



EUROPEAN UNION
OF THE DEAF



Impact Report 2023

Acknowledgements

Based in Brussels, Belgium, EUD is a not-for-profit European non-Governmental organisation (NGO) whose members comprise of National Associations of the Deaf (NADs).

CERV Work Programme

EUD would like to thank the European Commission for funding this 2023 Impact Report under the Citizens, Equality, Rights, and Values (CERV) Work Programme. Without their substantial financial contributions, the publication of this report would not have been possible. In this report, with the support of the EUD Board and President, an accurate and up-to-date account of the activities in 2023 is provided. Our member associations are at the heart of our work and we thank them for assisting and co-operating with us throughout the year.

Throughout 2023, we have worked closely with the European Disability Forum (EDF), the European disability umbrella organisation, who have been a great partner in all our work. They have kept us informed on all relevant policy updates and collaborated with our Board and staff via email and in person - in and outside of Brussels. In support of our advocacy work, we have been in contact with several Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and other relevant stakeholders. We aspire to continue this fruitful co-operation in the coming years.

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2023.



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Foreword

Greetings to all our members and supporters of the European Union of the Deaf (EUD), as we reflect on the significant milestones of 2023.

This year, we gathered for our General Assembly in the beautiful city of Stockholm, Sweden. The General Assembly remains a cornerstone of our organisation, providing us with the opportunity to come together, discuss pressing issues, and chart the course for the future. In Stockholm, we continued our mission to advocate for the rights and inclusion of deaf people across Europe. It is at events like these that we reaffirm our commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the principles of the EU's Citizens, Equality, Rights, and Values (CERV) programme.

One of the noteworthy achievements of 2023 is the progress made in the implementation of the European Disability Card. EUD has been diligently working to ensure that this card, designed to facilitate accessibility and the freedom of movement for persons with disabilities across the EU, becomes as accessible for and inclusive of deaf EU citizens as possible. We remain committed to advocating for the best possible policy and measures that enhance the lives of deaf

people, empowering them to participate fully in society. On a bittersweet note, we bid farewell to a dear colleague and friend, Mark Wheatley, who has dedicated an incredible 16 years of his life to EUD as our Executive Director. Mark's unwavering commitment and contributions to the work of EUD have left a valuable mark on our organisation. We express our deepest gratitude for his tireless efforts and wish him all the best in his future endeavors. As we navigate the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in 2024, EUD stands strong in its mission. We continue to champion the right to use indigenous national sign languages, advocate for empowerment through communication and information through national sign languages, and push for equality for deaf people throughout Europe. To close, I would like to extend my appreciation to all members, partners, and supporters of EUD who make our work possible. Together, we are creating a more inclusive and accessible Europe for deaf people, one step at a time. Here's to a year of progress, collaboration, and positive change.



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EUD President, Sofia Isari



EUD President Sofia Isari and European Commissioner for Equality, Helena Dalli, at the European Day of Persons with Disabilities 2023 in Brussels.



EUD President Sofia Isari at the Balkan Women's Seminar, Kranjska Gora, Slovenia, 9-12 November 2023.



EUD President Sofia Isari's participation marks a significant step towards equality and non-discrimination for deaf women, Milan, March 8th, 2023.

Introduction

European Union of the Deaf

Based in Brussels, Belgium, EUD is a not-for-profit European non-governmental organisation (NGO) comprising National Associations of the Deaf (NADs). It is the only supranational organisation representing deaf people at European level and is one of the few NGOs representing associations from all of the 27 EU Member States, in addition to Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and the UK. National Association of the Deaf in acceding, candidate and potential member countries can choose to be affiliated members with the option of becoming full members as soon as they officially enter the EU.

EUD aims to establish and maintain EU-level dialogues with its relative institutions and officials, in consultation and co-operation with its member NADs.

EUD is a full member of the European Disability Forum (EDF) and a Regional Co-operating Member of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) to tackle issues of global importance. Moreover, it also has participatory status with the Council of Europe (CoE).

