Standards and Accessibility – How to Make Accessibility Solutions Available to All

Matthias Schneider

Chairman of ETSI's Technical Committee on Human Factors

What I will talk about

- Introduction to ETSI

- The role of standards for UI design and accessibility

- Standards and regulation

- Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services

- Examples for accessibility requirements

- Concluding remarks

ETSI at a glance

- ICT standards organization, based in France, with global reach

- At the forefront of emerging technologies: NFV, IoT, smart cities, ITS, cybersecurity

- Global membership:

  - Over 800 organizations: large and small private companies, research entities, academia, government and public organizations

  - From 66 countries

  - 5 continents

  - 25% SMEs

- Direct participation: consensus based

- More than 35 000 free publications

ETSI at a glance

- 120 Secretariat members

  - Supporting around 7000 industry experts/year

- More than 90 partnerships

- Global network of alliances (regional/technical)

  - 3GPP: global partnership project for cellular telecommunications network technologies

  - oneM2M: global partnership project for Machine to Machine Communications and the Internet of Things

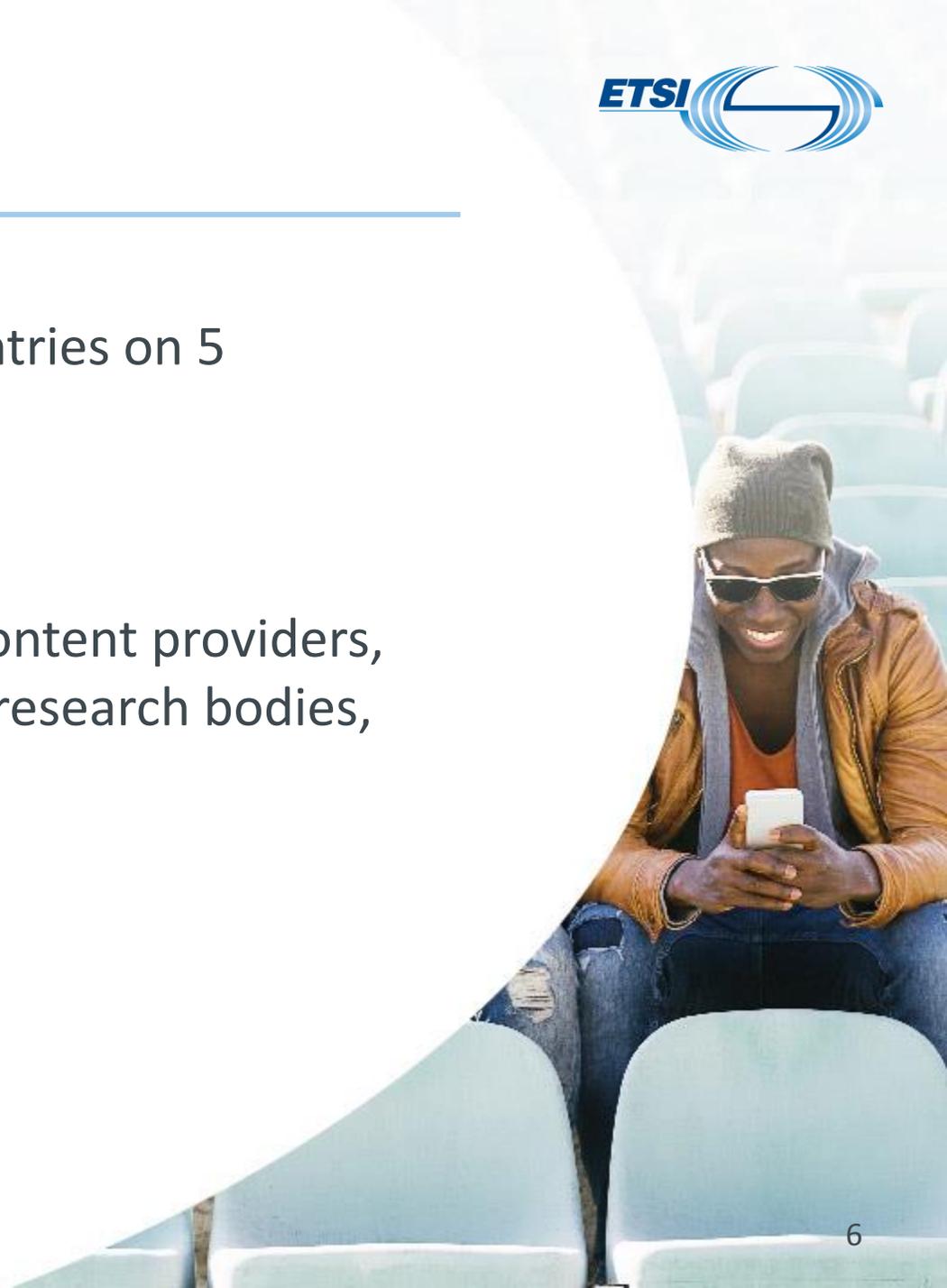- Major focus on Interoperability: Center for Testing and Interoperability

ETSI in Europe

- Recognized by the European Union as an official European Standards Organization (ESO) under Regulation 1025/2012.

- Created in 1988 to respond to particular needs in Europe in support of the single European market

- We produce standards for

  - European industry

  - To support European Union and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) regulation and legislation

- Officially recognised at EU/EFTA and governmental levels

- We contribute ICT radio frequency requirements to the European co-ordination process

- We produce Harmonised Standards including those supporting the Web Accessibility Directive

Membership

❖ Over 800 organizations, big & small, from 68 countries on 5 continents

❖ Direct participation in our work

❖ Manufacturers, network operators, service and content providers, national administrations, ministries, universities, research bodies, consultancies, user organizations

A powerful and dynamic mix of **skills, resources and ambitions**

The role of Standards for UI Design and Accessibility

➢ Standards are important tools for the communication between

- ➢ Manufacturers, service providers and App designers on one side (the "Industry")
- ➢ Users, procurement people, lobby groups, regulators (the "Users")

➢ Standards define the requirements of users with accessibility needs.

➢ Standards allow the industry to rely on a fixed set of requirements to develop marketable and economically viable solutions to address accessibility issues.

➢ Standards will always define (only) a subset of the optimal accessibility solutions.

➢ Harmonized standards can be used for conformance testing of products and services – regulatory use of standardized specifications.

EN 301 549: Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services

➢ Originally developed for public procurement purposes.

➢ Supported by ETSI/CEN/Cenelec and developed by a Joint Working Group of the three SDOs.

➢ Now re-published as a harmonized standard supporting the implementation of the Web Accessibility Directive – in line with the W3C's WCAG 2.1

➢ Still directed towards public sector – but with a huge influence on private industry as well.

Two examples for application areas

➢ Real time texting: RTT

   ➢ Complex due to the strong relation to infrastructure and legacy devices

   ➢ Solvable "in principle" but no unique and optimal solution

   ➢ Replaced by newer texting approaches?

➢ Mobile Apps and Website design

   ➢ Requirements imposed by the WAD

   ➢ Compliant with WCAG 2.1

   ➢ At this time only for the public sector but broader applicability

Concluding Remarks

❖ Standards are important for a broad dissemination of accessibility solutions.

❖ Standards can avoid "island solutions".

❖ Standards help keeping the industry partners competitive.

❖ Accessibility standards are "good for everyone" – for the broadest range of possible users and for the manufacturers and designers of products and services.

❖ Standards have regulatory function – they can be used to ensure adherence to legal requirements.