

European Union of the Deaf

Minutes

20th General Assembly

Luxembourg, 14-15 May 2005

FINAL DRAFT VERSION

EUROPEAN UNION OF THE DEAF

***MINUTES
of the
20th General Assembly Meeting***

14-15 May 2005

Luxembourg

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MINUTES

1. Welcoming address

EUD President, Knud SØNDERGAARD (KS), opened the 20th EUD General Assembly meeting, and welcomed the delegates by expressing his gratitude that so many countries were present and that many new faces had appeared.

He pointed to the full agenda and described the programme for the General Assembly. He hoped the entire agenda could be dealt with on Saturday, in order to make it possible to dedicate Sunday's session to the workshops, which would deal with the topics " Sign Language User vs Deaf" and "Swot analysis of EUD".

2. Introduction of Chair for the General Assembly

KS added that, following among others Scandinavian custom, the EUD General Assembly would be chaired by a person from outside the Board, and not by the President.

The Board had asked Jeff McWHINNEY (JMcW), former BDA director, to fulfil this task. KS clarified that the Chair would have no voting rights, and was only there to ensure the smooth development of the General Assembly.

The GA approved this decision.

3. Introduction of new Executive Director: Craig CROWLEY

KS introduced the new Executive Director of EUD, Craig CROWLEY (CAC). He explained that CAC officially took up his post on 1 May 2005 and gave some background information regarding his appointment. He especially pointed out that CAC has had over 20 years experience in working within the NGO field and has a vast experience in lobbying the UK Government.

CAC presented himself and emphasised he was looking forward to develop personal contacts with each of the National Deaf Associations.

JMcW congratulated CAC with his new post and thanked former EUD Director, Helga STEVENS (HS) for her good work during the past 8 years.

4. Roll call

4.1 Delegates:

Full members:

Helene JARMER and Günter ROISS (ÖGLB-Austria), Filip VERSTRAETE and Bernard FLEURUS (Fevlado and FFSB-Belgium), Dan OL VHØJ (DDL-Denmark), Tiina JAAKOLA and Helena TORBOLI (FAD-Finland), Patrick FOURASTIE and Adrien PELLETIER (FNSF-France), Thomas WORSECK and Alexander VON MEYENN (DGB-Germany), Anastasios TSAOUSIS and Ioannis YALLOUROS (HFD-Greece), Janos PODANI and

György MIKESY (SINOSZ-Hungary), Sebastiano MANCIAGLI (ENS-Italy), Kevin STANLEY and Kevin MULQUEEN (IDS-Ireland), Josy HOFFMANN and Jacques BRUCH (VGSL-Luxembourg), George VELLA (DPAM-Malta), Annemieke VAN KAMPEN (Dovenschap-the Netherlands), Kajetana MACIEJSKA-ROCZAN (ZGPZG-Poland), Arlindo OLIVEIRA and Paulo COSTA (FPAS-Portugal), Franc PLANINC and Tone PETRIC (ZDGNS-Slovenia), Luis J. CAÑÓN REGUERA and Amparo MINGUET SOTO (CNSE-Spain), Mats JONSSON and Lars-Åke WIKSTRÖM (SDR-Sweden) and Emma COLEMAN (BDA-United Kingdom).

Due to heavy preparations for the 85th Anniversary of their Association, due to take place one week later, the Latvian Deaf Association was forced to apologize themselves for not being able to attend the EUD General Assembly 2005.

Affiliated members:

Vasil PANEV (UDB-Bulgaria), Mihail GRECU (Romania), Berglind STEFÁNSDÓTTIR and Haukur VILHJALMSSON (Iceland), Irene GREFTEGREFF and Sissel GJØEN (NDF-Norway).

4.2 Observers:

Françoise CHASTEL and Georges CHARBON (A.G.S.M.R.-Montpellier).

Observers from new EU member states: Vanda VAIRKUTE and Svetlana LITVINAITE (Lithuania), Jaroslav PAUR and Pavel ŠTORM (Czech Republic), Yiannis YIANNAKIDES and Costas THEOPHANOUS (Cyprus Deaf Federation-Cyprus), Mária BENKOVÁ and Zuzana SVANTNEROVA (Slovak Union of Deaf and HOH-Slovak Republic).

Observers from EU candidate countries: Remzi KYRMYZYGÜL and Taryk TUNCEL (Turkey).

Observers from non-EU countries: Valery RUKHLEDEV and Dmitry REBROV (All-Russian Society of the Deaf-Russia), Roland HERMANN (SGB DS-Switzerland) and Andrija HALEC and Jadranka KRSTIĆ (Croatian Association of Deaf and HOH), Muamer KARALIC (SGNSCG-Serbia&Montenegro).

Ms Liisa KAUPPINEN (speaker at EUD seminar) was also present. France (Belkacem SAIFI and Slovenia (Bogdan KUCHAR) sent a third person to the GA as observer.

4.3 EUD Board:

Knud SØNDERGAARD (EUD President), Terry RILEY, Helly CHRISTOPOULOU, Hilde HAUALAND and Amilcar MORAIS (Board members).

4.4 EUD Staff:

Craig CROWLEY (EUD Executive Director), Helga STEVENS (former EUD Director) and Karin VAN PUYENBROECK (EUD Administrator).

4.5 Interpreters:

Gerdinand WAGENAAR and Mindy BROWN.

In total 19 Full Members and 4 Affiliated Members were present at the EUD 20th General Assembly. Moreover, 9 more countries (new EU member states, EU candidate countries and non-EU countries) also attended the General Assembly.

5. Ratification of membership applications

KS explained that EUD had received 4 applications for EUD membership. Three applications were for Full membership (Cyprus, Slovakia and Czech Republic) and one (Serbia and Montenegro) was for Affiliated membership.

In addition, Norway and Iceland had asked to change their current EUD Affiliated membership status into Full membership status.

KS referred to last year's GA where the General Assembly had ratified the decision that also EFTA countries (Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland) could apply for EUD Full membership. He clarified it was upon these member states themselves to decide whether they would apply to change their membership status. Full membership brings on the consequence that a country could appeal on having voting rights and can get reimbursement of costs.

