

Draft

EUROPEAN UNION OF THE DEAF

MINUTES
of the
14th General Assembly Meeting

29-30 May 1999

Wageningen, the Netherlands

AGENDA

1. Opening, Welcoming address, and Approval of agenda
2. Roll call
3. Adoption of the Minutes of the 13th Conference of delegates/General Assembly 1997
4. Presentation and adoption of the Annual Report 1997-98 and the Financial Report of 1997-98. Presentation of the Preliminary/Draft Annual Report 1998-1999 and Preliminary Financial Report of 1998-99.
5. Presentation of the EUD application for EU co-ordination grants in 1999-2000 (proposed EUD Budget and Workprogramme for 1999-2000).
6. Agreement EUD – WFD
7. Replacement of Board Members who retired: Netherlands, Austria and Portugal.
8. Motions tabled: discussion and voting
9. Reduced membership fee for Luxembourg
10. Revision of EUD Statutes and drafting of EUD Bye laws
11. Miscellaneous:
 - Citizens' Agenda 2000 Forum in Tampere, Finland (December 1999) (introduced by Markku JOKINEN)
 - Easy Euro Project (introduced by FFSB)
 - Charter of Deaf Rights (introduced by FNSF)
 - European Deaf University (introduced by ENS)
 - Interpreters' issue
12. Closure and Lunch

APPENDIX:

- Keynote lecture by Ms Verena KRAUSNEKER on Sign Languages and Minority Languages.
- Summary of Question time and Discussion

Saturday, 29 May 1999

1. OPENING, WELCOMING ADDRESS AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Knud SONDERGAARD, President of the EUD, opened the 14th General Assembly Meeting and warmly welcomed all delegates and EUD staff.

Changes/additions to the agenda:

It was agreed that points 7 and 8 are switched in order.

It was also agreed that the following additions are made to point 15: Euro project; Charter of Deaf Rights; and European Deaf University.

With these changes and additions, the agenda was approved.

The President apologised for the fact that some new documents were handed out to delegates the evening before the meeting. He also explained that the EUD Board had decided at its January 1999 Board meeting that no interpreters would be present at this General Assembly. He also added that it was decided not to have a Board meeting on 28 May 1999 because the same people would be present at the General Assembly meeting too.

2. ROLL CALL

See attached the list of participants/delegates. (ANNEX 1)

3. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING HELD IN 1997

Terry RILEY (UK) proposed some small changes (language and word errors). With these changes, the minutes were accepted.

4. PRESENTATION AND ADOPTION OF ANNUAL AND FINANCIAL REPORTS

◆ Annual reports:

The President remarked that there was an error in the (proposed) agenda. The Annual Report for the year 1996-97 and the 1996 Financial Report had already been accepted in 1997 and would therefore not be discussed again.

The President briefly repeated the content of the 1997-98 Annual Report, which had been sent out last year for comments. Revised copies of this Report were distributed at the meeting. The General Assembly adopted the 1997-98 Annual Report (revised version).

The President explained that the draft 1998-99 Annual Report could not be prepared in time for the General Assembly due to the heavy workload and staff illness. He then gave an overview of EUD actions and activities in 1998-99, highlighting the changes that took place at the EUD office (staff replacement, less budget, less working time for EUD director) and important events (financial control and audit by European Commission of EUD's 1996-98 expenses and accounts, EUD director retiring as Chair of the European Disability Forum (EDF) and taking up a new position in the Netherlands).

In order to inform all delegates about the EDF in more depth, the President gave a short presentation on the structure and work of EDF at EU level. A good discussion regarding the relationship between EDF and its members followed. It was found that 4 National Deaf Associations (Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg and Sweden) were not members of the National Disability Council in their respective countries. Thus Deaf people were not being adequately represented in the National Disability Councils and consequently also not in EDF by these Councils. It was agreed that EUD should become more active itself in EDF through other means (frequent contacts and participation in working groups) now that it can no longer exercise influence through Johan WESEMANN as chair. Also, Nicola BEDLINGTON, EDF director would be leaving as well - she had been one of the first EUD staff and had always kept good contacts with EUD.

It was agreed that the draft 1998-99 Annual Report should try to follow this structure:

- EUD vision and priorities
- Overview of follow-up on actions since the Annual Report of 1997-98 and its links to EUD vision and priorities should be shown
- New actions started must also relate to EUD vision and priorities
- What effect will the new Treaty of Amsterdam have on EUD work and information about new EU programs. Again link it up to EUD vision and priorities.
- Suggestions for members to take up responsibilities for one or more themes.

The draft 1998-99 Annual Report is to be mailed out in the Summer to all members for review and comments.