EUD also has signed memorandums of understanding with the European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (efsl), the European Union of the Deaf Youth (EUDY), the European Deaf Sports Organisation (EDSO), the European Deafblind Union (EDbU), European Deaf Students Union (EDSU) and the European Network of Sign Language Teachers (ENSLT). Since 2017, it has held special consultative status with the United Nations.



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Full Members

- Austria** – Österreichischer Gehörlosenbund (ÖGLB)
- Belgium** – Doof Vlaanderen & Fédération Francophone des Sourds de Belgique (FFSB)
- Bulgaria** – Съюз на глухите в България (СГБ / UDB)
- Croatia** – Hrvatski savez gluhih inagluhih (HSGN)
- Cyprus** – Ομοσπονδία Κωφών Κύπρου
- Czech Republic** – Svaz neslyšících a nedoslýchavých v ČR (SNNČR)
- Denmark** – Danske Døves Landsforbund (DDL)
- Estonia** – Eesti Kurtide Liit (EKL)
- Finland** – Kuurojen Liitto (FAD)
- France** – Fédération Nationale des Sourds de France (FNSF)
- Germany** – Deutscher Gehörlosen-Bund (DGB)
- Greece** – Ομοσπονδία Κωφών Ελλάδος (HFD)
- Hungary** – Siketek és Nagyothallók Országos Szövetsége (SINOSZ)
- Iceland** – Félag heyrnarlausra
- Ireland** – Irish Deaf Society (IDS)
- Italy** – Ente Nazionale Sordi (ENS)
- Latvia** – Latvijas Nedzirdīgo savienība (LNS)
- Lithuania** – Lietuvos kurčiųjų draugija (LKD)
- Luxembourg** – Solidarität mit Hörgeschädigten
- Malta** – Għaqda Persuni Neqsin mis-Smigh
- Netherlands** – Dovenschap
- Norway** – Norges Døveforbund (NDF)
- Poland** – Polski Związek Głuchych (PZG)
- Portugal** – Federação Portuguesa das Associações de Surdos (FPAS)
- Romania** – Asociația Națională a Surzilor din România (ANSR)
- Slovakia** – Asociácia nepočujúcich Slovenska (ANEPS)
- Slovenia** – Zveza društev gluhih in naglušnih Slovenije (ZDGNS)
- Spain** – Confederación Estatal de Personas Sordas (CNSE)
- Sweden** – Sveriges Dövas Riksförbund (SDR)
- Switzerland** – Schweizerischen Gehörlosenbund, Fédération Suisse des Sourds, Federazione Svizzera dei Sordi (SGB-FSS)
- United Kingdom** – British Deaf Association (BDA)

Affiliated member

- Ukraine** – Ukrainian Society of the Deaf (UTOG)

Board Members



Sofia Isari
EUD President
Greece



Ronit Laquerrière-Leven
EUD Vice President
France



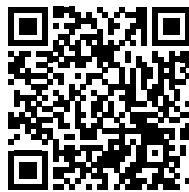
David Buxton
EUD Board Member
United Kingdom



Paal Richard Peterson
EUD Board Member
Norway



Andy Van Hoorebeke
EUD Board Member
Belgium



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Staff Members



Mark Wheatley
Executive Director
United Kingdom



Martyna Albaret
Policy Manager
Lithuania



David Hay
Communication and
Media Manager
United Kingdom



Frankie Picron
Project Manager
Belgium



Charlotte Olhausen
Policy Officer
Ireland



Marta Eusepi
Project Officer
Italy



Davy Van Landuyt
Project Officer
Belgium



Rehana Omardeen
Project Officer
Trinidad and Tobago



Alexandre Bloxs
Policy Manager
Belgium



Sara Palmeria
Administration and
Finance Officer
Portugal



Fabio Calzati
Policy and Communication
Assistant
Italy



Mission Statement

It is the core mission of EUD to promote, advance and protect the rights of and opportunities for deaf people in the European Union to ensure they can become full citizens in their own right. These key values are also mirrored in the daily work of its Brussels headquarters.

