

**Articles of Association for the
Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility**



1st Edition 06-09*

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1 Preamble

The “Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility” is the result of the EC- funded project “E-Learn-ViP”. This project was funded by the “E-Learning” strand of the European Commission and was carried out in the period from March 2005 to August 2006.

This project was carried out by the following companies:

Berufsförderungswerk Düren gGmbH, Germany (project-coordinator and -promoter)
ARLA Instituutti, Finland
Berufsförderungsinstitut Steiermark, Austria
Berufsförderungswerk Halle gGmbH, Germany
Institutet for Blinde og Svagsynede, Denmark
Institut Montecaire, France
VISIO, The Netherlands

Except of the bfy Steiermark all partners belong to the ***European Network for Visually Impaired’s Training, Education and Research*** (ENVITER)

2 Period of validity

These present Articles of Association have intermediate validity and are intended to establish an operational status for the “Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility”. To guarantee the administrative and personnel infrastructure for a successful start-up of this consortium, the ENVITER Network is supposed to take a leading role during the first two years in the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*.

The **validity** of these Articles of Association **will end at April 30th, 2008**. During a constitutional conference of the “Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility” within the 1st quarter 2008, new Articles of Association have to be confirmed by the responsible organs of this consortium.

3 Name, registered office

The Consortium bears the name:

“CONSORTIUM FOR E-LEARNING ACCESSIBILITY”

The official textual abbreviation is:

“C4EA”.

The official trade mark is:



The registered office of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility* is located at: Berufsförderungswerk Düren gGmbH, Karl-Arnold-Straße 132-134, 52349 Düren, Germany

The legal domicile is: 52349 Düren, Germany

The Head Office is located at:

The official working language of the consortium is English

4 Purpose and aims of the consortium

6.2 Purpose

1. The *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility* is a non-profit oriented affiliation of companies and organisations, which are actively working in the field of ICT-supported learning and aspire the aim to improve the access to ICT-supported learning services- and products, for people with special accessibility-requirements.
2. The *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility* acts as counselling service provider for developer and end-user of ICT supported services and -products considering all aspects of establishing and improving accessibility to these services and products for people with special requirements.
3. The *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility* understand itself as open consortium which allows all entities, mentioned under chapter 5 to contribute its expertise concerning ICT-supported learning and accessibility requirements.
4. The *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility* cooperates with any interested organisation and/or interest group which care about the accessibility and quality aspects of ICT-supported learning for people with special accessibility requirements.

6.3 Aims

The *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility* has the following main aims:

1. to monitor the development of ICT-supported education, methodology, teaching-media and –services, considering accessibility aspects,
2. to develop guidelines to establish and improve the accessibility to ICT-supported learning services and systems,
3. to develop up-to-date rating criteria's for ICT-supported learning services and systems,

4. to evaluate ICT-supported teaching and learning services and -systems concerning their accessibility,
5. to evaluate available ICT-supported teaching and learning systems and -services corresponding to their accessibility,
6. to educate system developers of ICT-supported products to develop their products accessible corresponding to the C4EA guidelines,
7. to promote the C4EA aims and products amongst stakeholders of ICT-supported education, system-developers, and other potential target groups and organisations of ICT-supported learning.

6.4 Activities

1. Evaluation of technological and educational development in ICT-supported learning
2. Sensitizing system developers and service-providers of E-Learning –products and –services considering accessibility
3. Evaluating released E-Learning –products and –services considering accessibility according to the actual developed C4EA standards
4. Training of system developers of E-Learning products according to the actual developed C4EA accessibility guidelines
5. Carrying out and supporting research about ICT-supported learning for people with special accessibility requirements
6. Carrying out public information activities, like conferences and participation on E-Learning for E-Learning developers, -service providers and end user, to promote the subject of accessibility and the activities of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*.

5 Membership

A membership in the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility* is possible for all legal entities, which are in their business field involved with ICT-supported learning and agree to comply with these articles of association of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*. A membership of single persons is not intended.

All members are obliged to contribute their experience to improve the work of the consortium and promote the idea of accessibility of E-Learning products and –services according to these articles of association and the accessibility guidelines of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*. All members agree to act and cooperate according to these Articles of Association and the Rules of Operation of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*.

