

U.S.-E.C. Information and Communications Technology (ICT) **Standards Dialogue on** **e-Accessibility**

2006

Accomplishments

Substantial progress has been made in the US-EC ICT Standards Dialogue discussions on e-accessibility. In 2005, the US and European Commission agreed on a rolling work plan and work is well underway on many of the tasks envisioned. An updated work plan (now being called activity plan) will be posted on the USTR and European Commission websites to reflect progress and next steps planned for 2006 and beyond.

The main objectives of this dialogue are:

- to exchange information and experiences
- to identify fields of concrete co-operation
- to ensure coherence between activities on each side for the benefit of users and industry.

Key recent accomplishments include:

- Two successful international workshops have been organized within the frame work of this dialogue: one on public procurement and one on conformity assessment for ICT and accessibility.
- The U.S. Access Board is reviewing the standards for electronic and information technology covered by section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and by section 255 of the Telecommunications Act. A representative of the European Commission is a voting member in the relevant Federal Advisory Committee. This collaboration will provide for European input to the US process to ensure coherence in requirements to the greatest extent possible.
- The EC has issued a mandate to the European Standards Organizations for developing standards for accessibility of ICT products to be used in public procurement. This mandate specifically calls for coordination with US and it is expected that representatives of the US government will be able to participate in the European process.
- We agreed to exchange information on regulatory impact assessment, both specific to e-accessibility and, more generally, on approaches for economic assessment and other societal impacts.
- We agreed to continue exploring how to more vigorously engage the users and other stakeholders in e-accessibility issues.