The General Assembly voted in favour of ratifying the decision of the EUD Board to change the membership status of Iceland and Norway into Full membership.

The General Assembly voted in favour of ratifying the decision of the EUD Board to accept the membership application of Cyprus as a Full member.

Subsequently, the General Assembly voted in favour of ratifying the decision of the EUD Board to accept the membership application of Serbia and Montenegro to become an Affiliated member.

KS explained that the EUD Board had decided to postpone the decision regarding the membership applications of Slovakia and the Czech Republic, since both countries had not used the proper registration form, nor had sent their statutes to the EUD Office prior to the GA. Slovakia responded that they would now fill in and sign the form.

[At the end of the GA, HS remarked that Slovakia meanwhile had filled in all the necessary forms for EUD membership and had handed over their statutes. During coffee break this application had been discussed and approved by the EUD Board. The EUD GA ratified this decision and welcomed Slovakia as a Full member.]

Germany asked for clarification regarding the voting rights.

JMcW answered that **only delegates** would be allowed to vote and said that each country had two votes. He also pointed out that the EUD staff had provided voting cards: red, green and yellow (abstention).

6. Adoption of the Agenda for the General Assembly 2005

KS went through the agenda of the General Assembly meeting and asked the GA to approve this agenda.

Spain asked to have some speaking time under item 19 ("Any other business"), regarding the WFD Congress 2007 in Spain. This item was added to the agenda.

Belgium proposed to give some explanation regarding the political structure of Belgium and on how this situation had influenced the two federations (Fevlado and FFSB) in Belgium. This item was added to the agenda.

Switzerland asked some time to show technical equipment that could improve communication for deaf people. Also this item was added to the agenda.

Austria wanted to give some general information regarding non-discrimination activities in Austria. JMcW proposed to add this to agenda under item 17) Resolution from the EUD Seminar.

Norway asked each of the speakers to deal with these matters in maximum 5 minutes, in order to keep track on the time.

The agenda was approved.

7. Follow-up on the Minutes of the General Assembly 2004

KS informed the General Assembly that following EUD Statutes, Minutes of GA were considered to be approved if no comments had been received within 2 months after receipt of the minutes. He asked if anybody had additional questions or comments.

HS proposed to give an overview of the Action points following the EUD GA 2004, held in Dublin, Ireland.

Regarding the **enlargement**: last year EUD had welcomed a number of new EU member states. The EUD office had tried to contact the remaining countries: Estonia did not respond to letters from EUD. Lithuania, Czech Republic, Cyprus and Slovakia are present at the GA. Moreover, Cyprus and Slovakia had applied to become a Full member. The last one with incomplete membership application forms. Lithuania and Czech Republic informed us of their interest in EUD membership, but hadn't sent in a formal application yet.

HS proposed to discuss the **amendments to EUD Statutes** under agenda point 12 "Amendments to EUD Statutes and Internal Rules".

The **motion** of France at last year's GA will be discussed later at this GA. Organisers from the *1st Mediterranean and European Congress of Deaf persons* are present at the GA.

The **EDF Board elections 2005** and **cooperation with EDF** will be discussed more thoroughly under agenda item 15.

EUDY could not be present at this GA, but has sent some information to the EUD office regarding the EUDY General Assembly and Seminar 2005, which will take place in Budapest, Hungary on 20-23 October 2005. This item will be dealt with under agenda point 16.

Last year Austria asked for support regarding a **letter campaign** towards Movie Company **MGM** for the maintenance of subtitling on German-spoken DVDs. EUD received notice that the campaign had led to a successful end.

The EUD office had provided **voting cards** for this year's GA.

Germany posed the question whether EUD could solve problems for new EU countries, regarding the high membership fee cost?

KS answered that this item already had been discussed within the EUD Board. The Board has agreed to lower the membership for new countries. First year membership fee would be lowered until 500€, second year 1000€ and third year 1500€. KS stressed that if the only restriction to become an EUD member is one of financial nature, these countries would have the possibility to ask for reduction. For smaller countries (e.g. Luxembourg, Iceland) an adapted membership fee has already been worked out.

HS added that it would not be fair towards other EUD members to reimburse the costs of new EU countries, who are not a EUD member yet.

KS closed this item by saying that he would travel to Latvia soon and that he hoped to meet people from Estonia over there, in order to facilitate communication in person.

The minutes were formally approved by the GA.

8. EUD Annual Report 2003-2004: presentation and ratification

The EUD Annual Report 2003-2004 deals with the period 01/09/2003-31/08/2004, which follows the grant period and had been sent out in advance to the EUD members by e-mail. Hard copies were available at the GA meeting.

KS explained that the European Commission had made some comments on the original report and had asked for clarification on some points. A new Annual Report had been drafted and was sent out.

EUD is now waiting for the approval of the European Commission. KS added the European Commission will only pay the final part of the grant after a positive decision on this part. This means that EUD can only reimburse travel expenses of EUD GA 2004 (Dublin) after this formal approval by the European Commission.

Norway pointed out that the EUD members should have the chance to read the report more thoroughly before approving this. HS clarified that the Annual Report had already been sent by e-mail in advance and that the printed version had entirely the same content as the e-mailed version.

JMcW proposed to send the future Annual Report 2004-2005 in October/November 2005. In that way, all EUD members would have sufficient time to print out the report and to read it. If necessary, questions could then be posed at next year's GA.

Finland reminded members that EUD Update and EUD website are good sources of information. The EUD Board and staff were thanked for their good work on providing the members with information.

The Annual Report 2003-2004 was unanimously approved.

9. Financial Reports

9.1 Financial Project Report 2003-2004: presentation and ratification

HS explained that the Financial Report had already been sent out by e-mail and that it was also included in the EUD Annual Report (p. 46). This report gives a clear overview of direct eligible costs such as staff, travel, services, administration. The total of eligible costs is 126.234,24€.

She also clarified that the EUD income was 46.424€ (DDL, registration fees Dublin, interpreters' support etc.). The EC grant was 79.116,64€.

The GA raised no further questions and ratified the EUD Financial Report.

9.2 Financial accounts for the calendar year 2004: presentation and ratification

HS explained that the Financial Report for 2004 had already been sent out by e-mail, but that a revised version, following the audit of the EUD accounts, would be distributed at the meeting.