6.2 Forms of membership

In the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*, three different forms of Membership are provided:

1. [Foundation Members](#)
2. [Operational Members](#)
3. [Supporting Members](#)

5.2.1 *Foundation Members*

5.2.1.1 Characterisation

The "Foundation Members" establish the administrative and infrastructural platform for the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility* by providing infrastructure and necessary administrative personal and facilities for the operative work of the consortium. A membership as "Foundation Members" is only intended for the companies which participated in the "E-Learn-ViP" project and applied for a membership in the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility* as Foundation Members.

5.2.1.2 Rights and obligation of Foundation Members

The Foundation Members's are represented within the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility* by each of their directors/managers, or one nominated representative. Foundation Members's possess active and passive voting rights within the general and extraordinary consortium meetings. Each Foundation Members has one vote within these meetings. Each Foundation Members has the privilege to act in its country as "National Head-Office" of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*. Each Foundation Members has the option to abandon its privilege as National Head-Office.

Each Foundation Members nominates to the consortium one or more staff members to work within one or more of the several working groups of the consortium for a defined amount of personal hours. This amount of personal hours will be regulated within the "Rules of Operation for the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*". These Rules of Operation will be defined and can be altered by simple majority during the regular general meeting in each year or any Extraordinary Meeting.

Every two years the Foundation Members determine the "President of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*" by a secret election with simple majority.

5.2.2 *Operational Members*

5.2.2.1 Characterisation of Operational Members

The "Operational Members" are the key members of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*. These members carry out the operational work within the consortium. As Operational Member can be approved any legal entities, which are active in their business-segment with:

- the development of E-Learning-systems, or
- ICT-supported education or
- representing the accessibility interests of people with special accessibility-requirements
- representing as organisation the interests of system-developers or service-providers in the field of ICT-based learning
- developing standards and/or regulations about ICT-supported learning

5.2.2.2 Rights and obligation of Operational Members

Operational Members are represented within the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility* by one nominated staff member. Operational Members possess active and passive voting rights within the general and extraordinary consortium meetings.

These voting rights are delegated by the member institute to one staff member of the Operational Member. Each Operational Member has one vote within the above mentioned meetings. Each Operational Member has the privilege to act as official “C4EA Test- and Training Centre”, if the institute provides about the specific expertise and technological infrastructure concerning the target groups with special accessibility requirements. In this function the Operational Members are permitted to:

1. Evaluate E-Learning products and –services in accordance to the C4EA guidelines and regulations
2. Certificate in accordance to the C4EA guidelines and regulations, accessible E-Learning products and –services with the C4EA Accessibility label
3. Carry out training courses in accordance to the C4EA training curricula and regulations
4. Carry out regional C4EA information conferences and trade fairs in cooperation with the National C4EA Head Office.

Each Operational Member nominates to the consortium one or more staff members who will work within one or more of the several Working Groups of the consortium for a defined amount of personal hours. This amount of personal hours will be regulated within the “Rules of Operation for the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*”.

5.2.3 *Supporting Members*

5.2.3.1 Characterisation of Supporting Members

As “Supporting Member” can be approved any legal entities, which are active in their business-segment as mentioned for the Operational Members in chapter 5.2.2.1 and want to contribute their experience to the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility* without regular working within the C4EA-Workgroups.

5.2.3.2 Rights and obligation of Supporting Members

Supporting Members have the privilege:

- to participate in the Meetings of the Workgroups
- to participate in the General- and Extraordinary Meetings
- to receive the pre-releases of documents and products, developed by the consortium
- of reduced participation fees of public conferences, carried out by the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*
- to receive discount for system evaluation and training courses, carried out by C4EA Training- and Test Centres or the National Head Offices

the Supporting Members have neither active or passive voting rights in the General- and/or Extraordinary Meetings.

The Supporting Members have to contribute an annual membership fee, which depends on the legal status of the Supporting Member. The amount of this membership fee is decided at the annual General Meeting and will be documented in the Rules of Operation.

6.3 Application and approval of membership

Every legal entity mentioned under the chapters 5.2.1.1, 5.2.2.1 and 5.2.3.1 can apply for a membership. The interested company/organisation has to use the formal application form of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility* and send it via postal mail to the [Head Office](#) of C4EA. This application form must be originally undersigned by an authorized representative of the applying candidate.

During the following Board Meeting the Administrative Board checks the eligibility of the applicant. If no objections about the eligibility occur, the applicant will get the status of an intermediate membership. The applicant will be informed by mail about this approval or a rejection and its reason by mail.

At the following General Meeting all present members with voting privileges decide by election with simple majority if the interim member is approved to the status as regular member.

