

Legislation - Ireland

Relevant Acts

Ireland is subject to the [European Accessibility Act](#) (EAA) and the [EU Web Accessibility Directive](#) and this has been implemented into Irish law through the [European Union \(Accessibility Requirements of Products and Services\) Regulations 2023](#), usually abbreviated to 'The Regulations'. The Regulations are clearer and more specific as to requirements in Ireland, and they detail how authorities will monitor compliance and administer penalties.

Interpretation of whether these acts apply to small publishers and ebooks

Yes, in both of these legislative acts, it is quite clear that this would apply to all small diamond open access presses. Both the EAA and the Regulations refer to 'economic operators', although there are very clear exemptions if the economic operator is very small.

Within the EAA, it states "In the context of e-books, the concept of a service provider could include publishers and other economic operators involved in their distribution," while The Regulations make reference to, "...e-books and dedicated software."

More information about legislative requirements

[Copim Compass guidance on EU accessibility legislation](#)

[National Disability Authority - European Accessibility Act](#)

[Recite.me - An Introduction to The European Accessibility Act in Ireland](#)

Standards referenced and how audited

The current EAA requirements align with [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1 AA](#), but the new updated version that comes into force in 2025 is widely interpreted as aligning with [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.2 AA](#).

[EN 301 549 Annex A](#) is the standard required to be compliant with EU Web Accessibility Directive, and it is roughly similar to WCAG 2.1 AA. Annex A also includes additional requirements that are not part of WCAG 2.1. Therefore, demonstrating that a website meets all the success criteria of WCAG 2.1 is not sufficient to provide a presumption of conformity with the Web Accessibility Directive.

The Regulations also contain a specific list of requirements for ebooks. While they don't necessarily go beyond those legal minimum requirements, they are more specific to the ebook as an overall product compared to WCAG, Accessible EPUB or PDF/UA standards which are designed for all websites and all digital files of those types. Some of these requirements are features of the platform or reader used on the ebook file, which publishers will not have control over.

1. ensuring that, when an ebook contains audio in addition to text, it then provides synchronised text and audio,
2. ensuring that ebook digital files do not prevent assistive technology from operating properly,
3. ensuring access to the content, the navigation of the file content and layout including dynamic layout, the provision of the structure, flexibility and choice in the presentation of the content,
4. allowing alternative renditions of the content and its interoperability with a variety of assistive technologies, in such a way that it is perceivable, understandable, operable and robust,
5. making them discoverable by providing information through metadata about their accessibility features, and
6. ensuring that digital rights management measures do not block accessibility features.

Within the EU, auditing is delegated to member states. In Ireland, The Regulations name specific Irish organisations that have oversight of compliance monitoring with the EAA. For, "E-books and dedicated software and e-commerce services," this is the [Competition and Consumer Protection Commission](#).

The Regulations also name Irish authorities that have oversight of various auditing processes within the EU Web Accessibility Directive:

- Monitoring: [Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais](#) (The National Disability Authority, NDA)
- Reporting: [An Roinn Comhshaoil, Aeráide & Cumarsáide](#) (Department of Environment, Climate & Communications, DECC)
- Enforcement: [An Choimisiúin um Chaidreamh san Áit Oibre](#) (Director of the Workplace Relations Commission); complaints may also be submitted to the [Office of The Ombudsman](#) under the Disability Act 2005, as referenced in the Irish Regulations (Section 7(4)c in SI 358:2020)

Both sets of specified organisations have the power to direct businesses to adhere to the legal requirements, and The Regulations also empower individual consumers to bring cases in the Irish

courts. Public bodies, private organisations, or other legally recognised entities with a legitimate interest are permitted to support these actions, provided the consumer agrees. The Regulations also specify penalties that include fines and imprisonment, and they are particularly harsh within Ireland:

- Summary convictions carry a fine of up to €5,000 and/or imprisonment for up to 6 months.
- Indicted convictions carry a fine of up to €60,000 and/or imprisonment of up to 18 months.

Accessibility statements

The accessibility statement requirements in Ireland follow the EU legislation (in the [EU Web Accessibility Directive](#)) exactly with no additional requirements.

More information about accessibility statements

[Copim Compass guidance on EU accessibility statements](#)

[National Disability Authority - Development of Accessibility Statements](#)

Exemptions

EU member states can set a 'transition period' for when organisations need to comply with legislation. In Ireland, this is until 28th June 2030. This means, products or services that are considered lawful before 28th June 2025, when the legislation comes into effect, don't need to be replaced immediately. Interpretation of what this means for small presses varies.

Otherwise, the exemptions details in Ireland follow the EU legislation (both the EAA and the Web Accessibility Directive) exactly with no additional requirements.

More information about exemptions

[Copim Compass guidance on EU exemptions](#)

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