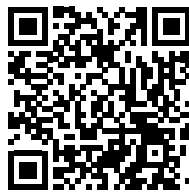
The office provides a fully accessible signing environment with international staff from many different countries across the EU. Most staff are deaf sign language users and all hearing staff must know or learn one national sign language as well as International Sign. Intersectionality and gender equality are also taken into account in all employment policies and when organising events and speakers.

To achieve equality in both public and private life for deaf people, EUD has laid out three main long-term objectives:

Recognition of the right to use an indigenous sign language;

Empowerment through communication and information; and

Equality in education and employment.



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Board Meetings



→ Athens	→ Stockholm	→ Madrid	→ Brussels
18 March 2023	24 May 2023	07 October 2023	02 December 2023

→ Summary

In 2023, the four quarterly board meetings of EUD took place in Athens, Greece; Stockholm, Sweden; Madrid, Spain; and Brussels, Belgium. These strategic gatherings continue to be instrumental in fostering European-wide cooperation among deaf communities. Alongside the General Assembly, these meetings remain the bedrock of EUD’s democratic structure, facilitating crucial discussions and decision-making processes that drive our mission forward.



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General Assembly 2023

Stockholm, Sweden

We are thrilled to share the key highlights from the recent EUD General Assembly, workshops, and seminar held in Stockholm from 25th – 27th May. This remarkable event was made possible by the unwavering dedication and active participation of our esteemed delegates – National Associations of the Deaf.

Workshops focused on three vital themes: Sign Language Machine Translation, Data Collection, and the European Pillar of Social Rights. Participants engaged in enlightening discussions, sharing their expertise and exploring innovative solutions. In partnership with the Swedish National Association of the Deaf, we organised a

thought-provoking seminar addressing the rights of deaf people to Community Support. This seminar emphasized the intersectionality within the deaf community, covering topics such as gender-based violence, BIPOC experiences, mental health, and specific communication requirements in national sign languages.

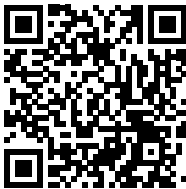
We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Swedish National Association of the Deaf for their invaluable support and collaboration during our time in Stockholm. Their contribution significantly contributed to the success of this event.

Webinars

The aim of EUD webinars is to strengthen the capacity of national member organisations – NADs - to enable them to actively contribute to the implementation of the European Disability Rights Strategy 2021-2030, the United Nations

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD), the European Pillar of Social Rights and other relevant policies and initiatives.

Topic	Date
1. EU Disability Card for Deaf persons	28 February
2. Human Rights & UN Convention of Persons with Disabilities	17 March
3. Data Collection workshop	25 May
4. Human Rights & Equality	26 May
5. Using the European Pillar of Social Rights to achieve the highest standard of health	06 October
6. Achieving Deaf Rights via the EU Semester Framework	07 December



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European Parliament

The European Parliament (EP) is an important forum for political debate and decision- making at the EU level. The Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are directly elected by voters in all Member States to represent people’s interests with regards to EU law- making and to ensure other EU institutions are working democratically.

5th European Parliament of People with Disabilities

On 23rd May 2023, the 5th European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities (EPPD) took place, where more than 600 disability advocates discussed advancing Disability Rights in the EU. The European Disability Forum (EDF) presented their “Manifesto on the 2024 European Elections“ focusing on the right to vote, accessibility (including the legal recognition of 30 national sign languages at the EU level), and informed voting for voters with disabilities. The EPPD had three main sessions covering topics such as freedom of movement, combatting inequality and social exclusion, and disability-inclusive resilience. EUD Vice-President, Ms. Ronit Laquerrière-Leven, made an intervention highlighting that deaf people face barriers due to the lack of information in national sign languages and urged the EU to legally recognise the 30 EU National Sign Languages as official languages on an equal foot with the 24 EU spoken languages. EUD also called for strong regulation on the European Disability Card to address communication barriers for deaf people.