In the invitation/agenda for this General Meeting the applicants and their applied form of membership has to be announced.

6.4 Termination of membership

5.4.1 Regular termination

Every member of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility* can terminate its membership to the end of each calendar year. To terminate the membership the director/manager of the concerned company has to inform the president of the Administrative Board by a written notice until September 30th of the present year. The termination will be valid due to December 31st of the actual year.

5.4.2 Termination by exclusion

An exclusion of a member might take place as a final reaction of the Administrative Board, if a member:

- a) doesn't contribute its membership fees or workpackages for over 1 year, from the point of it's due
- b) violates it's duties or obligations according to C4EA
- c) violates the rules documented in these Articles of Association and/or the Rules of Operations of C4EA

If one of the above mentioned situations occur, and negotiations with the director or general manager of the concerning member organisation aren't successful, at least one director or general manager of C4EA has to apply the exclusion of the concerning organisation at the Administrative Board. This has to be done in written form, by mentioning the reasons. The director or general manager of the accused organisation has the opportunity to explain the situation to the Administrative Board members and find a common agreement about the situation. If no agreement can be achieved among the Administrative Board members and the concerning organisation, the Administrative Board and exclusively the directors of all other member organisation, decide in a secret vote, if the concerning organisation will be excluded. This decision will be made by a simple majority. If the exclusion of membership is decided, the exclusion will be instantly valid. The director of the excluded member organisation will be informed from the Administrative Board about the exclusion in

written form. Membership fees of excluded Supporting Members won't be paid back.

6 The organs of the Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility

6.2 The Administrative Board

The Administrative Board is the superior organ of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*. It represents the consortium officially to the public and is responsible for the official appearance and the strategic orientation of the consortium. The Administrative Board coordinates the internal and external communication and collaboration between all members. The main task of the Administrative Board is to promote and disseminate the aims and philosophy of the consortium to concerned stakeholders and multipliers in the field of ICT-supported learning.

All members of the Administrative Board have to be employed staff members from Operational or Foundation Members of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*. If the employment of a board member ends within one of the above mentioned member organisations, a new board member has to be nominated within 3 months.

6.2.1 The President of the Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility

The President of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility* is the highest official representative of the consortium. In this function he is responsible for:

1. strategic orientation and development of the consortium
2. management of the internal administration
3. promotion, marketing and external appearance of the consortium
4. finances and budget of the consortium
5. nomination of the Workgroup Coordinator in a two years cycle

He is nominated by the Foundation Members for a two years cycle by election with simple majority.

6.2.2 The Workgroup Coordinator

The Workgroup Coordinator is mainly responsible for the coordination of the operational work and development of the consortium. He is also the official delegate/deputy of the President of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*.

The Workgroup Coordinator is in this function responsible for:

1. management of the internal cooperation and workflow between Workgroups and the Head Office
2. inducement of the official release and publication of official documents and products
3. inducement of the dissemination of new and updated documents to the Web-Server and the National Head-Offices of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*.

He is nominated by the President of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility* for a two year cycle.

6.2.3 The Technical Advisor

The Technical Advisor supports the Workgroup Coordinator in coordinating the operational work within the Workgroups. Furthermore he is responsible to evaluate and survey the ICT- and education- sector considering new developments and trends which might be important for the work of the consortium and improve the ICT-supported learning for the target group. He is also the official delegate/deputy of the Workgroup Coordinator.

The Technical Advisor is elected during the General Meeting by the members with voting privileges for a two year cycle.

6.3 The Workgroups

The Workgroups are the core cells of the operational work within the consortium. The number and the different subjects of the Workgroups depend on the technological development in ICT and ICT-supported learning.

6.3.1 Tasks of the Workgroups

Generally the Workgroups have the following tasks:

1. maintain, improve and develop guidelines and rating systems for accessible ICT-supported systems
2. develop courses for system developers, stakeholders and E-learning coaches to develop and realize accessible ICT-supported products and courses

6.3.2 Personnel and administrative constellation of the Workgroups

The personnel constellation of the Workgroups is depending on the subject and the required effort. All Foundation and Operational Members nominate one or more staff members for working in the Workgroups. In which Workgroup the nominated staff members are active, depends on their professional background and competences.

The amount of total working time the members have to contribute with their staff members corresponds to the valid Rules of Operation. The attestation of accomplished working time of staff members, is in the own responsibility of each member.

One nominated staff members can be delegated to a maximum of two Workgroups.

The work within the Workgroup can be carried out via online conferences and virtual meetings.

The work in each Workgroup is coordinated by a Workgroup Manager.

6.3.2.1 The Workgroup Manager

The Workgroup Manager coordinates the workflow within his Work Group and communicates the results to the Workgroup Coordinator and the Managers of the other Workgroups. In this function the Workgroup Manager is the link between Workgroup and Administrative Board.

The Workgroup Managers are elected during the General Meeting by simple majority

for a two year cycle.

A Workgroup Manager can be responsible for only one Workgroup.

6.4 The General Meeting

The General Meeting is the main organ for all members to influence the work of the consortium and determine its future development.

The Foundation Members and Operational Members decide during the annual General Meetings about:

- Status and impact of the common work, corresponding to the reports of the Board of the Consortium
- Approval of new members
- Strategies and development for improvement of the common work
- Promotion and Marketing strategies
- number, aim and constitution of the workgroups of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*
- the Workgroup Managers by election in a two year cycle
- the “Technical Advisor” by election in a two year cycle
- the alteration of the “Rules of Operation” corresponding to the technological development of ICT-supported learning and the strategic and organisational development and requirements of the consortium.

6.4.1 Invitation and agenda to/of General Meeting

Each regular member or applicant has to be invited via electronic or conventional mail to the following General Meeting of the consortium. This invitation must be scheduled at least within 31 days before the General Meeting is carried out. Element of this invitation is the Agenda for the meeting.

Each regular member can recommend alterations or additions to this agenda with a deadline of 7 full working days before the General Meeting is carried out.

7 Facilities of the Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility

The different facilities of the consortiums are provided with different privileges to:

1. Educate customers and clients
2. Certify Customers and clients in different levels
3. Approve and certify other companies as *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility* –facilities
4. Release official publications and products of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*

To enable an efficient and transparent work within the Consortium, it is organized in a strictly hierarchical tree-structure (see Figure 1).