It was agreed that in 2000 the EUD General Assembly should review its vision and priorities again to see whether EUD was still on the right track and to amend, change or clarify it when necessary.

◆ **Financial reports:**

Sign Languages project 1996-97: solely for information purposes, the President gave an overview of the Sign Languages Project finances, taking into account the audit results (see the Audit report sent to all Board members).

Financial report 1996: solely for information purposes too, the President informed the General Assembly that this had been audited by the European Commission (see again the Audit report). There was a possibility that EUD may have to return some money to the European Commission.

Financial report 1997-98: the EUD treasurer gave an overview using the papers prepared by the EUD accountant. It seemed that there was a loss of about 7050 EURO. However, it was remarked that there was no balance, thus it was hard to judge the financial information.

Financial report 1998-99: the EUD treasurer gave a preliminary overview using the papers prepared by the EUD accountant. The accounting information included all invoices up to 30 April 1999 but the work year would not end until 31 May 1999. Thus further work was needed to complete the accounts. The accounting work was complicated by the fact that the accounting year ends on 30.04.1999 but that the project year ends on 31. 05.1999.

A long discussion followed on the financial reports and the problems with times (project terms and accounting terms) and the fact that EUD did not receive any subsidy for the months January till May 1997.

The General Assembly agreed to accept the Financial Reports 1997-98 and 1998-99 for now but that its approval could not be given due to too many uncertainties. The next General Assembly should then approve these Financial Reports. It was also agreed to ask the accountant to prepare a balance and shift the accounting year to follow the calendar year so that it is no longer bound to projects, which complicated matters.

It was also agreed to set up a Financial Commission with André LATHOUWERS (treasurer), Adrien PELLETIER (board member) and Helga STEVENS (staff) to prepare financial guidelines for EUD and to monitor the financial situation of EUD.

5. PRESENTATION OF EUD APPLICATION FOR CO-ORDINATION ACTIVITIES IN 1999-2000 AND EUD WORKPROGRAMME

The administrator, Helga STEVENS, presented an overview of the proposed EUD budget and workprogramme. (See the papers that were distributed before the meeting). In addition to the 100.000 EURO subsidy that EUD expects to receive from the European Commission, about 37.000 EURO was still needed to enable EUD to carry out the proposed workprogramme in full. $37.000 : 15 \text{ members} = \text{about } 2.500 \text{ EURO per member}$ was needed. Note that the 1.000 EURO membership fee is also/already included in the amount of 2.500 EURO.

Terry RILEY (UK) reminded the General Assembly that it had asked all to consider whether they could contribute more money to EUD – this was important because EU subsidies continue to decrease. The President said this would not be discussed now, but later under point 12 of the agenda.

In principle the General Assembly agreed that the members should each contribute 2.500 EURO to EUD.

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Ms Verena KRAUSNEKER gave a keynote lecture on Sign Languages and Minority languages. A question time and a discussion followed the lecture. Please see the APPENDIX for more details. After this, the meeting was closed for the day.

All participants went to the National Deaf Elderly People centre 'De Gelderhorst' in Ede, for dinner and to meet with deaf elderly people and watch various short theatre plays. People from the European Society for Mental Health and Deafness were also there.

Sunday 30 May 1999

The following delegates/countries had to leave early because of flight times: Helly CHRISTOPOULOU and Giannis CHRISTOUPOLAKOS (Greece) and Luis Jesus Cañón REGUERA and Carmen Cerezales MAURIZ (Spain).

For clarity's sake, it was decided to resume briefly the discussion on the sources of own funding for EUD (see point 5. above). Terry RILEY (UK) asked all delegates to say clearly whether or not their association could contribute 2.500 EURO toward the EUD budget in order to enable the EUD office to move ahead with the proposed budget as submitted to the European Commission. The outcome was as follows: 7,5 countries indicated they were willing to contribute, 7,5 countries indicated they were unable to do so, or needed time to consult with their own Board since there had been no prior consultation at home. That means 50% could contribute, and 50% could not. The President closed the discussion and said that with these results, the EUD needed to consider whether it should tailor its services to need: provide less services to those members who do not pay and more service to those members who pay (more).

6. AGREEMENT BETWEEN EUD AND WFD

Liisa KAUPPINEN (FIN), delegate for the Finnish Association of the Deaf and WFD President, gave a short introduction and background information: both EUD and WFD are located in Europe/EU and both are independent non-profit international organisations. In theory both organisations could apply to get EU funding for various projects. In order to avoid competition, it was agreed to make a co-operation agreement between the two. It lays down the fields of co-operation and each organisation's responsibilities versus the other one.

