# 04. Accessibility statement

An accessibility statement is an essential instrument to inform users on the accessibility status of your website.

Having an accessibility statement is important because it:

- proves to your users that you care about accessibility and about them
- provides up-to-date information about the accessibility level of the website content
- demonstrates legal commitment to accessibility and social responsibility.

DG COMM requires all public facing websites, web applications, and mobile apps owned by the European Commission, to have an up-to-date accessibility statement that follows the European model.

A website that is not fully accessible or that has still not been tested for accessibility should nevertheless have an accessibility statement.

Each statement should include whether the website or app is fully, partially or not accessible. If the website is partially or not accessible, a list of known accessibility problems and a remediation timeframe must be provided.

The European Commission websites must use the following compliance statuses for communication:

- Fully compliant
- Partially compliant
- Not compliant

The responsibility for publishing, reviewing and maintaining the accessibility statement is with the website owner.

## Preparing and publishing a statement

[Download statement template](#) (please note that the template is in Word, but the actual statement should be an HTML page)

The first thing you need to do is check the accessibility of your website or mobile application. This does not mean checking every page, rather selecting a sample that shows different content and functionalities of your website or mobile app. There are different ways of checking your sample - basic checks or comprehensive audits. To help you decide which method is best for you, please refer to this guide’s section called testing early and regularly.

While the audit is in progress, collect all the information needed to include in the accessibility statement:

1. What is the official name and domain where the website can be found? If it is a mobile app, collect the (canonical) links to both App Stores (iOS and Android). It is best to include these links in the statement.
2. Are there sections of the website or app that should be excluded from the accessibility statement? There should be a good reason to exclude them, and this has to be explained in the statement.
3. If no one was assigned as responsible for the accessibility of the website or app yet, now is a good time to do that. Their name must be included as part of the statement.
4. How can people contact the Commission service owning the site? Is there a dedicated email address and phone number that can be added?
5. Choose the issues from the predefined list (options) in the model statement that apply to your website (generic issues that are typically present on EU websites).
6. List the most impactful (blocking) issues (information that you will get from the basic check or audit) and include them in the statement under the section 'Non-accessible content':
   a. If it is possible to be very specific on when issues will or can be fixed, it is acceptable to say: "In quarter X” or “with the next renewal of our website, which is planned for next year”. However, always give a proper perspective.
   b. Avoid using jargon or technical terms. It is better to say some images do not have image description rather than some images do not have ALT text.
   c. Add (in general terms) how these issues might affect users and when you intend on fixing these issues.

When the statement is ready:

1. Send the draft together with the accessibility report to the Accessibility Team at DG COMM via europamanagement@ec.europa.eu for approval to publish.

When the approval is received from DG COMM:

2. Publish the statement on the website with a link in the footer.

## When to publish the statement

New websites or apps cannot be published without an accessibility statement. So, even if the accessibility status is unknown, the statement needs to be there (informing users that the accessibility testing is planned or in progress).

## When to review or update the statement?

- Review the statement at least once a year.
- Review it after each significant update (visual, technical, editorial).

## Where to publish the statement?
Based on the type of your site, put a link to the accessibility statement in the site-specific footer, on each page. See screenshot below (example of EC branded harmonised website). **How to add a link to your footer - EWPP.**

**Screenshot:** put a link to your accessibility statement in the footer under the site name.

- Optionally, you can add links to the statement from various other places such as the help menu, sitemap, about page and other prominent areas. This allows users to find them.
- Use a consistent link name (“Accessibility”) for your accessibility statement so that users can find the information and recognise it. You do not need to include the word “Statement”. It is also not common to name your statement “Accessibility Policy”.
- Use the same link name on all web pages to refer to an accessibility statement for that website and use the same link name to refer to the accessibility statement of the mobile application version of the website.

**Accessibility statement for apps**

Mobile apps need an accessibility statement as well. Put the accessibility statement on the web page that has links to the app in the App Store (IOS) and the Play Store (Google). Unfortunately, until now, it is not possible to publish accessibility statements directly in the app stores themselves.

For apps, the same template can be used as for websites.

[Download statement template](https://example.com/download-template)