

The Brussels Effect in San Jose: SaaS Accessibility Standards 2026

As Silicon Valley prepares for the European Accessibility Act (EAA), the ripple effect is transforming how software is built globally. Exporting to the EU from California now requires radical inclusivity.

June 2025 Enforcement

2026 Market Standard

Why San Jose SaaS Must Adapt

The **Brussels Effect** describes a phenomenon where the European Union's regulations effectively set the global bar. Because the EU is a 450-million-person market, San Jose SaaS providers find it more efficient to adopt EU standards (like EAA and GDPR) across their entire codebase rather than maintaining separate products.

By 2026, accessibility will not just be a legal hurdle—it will be a competitive baseline. Non-compliant software risks being pulled from the EU market, leading to massive revenue losses and brand degradation.

Local Industry Impact:

The San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce (SVEDA) highlights that over 40% of Silicon Valley's tech exports are directly affected by shifting EU regulatory frameworks.

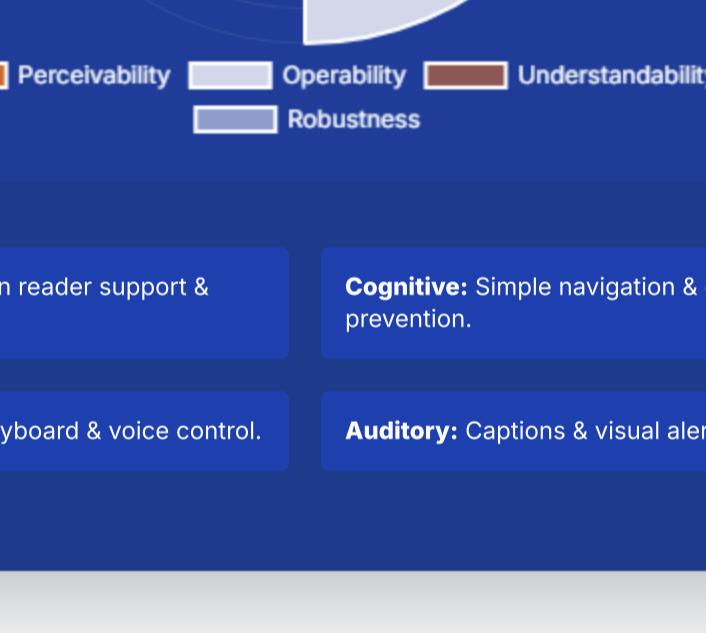
US SOFTWARE EXPORTS TO EU (PROJECTED)



Exporting software to the EU remains a primary revenue driver for California tech firms, necessitating compliance.

The 4 Pillars of EAA Compliance

To maintain EU market access by 2026, your SaaS must satisfy these core accessibility requirements:



Visual: Screen reader support & contrast.

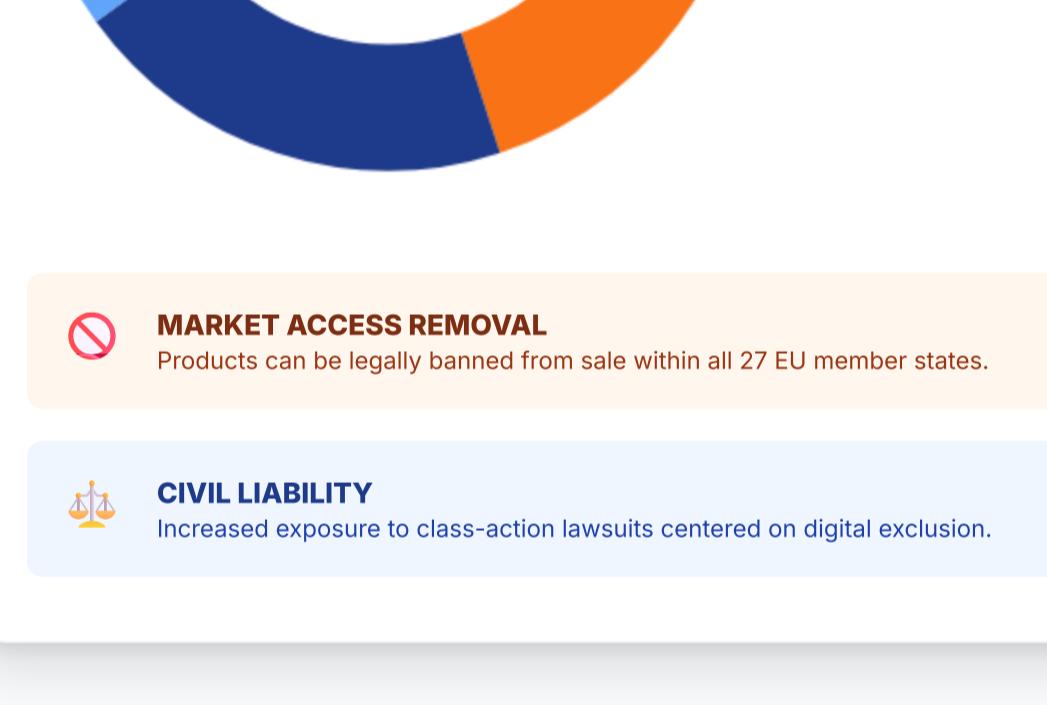
Cognitive: Simple navigation & error prevention.

Motor: Full keyboard & voice control.

Auditory: Captions & visual alerts.

The Risk Landscape

San Jose firms ignoring the EAA face more than just fines. The 2026 regulatory environment includes strict enforcement mechanisms.



MARKET ACCESS REMOVAL

Products can be legally banned from sale within all 27 EU member states.

CIVIL LIABILITY

Increased exposure to class-action lawsuits centered on digital exclusion.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does EAA affect my B2B SaaS in San Jose?

Yes. While EAA focuses on products and services for consumers, many B2B platforms used for e-commerce, banking, or travel fall under the directive if they impact the end-user experience in the EU.

What is the specific 2026 requirement?

By June 2025, enforcement begins. By 2026, any software without a detailed Accessibility Statement and WCAG 2.1 AA compliance will be considered high-risk for EU trade.

Can we just block EU users to avoid EAA?

While technically possible, for most San Jose companies, the loss of the EU market (the world's largest single trading block) is economically devastating compared to the cost of remediation.

Who provides local EAA certification?

Compliance is self-declared but must be verifiable. Working with local agencies like KHA Creation can help ensure your technical stack meets both US ADA and EU EAA standards.

GLOBAL REGULATORY RESOURCES		
RESOURCE NAME	RELEVANCE	LINK
EU Accessibility Act (Official)	Full legal text of Directive 2019/882	View Source
W3C WCAG Guidelines	Technical standard for EAA compliance	View Source
Department of Commerce	US Export standards to Europe	Trade.gov