The financial statement for the year 2004 ended on 31 December 2004 with a positive balance. EUD is waiting for the approval of the Annual Report 2003-2004, afterwards the EC will pay remaining amount of 26.000€.

HS mentioned that the balance sheet showed a picture of the status on 31/12/2004. Payments which have occurred afterwards, are not included (e.g. Germany has paid since then).

The balance of assets and liabilities on 31/12/2004 showed a result of 111.100,99€.

HS explained that the long term debt to DDL had its origins in 1995. EUD asked DDL for a loan since the EC had some delay in paying the grants during that time. KS informed the GA that the loan has been totally paid off in the first months of 2005.

HS explained that the list of suppliers mainly included reimbursements for travel costs. She repeated that EUD will have to wait for the payment by the EC, before travel costs for Dublin can be reimbursed.

During the months September-December 2004 EUD has had very little expenses, so the external auditor who checked the finances suggested to split up the EU subvention 2005 in

two parts: 2004 (September-December) and 2005 (January-August). The approval of the accounts for 2004 by the auditor was handed out at the meeting.

HS stressed that the EU subvention only covers 76% of the budget, which means that EUD has to cover 24% of its finances itself.

Belgium asked whether EUD would consider engaging extra staff, since due to the increase of new members, EUD might receive more money. Also it was asked whether EUD had enough income to cover the 26%? HS answered that EUD could cope with the membership fees, some donations and some sign language interpreters support from local governments.

Notwithstanding the higher number of members, the EC will not increase the subvention budget.

Germany asked why some supplier amounts from before 2003-2004 were still open. HS answered that some posts needed to be double checked, some amounts had already been paid but due to a mistake, this has not been incorporated in the accounts.

Terry RILEY, EUD Board member, warned that EUD had no financial security. EUD is extremely dependant on the EC subvention, which is annually granted and needs to build up urgently a reserve.

Germany agreed but asked why EUD members were not informed of this way of working in beforehand. NADs would feel more certain when they had known about this procedure.

HS warned that this was no news as this had been said many times. Moreover, the EUD financial situation may be somewhat distorted since DDL, thanks to KS, used to donate 10.000€/year. KS has now retired as DDL President, so it will be possible that DDL will stop this annual donation. It will now be the new Executive Director's responsibility to keep the EUD finances healthy.

HS informed that most EU projects (and funding) require a minimum of three partner countries. NADs are free to establish partnerships and can contact EUD within this regard, but they will be responsible for writing the project proposals themselves. EUD cannot cope with this extra amount of work since the actual staff only consists out of 1 ½ person!

JMcW summarized that it would be up to the new EUD Board and Director to draft a strategy for the future.

The Financial Report 2003-2004 was approved.

9.3 Financial situation

HS also gave a short overview of the current financial situation of EUD.

She explained that EUD had made very few costs in the period January-April 2005, since this was a transition period between HS as 'old' director and the start of CAC as new director. May was traditionally a month in which huge costs were being made (GA + seminar).

She added that CAC was now responsible for the financial plan for the period September 2005-August 2006. This plan needed to be handed in at the EC in July 2005.

Unlike the past few years, the EC will not issue an open call for tender. Only 5 organisations (EUD, Autism Europe, Mental Health Europe, European Blind Union and ?), which got funding in 2004-05, will get EU funding. HS said EUD was relatively sure of receiving the grant until 2006 but warned that it was up to the new Director and Board to ensure EU funding for the coming years.

In 2007 the EC will launch a new funding programme PROGRESS. She mentioned EDF was very involved in the lobbying work, but that at this moment it was too early to give more detailed information regarding this programmes.

10. Summary report on EUD Action plan for 2004-2005

HS explained that like the previous years, EUD had continued to contribute to the process of transposing the non-discrimination directives into national law by promoting exchanges of experience and good practices between its members and their governments and other actors active in the field of non-discrimination.

In drafting its work programme for 2004-2005, EUD has looked back to its work programme for 2003-2004 as well as taking into account the three main priorities put forward by the European Commission:

- Capacity building;
- Advocating for citizenship rights and responsibilities;
- Build awareness and support on the rights of disabled people.

HS remarked that EUD tries to inform its members by organising a GA, a seminar and Board meetings and also disseminates lots of information through EUD Update and the EUD homepage (www.eudnet.org). However, she acknowledged that communication is not always easy for Deaf people. Contrary to other groups of disabled people, Deaf people often have to cope with communication and language barriers.

She added that EUD would continue its work in the field of sign language recognition and raising public awareness, regarding the right of Deaf people to communicate in sign language. In this context, EUD fully supports the efforts of WFD and EDF to achieve a UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and to have references to Sign Language/s inserted in the Convention.

HS underlined that the EC expects the EUD website to be accessible, not only for Deaf people but also for the general hearing audience.

HS regretted that the work plan has not been carried out fully in the past previous months, due to her illness in 2004 and parliamentary duties in 2005, but is confident that CAC will catch up soon with this lost time.

No further questions were raised, so JMcW thanked HS for her hard work and clear explanation.

11. Proposed work programme for 2005-2006

Terry RILEY clarified that an application for 2005-2006 needed to be made and mentioned the Board had already made an action list. However, it was now up to the new Board to decide upon new objectives and/or possible actions.

Sweden considered the information flow to be vital. EU should directly contact EU citizens, also Deaf individuals would feel closer to EUD in that manner.

HS underlined EUD Update is an important source of information. EUD cannot contact all individual Deaf citizens separately but they can all subscribe to EUD Update and visit the EUD website regularly to find out more about EU news etc.

HS mentioned she was very much aware that there was a language problem, since EUD can only afford to work in English and has no money for translations. This is an old an ongoing problem.

Germany stated that it fully understood EUD had to follow EC priorities, but thought it was equally important to have internal objectives.

LK mentioned that the EU has many working programmes, which is a very positive thing. HS added that NADs should seek partners in other countries and hand in projects together. EUD has tried to stimulate this in the past but this has proven to be very time consuming since this means a lot of paper work.