EUD took opportunity of this crucial event to release a written statement with the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), the European Deafblind Union (EDbU) and the National Associations of the Deaf (NADs) highlighting that one of the major challenges faced by deaf people in the EU is the lack of information delivered or available in their national sign languages and the limited opportunities to communicate through their preferred languages. This stems from the lack of legal recognition of the EU 30 National Sign Languages by the EU. This is further exacerbated for deafblind people who solely rely on personal tactile-sign interpreters to communicate and access their surrounding environment. The EU does not recognise the right to tactile-sign interpretation either. We emphasise the additional discriminations deaf people with intersecting identities face and condemn all forms of discrimination.



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EUD Board and WFD President and staff exemplifying partnership and shared vision in advocacy for the deaf community.



EUD Vice-President Ronit Laquerrière-Leven’s impactful intervention on sign language equality at the European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities.



Dr. Humberto Insolera, of EDF’s Executive Committee, expertly moderates the European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities conference.

European Parliament

Sakharov Prize Ceremony

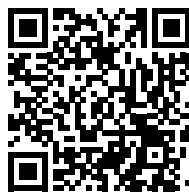
EUD was invited to attend the prestigious Sakharov Prize Ceremony in Strasbourg on 13th December 2023. The event, organised annually by the European Parliament, honors individuals and groups who have dedicated their lives to defending human rights and freedom of thought.

EUD President, Sofia Isari, Vice President, Ronit Laquerrière-Leven, and Executive Director, Mark Wheatley, representing EUD, were prominent attendees at this year's ceremony. Their presence signified the EUD's unwavering commitment to championing the rights and inclusion of deaf individuals across Europe. The EUD's participation in such high-profile events aligns with its mission to ensure

equality for deaf people in all aspects of life, including the right to use indigenous sign languages.

The ceremony served as a platform for EUD to reiterate the importance of inclusivity in all spheres of society.

The EUD's presence at the Sakharov Prize Ceremony was a symbolic and strategic step towards fostering collaborations with other human rights defenders. By uniting with other participants and organisations, EUD aims to amplify its voice and efforts in safeguarding the human rights of deaf people.



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European Commission

European Day of Persons with Disabilities

This year, the EU Commission's European Day of Persons with Disabilities (EDPD) took place from 30th November to 1st December 2023. The event included presentations from disability advocates, delegates from the EU Commission, and organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs).

This year's theme focused on the right to vote and run for elections, particularly in the context of the upcoming 2024 European elections.

A significant moment at the event was the intervention made by EUD President, Ms. Sofia Isari, who highlighted the legal and administrative barriers faced by deaf people with regards to their right to vote, notably the lack of funding for national sign language interpreters and recognition of sign languages as full languages.

The EDPD also explored the employment of individuals with disabilities and strategies to reduce the Disability Employment Gap in Europe. Mr. Jakub Hrkal from Eurostat discussed the strategy for disability data collection, emphasising the inclusion of disability types and barriers in Eurostat's

social surveys. He also announced the upcoming launch of a new website on disability statistics, an initiative closely monitored by the EUD.

EUD Board member, Mr. Paal Richard Peterson, stressed the need for upskilling opportunities in national sign languages and called for disaggregated data collection based on disability type and with consideration given to the multiple and intersecting identities.

The event coincided with the EU Parliament's first ever Disability Rights Week, featuring various disability-focused meetings and discussions. The EUD participated in several of these, including hearings on harmful practices towards women and girls with disabilities and discussions on the EU Disability Card.

As the EU Commission gears up for its next initiatives for the EU Disability Rights Strategy (2025-2030), the EUD continues to advocate for the legal recognition of its 30 national sign languages at the EU level, emphasising the political priority this action deserves.



