

# **EUROPEAN UNION OF THE DEAF**

## ***MINUTES of the 21st General Assembly Meeting***

**13th-14th May 2006**

**Vienna, Austria**

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## MINUTES

### **1. Welcoming address**

Helga STEVENS (HS) opened the 21<sup>st</sup> EUD General Assembly (GA) at 9.00h. She welcomed all delegates and observers present and thanked the EUD staff for preparing for this meeting.

### **2. Introduction of Chair for the General Assembly**

HS informed participants that the GA would be chaired by Jeff McWHINNEY (JMcW). Previous GAs had requested that the EUD's GA would be chaired by an independent person. Since EUD was very happy with the way the 2005 meeting in Luxembourg had gone, it was decided to ask JMcW once again to undertake this task.

### **3. Introduction of new Executive Director: Mairead O'LEARY**

HS informed the GA that Mairead O'LEARY (MOL) had started to work for EUD in January 2006 as interim director for the year. The contract with the previous director was terminated in November 2005.

### **4. Roll call**

#### *4.1 Delegates:*

#### ***Full members:***

Helene JARMER and Günter ROISS (ÖGLB-Austria), Filip VERSTRAETE and Bernard FLEURUS (Fevlado and FFSB-Belgium), Antonis ANTONIOY and Thakis TIMOTHEOU (Cyprus Deaf Federation-Cyprus), Asger BERGMANN and Dan OLVHØJ (DDL-Denmark), Liisa KAUPPINEN (FAD-Finland), Belkacem SAIFI (FNSF-France), Thomas WORSECK and Alexander VON MEYENN (DGB-Germany), Spyros ALEXANDRIDIS (HFD-Greece), Adam KOSA and Gergely TAPOLCZAI (SINOSZ-Hungary), Kristinn BJARNASON (Iceland), Sebastiano MANCIAGLI and Armando PEDULLA (ENS-Italy), Geraldine FITZGERALD and Anthony MOORE (IDS-Ireland), Edgars VORSLOVS (LNS-Latvia), Josy HOFFMANN and Jacques BRUCH (VGSL-Luxembourg), Dorianne CALLUS (DPAM-Malta), Monica VERSLUIS (Dovenschap - the Netherlands), Hanne Berge KVITVAER (Norges Døveforbund - Norway), Kazimierz DIEHL (ZGPZG-Poland), Arlindo OLIVEIRA and Barbara CRESPO (FPAS-Portugal), Andrei FEČ and Jaroslav CEHLÁRIK (SZSP-Slovak Republic), Franc PLANINC and Martin DOBNIKAR (ZDGNS-Slovenia), Amparo MINGUET SOTO and Concepcion DIAZ ROBLEDÓ (CNSE-Spain) and Helga McGILP (BDA-United Kingdom).

Due to festivities for the Sign Language Week ("25 years Sign Language") SDR-Sweden was unable to attend the EUD General Assembly 2006 and sent their apologies to the General Assembly.

#### ***Affiliated members:***

Vasil PANEV (UDB-Bulgaria) and Mihail GRECU (ANSR-Romania)

Affiliated member SGNSCG-Serbia & Montenegro apologized for not being able to attend.

#### *4.2 Observers:*

- **EUDY** : Thomas PHILIP, Minna KATAINEN and Seán HERLIHY
- **WFD** : Knud SØNDERGAARD
- **Austria** : Lukas HUBER, Maximilian MÜLLER and Harald RESCH (ÖGLB-AUSTRIA)
- **Slovenia**: Mojca KLEPEC (ZDGNS)
- **Luxembourg**: Nicole SIBENALER and Fabio GIUSTI (DAAFLUX)
- **Russia**: Dmitry REBROV (All-Russian Society of the Deaf)

#### *4.3 EUD Board:*

Helga STEVENS (EUD President), Kajetana ROCZAN-MACIEJSKA, Berglind STEFANSDOTTIR and Yannis YALLOUROS (Board members). EUD Vice-President Adrien PELLETIER had sent his apologies about not being able to attend this EUD GA.

#### *4.4 EUD Staff:*

Mairead O'LEARY (EUD Director) and Karin VAN PUYENBROECK (EUD Administrator).

#### *4.5 Interpreters:*

Gerdinand WAGENAAR and Joanna MARTIN.

#### *4.6 Members to be voted in:*

- **From Full members to be voted in**: Vanda VAITKUTE and Stasys Petras LINKEVICIUS (LKD-Lithuania), Jutta GSTREIN (SGB-FSS-Switzerland) and Pavel ŠTURM (SNNvCR – Czech Republic)
- **From Affiliated members to be voted in** : Andrija HALEC and Jadranka KRSTIC (HSGN-Croatia)

#### *4.7 EUD Chair:*

Jeff McWHINNEY.

In total 24 Full Members and 2 Affiliated Members were present at the EUD 21st General Assembly. Moreover, 4 more NADs from applicant organisations (3 full + 1 affiliated) and one non-EU country were present in the 2006 General Assembly.

### **5. Ratification of membership applications**

EUD had received three applications for EUD Full membership from Switzerland, Lithuania and Czech Republic and one application for Affiliated membership from Croatia.

BS clarified that all EUD Full members had two voting cards, meaning that each full member NAD has two votes.

The General Assembly voted unanimously in favour of ratifying the decision of the EUD Board to accept the EUD Full membership application of SGB-FSS (Switzerland).

The General Assembly voted unanimously in favour of ratifying the decision of the EUD Board to accept the EUD Full membership application of LKD (Lithuania).

The General Assembly voted unanimously in favour of ratifying the decision of the EUD Board to accept the EUD Full membership application of SNNvCR (Czech Republic).

Subsequently, the General Assembly voted in favour of ratifying the decision of the EUD Board to accept the membership application of HSGN (Croatia) as an Affiliated member of EUD

JMcW explained that at this stage, Croatia cannot yet become EUD Full member and referred to the EUD Statutes. HSGN-Croatia indicated its enthusiasm for joining EUD and stated it looked forward to the day when they could become Full members of EUD.