HS stated firmly that EUD provides information to NADs but that EUD cannot help it if NADs do not respond to EUD's call to send in more information. Eg Croatia has made an overview of activities in their countries and has provided a translation of the EUD Guidelines regarding to non-discrimination in employment. This is considered as a very good example. According to HS also big countries should provide this. She also referred to a project that was set up a few years ago by Spain (CNSE) on access to employment, where only one response had been received.

Germany replied that not all NADs have a big number of staff and therefore have to make choices when ranking priorities. Germany was of the opinion that a lot of information from the 2005 seminar went over the heads of the participants! Germany did not agree that EUD should only provide information and then leave it up to the NADs to use this information in practice. They were of the opinion that this is a partial responsibility and that EUD should have more attention for Deaf people at grassroots level.

HS admitted that there is always room for improvement and suggested to discuss this at Sunday's workshop regarding to the SWOT-analysis. But it has to be kept in mind that EUD has only 1 ½ staff!

LK referred to the Framework programme and said that there is much money available under these programmes. She admitted that it is very difficult to write such programmes but that this proves to be very fruitful! She also asked to support the EUD director in this important work.

12. Amendments to EUD statutes and Internal Rules

KS informed the GA that the EUD Board had worked out a proposal to increase the number of Board members with one more (which would mean 6 instead of the current 5). The adaptation of article 5, Section 1 has been an ongoing discussion.

Greece was of the opinion that the Board should avoid to be composed in an even number. Otherwise the President would be forced to have the last word when there is a tie.

Slovenia feared the lack of continuity if all Board members would step down at the same time. They proposed to have overlapping terms of office. JMcW asked to restrict the discussion on the number of Board members, before discussing other issues.

KS remarked that in fact this was a non-issue, since during all the time he had been in the Board, there never was a voting. Moreover, the President always will have a casting vote whether the number of board members is even or odd.

Sweden referred to the Scandinavian tradition of always having an uneven number of Board members and preferred to have a Board of 7 people.

According to Germany the Board shouldn't change its number of members since Board meetings would become more expensive if the Board should enlarge. Germany also remarked that 5 people are sufficient for the amount of work and added that the Board doesn't have a tradition of deciding by voting. Greece agreed with this and abstained from the proposal to increase the number of Board members until 7 people.

Germany wanted to know whether it would be possible for the GA to make another proposal, as an alternative for the Board's proposal of increasing the number of Board members. Terry RILEY explained that the GA 2004 had given a mandate to the Board to make a proposal, but that it was finally up to the GA to decide upon this item.

KS remarked that if the Board expands with 2 people (to 7 members), this had to be taken into account in the budget, the EC would not automatically give more subsidy to cover for the extra cost. So maybe the number of meetings should decrease.

Greece remarked that a practical problem would occur if the Board would be enlarged with 1 or 2 candidates, since only 5 people stood for election. Germany proposed to expand the Board in a later stadium, when there are enough candidates. KS answered that this discussion is a theoretical one which relates to the statutes and that practical issues should be solved another time.

LK asked to have this item picked up by the new Board and also asked them to work out a proposal regarding the possibility of overlapping terms. This new proposal should be sent out several weeks before GA 2006 in order to give people the chance to think this over.

JMcW asked the GA to vote about the proposal of the Board to expand the Board with one person (6 instead of five Board members).

"ART 5. Section 1. Members, election procedure, and duties

1. The Board shall consist of six (6) ~~five (5)~~ members. "

A clear majority voted against the Board's proposal, so article 5 section 1 will not be amended.

KS asked the approval for a textual replacement in article 5 section 5:

"ART 5. Section 5. Replacement

Should a vacancy occur in the Executive Board, he or she will be replaced at the discretion of the Executive Board. The replacement must come from a Full Member's country. ~~one of the countries of a Full Member.~~ In the event of the office of the President becoming vacant, the position will be automatically filled by the Vice-President. All replacements must be ratified at the next meeting of the General Assembly."

This proposal was accepted by the GA.

Regarding to the Internal Rules, the Board had discussed about changing the "50%+1 rule" in "most votes" and about the obligation to be present in person at the meeting in order to be eligible.

"To be elected a candidate must get a simple majority, that means he/she must get the most votes.

This replaces the following:

~~*have 50% + 1 of the votes casted. However, if there are 3 candidates for the same position, then the candidate with the greatest majority of votes wins.*~~

All candidates for the Board must be present in person at the General Assembly during which the election of the Board takes place. The ballot papers will remind voters to bear in mind the need for gender and geographical balance."

KS explained that the Board has had discussion about changing the "50%+1 rule" into "most votes", but that after all was decided to withdraw this proposal.

Regarding the obligation to be present in person at the meeting in order to be eligible, Norway asked whether it was technically speaking possible that people who attend the GA as observer, would stand for election. KS replied positively, this rule means that all delegates, observers and Board members are eligible.

Sweden observed that people who are physically not able to attend the meeting (cfr nominated person from Denmark, Asger BERGMAN or eg pregnant women) should be enabled to stand for voting. A written statement from the Board of the respective NAD could support their nomination. Subsequently, Sweden asked not to accept the proposal (that persons had to be present in person at the GA to be eligible for the Board).

KS remarked that at GA 2001 it was decided that only *delegates* could be nominated, but afterwards the Board realised that technically Board members are not delegates, so would never be able to stand for re-election.

Greece asked whether this adaptation would have consequences for this year's Board elections or only would come into effect as from the next Board meeting.

JMcW asked the GA to vote upon this Board proposal. The "50%+1" rule had been withdrawn, the proposal about presence in person was voted upon positively and would come into effect as from this year's election.

13. Election of the EUD Board

JMcW proposed that all nominated persons for the EUD Board would introduce themselves in a brief way and would give some explanation regarding their vision on EUD. Afterwards, the GA would have the opportunity to vote for the vacant positions.

Helga STEVENS (Belgium) was the only candidate for the position of **EUD President**. HS introduced herself by saying that she was a lawyer and that she had been elected into the Flemish Parliament. She has been EUD Director for the past 8 years and was of the opinion that she could provide useful assistance as EUD President, in order to ensure continuity for the new Executive Director. She explained that, in her vision, EUD needed to be an organisation with a strong profile: "Empowerment" is the key word; Deaf people need to show that they can manage themselves, without being dictated by hearing persons. She stressed that EUD is a unique organisation, being Deaf led, and she announced she would fight to maintain this.