CRPD

EUD aims to ensure that the UN CRPD is meaningfully implemented at the EU and national levels for deaf persons in the EU.

Support for National Associations of the Deaf (NADs)

The UNCRPD Committee’s review of Germany and Austria on August 14, 2023, in Geneva led to significant Concluding Observations. Concluding Observations are recommendations based on the evaluation of the state of play of the implementation of the UN CRPD by its States Parties. They play a crucial role in shaping the policies and practices related to the rights of persons with disabilities, including deaf people. In preparation for the review of Germany and Austria by the CRPD Committee taking place at the UN Headquarters in Geneva, EUD took proactive steps to support its members, Österreichischer Gehörlosenbund (ÖGLB) and Deutscher Gehörlosen-Bund e.V. (DGB). The training was delivered by the EUD Policy Manager in August 2024.

The training was an excellent opportunity for EUD to provide guidance and expertise on how to best share the perspective of deaf people by individually engaging with members of the CRPD Committee. This would enable the requirements of deaf people to figure in the Concluding Observations, which are recommendations given by the CRPD Committee to States Parties on the priorities to undertake to implement the CRPD at the national level. During the training, delegates from (NADs Austria and Germany) could exchange their previous experiences in engaging with the CRPD Committee. This exchange allowed them to learn from each other’s successes and challenges, thereby enhancing their collective capacity to advocate for the rights of deaf people on an international stage.



CRPD

UNCRPD Webinar

In March 2023, EUD held a Webinar titled “Deaf perspectives on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” on a hybrid format in Athens, Greece. The purpose of this webinar was to provide insights and information on how the Convention can be a crucial tool to achieve the full linguistic human rights of deaf people to their national sign language.

Operating with a bottom-up approach, the webinar collected experiences and good-practices from five European countries,

namely Belgium, France, Greece, Norway and the United Kingdom where the panellists highlighted the achievements and pitfalls of their countries to achieve the rights of deaf people through the CRPD. Several crucial topics such as the rights to quality and inclusive education, the legal recognition of national sign languages, the dual identity of deaf people as part of both the disability movement and the cultural and linguistic minority movement, accessibility, and community-based support to achieve full linguistic human rights.

COSP

Every year, the Conference of State Parties to the CRPD (COSP) is taking place in June at the UN Headquarters in New York City. The COSP serves as a platform gathering delegates from States Parties to the CRPD and Civil Society Organisations’ representatives to discuss the priorities to meaningfully implement the Convention. Thanks to its UNECOSOC Consultative Status, EUD contributed to the General Debate of the Conference through its cooperating partner, the World Federation of the Deaf. The theme of the 2023 COSP General Debate was: “Harmonizing national policies and strategies with the CRPD: achievements and challenges”

The aim of EUD’s contribution was to remind the European Union of its obligations – as State Party to the Convention – to legally recognise the 30 EU National Sign Languages as EU official languages, as per Article 21(e) CRPD. In fact, the challenges encountered by deaf people to their full inclusion in all areas of society in the EU through their national sign languages is caused by a structural lack of recognition of the full linguistic status of National Sign Languages by the EU. Such legal recognition would be a step forward to the achievement of the full linguistic human rights of deaf people in the EU and the achievement of a Union of Equality.

EU Disability Rights Strategy 2021 – 2030

EUD supports the implementation of the European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021- 2030 (ESRPD) to ensure it is ambitiously implemented for deaf persons in the EU.

The ESRPD was adopted in 2021. It contains a number of actions that the EU and its Member States must undertake to implement the UNCRPD at the EU and national levels. EUD welcomed this important initiative in 2021 and continued advocating for and supporting its ambitious implementation in 2023.

In 2023, EUD supported the implementation of the activities planned until the end of 2023 and prepared for the future actions of the ESRPD. We ensured all initiatives and outputs of the Strategy were developed by consulting EUD, taking into account deaf rights and being ambitiously implemented for deaf persons in the EU, especially for deaf women and girls as well as deaf persons with intersecting identities.

