid the discovery of accessible works, the signatories agree to support the establishment of an online European catalogue of works available in accessible formats.

This service shall include a database of commercially available accessible publications, public domain works, and works created under a national copyright exception or licence.

It is intended in the first instance that this is a catalogue, but it could evolve to be a distributed service to facilitate the discovery and delivery of accessible ebooks to authorised users. The Signatories acknowledge that this is a major undertaking, and will work in good faith together to secure funding and other resources to move forward to realise this objective.

This objective is shared with the WIPO Stakeholders Platform projects, and the signatories will work together to avoid duplication of effort by building on existing work.

#### **7. Measures of Success**

- The following are seen by this MOU as measures of success:
  - Identify rightsholders representative bodies in a majority of Member States
  - Evidence of a flow of accessible works between TIs in Europe
  - An online database of accessible works investigated and costed plan developed

#### **8. Safeguarding Measures and Settlement of Disputes**

The signatories agree it is important to safeguard trust between rightsholders and Trusted Intermediaries and will agree appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms.

## **9. Implementation**

The signatories agree to work together to finalise an activity plan, trusted intermediary guidelines, model licenses, and other tools as needed to support the implementation of this MOU.

## **10. Signatures**

Signed by representatives of rightsholders and print disabled people/Trusted

Intermediaries:

**Federation of European Publishers European Blind Union**

**European Writers Council European Dyslexia Association**

**International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organisations**

**International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers**