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English version

Accessibility and usability of the built environment - Conformity assessment

Accessibilité et utilisabilité de l'environnement bâti -
Évaluation de la conformité

Zugänglichkeit und Nutzbarkeit gebauter Umgebung -
Konformitätsbewertung

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European foreword

This document (CEN/TR 17622:2021) has been prepared by the Joint Technical Committee CEN-CENELEC/ JTC 11 “Accessibility in the built environment”, the secretariat of which is held by UNE.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. CEN and CENELEC shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

This document has been prepared under Mandate M/420 given to CEN, CENELEC and ETSI by the European Commission and the European Free Trade Association in support of European accessibility requirements for public procurement in the built environment.

Any feedback and questions on this document should be directed to the users’ national standards body/national committee. A complete listing of these bodies can be found on the CEN and CENELEC websites.

Introduction

Conformity assessment, also known as compliance assessment, is any activity to determine, directly or indirectly, that a process, product, or service meets relevant technical standards and fulfils relevant requirements. Conformity assessment activities may include testing, surveillance, inspection, auditing, certification, registration, etc.

In the built environment, accessibility conformity assessment refers to the suitability of accessibility in buildings (complete or part of them), or in urban public spaces or elements or areas thereof. These spaces may be in the project, construction or post occupancy phase.

This accessibility conformity assessment in the built environment also has a particularity that characterizes it even more: it is carried out on functional requirements, unlike other assessments that are made directly on parametric considerations. Thus, the same functional requirement can be assessed differently in one country and in another, both being valid, depending on the requirements of each country and how that specific functional requirement is interpreted. The functional requirement is defined in the text of EN 17210, whereas the specific parameters (taken from CEN/TR 17621 or a national standard / regulation) are tools to specify the evidence, when a numerical value is necessary.

This document assesses the compliance or conformity with the functional requirements in EN 17210 *Accessibility and usability of the built environment – Functional requirements*. For this, it will be necessary to use EN 17210 to introduce the necessary requirements in the tables, according to the specific scope of the assessment that is going to be carried out.

The technical performance criteria and specifications to be applied to measure the level of conformity with the functional requirements in EN 17210 are provided in CEN/TR 17621 as examples of a way or ways in which the functional requirements in EN 17210 could be fulfilled or, alternatively, National Standards or Regulations may be used.

In accessibility conformity assessment, the training and experience of the auditor (who may rely on experts if necessary) and the participation of users in all stages of assessment (especially the most impacted groups, such as persons with visible and non-visible impairments) are essential.

1 Scope

This document provides criteria to assess conformity of the built environment with the functional requirements and recommendations described in EN 17210, *Accessibility and usability of the built environment – Functional requirements*, regardless of whether self-declaration, second-party attestation or third-party certification is requested.

This document provides guidance on how and when accessibility and usability of the built environment have to be considered throughout all stages of the building process, including feasibility, design, construction, completion and post occupancy. It is also applicable for refurbishment or adaptation of existing buildings.

CEN/TR 17621 *Accessibility and usability of the built environment - Technical performance criteria and specifications*, provides examples of a way or ways in which the functional requirements in EN 17210 could be fulfilled. Alternatively, National Standards or Regulations can determine the technical performance criteria and specifications to fulfil the functional requirements in EN 17210.

NOTE 1 Design for All, Inclusive Design and Universal Design share a similar inclusive design philosophy. "Universal Design" means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. "Universal Design" does not exclude assistive options or devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed.

NOTE 2 Terms such as "design for all", "inclusive Design", "universal design", "accessible design", "barrier-free design", "inclusive design" and "transgenerational design" are often used interchangeably with the same meaning.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

EN 17210, *Accessibility and usability of the built environment - Functional requirements*

EN ISO/IEC 17000, *Conformity assessment - Vocabulary and general principles (ISO/IEC 17000)*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in EN 17210 apply. For the specific terminology of conformity assessment, the terms and definitions given in EN ISO/IEC 17000 apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>

4 Accessibility in European public procurement

The inclusion of the requirement "accessibility" in European Union public procurement procedures aims to improve accessibility for a wide range of users including people with disabilities by using a harmonised European approach in the domain of built environment (Mandate 420), which is relevant for this Technical Report. Such a European approach will help the development of a single market for the design and construction of an accessible built environment without affecting national regulations and standards of European Member States. It will also help all users of the built environment because accessibility requirements of persons with disabilities and other users with accessibility requirements are very similar across Europe.