

Position Paper

Availability of EN 301 549 in European national languages

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Page 1

Background

In 2005, the European Commission had launched a "Standardization mandate to CEN, CENELEC and ETSI in support of European accessibility requirements for public procurement of products and services in the ICT domain". The main result of Mandate 376 is the standard EN 301 549 "Accessibility requirements suitable for public procurement of ICT products and services in Europe"¹, published by CEN, CENELEC and ETSI in February 2014. It specifies harmonized functional accessibility requirements for ICT products and services, which are intended to be used by procurers for assessing accessibility in the context of the new European Public Procurement Directive 2014/24/EC, which came into force on April 17, 2014. The EU member states have to adopt it in the form of national legislation by April 2016.

BITKOM kindly asks the EU Commission to take the following comments into account with regard to the application of EN 301 549 in the context of public procurement:

Necessity of translations of EN 301 549

The intention of EN 301 549 is to provide harmonized functional accessibility requirements which support public procurement in Europe and avoid diverging national accessibility approaches. Unfortunately, EN 301 549 has been published only in English language. For that reason, its acceptance and application will probably be marginal in all non-English speaking countries. Most procurers will probably continue to use national accessibility standards which is neither the intention of Mandate 376 nor in the interest of ICT companies.

Bitkom asks the European Commission as the issuing authority of Mandate 376

- to request that the contracted European Standardization Organizations solve possible copyright issues currently hindering any translations and

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¹ http://www.etsi.org/deliver/etsi_en/301500_301599/301549/01.01.01_60/en_301549v010101p.pdf

Position Paper

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Page 2|2

- to initiate the translations of EN 301 549 into other European languages e.g. under the responsibility of the National Standardization Organizations.

Translations into all European languages should be carried out such that they become available before the national implementations of the European Public Procurement Directive 2014/24/EC becomes mandatory.

About Bitkom

Bitkom represents more than 2,300 companies in the digital sector, including 1,500 direct members. With more than 700,000 employees, our members generate a domestic turnover of 140 billion Euros a year, exporting high-tech goods and services worth another 50 billion Euros. Comprising 1,000 small and medium-sized businesses as well as 300 start-ups and nearly all global players, Bitkom's members offer a wide range of software technologies, IT-services, and telecommunications or internet services. They produce hardware and consumer electronics or operate in the sectors of digital media and the network industry. 78 percent of the companies' head-quarters are located in Germany with an additional 9 percent in other countries of the EU and 9 percent in the USA as well as 4 percent in other regions. Bitkom supports an innovative economic policy with a special focus on the modernization of the education sector and a future-oriented network policy.