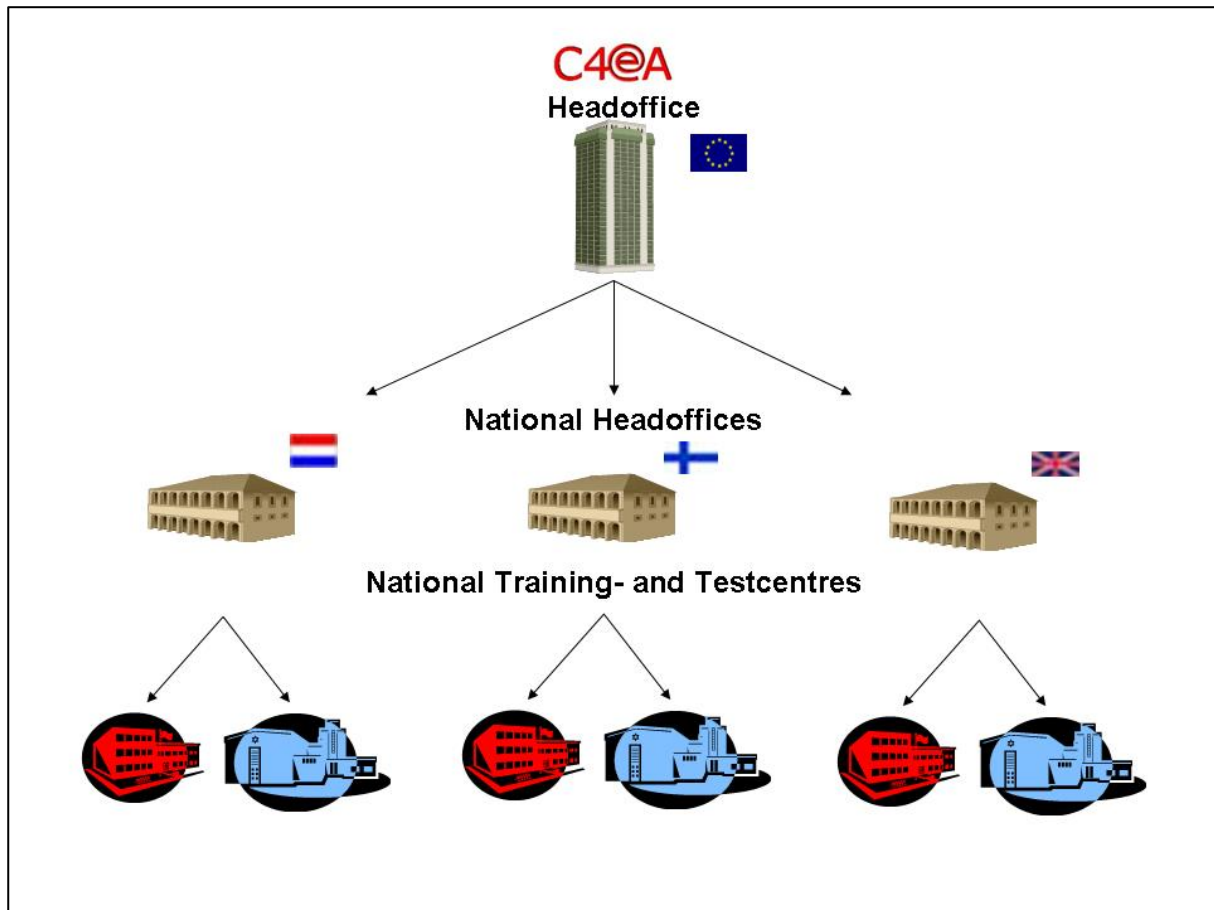


Figure 1 Organizational structure

6.2 Head Office

The Head Office of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility* is legally located at:

The practical work of the Head Office is affiliated to the regular member, which employs the President of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*.

The Head Office has following tasks and privileges:

1. Release and publish of official documents with standards of the consortium
2. Release and publish of official PR documents for the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*
3. Approval of official training courses of the consortium
4. Maintaining the database with published accessible ICT-supported learning products and –services
5. Approving National Head Offices
6. Carrying out transnational PR activities (e.g.: fairs, conferences) on behalf of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*.

The Head Office is the direct contact point for all National Head Offices of the consortium.

The Head Office can also operate as National Head Office and Training- and Test Centre in the located country.

6.3 National Head Offices

It is proposed to provide one National Head Office in each member country. The National Head-Offices are the relay between Head Office and the national Training- and Test centres. The National Head-Offices are the official representatives of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility* in the specific country and operate as direct contact point for potential clients considering all C4EA subjects.

The National Head Offices have following tasks and privileges:

1. Release and publish of official documents with standards of the consortium in the specific local language(s)
2. Release and publish of official PR documents for the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility* in the specific local language(s)
3. Carrying out official C4EA training courses for staff members from National Training- and Test Centres
4. Approving National Training- and Test Centres
5. Carrying out national PR activities (e.g.: fairs, conferences) on behalf of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*
6. Monitoring the National Training- and Test Centres concerning adherence of C4EA standards

To receive the status as National Head Office, the following prerequisites must be complied:

1. There exists no National Head Office in the specific country yet
2. The member must formally apply for the nomination as National Head Office
3. The applying member must at least have the status as a regular Operational Member
4. The applying member must provide about sufficient infrastructure, qualified staff and experience in the business field of ICT-supported learning for people with disabilities

A National Head-Office can also operate as Training- and Test Centre.

6.4 National Training- and Test Centres

These centres enable a decentralization of the C4EA services for potential clients in all countries.

The National Training- and Test Centres have following tasks and privileges:

1. Carrying out official C4EA training courses for staff members from system developers and education organisation
2. Testing ICT- supported learning systems- and products, corresponding to the Accessibility standards of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*
3. Pricing of training courses and system tests corresponding to national and/or regional situation
4. Carrying out regional PR activities (e.g.: fairs, conferences) in accordance with the National Head-Office

To receive the status as National Training- and Test Centre, the following prerequisites must be complied:

1. The member must formally apply for the nomination as National Training- and Test Centre
2. The applying member must at least have the status as a regular Operational Member
3. The applying member must provide about sufficient infrastructure, qualified staff and experience in the business field of ICT-supported learning for people with disabilities

8 Finances

The *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility* operates as non-profit organisation and does not aspire commercial interests. Generated revenues will be exclusively used to maintain the operability of the consortium and will be expended only for occurring general costs like:

1. PR activities
2. Costs for publishing official documents about C4EA standards
3. Costs for meetings and conferences

Staff costs are not eligible to be compensated by generated revenues.

Revenues can be generated by:

1. Membership fees of Supporting Members
2. Donation of Sponsors
3. Fixed contributions from Training- and Test Centres for carried out courses and system tests
4. Participation fees of conferences and fairs

All revenues are transferred to the central bank account of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility*.

The President of the *Consortium for E-Learning Accessibility* reports about the financial situation during each General Meeting.