For NADs to understand the ESRPD and its role when implementing the UN CRPD, EUD developed a toolkit. The toolkit provides an in-depth outline of the actions foreseen for the upcoming years and provides guidance on how NADs can play an active role when implementing the Strategy. Moreover, the ESRPD includes seven flagship initiatives. In 2023, EUD was an active player with regards to a number of flagship initiatives within the Strategy.

EUD & flagships initiatives of the EU Disability Rights Strategy 2021 – 2030

→
**EU
Disability
Platform**

→
**AccessibleEU
Centre**

→
**Disability
Employment
Package**

→
**European
Disability
Card**

→
**EU
Disability
Platform**

One of the flagship initiatives of the ESRPD is the establishment of the new Disability Platform. The European Commission fulfilled this commitment and established the Disability Platform at the end of 2021, replacing the High-Level Group on Disability.

The European Disability Platform supports the implementation of the ESRPD as well as national disability strategies. It brings together national UN CRPD focal points, organisations of persons with disabilities and the European Commission. The online presence of the Disability Platform contains information on its meetings, activities, analysis, and country information, including promotion of accessible and inclusive good practices. As of 2021, EUD has been a member of the EU Disability Platform.

In 2022, EUD attended and actively participated in each of the three meetings of the EU Disability Platform. EUD also participated in the ad hoc meeting on Ukraine organised by the EU Disability Platform to discuss the support for persons with disabilities in Ukraine. The first meeting took place in February, the second one in June, and the last meeting took place in October.

Moreover, in 2022 the EU Disability Platform established three sub-groups on the following flagship initiatives of the ESRPD: the AccessibleEU Centre, the EU Disability Card, and the Disability Employment Package to improve labour market outcomes for persons with disabilities. EUD, as a member of each of the three subgroups, actively participated in and contributed to the work of the sub-groups ensuring that the deaf perspective is included when designing policies or planning upcoming actions.



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**AccessibleEU
Centre**

Another important flagship of the ESRPD is the establishment of the AccessibleEU Centre. The initiative for the Centre was launched in 2022 and aims to support the implementation of EU accessibility legislation by facilitating access to relevant knowledge, best practices, and resources.

Prior to the establishment of the Centre, EUD provided input to the EU Commission on how to ensure that the work of the Centre focuses on the topics that are important for the deaf community when ensuring accessibility. 2023 stemmed with the official launch of the AccessibleEU Centre in July 2023, attended by EUD. EUD continues to work in close cooperation with the European Commission and the Centre by feeding its data base with relevant policies and good practices enhancing the inclusion of deaf people in all areas of society through accessibility features.



→
**Disability
Employment
Package**

In 2022, the EU Commission launched its Disability Employment Package to support Member States in ensuring that persons with disabilities enjoy social inclusion and economic autonomy through employment. The Package is part of the ESRPD and is in line with the UN CRPD. To support the package and inform the EU Commission on how well the right to work and employment is realised in the EU for deaf persons as well as which barriers remain. In the continuity of the 2022 Position Paper “Access to the Labour Market for

Deaf Persons in the EU, EUD published a new Policy Recommendations “EUD Policy Recommendation on Establishing Target for the Employment of Deaf People aimed at creating a momentum for NADs, the European Commission and National governments to increase the employment rate of deaf people by collecting disaggregated data on the number of deaf people in age of working to include them in the open labour market. Consequently, EUD organised a webinar to disseminate the recommendations, in December 2023.



