

EU40's interactive workshop **App challenge for societal change** on **December 2nd** at the **European Parliament**

What is the impact of mobile applications for people with disabilities and elderly? The **App challenge for societal change** debate aims at showcasing that **mobile applications can have a positive societal impact**.

It is estimated that **one billion people worldwide live with a disability** and 80% of them live in developing countries. Therefore **access to easy to use and affordable technology that makes people's lives easier** is pivotal in making them overcome the barriers posed by their condition.

The *UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities* takes place today and we took the opportunity to have a stimulating debate about **empowering disabled and elderly people with the help of accessible technology** specifically designed for them. We also showcased two successful examples of **mobile applications with positive societal impact**:

- **RogerVoice**, an app enabling deaf people to make phone calls: more on <http://www.rogervoice.com> and
- **Vivago**, an app enabling elderly and disabled people to take care of their health from the comfort of their home: more on <http://www.vivago.com>

The *interactive workshop* organised by EU40, the network of young MEPs, in collaboration with the European Disability Forum and the Application Developers Alliance was **hosted by MEP Philippe de Backer** and took place on **December 2nd from 09.00 to 10.30 at the European Parliament**.

Zoran Stančič, Deputy Director-General, DG CONNECT, European Commission, said: "I was happy to see that the debate did not only address people with disabilities, but the societal change that can help the integration and participation of all people at risk of exclusion."

MEP Philippe de Backer, the host of the debate, stressed that "The inclusion of persons with disabilities should be high on the political agenda."

"When accessible, mobile devices and apps are recognised as an enabling factor for persons with disabilities to live independently and participate in all aspects of life", stated **Alejandro Moledo**, New Technologies & Innovation Officer, European Disability Forum.

Olivier Jeannel, CEO RogerVoice thinks that "The use case for accessibility goes beyond niche segments. The democratisation of technology means everyone can now contribute."

"Mobile health is the biggest technology breakthrough of our time which will bring our society towards a radical change. Around 185 million EU citizens are expected to become regular mHealth users by 2017", said **Catriona Meehan**, Director of EU Policy and Government Relations, Application Developers Alliance.

"It is key for the future of EU that we focus on solutions helping the lives of elderly people and people with disabilities. EU 40's interactive workshop is greatly needed to bring this issue up. ", says **Maria Lavonen** CEO of Vivago Ltd.

Steve Tyler, Head of Solutions, Strategy and Planning, RNIB Solutions (Royal National Institute of

Blind People) shared his authentic experience with the audience and declared that “What we want is access to what everyone has and everybody is taking for granted. For the future, I just want to be able to use the washing machine like everybody else.”

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About **EU40**

EU40 is the network of young Members of the European Parliament. EU40's mission is to serve young Members under the age of 40 and strengthen their role inside the European Parliament by connecting them to each other and with young politicians across Europe, while offering them opportunities for publicity and political interaction. EU40 thereby serves as an interlocutor, creating synergies between all connected to the network.

More on eu40.eu and members: <http://www.eu40.eu>

About the **European Disability Forum (EDF)**

The European Disability Forum is an independent NGO that represents the interests of 80 million Europeans with disabilities. EDF is the only European platform run by persons with disabilities and their families.

EDF was created in 1996 by its member organisations to make sure decisions concerning disabled people are taken with and by disabled people.

More on EDF: <http://www.edf-feph.org>

About the **Application Developers Alliance**

The Apps Alliance is a non-profit global membership organization that supports developers as creators, innovators, and entrepreneurs. We promote the continued growth of the industry and advocate on behalf of our members on public policy and industry issues. The mission of the Alliance is to serve as an advocate for developers, support the industry's continued growth, and promote innovation.

More on the Application Developers Alliance: <http://www.appdevelopersalliance.org>