Italy asked on which grounds Switzerland could be allowed as EUD Full member and which prevented rule prevented HSGN-Croatia from applying for the Full membership of EUD?

HS answered that the EUD GA 2004 had ratified the decision that for EUD EU and EFTA member states stand on equal footing, this means that also EFTA countries can apply for Full membership of EUD; Switzerland, Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein belong to the group of EFTA member states.

The four new EUD member states thanked the GA and introduced themselves briefly.

## **6. Adoption of the Agenda for the General Assembly 2006**

JMcW informed the members of the EUD GA that Liisa KAUPPINEN (FAD-Finland) had asked to have some speaking time under the item AOB (agenda 19) with regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This item was added to the agenda.

The agenda was approved.

## **7. Minutes of the Luxembourg EUD General Assembly 2005 : Follow up**

HS informed the members of the GA that the EUD office had not received any comments with regard to the minutes of the EUD General Assembly 2005 in Luxembourg.

She summarised by stating that there were two big action points which remained over from last year's GA: **the Strategic Framework & Vision on EUD**, which will be dealt with separately in a workshop and the **FNSF motion regarding Deaf Seniors**, which was a part of the 2006 EUD Seminar on Multiple Discrimination. Both items are carried forward to the 2006 GA and on the agenda for discussion.

## **8. EUD Annual Report 2004-2005: presentation and ratification**

JMcW thanked the EUD Board and Staff for preparing the EUD Annual Report 2004-2005. He explained that this was a summary of the work that had taken place from September 2004 to August

2005. Approval of the Annual Report by the GA was a formality, since the Annual Report had already been sent to the European Commission at the end of 2005.

The GA unanimously approved the EUD Annual Report 2004-2005.
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## **9. Financial Reports**

### **9.1 Financial Project Report: presentation and ratification**

HS said that all financial documents had been sent out by email in advance of the GA. It was now up to the GA to pose any questions about clarification and afterwards there would be a vote on the financial report of the year 2005 and another vote on the accounts of the work programme year 2004/2005.

HS explained that the Financial Project Report dealt with the period September 2004-August 2005. This was linked to the activity year and included office expenses etc. The total of direct eligible costs was 116.473.71€. She clarified that 89.381€ of this amount was committed by the EC. She warned however that the EC would cut its own contributions proportionately for the coordination year 2004/2005, if EUD had less income to co-finance the EC grant.

The EC had paid 40% of this amount as a first instalment and also the last part had been recently received. HS mentioned once again that the activity year was not the same as the book year.

The GA did not raise further questions regarding this.

The Financial Project Report was unanimously approved.
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### **9.2 Financial accounts for the calendar year 2005: presentation and ratification**

An incorrect version of the balance sheet had been sent out (annex 4), followed by the correctly amended version. Since not all members had received the correct version, it was decided to copy the correct version and to postpone the voting until all delegates had the correct figures. The correct version was subsequently distributed to all delegates.

HS explained that the balance sheet on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2005 gave an overview of the assets and liabilities of EUD. Most of the amounts payable to suppliers (35.211,50€) which was on the balance on this date, have been paid during the months January and February 2006. At the time of the drawing of the balance sheet, the EC money had just been paid, which explained the high amount in the post "current account".

HS informed the assembly that the Nordic Council had donated 1500€ to EUD during the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of EUD in Montpellier in order to establish a Deaf Lawyers Group. She added that EUD hopes to have a first meeting of this group in the final months of 2006.

MOL added that she had contacted the NADs during February and March 2006 and had sent them overviews of what they owed EUD or vice versa. The amount payable to suppliers had now decreased from 35.000€ to 18.000€ and also the invoices receivable had decreased from 18.000€ to 8.000€.

HS confirmed that the EUD accounts had been approved by an external auditor. She explained that the formal approval only had been received at the very last moment, so this declaration could not be sent out by email prior to the GA.

FAD-Finland asked to have more detailed figures on the balance sheet. HS explained that the balance sheet was only a global overview and that more details figures were available in the other parts of the emailed document. On the bottom of the screen there are different “tabs”, where one can find more information on the other items.

Norges Døveforbund - Norway expressed their satisfaction with the smooth manner in which the finances were discussed. They remembered that some years ago the EUD GA held long debates about the figures.

**HS promised to send out the minutes of the GA, with the amended balance sheet and the auditor statement attached.**

The financial accounts for the calendar year 2005 were unanimously approved.

## **10. Summary report on EUD Action plan for 2005-2006**

MOL explained that she had ‘inherited’ the EUD Action Plan for 2005-2006 from the previous EUD Director. The three main priorities are as follows: (1) capacity building; (2) advocating for citizenship rights and responsibilities and (3) building visual awareness and support on the rights of disabled people.

The first section “**Capacity Building**” focuses on the enlargement of the EUD membership and wants to strengthen the position of Deaf people. MOL thanked the EUD Board for their activities regarding the recruitment of new EUD members, which accumulated today in the application and approval of the four new members. She said she was happy to see that EUD membership now consists of all EU member states, except from Estonia. She stressed that also the group of affiliated members was also extremely important for EUD.

**MOL urged participants to come up with names of potential affiliate and associate members from their networks of contacts.**

She also explained that she has ongoing contacts with other ENGO’s like EFHOH (European Federation Hard of Hearing) and EFSLI (European Federation Sign Language Interpreters). EUD and EFHOH have attended several meetings with regard to communication and ICTs and liaise regularly.

**EUD & EFHOH have drafted a questionnaire on ICTs which will be sent out to all EUD members in the Summer.**

Knud SØNDERGAARD (KS) informed the audience that he attended the EUD GA on behalf of WFD since the WFD President Markku JOKINEN was unable to attend. He said that the EUD has continued to grow consistently. He stressed it was very important for NADs from the CERS (Central European Regional Secretariat) to attend the WFD 2007 Conference in Spain since at that time WFD will decide upon the formal closing of the CERS.