JMcW asked HS to leave the room for the voting. Helga STEVENS was chosen as the new EUD President, with one vote against.

JMcW thanked KS for his excellent presidency over the past number of years and congratulated HS with her new position. HS promised to continue to serve EUD well over the next 4 years.

Three persons were candidate for the position of **EUD Vice President**. Hungary asked to have a written (secret) ballot. Terry RILEY asked the members of the GA to keep eye on the geographical and gender balance and reminded everyone that ability to communicate in written English was a very important skill.

JMcW clarified once again that only delegates would be allowed to vote!

Adrien PELLETIER (FNSF-France), Ioannis YALLOUROS (HFD-Greece) and Berglind STEFANSDOTTIR (Iceland) were candidate for the position of Vice President. The first voting round was concluded in a tie: since none of the candidates had the required 50%+1-vote a second voting round was necessary. Also the 2nd and 3rd place ended in a tie: after the second vote, Berglind STEFANSDOTTIR had the second place (25 votes / 19 votes for Ioannis YALLOUROS). In the third and concluding vote: Adrien PELLETIER was chosen as Vice-President with 26 votes to the detriment of Berglind STEFANSDOTTIR (17 votes). (1 void vote).

Hungary proposed that the person with the most votes should win (disregarding the 50%+1-vote rule), but KS replied EUD Statutes and Internal Rules had to be followed with regard to the voting procedure.

For the remaining three board seats, only three persons were nominated: Berglind STEFANSDOTTIR, Ioannis YALLOUROS and Kajetana MACIESJKA-ROZAN (Poland), so there was no need to vote. (Asger BERGMAN was not eligible anymore, since he was not present in person).

The new EUD Board was formally accepted by the GA with 5 abstentions and 2 votes against.

14. Motions tabled

MOTION 1 – Submitted by FNSF, France:

“Our National Federation of the Deaf persons of France, on request of Coordination France Deaf Seniors proposes to create a new commission for aged deaf persons in EUD, during general assembly in Luxembourg (May 14 and 15 2005).

Introduction

CFSS: It's a National association under the FNFS, and it means: Coordination France Deaf Seniors. This was declared on June 5, 2001 under the number N°01/2012 in Official Journal of July 1, 2001 N°1623.

The aims of the association are the followings:

defend the moral interests of aged people reached of deafness (or complete cophose or bilateral)

guarantee their social and human protection

promote their moral and cultural blooming

facilitate their access to the means of communication thus spare-time activities

support their steps near the public territorial communities

develop services of Sign Language translators

Actions disperse in two sectors:

Social Sector: (information on social measures in favour of disabled people, interventions, support, placement in establishments of health and pension for aged deaf persons, communication adapted in Signs Language.

Spare-time sector: (to encourage teaching activities, to coordinate cultural exchanges, to promote spare-time, to harmonize travel, to facilitate international exchanges, to develop solidarity actions). This association groups the aged deaf for their spare-time culture – travels and organizes a congress every 2 years, since 2000.

Only one great success on the international level:

“Which Europe for aged Deaf?” was the topic of the 3rd National Congress of aged Deaf and the 1st Congress European, which took place on 20 – 23 May, 2004 in the vast and beautiful “Pavillon Joséphine” in the park of Orangerie in Strasbourg situate in front of European Council, with more than 300 French and European aged deaf.

Mr Pierre ADELIN, president of CFSS raised questions about the future, conditions of pension and the end of life in Europe, with Mr Knud SONDERGAARD, Danish President of EUD (European Union of the Deaf).

Here, we were very happy to receive Mr SONDERGAARD, president of EUD. It was a good opportunity for us. Now Mr SONDERGAARD knows very well our 1st European Congress of aged deaf persons.

He even said that our congress was an example for all aged Deaf persons in Europe. You must know that the population in Europe ages more and more, the deaf persons too.

Projects/Aims:

EUD, European Union of the Deaf persons has concentered aims:

create a commission for aged Deaf persons of Europe, following the example of Commission of young people (EUD there)

define the Commission directives joining deaf leaders of Europe associations in social for create an office

encourage the establishment of national committees of aged deaf for each European country to bring relationship into line

organize an European congress for aged deaf people, every four years

defend the rights of deaf peoples who live in pension to the European Commission of Brussels support exchanges of the aged deaf in Europe."

France explained the aims of this motion.

Sweden thought that EUDS would be a good idea, but at the same time warned that EUD has broad, political objectives. A new federation for elderly people could be set up, but will have to work independently from EUD (cfr EUDY).

Terry RILEY proposed that the new Board would be mandated to work out a proposal with regard to elderly Deaf citizens, in that way the Board could come up with a concrete proposal at next year's GA.

It was unanimously voted that the Board was mandated to follow up on this motion.

15. Report on relations with EDF and EDF activities

KS explained that EDF would have its Annual General Assembly at the end of May 2005 in Barcelona. CAC was nominated for a Board position.

KS also informed the Board that he and HS had been present at the EDF Directors' meeting on 8 April 2005 in Brussels. EDF had originally been created as a balanced two pillar organisation: National Disability Councils and European Non Governmental Organisations (ENGOS). The meeting in April was meant to the balance between the ENGOS and National Disability Councils.

HS observed that Eastern European countries were very active within the disability field. She also shared her concern that parents' organisations were very prominent within this field.

This is ok for people with mental disabilities etc, but EUD will need to be extremely vigilant when it comes to hearing parents who decide for Deaf adults!

Germany remarked that National Disability Councils are increasingly focusing on chronic diseases etc., this to the detriment of traditional disabilities.

HS agreed with this and stated that attention is needed but that she felt that EDF was trying to give very balanced attention. She also remarked that the deaf field is constituted of several different organisations (parents, HOH, EUD etc.), which makes the situation even more difficult. CAC will have the responsibility to show that Deaf people are perfectly capable of representing themselves.

Spain agreed and stated that this diversity is a real threat since this is blocking progression.

Terry RILEY stated that the slogan "Nothing about us, without us!" is perfectly applicable on Deaf issues.

