

Inclusive design benefits everyone

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What is accessibility and why is it important?

Accessibility in software is the idea that digital products should be usable by *everyone*, regardless of functional variation in sight, hearing, cognition or otherwise. The ability to use digital products and services contributes to inclusion, a key focus area and commitment for Telia as a company and part of our business proposal. Also, inclusive design tends to enhance the user experience for all users. You don't have to have a functional variation to appreciate clear design and presentation. Features like captions, high-contrast text, or keyboard navigation assist people with disabilities, but they often make products easier to use for everyone.

This is why we thoroughly analyse, review and aim to comply to the EU Accessibility Act which became law in member states on June 28th, 2025.

Q3 2025 regulatory landscape

Digital accessibility has gained heightened attention due to recent legislation mentioned above. The European Accessibility Act (EAA), passed in 2019, requires that many digital products and services in the private sector be accessible, extending the earlier Web Accessibility Directive (WAD) (2016) which applied mainly to public sector websites.

The EAA references the European standard EN 301 549, which in turn is based on the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 at level AA. As now law, it means that private sector offerings (like customer-facing web applications) must meet accessibility standards. WCAG and EN 301 549 serve as the benchmark, but the actual enforcement is left to national agencies (for example, the Swedish Agency for Digital Government, DIGG, in Sweden).



2016: EU Web Accessibility Directive (WAD)

Adopted to ensure public sector websites/apps meet accessibility guidelines (WCAG 2.0 AA).



2019: European Accessibility Act (EAA)

Enacted to expand accessibility requirements to private sector services and products (referencing WCAG 2.1 AA).



June 28, 2025: EAA Enforcement

EU member states' legislation takes effect – private digital services (like Telia ACE interfaces) must comply with accessibility standards.

Telia ACE is fully committed to these regulations. We recognize that complying with standards like WCAG 2.1 AA is not just about avoiding penalties – it's about delivering a quality service. Telia has already opted to comply with WCAG in all markets

proactively, because we believe in the principle of accessibility and want to be ahead of regulatory demands.

We closely follow guidance from authorities: for example, if DIGG or other bodies issue specific interpretations of the law, we use those as our guiding principles. In cases where different accessibility reviewers provide conflicting recommendations, Telia ACE assesses and may seek clarification. Ultimately, the strictest applicable interpretation (such as DIGG's recommendations in Sweden) will guide our compliance decisions.



Putting it to practice

Accessibility by design

Accessibility is built into every stage of our product development—from design and requirements to implementation and testing. Our design guidelines, user stories, and definition-of-done checklists all include accessibility criteria. We start with accessibility from the beginning, ensuring solutions are integrated, not patched in as an afterthought.

Continuous improvement

Accessibility is an ongoing journey. After each release, we gather feedback and make improvements, guided by the principle: “Small steps, everywhere, all the time.” We use WCAG 2.1 AA as our baseline but strive to go beyond the checklist with user testing and creative solutions.

Inclusive and collaborative

We see accessibility as a creative challenge. Our teams innovate to make products both attractive and accessible, involving users with diverse abilities in testing and feedback. By designing for them, we make our products clearer and easier for everyone.

Take expert help

We work with external specialist consultants like Axess Lab, whose IAAP-certified experts help us test, train, and support our teams. Their audits and workshops keep us aligned with best practices and ensure our standards meet real-world expectations.

Robust tooling and testing

We use both manual and automated testing—screen readers, keyboard-only navigation, color contrast checks, and more—to ensure our interfaces meet and exceed accessibility standards. Automated tools like Deque Axe complement our manual efforts, but real user feedback remains key.