JMcW was of the opinion that the CERS topic needed more thorough discussion, but that it would be a good idea to postpone this until the EUD GA 2007, since this will take place two months before the WFD conference in Madrid.

Germany asked for an overview of the work of the EUD Board. MOL replied that the 2005-2006 Work Plan normally should have been sent out to all NADs during the summer of 2005. She stressed that it would be no problem to send out the full version once again. This will be done upon request.

The second priority of the EUD work programme is **“advocating for citizenship rights and responsibilities”**. MOL explained that EUD, as every year, had committed to organising a seminar and a General Assembly. The leadership workshop which was organised on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2006 was aimed at promoting the exchange of experience and ideas on leadership strategies and possible activities to be undertaken by EUD member associations (e.g. lobbying for Sign Language recognition, interpreters’ services, relations with the media, engagement in the political process, anti discrimination and diversity training etc.).

The third part of the EUD work programme focused on **“building visual awareness of and support for the rights of disabled people”**. MOL explained that EUD has several tools in order to achieve this. She referred to EUD Update as a very important conduit towards raising awareness but she stressed that EUD Update can only be as relevant as possible with help from members. If members don’t inform EUD about important Deaf events in their countries, EUD cannot gather this information and disseminate it widely!

The EUD website is an important tool for reaching members, but also for contacting the public at large. MOL explained that the EUD office is currently working on a FAQ (frequently asked questions) section and said that further suggestions to improve the website, are always welcome from members.

Fevlado-Belgium asked why EUD currently has two websites and suggested to merge them into one general website in order to avoid confusion. HS replied that the general EUD website is [www.eudnet.org](http://www.eudnet.org) and that indeed there also exists a [www.eudeaf2003.org](http://www.eudeaf2003.org) site which was created for the European Year of Disabled People 2003. The latter has basic information about EUD in 11 different Sign Languages and EUD wants to maintain this information since this is most accessible to Deaf people.

HS promised that EUD would see whether it would be financially possible to create one general website for EUD. If possible, this could be budgeted for in 2007.

DGB-Germany informed that a great percentage of the seminar went over their heads. They suggested to have more active participation by delegates and wanted to have more focus on discussions etc. in order to be able to learn more from each other. DGB-Germany also asked for some more background information on the EU Directives. DDL-Denmark supported the demand to have more similar meetings like the workshop. DDL-Denmark said they liked the topic of the seminar and also liked very much the interaction between presenters and audience. Also the splitting up of the workshop into two groups was a good idea. DDL-Denmark suggested having more floor time for members from the newer EU countries. DDL also suggested keeping the structure of the EUD 2003 website since this was excellent.

SINOSZ- Hungary proposed to organise more extended workshops/seminars on non-discrimination, with more experts. They suggested looking for funding.

FAD-Finland considered the information on both the EUD websites to be good but also made reference to current technologies which allow using more Sign Language. E.g. information about new EU programmes could be signed in order that NADs can better understand relevant EU info.

HS replied that the same comments were already made at previous assemblies. She explained that the EUD Seminar is an event which is open for all, this is in contrast to the EUD GA which is a closed



meeting. NADs have the responsibility to inform their own national members about the EUD Seminar where all people are welcome. For this reason also the registration fee is kept low. With regard to EUD Update, some NADs have already taken the initiative to translate Update into their own national language or Sign Language. Both the EUD internet sites are accessible for all. She stressed that EUD is not in favour of promoting International Sign on the website. EUD wants to stress that it respects all different Sign Languages. HS also referred to the EUD DVD which gives clear basic information about the two EU Directives. Each NAD received two copies of this DVD. More copies can be ordered at the EUD Office. ÖGLB-Austria added it does not have problems with the translation of the EUD information. NADs have to take up the responsibility of acting proactively.

EUD Board member Yannis YALLOUROS (YY) added that it would not be easy for EUD to ask the EC for more money; he suggested that NADs would contact the EU office in their own country to explore more funding possibilities. FAD-Finland stated that each NAD should support EUD and that translations of EUD news can be provided by the NADs themselves. She also asked to inform the EUD office of this in order that the necessary links can be provided.

Norges Døveforbund-Norway didn't see a problem regarding the use of international sign. Norges Døveforbund-Norway considered international sign as a common international language which would provide the possibility of translating in e.g. Norwegian SL. Norges Døveforbund - Norway also added that the EU has enormous amounts of information on paper about the EU Directives in several different EU languages. People should do their homework and take up their own responsibilities when it comes to acquiring basic information. The EUD seminars are meant for people who are informed and who want to learn more.

KS warned that it was important to stick to the principle of avoiding promoting international sign. The 2003 website was able to show different sign languages and it is important to try to find support for repeating this initiative in the future.

HS summarised that the EUD Board has had a Board meeting in November 2005 during the EUD 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in Montpellier. This was followed by a Board meeting in January 2006, which was kindly hosted by EUD Board member Kajetana ROCZAN-MACIEJSKA and ZGPZG-Poland. After the organisation of the workshop, GA and seminar, MOL could now start to focus fully on the work programme. She added that the EUD Board also had represented EUD on several occasions (European Day of Disabled People, WFD Conference, Serbia & Montenegro meeting, conferences etc.). She also clarified that both EUD Staff and EUD Board represented EUD.

## **11. Proposed work programme for September-December 2006**

MOL explained that, to date, the operating grant received from the Anti-Discrimination Unit of the EC has always run from September until August. 2006 is a special year since the current EC Multi-annual Work Programme 'EQUAL' will come to an end in December 2006. In 2007 the new PROGRESS programme commences. This PROGRESS programme will cover a 7 year period and is scheduled to start on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007.

