

# **Assistive Technologies in Europe - Users with Disabilities' Viewpoint**

**AAATE Conference  
2 September 2009**

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**euROPEAN disability forum**



# Outline

- **Presentation of the European Disability Forum (EDF)**
- **Assistive technologies and people with disabilities: what is at stake?**
- **Access to AT for Europeans with disabilities: state of play and challenges ahead**



# **Presentation of the European Disability Forum (EDF)**



# European Disability Forum

## Who we are

- Represents 50 million people with disabilities
- Represents all types of disability
- Umbrella organisation of disability organisations in the European Union
- Organisation OF people with disabilities and not for disabled people
- Our motto: Nothing about people with disabilities without people with disabilities



# European Disability Forum

## What we do

- **Objective: to promote the rights of people with disabilities and fight against discrimination**
- **Areas of work: non-discrimination, social affairs, education, health, EU funding, transport, tourism, built environment, ICT, standardisation,...**



# **Assistive Technologies and People with Disabilities: What is at Stake?**



# Accessible and assistive technologies

Two complementary approaches:

- **Accessible mainstream technologies**
  - Develop technologies usable and accessible by the widest number of consumers
  - Respect the Design for all/universal design principles
- **Assistive technologies**
  - Accommodate the particular needs of people with disabilities
  - Ensure interoperability and compatibility



# Usefulness of AT for people with disabilities

AT are useful for disabled and older people to:

- Achieve independent and community living by supporting dis-abilities of everyone
- Improve autonomy and quality of life
- Enable social participation
- Support access to education, employment and leisure
- Maintain existing skills when abilities of people decline





# The right to access AT

- **Human and fundamental right**

**Article 4 - UN Convention on the rights of people with disabilities**

**Article 20, 26, 29 and 32**

- **Consumers and users right**

**Users and consumers with disabilities should be able to benefit from the same opportunities as their non-disabled peers**



# **Access to Assistive Technologies by Europeans with Disabilities: State of Play and Challenges Ahead**



# State of play

- **Expensiveness of AT**
- **Difficult and long to get**
- **Difficult to repair**
- **Inequalities in access to AT between Europeans with disabilities**



# Future actions

**Two complementary approaches:**

- **A technology-oriented approach:**
  - **Develop an internal market for AT**
  - **Delivering AT**
  
- **A human-oriented approach:**
  - **Ensure disabled users' participation and involvement; representation by DPOs**
  - **Being AT literate**



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