[Note: At the EDF General Assembly in Barcelona (27-29 May 2005) CAC was elected into the EDF Board, as well as in the EDF Executive Committee.]

16. Information from EUDY

Since Thomas PHILIP, EUDY President, could not attend the current EUD GA, Board Member Amilcar MORAIS, former President of EUDY, gave a brief update on EUDY.

He informed the GA that Youth Camps in Portugal and Holland hadn't taken place. Denmark had succeeded to obtain project funding and so a meeting had taken place in August 2004 in Denmark. On that occasion a profile for Board members was drawn, and rules regarding to EUDY GA and organisation of a Youth Camp were set up.

Thomas PHILIP had informed EUD that a Youth Seminar on Higher Education would be organised in Budapest on 20-23 October 2005. This event will be organised in collaboration with the Hungarian Deaf Youth Committee. The EUDY GA will also be organised in Budapest on 22 October 2005.

Hungary added that the preliminary programme has been approved and would be disseminated in the near future.

Ireland informed that the next EUDY Board meeting would take place in Dublin, Ireland. A meeting will also be arranged with the Camp Organisation Committee since Ireland will organise the EuroCamp 2006.

JMcW stressed the importance of a good information flow towards young Deaf people since more and more of them are now mainstreaming.

17. Resolution from the EUD Seminar "United in Diversity (against Discrimination)"

17.1 Resolution

"The participants at the EUD Seminar "United in Diversity (Against Discrimination)", held on 13 May 2005, and the delegates at the EUD General Assembly meeting, held on 14 May 2005 in Luxembourg, call upon:

- *The United Nations and the member states to **continue** with the drafting of the proposed UN International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, **incorporating** the specific needs of Deaf people and children whose first or preferred language is a national **sign language**. When the drafting process is completed, all the member states of the UN General Assembly must adopt, and the member states ratify and implement the proposed UN International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;*
- *The Council of Europe to organise an international conference on sign languages, according to the Reply adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 June 2004 (at the 188th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies), in response to the Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1598 (2003) on the protection of sign languages in the member states of the Council of Europe; and to act upon the findings presented at this international conference;*
- *The European Commission and the EU Council of Ministers must now move forward to adopt a comprehensive non-discrimination directive protecting Deaf and disabled people against discrimination in all spheres of life;*
- *The European Union of the Deaf along with the member Deaf Associations to continue building relations with and lobbying the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Union and the governments of the member states to ensure that the rights and needs of Deaf people are not ignored, in collaboration with the World Federation of the Deaf, National Deaf Associations, the European Disability Forum, and other NGOs."*

The EUD General Assembly adopted this resolution.

HS added that the approved Resolution would be sent out to all above mentioned organisations.

17.2 Non-discrimination project Austria

Austria explained that ÖGLB has been very active in the area of non-discrimination. After consultations with several legal experts, a project had been set up in order to collect real life examples of discrimination.

Unfortunately, they initially received a very low responses reaction. So they had started to search for a new approach: 2 members of each of the five regional Deaf associations had been educated and trained by ÖGLB to become "appointee for discrimination". ÖGLB had invited trainers from the field of discrimination, law and racism to make sure that the appointees became up-to-date and firm in their field. The small group collected cases of discriminations against Deaf people and their language and then wrote a report. In May 2005 the first Austrian Sign Language communities' Discrimination Report was presented. The presentation of this report was featured on Austrian television and in several daily newspapers. Also it was sent to every Austrian Member of Parliament in order to make sure that also hearing politicians would become more aware of discrimination against Deaf.

ÖGLB had also booked success with regard to airline policies: thanks to their constant struggle, Austrian Airlines had agreed to change its regulations for disabled customers and passengers. Large groups of deaf persons are now allowed to travel without an escort or assistant and disabled passengers do not need to fill in special forms anymore. Furthermore the security video has been expanded to include International Sign.

Austria also informed that recently a second generation of Deaf appointees for discrimination from all over Austria had been trained and that they are working on a next report. They added that they are willing to relate their experience to other members of the Deaf community.

18. Workshops

18.1 SWOT-analysis

JMcW informed the GA that the EUD Board had already conducted a SWOT-analysis and that this workshop was aimed at completing this analysis with comments from delegates and observers. This information is extremely important for EUD in order to have a clear overview on the workplan and vision.

Austria remarked that it would be better to explain first more clearly what a SWOT-analysis is.

CAC clarified the goal of a SWOT analysis: **Strengths** (what we have), **Opportunities** (to enhance **strengths**, to improve weaknesses), **Weaknesses** (what we don't have) and **Threats** (to erase strengths, danger for more weakness).

CAC proposed to discuss the bullet list and after each category to give the floor to participants.

<p><u>STRENGTHS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ member associations ○ political influence in Europe ○ EU recognises EUD ○ SL promotion ○ SL recognition ○ website/EUD Update ○ high/clear profile ○ good network ○ transactional expertise ○ clear identity ○ seminars/conferences/projects ○ democratic organization (cf voting at AGA) ○ self controlled OF deaf people ○ EDF/WFD membership ○ clear policy ○ board representation ○ Deaf awareness 	<p><u>OPPORTUNITIES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use EU recognition for funds ○ SL recognition/legislation ○ enlargement/new members ○ seminars ○ network outside deaf field, apart from disability field (cf politics) ○ ICT ○ SL promotion ○ International Signs (ASL) ○ youth knowledge of English ○ educated Deaf people ○ fundraising ○ EUD update ○ CoE Social Charter ○ Directive 2000/78/EC ○ Amsterdam Treaty art. 13 ○ UN Standard Rules ○ UN Disability Convention ○ membership EDF/WFD ○ individual membership (support, sponsorship) ○ fundraising
<p><u>WEAKNESSES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bad information and communication with/in NADs ○ no permanent finances ○ not enough staff ○ not enough communication EDF/WFD ○ staff training ○ grassroots ignorance ○ EU commission demands ○ written language ○ not enough money ○ not enough volunteers ○ instability in NADs ○ dissemination of information ○ not multilingual ○ don't use ICT enough ○ member fee differs ○ videophone 	<p><u>THREATS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ money cuts any time ○ (low) long term stability in staff ○ lack of contact with grassroots – legitimacy? ○ parents/doctors ○ EDF controlled by parents and national disability organisations ○ little continuity in delegates ○ "old" minds ○ splitting in deaf group ○ language ○ instability in NADs ○ education/employment

LK added awareness of SL issues and Deaf awareness as one of the **strengths** of EUD.