The current EUD work programme terminates in August 2006. EUD will have to submit a new application for the last 4 months of 2006. Afterwards EUD will have to make a new application under PROGRESS, operational as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007.

MOL stressed that it was very important to have a meaningful discussion at the GA about the work programme.

For the work programme September – December 2006 a list of 5 objectives had been identified:

- ❑ workshop on international sign
- ❑ update of EUD website with Sign Languages of newer member countries
- ❑ strategy for coming years 2007-2013
- ❑ ICT questionnaire
- ❑ Deaf Lawyers Group.

She added that these 5 objectives matched with the 3 priorities as set out by the EC: (1) capacity building, (2) advocating for citizenship rights and (3) building awareness and support on the rights of disabled people. She specified that if this work programme is approved, EUD is obliged to carry out all aspects of it within the specified timeframe.

KS recommended contacting CNSE-Spain regarding the workshop on international sign. WFD has been informed that Spain is involved in a similar project (in preparation for the WFD 2007 Conference in Madrid), which could be useful background knowledge for EUD?

HFD-Greece commented that it was important not to forget older people who do not have internet access. Greece asked whether it would be possible to prepare a 5 minute TV commercial.

Fevlado-Belgium wanted to make its own preparations for the Year of Equal Opportunities 2007 and therefore wanted to know more about this. MOL answered there would be a group discussion on this later on the agenda, but acknowledged that the largest part of the funding was available at national level.

Norges Døveforbund - Norway stressed the importance of joining forces. NADs should inform each other about important projects, for example the international sign project by CNSE-Spain, in order that other countries can set up similar projects and learn from each others experiences. Norges Døveforbund - Norway informed participants that they would decide later in the year whether they would join a similar project or not.

DGB-Germany questioned whether all these items could be discussed during the Sunday morning part of the meeting because of time restrictions. JMcW said there was still some time left in the schedule for catching up on these items.

CNSE-Spain clarified that they were teaching Deaf people international sign but that this was not in relation to the WFD Conference. A booklet with pictures and a DVD are in the process of being made. However, Spain doubted that this material was easy to adapt for an international audience?

JMcW suggested that CNSE-Spain and Norges Døveforbund - Norway discuss this further together.

Dovenschap - The Netherlands asked for more information about the Deaf Lawyers Group and wanted to know on which laws the group would focus: national legislation or EU legislation? HS answered that the WFD had already established an expert group on this topic and that during the WFD 2003 Canada Conference some Deaf lawyers (among others HS, Adam KOSA and Gergely TAPOLCZAI) had met. She explained EUD was sometimes confronted with problems of a legal nature, like Human Rights. The idea behind the Deaf Lawyers Group is to support EUD when it comes to formulating opinions, either for EUD work, or for EDF questions.

SINOSZ-Hungary informed the GA that in the framework of Leonardo and Tempus programmes a Spanish University had been granted 15.000€ in order to produce a DVD on the EU in 15 different spoken languages and 15 different Sign Languages.

KS expressed his concern about achieving consensus on what is international sign. He referred to the 2003 WFD World Conference where a long discussion about this had taken place. He suggested contacting SL experts in order to formulate an opinion on this.

ÖGLB-Austria asked all NADs to keep EUD better informed of the projects they are working on. It is important to join forces in order to avoid duplication of work.

MOL asked NADs to put forward the names of people that would be eligible to join the Deaf Lawyers Group.

## **12. Amendments to EUD statutes and Internal Rules**

HS apologised for not being able to send out the proposed amendments to the EUD Statutes to delegates in advance of the GA. The work of the lawyer who advised EUD had taken more time than expected, so the finalised text was only received a few days before the GA meeting.

HS stressed that there were no major amendments to make but informed the GA members that the Belgian Law for (international) non-profit organisations had recently changed and that this required some amendments to the EUD Statutes. EUD is an international non-profit organisation under Belgian Law and therefore the EUD Statutes must be compatible with the recent changes in legislation.

The proposed changes refer to procedures for Board resignation and Board meetings.

- Art. 5 – Section 1 (6): *“If a Board Member resigns, he/she must hand in his/her resignation by sending a registered letter, duly signed by him/her. His/her resignation will take effect one month after the date of sending of the registered letter.”*
- Art. 5 – Section 3: *“The meetings of the Board shall be held at a place mentioned on the invitation. The President shall call such meetings. This call shall be accompanied by a proposed draft Agenda that shall be submitted to all Board members.”*

Norges Døveforbund - Norway asked whether it is the President alone, or the President in consultation with the Secretariat who drafts the Agenda for Board meetings. The EUD Statutes outline this to be the responsibility of the President but of course this is done in consultation with the Director.

SINOSZ- Hungary had some reservations about Article 5 – section 1 (6) with regard to the possible resignation of the President. HS replied that the replacement of the EUD President was covered by article 5 – Section 5. Article 5 – section 1 (6) only dealt with the procedural aspects of sending a resignation letter.

It was proposed to make the EUD Statutes more democratic by including an article about the GA being chaired by an external moderator. HS considered this to be a topic to add in the EUD Internal Rules.

The EUD GA adopted the proposed amendments to the EUD Statutes. The quorum of 75% was met.
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HS clarified that this version would be sent out to the lawyer's office and that the EUD Staff and President will do the follow up - publication in the Official Journal etc.

HS added that the official working language of EUD was English but that Belgian Law required the Statutes to be in Dutch or French. She asked for the approval of the GA that the EUD Staff and President would have the mandate to translate the adopted English text into Dutch.

This mandate was granted by the GA. The quorum of 75% was met.

ZDGNS-Slovenia wanted to know why other portfolios and responsibilities (such as treasurer etc.) were not listed and also what the exact mandate of the director was. HS replied that these were more arrangements of practical nature, which are included in the Internal Rules. **She said the Staff would review the Internal Rules in order to make sure there were no incompatibilities between the EUD Statutes and its Internal Rules. This will be listed as an Action Point for the EUD GA 2007.**

### **13. Motions tabled**

EUD received four motions for the EUD GA 2006. The motions were sent to delegates by email prior to the meeting. They are listed below.

