

## **Sign Language Legislation in Europe - Summary**

The book 'Sign Language Legislation in Europe' will be a comprehensive study of sign language legislation in the European Union. A book like this has become necessary as more and more European countries are passing legislation relating to sign language. A full overview of all the countries has thus far not been published. Although an attempt was made by Timmermans in 2005 (The status of sign languages in Europe, Council of Europe Publishing), the author did not claim completeness due to a number of issues, such as language barriers. The present book will cover every EU country and analyse each piece of legislation in its original language. It aims to become a resource for Deaf Studies researchers, lawyers, and others interested in sign language and minority language legislation but also for those wanting to create and improve sign language legislation in their home countries.

The book will first give a short overview over the EUD (European Union of the Deaf) as the author of the work. Then, background information on sign languages will follow, ensuring a reader without prior knowledge of sign languages or Deaf communities will be able to fully comprehend the subject.

The concept of sign language as a Human Right will be explored in the next chapter. This is based on the notion that sign languages are the mother tongue of Deaf people, even if they might not learn the language through the mother. The chapter will also include information on Human Rights in general, as well as minority rights and the relatively new concept of Linguistic Human Rights (LHR) developed by Tove Skutnabb-Kangas. This theoretical concept states that LHRs are language rights that are needed to guarantee basic Human Rights.

Sign language legislation does not only exist at the national level, the UN as well as the EU and the Council of Europe have issued a number of documents relating to sign language. The next chapter will cover these supra-national resolutions and conventions to then lead onto the different pieces of legislation at national level. It will explain that there are different ways to recognise a sign language. This can be within a country's Constitution, in language legislation, in disability legislation, or in educational and other legislation. The book will not be organised by country but by kind of legislation to make comparison easier. For completeness, any countries not having sign language legislation in place (yet) will be mentioned at the end of the chapter.

As the recognition of sign language is closely linked to the provision of interpreting services, a chapter on sign language interpreting will be added. It will include general information on interpreting as well as current information on the interpreting situation in Europe.

The book will also include an appendix with all the relevant pieces of legislation in their original language. This will be important for anyone wanting to research and work with the law where a translation would not be sufficient. However, in the running text, excerpts will be translated to facilitate reading and understanding.

Overall, this book will be the first of its kind to give a comprehensive overview of sign language legislation in Europe, hoping to inspire its readers to continue fighting for sign language recognition in every country.