

How the EU Accessibility Act Will Affect Filmmakers or Content Creators: 5 Ways to Future-Proof Your Content

From June 2025, the EU Accessibility Act (EAA) **will legally require certain products and services to be accessible to people with disabilities** across all member states. The aim? To remove barriers and make sure that everyone - regardless of ability - can access, use and enjoy the same services.

For creatives and content makers, this isn't just a compliance issue. It's a call to action.

What Does the EAA Cover for the Arts?

Under the EAA, accessibility standards will apply to:

- Television sets and related equipment
- Streaming services and TV programmes
- E-books and digital publications

That means subtitles, audio description, clear navigation, and screen-reader-friendly interfaces are no longer optional extras - they're essential.

1. Avoid Lower-Third Clashes

Don't crowd the subtitles. Avoid placing crucial text - like character intros, inserts, or graphics - on the bottom third of the screen (particularly in the centre). Subtitles live there. If visuals compete with them, it forces subtitlers to move text up and down, creating a jarring experience for viewers. Frame with future accessibility in mind.

2. Include Audio Description for Visual Access

Not all storytelling is visible. Audio description helps blind and visually impaired audiences by narrating what's happening on screen. Facial expressions, scene changes, action - all described clearly. It's more than a legal requirement; it's inclusive storytelling. Make sure you work with AD specialists who tailor tone and vocabulary to the content - a horror film's AD shouldn't sound like a children's show.

3. Go Beyond Standard Subtitles

SDH (Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing) are a must. They include speaker IDs and sound cues - standard subtitles don't. But even SDH has its limits: Deaf viewers whose first language is BSL may still be left out. If budget allows, integrate a BSL interpreter on screen or live.

4. Inclusive Theatre: Cover All Accessibility Bases

For live events and theatre, inclusivity goes beyond subtitles. Consider:

- Relaxed performances to welcome neurodiverse audiences
- BSL interpreters (bring one on tour with you to cut down prep costs of a new interpreter in each city)
- Haptic feedback systems for immersive shows
- Captioning glasses like Xander glasses, WatchWord or National Theatre Smart Caption Glasses
- Apps like The Difference Engine or GalaPro for mobile captioning in promenade or moving performances

And when positioning captions or subtitles, aim to place them just above the performer's head - not floating too high or buried too low for a smoother viewing experience.

5. Embrace Inclusive Design = Bigger Reach

Ignore accessibility and you're ignoring your audience. **Think back to when beauty brands excluded diverse skin tones - and lost billions.** Media is no different. Accessibility doesn't just tick boxes, it opens doors to new viewers, markets, and partnerships.

Bottom line? Accessibility is smart, creative, and soon to be required by law. Whether you're shooting a feature film, producing a digital series, or staging a live immersive event, it's time to bake accessibility into your creative process - not bolt it on at the end as a cheap afterthought.

Not sure where to start? Get in touch!