- **Screen reader testing:** We manually test using screen readers such as NVDA (NonVisual Desktop Access) to ensure that blind or low-vision users can navigate and understand our content. Our team members perform internal evaluations of user experience with screen readers, and we refine issues related to focus order, ARIA labels, and element roles proactively.
- **Keyboard-only navigation:** Every feature is tested to be usable with keyboard only, without a mouse or touch. This is crucial for users with motor disabilities. We ensure that all interactive components (links, buttons, form fields, etc.) can be reached and operated via keyboard (using Tab, Enter, spacebar, arrow keys, etc.). We also design clear focus indicators (the highlighted outline showing which element is active) that are highly visible, making keyboard navigation easier to follow.
- **Color contrast and visual clarity:** Our designers and QA test that all text and key UI elements meet contrast requirements (generally at least 4.5:1 contrast ratio for text, and 3:1 for graphics/UI components, per WCAG 2.1 AA). We use tools (including the built-in browser inspectors and design plugins, as well as guidance from Axess Lab) to check color combinations. This ensures content is readable for users with low vision or color blindness and even improves visibility in difficult conditions like sunlight.
- **No color-only information:** We verify that no information is conveyed by color alone. For example, required fields have not just a red outline but also an icon or text indicating “required”; error messages use icons or text, not just colored highlights. Any images that convey meaning have appropriate alt text descriptions so that screen reader users get the information.
- **Responsive text scaling:** We test zooming in browsers and increased font settings to ensure that zoom and text resizing do not break the layout or hide information. The interface remains functional and scrollable at 200% zoom or more, for those with low vision.
- **Structured headings and labels:** Our content is structured with proper headings (H1, H2, H3...) in logical order – no skipping levels that could confuse navigation. Form fields and interactive controls have clear labels (visible or hidden) and/or ARIA labels where needed. We adhere to the principle of semantic HTML: headings, lists, tables, and landmarks are used appropriately so assistive technologies can parse the page easily.

- **Automated testing:** In addition to manual tests, we run automated accessibility scans using tools like Deque Axe on our applications. This catches common issues (like missing alt attributes or low contrast flags) early and serves as a complement to human testing. Automation is part of our CI pipeline “definition-of-done” checks, but we recognize it cannot catch everything, so manual testing and user feedback is vital.

Our “definition of done” for each feature includes a checklist of accessibility tests like the above (contrast, keyboard access, screen reader basics, etc.). For major updates or complex new features, we often involve users who rely on assistive tools (for example, arranging a session with a screen reader user) to get direct input. By combining internal QA, expert audits, and real user testing, we maintain a high standard of accessibility across the Telia ACE suite.

Supporting our customers

While Telia ACE provides an accessible platform, customers play a crucial role in maintaining compliance. We offer best practice tips for configuration, such as choosing high-contrast colors, providing alt text, using clear link names, and structuring content for readability. Keeping ACE updated ensures you benefit from the latest accessibility enhancements.

Product Scope

Many ACE products and features — like Chat, Video, Knowledge Widget, and Survey — are facing end users and are thus in scope for the EAA and must meet accessibility standards. Internal tools like ACE Interact and ACE Coach, while not legally required, are still built to the same high standards.

Hands on recommendations for editors and web developers using our customer facing components

Our interfaces are highly customizable, which means you as our customer have a significant influence on accessibility for end users.

Here are a few tips for you:

- **Choose approved contrasts:** When selecting a color profile, make sure the contrast ratio is at least 4.5:1. Use a free contrast-checking tool.
- **Add alt-texts to images:** These are descriptions of images that are conveyed to users who cannot see them. See the article [Alt-texts: The Ultimate Guide](#).
- **Name links clearly:** Avoid phrases like “click here.” Make sure the link text clearly indicates where the link leads.
- **Use proper headings:** Use heading styles so they are coded as actual headings. Follow a logical order and don’t skip levels. A level 2 heading should not be followed by a level 4 heading.
- **Avoid a “wall of text”:** Create space and structure in the text using headings, subheadings, paragraphs, and bullet points. Feel free to use images and

videos to complement the text.

- **Use simple language:** Avoid or explain difficult words and concepts. Consider using plain language techniques.
- **Provide multiple contact options:** Many people with hearing impairments prefer chatting over calling. Many with visual impairments prefer calling over emailing. Offer multiple options so users can choose.
- **Test with users:** Conduct usability tests where you try common scenarios in your interface. It's helpful to test with people who are not tech-savvy.

Also, the EAA has direct implications for telephony contact paths using DTMF menus. Keep the following in mind when designing your IVR. The caller should, among other things, be able to:

- Easily navigate the system
- Get sufficient time to enter choices and information
- Get the opportunity to repeat information
- Be offered to skip complex menus
- Get an offer to speak to a human agent

Partnership for compliance and quality

Telia ACE builds accessible products, and our customers use them in accessible ways. If any issues arise, we work to address them and help you “pass the test” of regulatory compliance. We’re committed to staying ahead of new legislation and best practices, so you can be confident that Telia ACE is always on top of the accessibility game.

Accessibility isn’t an add-on at Telia ACE—it’s at the core of product development. We’re dedicated to delivering seamless, inclusive services and supporting you every step of the way. Not because we must, but because it builds first class user experiences for everyone.

If you have questions or feedback, reach out to your Telia representative.