MOTION 1 – submitted by FAD-Finland

*“The Finnish Association of the Deaf does not submit a new motion, but should like to have information of the present state of those motions it has submitted in previous EUD General Assemblies.”*

MOL explained that, in response to this motion, the EUD Office had sent an overview of the status of previous Finnish motions to FAD. Now FAD would report back on its undertaking with regard to the 2002 motion regarding the Network of Centres for Excellence [Design for All (DfA) – Information Society for all].

In 2002 FAD had informed EUD of this European network. Since no other NADs were members of their own respective networks, FAD had promised to inform EUD member organisations of DfA matters relating to the deaf/Sign Language. None of the EUD members had provided FAD with information of their ICT-contact persons.

FAD now wanted to be discharged of its responsibilities regarding this motion. NADs were also asked to subscribe individually to the newsletter of the EDeAN (European Design for All e-accessibility network). This can be done via [secretariat@edean.org](mailto:secretariat@edean.org) and the most recent newsletter can be read at <http://www.edean.org>.

MOTION 2 – submitted by VGSL- Luxembourg

*“The possibility to display subtitles in Luxembourgish TV is a political discussion. This year subtitles cannot be introduced because of the budget limits of the Luxembourgish state.*

*The VGSL looks to other NADs for information about the best practice on:*

*-the initial investigation costs of subtitles*

*-the annual costs of subtitling after the investigation of subtitle equipments.”*

VGSL-Luxembourg clarified it needed examples of good practice. MOL replied that EUD was in possession of a survey from a few years ago, but that this information was unfortunately outdated. She referred to a recent EFHOH survey and also asked all EUD members to complete a questionnaire on ICTs, which will be sent out in July. This survey will contain a small section on subtitling. MOL also suggested contacting the EBU (European Broadcast Union) who might have more experience on subtitling.

Dovenschap-The Netherlands addressed the problem of commercial stations which are based in other countries and who do not have to follow national regulations and asked whether EUD can take any action on this. DGB-Germany added to this comment by saying this was a big problem in Germany too.

ÖGLB-Austria suggested that VGSL-Luxembourg could send out its questionnaire to all NADs and collect responses in this way.

YY said it was important to make the distinction between real time captioning and subtitling on pre-recorded programmes since the costs will be different.

JMcW proposed to take a vote on the motion from Luxembourg, i.e. VGSL-Luxembourg was asked to draft a questionnaire, which will be handed over to EUD for review and dissemination. This proposal was accepted.

### MOTION 3 – submitted by Fevlado-Belgium

*“One of the main tasks of Fevlado is to ensure an accessible society for Deaf people in Flanders. The issue of accessibility is a complex issue for Deaf persons because it is related to information and communication, and therefore also to language. The problems regarding inaccessibility, sometimes resulting in discrimination, rise in various situations e.g. television, public buildings, public services and also websites.*

*The internet and websites are a source of information for our quickly evolving society and also Deaf persons want to and need to profit from this medium. Unfortunately, the written language is not 100% accessible for all Deaf persons.*

*Our federation has started to define what should be the conditions in order to be able to define a website as accessible for Deaf internet surfers. It is only a matter of time before the Flemish Sign Language will be recognised by the Flemish government. Once the recognition is achieved, Fevlado will start to lobby the government in order to make all governmental websites accessible for Deaf users.*

*We would like to know the opinion of the EUD regarding this matter.*

*Does the EUD feel that all governmental websites should be accessible for all people?*

*How does the EUD define an accessible website for Deaf persons? Does this mean that all information has to be made available in Sign Language, is there also a solution in using less complex written language or is the most accessible website a combination of written and signed information?*

*Can the EUD have a coordinating role when trying to set new European guidelines concerning website accessibility for Deaf persons?*

*Do other EUD members already have some experience in website accessibility and can knowledge be shared across federations?*

*Do other EUD members, where the national sign language has been recognised by the government, feel that the recognition is a powerful lobby tool that can be used when lobbying for accessible websites?”*

Fevlado wanted to know whether the EU Directives can be used to obtain rights or obligations with regard to website accessibility for Deaf people? Belgium also made reference to the blind surfer label

which is used by blind people and questioned whether a similar initiative should be set up for Deaf people in order to show that websites are accessible for Deaf people?

ÖGLB-Austria replied that they set up a project in 2005 which resulted in the Austrian Government giving a commitment to convert their websites into Sign Language. Austria believes that EUD has a role to play in this and therefore asked EUD to take up responsibility in this regard.

**The General Assembly accepted the motion and EUD will report back to Fevlado after internal discussion within the ICT group.**

MOTION 4 – submitted by Fevlado-Belgium

*“ Sometimes specific services are provided for Deaf people on various occasions. There can be an induction loop in a building, there can be a videophone available so Deaf persons can have a relay interpreter, a website can be accessible for Deaf people,... These facilities can be announced by a symbol/ logo/ pictogram. Fevlado has started a search for appropriate symbols regarding videophone and accessible website information and found that different European countries use different symbols (see attachments). This is also the case for websites which are accessible for blind people. Different European countries use different symbols to indicate that a website is accessible for blind persons. Since a couple of years some countries have joined into a European group (WAB-cluster) in order to try and stipulate one universal symbol, but the negotiations proceed with great difficulty and the different groups seem to be unable to reach a consensus.*

*We would like to know if the EUD feels that every country is free to choose an own symbol for the facilities provided for Deaf people or should there be a universal symbol at European level? Can the EUD encourage her members to try and agree on one universal symbol?”*

Fevlado wanted to have a discussion on how to adopt a common symbol for Deaf accessibility and asked to take up its responsibilities in this regard. Fevlado added that, in case EUD should consider that this kind of topic is not to be taken up by EUD, Fevlado will decide upon this itself.