The agreement was drafted in consultation between EUD and WFD following the decision of the joint EUD-WFD meeting in Sardinia in May 1998. It was agreed that not the EUD Board but the General Assembly should approve this agreement. The WFD General Assembly should also approve this agreement – according to Liisa KAUPPINEN, this would be done under 'Miscellaneous' in Brisbane, Australia. The proposed agreement was unanimously adopted and it was hoped that the WFD Assembly would do the same.

7. MOTIONS TABLED : DISCUSSION AND VOTING

The President said that 14 motions had been received, the most (12) from the UK. That it seemed it was time to change and improve the EUD statutes to make EUD stronger and more efficient. All motions would be shown on the overhead projector.

It was regretted by some delegates that this information was not sent out earlier – consequently some associations have not had the opportunity to discuss these in depth in their board.

♦ **Regarding motions 1-10 (proposed by the BDA):**

The President said that it was important to keep the following questions in mind: Do we want to keep the present situation as it is: a large Board and an Executive Committee of 5 members, and a General Assembly which meets every 2 years? Or do we want to go back to the old situation: a small Board/Executive (5 or 6 persons) and a General Assembly, which meets every year? It should be remembered that the present structure with the 15 members Board was introduced because Belgian law required that one Board member has the Belgian nationality. This legal requirement is now being deleted, so the statutes can be changed.

A discussion followed on these principal questions. It was agreed to set up a Working group responsible for revising the EUD statutes. The main principles for the Working group to follow were set as follows:

- 1) the large Board is to be dissolved;
- 2) a Committee or Board (max. 5 or 6 people) is to be set up;
- 3) the General Assembly should be composed of NAD delegates/representatives and not include Board or Committee members. The Board/Committee members would not have voting rights at the General Assembly.

The Working group is to distribute the results of their work as soon as possible so that there is enough time left for internal consultation before the 15th Anniversary meeting of EUD in 2000. In this structure we would again need to appoint national contact persons with whom EUD could keep contact. Pascal SMITH (F) proposed that a clause be inserted into the statutes, enabling EUD to organise an «information & consultation meeting» for representatives of all 15 NADs in case of emergency situations, etc.

The General Assembly unanimously adopted the main principles (see above) for the Working group. Terry RILEY (UK) and David BULLOCK (UK), on behalf of the BDA, agreed to withdraw the motions 1-10 based on the above principal lines and to defer these motions to the Working group for follow-up.

The following persons were appointed to be members of the Working group:

1. Knud SONDERGAARD
2. Ida COLLU
3. Terry RILEY
4. Alfred FIEVET
5. EUD staff person: Helga

The work should be completed within one year and in any case before the EUD meeting in 2000.

♦ **Regarding motion 11 (proposed by the BDA):**

Terry RILEY (UK) introduced this motion. The BDA would like to see the EUD membership fee raised to 10.000 EURO.

Terry RILEY explained that the reason was that EUD needed to have more funding of its own viewing the fact that EU subsidies keep decreasing. Moreover, in order to get EU funding for any project, EUD must contribute between 30 to 50%. This is impossible if EUD has to search constantly for money and has to rely on the goodwill of partners. This was to be seen as the MAXIMUM amount needed for EUD.

Lars Ake WIKSTRÖM (SWE) said that it would be financially difficult to contribute so much to EUD: there was no time to consult with own Board in advance and moreover, Sweden had already just contributed 10.000 US\$ to the WFD. Denmark and Finland had also contributed the same amount; Norway and Iceland had contributed 5.000 US\$. Sweden would only contribute 10.000 EURO if all countries did the same.

Terry RILEY (UK) said that, with all respect for WFD, they could not accept that what one or more countries decide to do for WFD should influence EUD's business or the financial situation of EUD. EUD and WFD are both independent organisations and should be viewed separately here when we talk about financial support for EUD to consolidate EUD. The financial needs of WFD have nothing to do with EUD and should not influence financial decisions for EUD. He also asked whether the EUD Board or Executive Committee had already discussed this motion in particular and the global financial situation of EUD in depth? Has any financial plan been made? This discussion is already 5 years old and is still going on. It is time that EUD decide on priorities and take action financially!

The President asked for a voting on the motion. 3 countries were in favour; 4 countries were against. (13 countries present). Thus the motion is rejected.

♦ **Regarding motion 12 (proposed by the BDA):**

Terry RILEY (UK) introduced this motion. The BDA would like to see the EUD membership fee raised to 5.000 EURO. Terry RILEY explained that this was an alternative, in case motion 11 would be rejected. The basic problem is the same: funding for EUD. Something absolutely needed to be done. Members needed to be more committed to EUD, otherwise they could as well close the EUD office!

The President asked to vote on the motion: 5 countries supported the motion; 4 were against. (13 countries present).