Sweden remarked that ICT was an EUD **weakness**. The EUD office should start to seek for funding to buy videophone equipment.

Germany mentioned that NADs were very heterogeneous: some associations (eg Spain) have a number of staff, while others (eg Germany) only have a staff of 2 people. They also remarked that the contact between EUD and grassroots Deaf people was very weak.

Cyprus brought up the issue of equal representation in disability organisations. EDF and other organisations should amend their statutes in a way that Deaf people cannot be excluded from Board positions.

Austria asked not to focus on weaknesses only, but also to have an eye on strengths and opportunities.

LK observed that management and leadership skills needed to be developed further.

The Netherlands intervened by saying that Youth was a very important topic.

Ireland raised the issue that the future of the Deaf Community could be in jeopardy (**threats**) because of bio-ethics (CI, genetics, etc) and mainstreaming. They also observed that many Deaf individuals are often ignorant and apathetic towards political work; this causes a lack of unity towards the governments.

Germany added that there is a lack of competence and of legal expertise and awareness about what is going on at EU level.

Sweden and Malta stressed the important link between good education and employment and referred to the modern society where higher skilled jobs automatically resolve in higher requirements.

It was pointed out that "old minds" referred to the fact that EUD is still depending on EU funding and that it was thought extremely important to look for other ways of funding (eg project funding).

Terry RILEY remarked that mainstreaming in society is an important keyword. Attitude and behaviour towards Deaf people are changing but maybe it is also good to see this as an opportunity and not only as a threat.

Germany observed that the wide knowledge of ASL among Deaf youngsters could be considered as an **opportunity**. CAC agreed with this but at the same time warned that we **must not** give people the impression that there exists such a thing as international sign language.

Terry RILEY was of the opinion that individual membership should be stimulated.

LK stated that we have to think in a positive manner: we should think how to turn these threats into opportunities. Eg EUD can use research and knowledge to give information to doctors and parents and thus use this threat in a positive way.

Sweden remarked that EUD should start to think about selling EUD merchandise.

The issue was also raised that interpretation services could be at the same time a strength and a weakness. France added that the concept of Sign Language User would allow hearing people to become part of the Deaf Community; this can be both an opportunity as well as a threat.

HH warned that a SWOT-analysis can be conducted on two levels: on EUD itself and on the Deaf Community in general.

Sweden observed that EUD and NADs are working together to serve Deaf individuals in society. Although few people are interested in doing political work, discriminated individuals should be able to turn to their NAD when necessary. So NADs should also learn of this analysis; they are responsible for advocacy work!

LK pointed out that EUD consists of NADs and that this is a huge strength.

Terry RILEY added that EUD and NADs have to be considered as complementary. Individual grassroots members cannot lobby at EU political level, but EUD can, so there is an indirect link between them.

Germany highlighted that the information flow from EUD should be used on national level in order to make NADs stronger.

CAC concluded by saying that the information gathered in this workshop would be used to make a concrete action plan and will be put on the website in the near future. At next year's GA the outcome of the SWOT-analysis will be an agenda point on its own, after have gone through the new EUD Board.

JMcW closed this first workshop by summarizing that information is a key word for EUD and asked NADS to provide support for CAC for his political lobbying work.

18.2 Deaf vs Sign Language User?

At GA 2004 France asked to have a discussion about the concept of Sign Language User (abbreviation: "SL User").

France started off by asking if participants felt that the word "SL User" is overlapping with the use of the term "**Deaf Community**" or whether they felt these were two different concepts. Should we stop talking about EUD and start talking about EUSL?

They went on by saying that Northern countries seem to be more respectful, while France is quite hesitating about the use of this concept.

JMcW proposed to give the floor to Finland and the United Kingdom, as they have more experience regarding to this matter.

According to LK (**Finland**) this discussion had already started in her country in 1995. In the revised Constitution was mentioned that "the rights of SL users were to be protected by Law", nowhere within this text the word "Deaf" has been mentioned.

The Department of Justice had set up several working groups and considered SL Users as a linguistic-cultural group. In several laws and areas the concept of SL users was dealt with; *education* (SL research, SL council, requirements for SL curriculum, multilingualism at Deaf schools), *vocational training* (to give and to receive instruction in SL – from primary school until university), *the setting up of a Master in SL*, *the provision of information in SL* (eg accessible parliamentary website, accessible information on real estate).

LK continued that a lot of things had been achieved within these 10 years, but underlined that there was still a long way to go. Associations of SL users should motivate people to learn SL in an early state, especially family members.

She also remarked that some Deaf Clubs have changed their names into SL Clubs, but that there was a lot of hesitancy on this point because this is considered to have large impact on identity. However, for young people this whole discussion seems to be a non-issue.

The UK started off by saying that BDA had recently changed its name into SL Community. It was however observed as extremely important that Deaf people should have ownership of their own language and should get instruction in this language. Bilingualism is considered as the way to social inclusion. Also cooperation with hearing SL users is acknowledged; eg. BSL is instructed by Deaf teachers, hearing people can only have a supporting role in this.

Also towards the government people are lobbying for a paradigm shift from impaired people to language minority. It is important to stress in this fact that SL is not a tool, but a language in its own right! BSL has been officially recognised in the UK in 2003 but people are still waiting for concrete results.

It was remarked that the Disability Discrimination Act in itself is a very good Law but that this isn't sufficient to give Deaf people full rights. Lobbying for a BSL Act should be continued.

Sweden intervened by saying that their country is also working towards the same objectives as Finland but until now there is no place for languages in their laws. Swedish SL has a very strong place in society but has a very weak legal position. Legal protection however exists, but only in a very fragmented way. A working group has been set up to bring together all texts of the different regulations.

They added that Deafness can be seen from three angles: a language perspective, a disability perspective and an integration perspective. It is found extremely important to fight for an equal status of Swedish Sign Language, this would be an enormous statement.