KS answered that the subject of a standard symbol for Deafness was also raised during a WFD General Assembly 11 years ago but yielding no results. KS stressed that this was a global discussion. YY suggested to add to the motion that Deaf people should work towards a globally accepted symbol in order to help WFD.

HS agreed that a common symbol would prove to be helpful but stressed EUD could not work alone on this. It would be better to have cooperation between EUD and WFD. She suggested setting up a vote system with a set of symbols via the internet and let people vote upon this. MOL added that a similar competition had been set up in Spain and said this could be used as an example.

**HS promised that EUD would take up this motion but thought it better to have an internal discussion about this before reporting back to Fevlado.**

## **14. Report on relations with EDF and EDF activities**

YY stressed that the European Disability Forum (EDF) is a very important umbrella organisation on disability. EDF aims to be the voice of Disabled people and has a lot of influence. Not only is EUD a

member of EDF, but so too is the European Federation of parents of Deaf/Hard of hearing children (FEPEDA).

YY informed the GA that during the EDF GA 2005 the former EUD director had been elected to the EDF Board and Executive Committee. EDF Statutes stipulate that all Board members must be directly linked to an EDF member organisation. If a Board member is replaced within their function, the new person does not automatically maintain the board position for the ENGO. During the EDF GA 2006 a new Board member will be elected and YY will stand for the elections. He referred to the EDF slogan "Nothing about us without us!" and stressed it was crucial for EUD to remain represented in the EDF Board.

The EDF Annual Report 2004-2005 was handed out to delegates.

## **15. WFD 15<sup>th</sup> World Congress Madrid 2007**

CNSE-Spain gave some information about the 15th WFD World Congress, which will take place in Madrid, Spain from 16-22 July 2007.

Booklets were distributed. More information is available via the internet on [www.wfdcongress.org](http://www.wfdcongress.org) in English, Spanish, International Sign and LSE (Spanish Sign Language). Questions can be sent to [wfdcongress@cnse.es](mailto:wfdcongress@cnse.es). The final programme will be ready in December 2006 and different commissions will be established, among others health, technology, Human rights, education. CNSE informed GA participants that there will be different registration rates depending to the time of inscription; the sooner one books, the less he/she has to pay.

Norges Døveforbund - Norway asked when presenters should send in their proposals. CNSE replied that they are welcome to do so now. In October 2006 the programme will be composed and in December 2006 the final programme should be fixed. Norges Døveforbund - Norway commented that it would be best to disseminate the programme as soon as possible, since people often tend to wait to register when they know who the presenters will be.

## **16. EUD – EUDY Cooperation**

Thomas PHILIP (TP), EUDY President, gave a short introduction about EUDY (European Union of the Deaf Youth). Together with two other EUDY Board members he was present as an observer to the GA.

TP had prepared a presentation. He explained that EUDY has wider geographic possibilities for full membership having 37 members in comparison to EUD's 27 full members - e.g. Serbia & Montenegro are full members of EUDY. TP acknowledged that EUD and EUDY have had a long and complicated history.

EUDY organises Annual General Assemblies and seminars, as well as biennial camps which are open to 4 participants per country. EUDY is very interested in collecting research on Deaf Youth (16-30 years) and wants to have statistics regarding their rates of participation in education and the labour market.

TP also invited NADs to subscribe young people for the next EUDY Camp, which will take place in Dublin, Ireland in August 2006 – more information can be found at [www.eudycamp2006.com](http://www.eudycamp2006.com).

Regarding the EUDY Camp, Fevlado-Belgium questioned why Belgium had to split up the 4 participants regarding the Camp between Fevlado and FFSB, while the UK was permitted to send delegates from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. EUDY answered that it was possible for Belgium to request that an exception to this rule be made and to let Fevlado and FFSB each send four delegates.

Russia mentioned that they have lots of information about education and said they would be happy to share this with EUDY.

DGB-Germany asked why EUDY and EUD use different membership criteria. HS explained that EUDY had chosen to work independently from EUD and that they have made their own statutes. EUDY follows Council of Europe membership and therefore can accept e.g. Turkey as a full member.

TP added that Deaf youth want to unite themselves, regardless of the political situation in their country.

YY suggested that EUDY would include reference to deaf youth from ethnic minorities in their scope of work.

TP concluded by saying that EUDY hoped to work in closer collaboration with EUD in the future.

## **17. EUD Seminar 2006**

ÖGLB-Austria took the floor in order to inform delegates and observers about the seminar on Multiple Discrimination and the Austrian experience with non-discrimination training. ÖGLB added that it was very interested in delivering this kind of training in one day or longer training seminars in Austria, or other countries. For more information on this ÖGLB can be contacted at [info@oeglb.at](mailto:info@oeglb.at).

## **18. Discussion Forum:**

### **18.1. FNSF's proposal of 2005 establishing EUD Senior**

The person from FNSF-France who was due to present this proposal, was not present at the time of this item being scheduled so last year's motion was not discussed in further detail.

MOL said that the EUD office would welcome two interns during the summer of 2006. One of them, Bram SCHOEMAKER, will have the task to design a questionnaire in relation to services for Deaf elderly people and exploring the interest in and necessity of establishing a European commission/forum for Deaf Seniors. The questionnaire is to be sent out during the month of June and NADs were asked to respond quickly.

### **18.2 EUD 7 year strategy**

MOL informed that the new PROGRESS programme would come into effect in 2007 but that at this stage not much information is available, so it is very difficult to draft a fully coherent strategy.

She explained the Board had used the SWOT discussion from last year's GA as basis for discussion during the January 2006 Board meeting in Poland. Three important items had come up:

- ❑ **FUNDING:** EUD has no financial reserves, due to the annual rolling work programme and application for funding. This means that the stability of EUD is never certain. MOL said that during the summer months an intern will work at the EUD office and one of his tasks will be to



research funding sources in order to address the financial uncertainty EUD presently experiences. MOL asked NADs to think about different ways of funding and said that NADs could ask their national Ministry of European Affairs for support too.