However, due to the fact that many associations had not seriously considered the motions at home before coming to the General Assembly, the President proposed that this motion would be deferred to the next General Assembly. Then all delegates would be able to vote yes or no after having consulted with their Board. 10 countries supported this postponement. Thus it was agreed to defer this motion to the next General Assembly.

Terry RILEY (UK) said that now both motions had in fact been rejected, the members needed to come up with something else in order to enable EUD to sign the contract for 1999-2000 co-ordination activities. Without own funding of at least 37.000 EURO, including membership fees (=14.250 EURO), EUD would not be able to implement the proposed budget and sign the contract with the European Commission. Terry RILEY urged each country to contribute at least 2.500 EURO, which was in fact the absolute MINIMUM amount, needed from each member to continue the EUD office that was already operating at minimum levels due to financial restraints.

The President referred to the discussion of yesterday and earlier this morning (50% yes, 50% no) and said that he hoped that in the end all members would want to contribute 2.500 EURO each. He closed the discussion.

Ida COLLU (I) apologised and said that Sebastiano MANCIAGLI and she herself, delegates for ENS, had to leave now but that they would support whatever decision would be taken.

◆ **Regarding motion 13 (proposed by CNSE):**

The motion asked that EUD promote, help and support the creation of a European Union of the Deaf Women network and to subsidise some of the activities.

It was unanimously agreed that EUD should support Deaf Women in their work. But only in principle, not by providing money because of lack of funding. But EUD could assist them in writing project applications, etc.

◆ **Regarding motion 14 (proposed by FAD):**

The motion asked what progress had been made with regard to earlier motions (telecommunication, sign interpreting and survey on Deaf education)?

The President responded that this was not a real motion, but related to EUD work programme and activities. He pointed out that without sufficient resources, it was difficult to do all this. Own funding is always needed to set up projects and that is exactly EUD's problem, like we saw this morning with EUD co-ordination activities. The Sign Languages Project was a big exception, but otherwise we cannot submit projects without some own funding. He also added that EUD could encourage universities to make surveys about Deaf education, etc.

Liisa KAUPPINEN (FIN) said that in the future EUD could co-operate more with FAD and her to set up projects, etc.

8. REDUCED MEMBERSHIP FEE FOR LUXEMBOURG

The President explained that this was already discussed at the January Board meeting which had unanimously agreed to propose to the General Assembly to reduce the membership fee for Luxembourg. The reason for this is the fact that it is a very small country and its National Deaf Association is in fact not bigger than a Deaf Club is. It could not possibly pay such a high fee, taking into account its small size.

It was unanimously agreed that Luxembourg would only pay 250 EURO and that this would be re-evaluated every two years taking into account new developments.

9. REVISION OF EUD STATUTES AND BY-LAWS

This point was already discussed above when the General Assembly discussed motions 1-10. For a conclusion, see above.

10. MISCELLANEOUS

- **Citizen's Agenda 2000 Forum in Finland**: Finland gave some explanation and said that more information and programmes would be sent out soon. The final programme would be available in September 1999.
- **EasyEuro project**: Martine FRAITURE, FFSB director, gave some explanation regarding this project. A sheet was distributed to all delegates at the meeting. FFSB asked that EUD would take over responsibility from FFSB for the 2nd part of the project. It was agreed that Helga STEVENS (EUD staff) would meet with FFSB to see how this project could be continued. A major stumbling block was however the fact that 50% co-financing was needed – it would be practically impossible for EUD to find the needed 50%. How could EUD find this amount?

[The President decided after the General Assembly that EUD could not take this responsibility due to financial problems, but that EUD would support FFSB in their work and assist them whenever necessary with advice and contacts.]

- **Charter of Deaf Rights**: France has been working on this charter for a while and asked that EUD also take this up at EU level. It was agreed that the Executive Committee should discuss this matter and France was requested to send the text of the Charter to EUD. French-Belgium added that it had also drawn up a charter of Deaf Rights in 1996.
- **European Deaf University**: Italy is now planning to set up such a university in Italy. Information will be given to EUD and sent out to all NADs.
- **Interpreters' issue**: it was agreed that the next Board meeting would evaluate how the General Assembly went without Sign language interpreters in order to decide on the use of interpreters at EUD events.

All members were asked to take documents and videos provided by EUD: SLP video, Annual Report 1997-98, UN Standard Rules Seminar Report, Signs of the Future book & CD-rom, and the Summary of the 'Steps towards an Improvement of the Participation of Deaf persons in the Information Society'.

11. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

The President closed the meeting at 13.10 h and thanked everybody for their coming and participation in this General Assembly and wished them a good trip home. The next General Assembly meeting would probably be in England.

He reminded everybody to send in their reimbursement forms with original tickets and invoices – copies would not be accepted.

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Minutes taken and typed out by Helga STEVENS

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