



# Press Release

16 June 2011

Contact person at ANEC: Chiara Giovannini

Tel: +32(0)2 743 24 70

## Inaccessible Websites: Time to Act!

**We live in an increasingly digitalised world, where access to the internet has become a factor of independence and inclusion. "As many everyday services are now offered through the internet - sometimes exclusively - it is essential that all consumers are able to access the internet and internet websites, whatever their age and abilities. Sadly, that is far from the case", commented ANEC Secretary-General, Stephen Russell. "Today, as the European Commission hosts the first Digital Agenda Assembly , we call for this discrimination to be brought to an end and, together with Age Platform Europe, the European Blind Union (EBU) and the European Disability Forum (EDF), urge the Commission to take urgent action on introducing mandatory rules for the accessibility of websites."**

The Digital Agenda for Europe, one of the flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, states that the Commission will, *"based on a review of options, make proposals by 2011 that will make sure that public sector websites (and websites providing basic services to citizens) are fully accessible by 2015."*

"We believe now is the time to legislate because disabled and older consumers continue to face great difficulties in accessing websites. Standards on web accessibility exist and new standards, to which we are contributing, are in the making<sup>1</sup>. Yet voluntary compliance has failed to deliver accessible websites, both in the private and public sectors, and market fragmentation is becoming an issue in Europe<sup>2</sup>" added Stephen Russell. "This is why we have prepared a proposal for a legal act on the accessibility of websites for the Commission to consider. Denying access to the Internet for older and disabled consumers is no longer an option - and should it never have been one in the first place."

The proposal for a legal act on accessible websites and other material can be found at: <http://www.anec.org/anec.asp?rd=4687&ref=01-01.02-01&lang=en&ID=8>

ENDS

1 M 376 – ENSTANDARDISATION MANDATE TO CEN, CENELEC AND ETSI IN SUPPORT OF EUROPEAN ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC PROCUREMENT OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN THE ICT DOMAIN

2 University of Middlesex study for ANEC - <http://bit.ly/mMblji>

## ANEC in brief

*ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardisation, representing and defending consumer interests in the process of standardisation and certification. ANEC was set up in 1995 as an international non-profit association under Belgian law and represents consumer organisations from the 27 EU Member States and 3 EFTA countries and Croatia. ANEC is funded by the European Union and the EFTA Secretariat, while national consumer organisations contribute in kind. Its Secretariat is based in Brussels.*

More information: [www.anec.eu](http://www.anec.eu)

### **Contact person at ANEC: Chiara Giovannini**

Tel: +32(0)2 743 24 70

Email: [anec@anec.eu](mailto:anec@anec.eu)

ANEC-PR-2011-PRL-013final