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More accessible books available for blind and visually impaired people

Marrakesh Treaty

The European Parliament has today approved the final deal on the implementation of the Marrakesh treaty in the EU. The treaty makes exceptions to some copyright rules for books and other materials in accessible formats for people who are blind or visually impaired (such as audiobooks, large print, and braille).

Greens/EFA MEP **Max Andersson**, who was the parliament's rapporteur, calls on the Member States to swiftly ratify the deal:

"I am delighted that the European Parliament has approved this deal with such a strong majority. We now call on the Member States to act quickly to bring this into force, and allow the cross-border exchange of books to begin.

"In the final negotiations, countries such as France and Germany tried to introduce provisions to the benefit of publishers, ignoring the people this treaty was designed to benefit. The final compromise means that Member States can offer publishers compensation, but with several safeguards to ensure it is not to the detriment of the purpose of the treaty."

Further information

What are the next steps for ratification?

According to the directive and the regulation of the Marrakesh Treaty, the Member States have 12 months to implement it into law after it has entered into force. With ratification process expected to start after the summer, we hope the deal will become reality in Autumn 2018.

What will this achieve?

There are approximately 285 million blind or visually impaired people in the world today. Only 5% of all books in the EU are made in an accessible format, with the global figure only 1%. The treaty addresses the

cross-border exchange of books. When the EU ratifies the Marrakesh Treaty, blind organisations and libraries in any EU country will be able to transfer accessible format books without any cost. The EU regulation also makes this exchange possible on a global level, helping increase the availability of accessible books for blind or visually impaired people in less developed countries.

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Responsible MEPs



Max Andersson

Member

Contact person



David Weir

Press & Media Advisor EN (English language press)

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