- ❑ **PUBLIC RELATIONS:** it is important to profile EUD and the Deaf Community at European level. Pan-European activities should set up to profile the Deaf Community in 2007, e.g. creating a TV clip with one common message for all EU member states to be broadcast during the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All.
- ❑ **PROJECTS:** follow-up on previous projects (e.g. Sign Language Project, CI project, website project) and new projects.

MOL repeated it was not possible to define a clear cut strategy at this moment yet but considered this discussion forum to be an important brainstorming tool.

DGB-Germany proposed establishing a group that would be responsible for searching for funding opportunities. DGB also expressed its concern about the increasing number of Deaf persons with cochlear implants and that the implications that this would have for the future of the Deaf Community.

Norges Døveforbund - Norway said that the number of Deaf children with cochlear implants was increasing and thought it was vital to cooperate closely with EUDY.

FAD-Finland made some short comments and promised to send more in-depth thoughts afterwards. FAD said the fundraising item was a fundamental issue. FAD had already finalised its Work Plan and Budget for 2007 so there is no room left for extra input. With regard to research, the key issue should be the promotion of the UN Convention.

MOL said EUD would welcome names of people who wanted to form part of the funding group. **Günter ROISS from ÖGLB-Austria volunteered, so did Thomas WORSECK from DGB-Germany. DDL-Denmark proposed Lars Ryberg VIKKELSØ.**

MOL clarified that the 2007 programme should be consistent with the activities carried out in 2006. She said it was not yet clear what the EC will be looking for to be undertaken in the field of non-discrimination. She stressed that it is also important to look at the effectiveness of anti-discrimination laws at national level.

HS repeated that the EUD Board had carried out a SWOT analysis and said the ideas for the future are there but that EUD has to wait and see whether this will match with the EC's PROGRESS programme. She stressed that drafting a 7 year strategy is something very ambitious to do and therefore preferred an in-depth discussion on the subject.

HS said the EUD financial situation for 2006 was secure but warned that there was no guarantee for the period beyond. Normally the new EC programme would operate as from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 but this could be delayed to sometime between March and June 2007. This could leave EUD in a precarious situation since it has no reserves to survive a couple of months without EU funding. EUD has to look for a solution to bridge the gap!

Fevlado-Belgium proposed establishing EUD Expert groups. HS replied that the WFD Expert List is in the process of being updated. Once EUD has received this new list, the European people on the list will be contacted and will be asked whether they want to appear on an EUD list.

FAD-Finland clarified that it is WFD who liaises with the coordinator of the list and that the expert is contacted solely via this coordinator. The idea is not to have NADs approach experts directly. KS added that WFD will rethink the structure of the expert list since at this moment the quality of the experts cannot be guaranteed and there are not experts found for all required areas. NADs are welcome to propose names of suitable candidates for the expert list.

ÖGLB-Austria said that it had hired a PR expert for one day per month to look at the strategy and activities of ÖGLB. Maybe it would be a good idea if EUD were to do the same?

SINOSZ-Hungary said that in 2007 it would celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. There will be a celebration and a conference. Funding is available for this. Hungary asked that delegates suggest some themes and proposed to host a conference and other activities around its festival.

ZDGNS-Slovenia mentioned that in the framework of non-discrimination, EUD should fight for an equal amount of subtitling and Sign Language on television. ZDGNS said it was important for EUD to lobby for more benefits for the deaf and for the use of Sign Language in education. In Slovenia, Slovene Sign Language is an official language but Deaf students do not have the right to use this at university.

MOL thought this could be a matter for the Deaf Lawyer Group. They could do some research on how to properly implement legal instruments at national level.

ZDGNS also mentioned that they are not currently receiving EUD Update. HS replied that the EUD Update is sent out to all NADs and is also available via the EUD website. She urged all members to contact EUD when they feel they are not receiving EUD information. EUD cannot know that something is wrong with the information flow if it is not informed of the problem.

Some countries suggested getting more money via EDF. HS replied that although EDF has a large budget, this is not to be used for funding member organisations. EDF has its own work programme which includes several projects. EDF is a very important source of information. In comparison, EUD is a small organisation with 1½ members of staff and a small Board and therefore has to prioritise.

HS said that it could be an interesting option for EUD to apply for projects, but stressed that most projects require co-funding. Also, to make matters more complicated, usually it is required that partners from at least 3 different countries join the project. She added that it is very time consuming to write applications, especially when there is no guarantee of obtaining the project. More information on how to apply for European funding can be found on [www.europa.eu](http://www.europa.eu).

SGB-FSS-Switzerland asked to have more visual and practical information on EUD meetings. SGB-FSS added that the Swiss are rather strong in technological issues and can offer their expertise in this area. Reference was made to the problem of incompatible text telephone systems; it is important to work on this and to make industry aware of the needs of deaf people. HS agreed with the intervention made by SGB-FSS.

DGB-Germany proposed that more EUD members attend conferences on behalf of EUD, since it was impossible for Board and Staff to be represented everywhere. HS replied that this is done already (e.g. Jacques BRUCH from VGSL-Luxembourg who attended an ICT conference on behalf of EUD – see report EUD Update March 2006). This activity will be increased in the future, after putting together the expert list.

- ❑ **ICT:** MOL explained that she has attended TCAM and INCOM meetings on behalf of

EUD together with JMcW. She clarified that TCAM's aims are looking at standards for different systems in Europe (videophone, 3G, etc.). The problems of deaf people in this area need to be addressed. Subtitling, videotelephony and mobile telephones are most relevant to deaf people.