Germany was of the opinion that SL is a language of Deaf people. Hearing (non-CODA) people can sign but SL can never be considered as their mother language. Germany feared for oppression by hearing people who would take over SL.

LK remarked that in Finland there are mainly three groups: self identified SL users (mother tongue or first language), second language users and elderly deaf people who cannot fluently sign.

WFD has chosen to work within the disability movement, but at the same time requires recognition for the group of people for whom SL rights are basic.

Generally it was felt that in Europe time is ready to shift away from the medical perspective of deafness, in contrary to some parts of the rest of the world.

France pointed out that the Deaf Community and SL Community have in common that they use SL, but that the difference between them consists in the fact that the Deaf Community has primary a common identity and secondary the use of SL, while the SL Community primarily focuses on the language and not on the identity.

Ireland remarked that in the past, IDS was not ready for recognition as SL users. However, time becomes more and more ready and there exists a willingness to open up. At the SL March a few months earlier 70% of the people were Deaf, while 30% of the group consisted out of parents, CODAs etc.

Cyprus noted their fear that the Deaf Community is only a small community, which will be possibly wiped away in 10 years due to the medicalisation of deafness.

HH added that in the USA and Canada hearing people use signs with their hearing children because it is believed that this causes a raise in IQ. She remarked that it is a paradox when at the same time Deaf children are forced to get cochleair implants and are learned not to sign.

Spain concluded by saying that the Spanish government is quite hesitant to change the shift towards SL users because they fear that legal recognition could lead to demands of rights by a broader group of people.

19. Any other business

Spain announced that the main organising committee of the WFD 15th World Congress had approved upon the logo, the poster and the theme. The "Human Rights through Sign Language" conference will take place in Spain on 16-22 July 2007.

Also the registration fees and the programme already had been approved.

Spain added that major support had been received from national, regional and local governments and that also Fundacion ONCE and major private companies are supporting the event.

Belgium asked for some speaking time in order to clarify the political situation in Belgium and its repercussions on the Deaf Associations over there. Belgium explained that there are two Deaf Associations, Fevlado (Federation of Flemish Deaf Organisations) and FFSB (Fédération Francophone de Sourds Belge). The Belgian Deaf National Federation was dissolved because it was not funded by the national Belgian government. Instead Fevlado and FFSB had made and signed a formal agreement outlining clearly their roles and responsibilities via-à-vis EUD and WFD. Thus at EU and international level, they would

continue to cooperate and represent Belgium together. This had been accepted by EUD and WFD. Belgium would always send two persons to international meetings (one from Fevlado and one from FFSB).

Switzerland stressed the importance of video technology for Deaf people. Since spoken languages are a real communication barrier, the need to communicate fluently in sign language/s is urgent. Switzerland has brought equipment to demonstrate the use of this means of communication. For more information Switzerland (Roland Hermann) or JMcW can be contacted.

Austria remarked that they had launched a positive image campaign for Deaf people and Austrian Sign Language: the turquoise ribbon demonstrates a positive attitude towards Sign Language and the Deaf community. Over 2000 ribbons have been sold and public awareness is for sure rising.

Observer Françoise CHASTEL asked for some speaking time to inform all attendants about the first European and Mediterranean Deaf Sommet which will take place on 10-12 November 2005 in Montpellier, France. EUD will arrange a part of the programme in order to celebrate its 20th Anniversary.

Ms CHASTEL said she had contacted Croatia, Slovenia, Malta, Greece, Portugal, Spain, France, Italy and Cyprus and expressed her hope that this conference would become a Southern equivalent for the Nordic Council.

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JMcW thanked everyone for this interesting GA and especially expressed his gratitude towards the EUD staff and interpreters. A special expression of thanks was addressed to the EUD Board and more particularly to KS, who had been EUD President for a number of years.

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KS closed this 20th General Assembly by thanking everyone. He also especially wished the new EUD Board all the best.

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Minutes drafted by Karin VAN PUYENBROECK, EUD Administrator on 15.05.2005.

Revised by Craig CROWLEY, EUD Executive Director on 11.7.05 and Helga STEVENS, EUD President on 07.07.2005.

Revised by the Secretariat on X following amendments proposed by Members and the decisions of the Board.

Final revision on X by X.

C2/EUD FILES/EUD04-05/EUD GA/draft minutes15.07

EUD GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2005:

MOTIONS

EUD has received one motion for the EUD GA 2005. This is listed below.

MOTION 1 – submitted by FNSF, France

“Our National Federation of the Deaf persons of France, on request of Coordination France Deaf Seniors proposes to create a new commission for aged deaf persons in EUD, during general assembly in Luxembourg (May 14 and 15 2005).

Introduction

CFSS: It's a National association under the FNFS, and it means: Coordination France Deaf Seniors. This was declared on June 5, 2001 under the number N°01/2012 in Official Journal of July 1, 2001 N°1623.

The aims of the association are the followings:

- defend the moral interests of aged people reached of deafness (or complete cophose or bilateral)
- guarantee their social and human protection
- promote their moral and cultural blooming
- facilitate their access to the means of communication thus spare-time activities
- support their steps near the public territorial communities
- develop services of Sign Language translators

Actions disperse in two sectors:

- 1) **Social Sector:** (information on social measures in favour of disabled people, interventions, support, placement in establishments of health and pension for aged deaf persons, communication adapted in Signs Language.
- 2) **Spare-time sector:** (to encourage teaching activities, to coordinate cultural exchanges, to promote spare-time, to harmonize travel, to facilitate international exchanges, to develop solidarity actions). This association groups the aged deaf for their spare-time culture – travels and organizes a congress every 2 years, since 2000.

Only one great success on the international level:

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EUD GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2005:

MOTIONS

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- 1) create a commission for aged Deaf persons of Europe, following the example of Commission of young people (EUD there)
- 2) define the Commission directives joining deaf leaders of Europe associations in social for create an office
- 3) encourage the establishment of national committees of aged deaf for each European country to bring relationship into line
- 4) organize an European congress for aged deaf people, every four years
- 5) defend the rights of deaf peoples who live in pension to the European Commission of Brussels
- 6) support exchanges of the aged deaf in Europe."