

The European Accessibility Act and Its Impact on the Fintech Sector

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The European Accessibility Act (EAA) represents a significant step towards harmonising accessibility standards across the European Union (EU). By addressing the barriers created by divergent national rules, the EAA aims to improve the functioning of the internal market for accessible products and services.

For the fintech sector, this legislation is poised to bring transformative changes - by fostering innovation, reducing costs, and unlocking new market opportunities. Ireland has transposed the EAA through [S.I. No. 636/2023 - European Union \(Accessibility Requirements of Products and Services\) Regulations 2023](#).

A Unified Accessibility Framework for Fintech

The EAA came into effect on 28 June 2025. For fintech firms, the EAA's requirements mean that accessibility will no longer be an optional feature but a legal obligation. This shift is particularly relevant in a sector that thrives on digital innovation. By embedding accessibility into their products and services, fintech companies can not only comply with the law but also enhance their user experience, making their offerings more inclusive and appealing to a wider customer base.

The EAA's scope extends to various consumer banking and financial services, including payment accounts, electronic money, credit agreements, and certain investment services under MiFID II. Pure deposit (savings) business, however, is excluded. The EAA outlines functional requirements rather than prescriptive technical specifications¹.

Key Accessibility Requirements for Fintech Services

Fintech firms must comply with several functional accessibility obligations to ensure their services are usable by persons with disabilities. Products like ATMs and payment terminals must meet accessibility requirements, including features like text-to-speech technology to assist users with visual impairments, as outlined in Schedule 1, Part 1.

Information about services, their functioning, and compatibility with assistive devices must be provided in accessible formats, using multiple sensory channels, understandable language, adequate font sizes, contrast, and spacing, and supplemented with alternative presentations for non-textual content. Websites and mobile applications must adhere to the principles of perceivability, operability, understandability, and robustness².

Where available, support services (help desks, call centres, technical support, relay services and training services) must provide information on the accessibility of the service and its compatibility with assistive technologies, in accessible modes of communication.

An additional requirement for fintech firms is that they should include identification methods, electronic signatures, security, and payment services which are perceivable, operable, understandable and robust and ensure that the information is understandable, without exceeding a level of complexity superior to level B2 (upper intermediate) of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.



Firms are required to include details on how their services meet accessibility requirements in their terms and conditions or equivalent documents, ensuring this information is available in written and oral formats and retained while the service is operational. In cases of non-compliance, providers must take corrective measures, notify national authorities immediately, and provide details of the non-compliance and actions taken.

Compliance and Enforcement

In Ireland, the Central Bank of Ireland (CBI) has been designated as the national competent authority responsible for ensuring compliance with the EAA's accessibility requirements for consumer banking services. The National Disability Authority will provide advisory support to the CBI under the regulations. Firms operating across the EU must also comply with national rules implementing the

EAA in other jurisdictions, as non-compliance could result in enforcement actions.

Opportunities for Fintech Innovation

The EAA presents a unique opportunity for the fintech sector to lead the way in accessibility innovation. By integrating accessibility into their design processes, fintech firms can create products and services that cater to a diverse customer base, including the estimated 87 million people with disabilities in the EU³. This inclusivity not only enhances brand reputation but also opens up new revenue streams with an enhanced customer base.

REFERENCES

1. Prescriptive requirements will be laid out in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and EN 301 549 with the latter standards to be revised in 2025 as a result of the EAA.
2. Recital 37 of Directive (EU) 2016/2102 explains these four principles in detail.
3. https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/disability/persons-disabilities_en