EUD was asked to make an inventory of problems faced by deaf people and to give a short presentation on the last eInclusion meeting, organised by the EC. MOL said that there will be a high level conference taking place in Riga, Latvia which will be attended by ministers and senior civil servants and that, from a PR perspective, it was very important for EUD to attend. Interpretation in international sign will be provided. MOL added that JMcW and LNS (NAD Latvia) would attend the Riga conference in June 2006.

**MOL informed the audience about a questionnaire which was designed together with EFHOH and which deals with access to ICTs for deaf and hard of hearing people. She said EUD would send out this questionnaire and asked members to complete it and send it back to the EUD office.**

The COCOM (Communication COMmittee) of the EC had made a report on access to ICTs for people with disabilities within the EU. The information that was gathered was lacking in detail. Therefore, EUD had drafted the ICT questionnaire to supplement the information already gathered for the COCOM report.

ÖGLB-Austria asked to receive information about events like the EU Conference on eInclusion in Latvia in advance. It is important that Deaf people in Europe are made aware of such conferences. Austria mentioned that 3G mobile video telephony was available in FAD-FAD-Finland- and that deaf people can subscribe to special ratings (5€/month: 1000 minutes), without any network problems.

ÖGLB also showed a short videoclip from their website: [www.oegsbarrierefrei.at](http://www.oegsbarrierefrei.at).

With regard to captioning on TV, it was stressed that real life subtitling was already technically possible and that it would be a good idea to take this up with EBU (European Broadcasting Union).

SGB-FSS-Switzerland suggested creating an EU Deaf phonebook. HS referred to the EUD website, where all contact details from EUD members can be found. MOL addressed the topic of accessible directory enquiry services. Such services should, under EU legislation, be accessible for deaf people.

JMcW warned about systems like the Avator, which is a virtual signer that is sometimes used for replacing human interpreters. In the UK this has caused problems. JMcW also urged NADs to give names of ICT experts in order to create an ICT working group. MOL clarified that this working group will not be required to meet in person often (maximum one time per year) but that they would work via email. To this end, applicants should be proficient in International Sign and in English - which are the working languages of EUD. ICT meetings at the EC are also conducted in English with International Sign interpretation also available.

## **19. Any other business**

### **1) UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

Liisa KAUPPIINEN (LK) of FAD-Finland addressed the GA about the drafting of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. LK explained that all NADs should have received a letter

regarding this topic and stressed once again that it was very important to undertake action at national level.

LK explained that 26 articles have already been approved, but some important articles still remain open for discussion at the next Ad Hoc Session in August 2006: article 2 “definitions”, article 6 “women with disability”, article 7 “children with disability” and article 12 “equal recognition before law”.

To this end, LK called upon NADs to lobby their own national governments to support these important articles. And if possible, to be part of the official government delegation. The deadline for the accreditation procedure is 1<sup>st</sup> June 2006. LK stressed that the time for action is now, as the meetings have reached the final round. Afterwards it will prove extremely difficult to make amendments.

Asger BERGMANN of DDL–Denmark thanked LK for her energy and dedication to the process of the UN Convention negotiations.

JMcW stressed once again how important it was to lobby before ratification takes place.

ZDGNS-Slovenia asked for a clear definition of disability. For example, are heart patients also included? LK answered that the UN Convention does not define disability and refers only to non discrimination. No specific definition of Deaf people is included either. ZDGNS remarked that in Slovenia the Government often makes distinctions between different groups, e.g. those having cochlear implants or hearing aids.

HS explained that Finland will hold the next EU Presidency (July-December 2006) and wanted to know if FAD would be represented in the Finnish delegation in order to ensure the position of deaf people in the Convention. LK answered that FAD would be represented through the Finnish Disability Forum and that WFD would be there as well. It was felt that Deaf people would be in a stronger position, if being represented by an NGO.

LK asked to include this item in the EUD 2007 work plan.
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It will be very important to lobby national governments to ratify the Convention and also to think about how this will need to be implemented, on EU and on national levels.

DGB-Germany wanted to know how many countries need to ratify the Convention before it will enter into force. LK answered that a first step is that a certain number of countries will have to sign the Convention, and afterwards there will be a period for implementation. After the August 2006 session this timetable will be clearer.

LK explained that countries cannot make exceptions with regard to certain articles. They will have to accept or reject the Convention in its entirety. She also said an ombudsman committee will be set up in order to function as a kind of monitoring system.

MOL concluded this theme by saying that if NADs were interested in joining their national delegation, they could contact EUD in the next week in order to get some support with regard to their application.

## **2) GA 2007**

HS repeated that there was no financial security for EUD after December 2006. She said it was therefore very difficult to make plans for 2007 GA. Hopefully EUD will know more in September 2006 in

order to start preparing for the next GA in May 2007. If not, then the GA will have to be postponed until autumn 2007, unless all NADs are prepared to cover their own expenses.

She added that a 3-4 day meeting is a nice idea but that the EUD budget cannot afford this. However, people are free to stay longer at their own expense. Options like pre or post conferences need to be explored and therefore the offer by SINOSZ-Hungary to host a conference was very welcome.

Answering the question from the GA what the absolute minimum budget was to keep the EUD office running, HS said that EUD office costs for staff, office rent, website and other services are minimum 5610€/month, which excludes holding Board meetings etc.

### **3) Date of GA 2007**

ENS-Italy said that it greatly appreciates the work of EUD and WFD and wanted to thank both organisations for their work with regard to the UN Convention. Italy also asked if it would be possible to avoid organising the 2007 GA and Seminar during the period 12-15 May 2007, as ENS will have its annual GA and other events at this time.

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HS closed the meeting at 12.10h and wished everybody a safe journey home.

JMcW thanked everyone for their participation in yet another interesting GA and especially expressed his gratitude towards the EUD staff and interpreters.

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Minutes drafted by Karin VAN PUYENBROECK, EUD Administrator on 21.06.2006

Revised by Mairead O'LEARY, EUD Director on 23.06.06 and again 28.06.06

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