→
**European
Disability
Card**



In 2023, in the time running up to the Commission’s publication of its proposal for a Directive establishing an EU Disability Card, EUD ensured to provide its feedback to the development process in all possible ways. For instance, EUD submitted its feedback to the various public consultations and calls for evidence that the EU Commission opened on the EDC. Additionally, EUD participated in an Ernst and Young Workshop supporting the Impact assessment of an EU initiative introducing the European Disability Card. EUD also published its own policy recommendations on the EDC to outline how the EU can ensure the final version of the EDC is as inclusive of the deaf perspective as possible. To raise further awareness on the development of the EDC to its members (NADs), EUD held a webinar on this topic. On September 6th, the European Commission officially presented its proposal for a Directive establishing a European Disability Card. This important initiative represents an opportunity to address the barriers faced by the European deaf community in realising their fundamental right to the freedom of movement within the EU. EUD, along with the wider disability movement, have been campaigning for an EU Disability Card for many years, so this proposal for a Directive marks a significant achievement. Since the publication of the

Commission’s proposal for a Directive, EUD has been advocating for the final version of the Directive to be as deaf-inclusive as possible. In doing so, EUD has met with a number of Members of European Parliament (MEPs) to outline its position. EUD published its position and corresponding amendments to the proposal for a Directive on its website and social media channels in order to raise awareness about the improvements required for the final version of the Directive to ensure the Card is a genuine tool for deaf people to facilitate their right to freedom of movement in the EU.

As part of its advocacy efforts, members of the EUD policy team also joined the European Disability Platform Expert Group on the EU Disability Card in order to share knowledge with relevant stakeholders and collaborate on advocacy work.

The deadline for the final version of the EDC Directive is in April 2024, therefore, in the meantime, EUD will be working hard to ensure they collaborate with all relevant stakeholders in the Disability Movement and MEPs to ensure the deaf perspective is mainstreamed in the final Directive.

EU Accessibility legislation

EUD aims to ensure that all the EU’s accessibility legislation is meaningfully implemented at the EU and national levels for deaf persons in the EU.

Executive Director, Mark Wheatley, and Policy Manager, Alexandre Bloxs, alongside Daniel Casas Ballester from the European Disability Forum, attended the EENA workshop on „Implementing EU Law on Emergency Communications.“ This important event took place at the Microsoft Business Centre in Brussels on 19th – 20th September. Key discussions focused on advocating for the inclusion of deaf people in emergency communications, exploring the impact of EU law on the accessibility of these services and fostering collaboration with major EU institutions and stakeholders. The EUD team is dedicated to pursuing policy-oriented and innovative solutions for inclusive emergency communications, in line with the CRPD.

On 8th June 2023, EUD, represented by its Executive Director, attended the European Accessibility Summit 2023. The focus of EUD’s contribution was on the essential inclusion of national sign languages in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a crucial step towards enhancing digital accessibility for all deaf people.

EUD’s message at the Summit was clear and impactful: while advancements in ICT have significantly improved the inclusion of deaf people, they often overlook the specific requirements of deaf people. This gap in accessibility emphasises the necessity of integrating national sign languages into digital platforms and technologies. The EUD position sheds light on the diversity within deaf communities and the importance of acknowledging this diversity while developing ICT solutions.



Human Rights

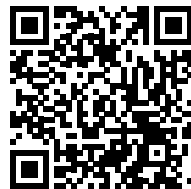
The goal of EUD is to achieve the fundamental human rights of all deaf people, irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, age, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and any additional intersecting identities, to achieve equality in all spheres of life in the European Union.

Therefore, EUD aims to meaningfully promote, protect, monitor, and raise awareness of the human rights of all deaf persons in the EU through its policy, capacity- building, and communications work.

In 2023, EUD embarked on an advocacy journey to advance the rights of all deaf people to use their national sign languages within the European Union through the legal recognition of the 30 EU National Sign Languages as official EU languages on an equal footing with the 24 spoken languages.



The EUD Board engaging with Policy Manager Alexandre Bloxs on effective interventions for the European Day of Persons with Disabilities in Brussels.



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Human Rights

Meeting with Melanie Köller: A Step Toward Accessibility at the European Parliament

One of the pivotal moments in EUD’s 2023 work was a meeting with Ms Melanie Köller, Advisor to the President of the European Parliament, Ms Roberta Metsola. This meeting focused on the path towards legal recognition of national sign languages within the EU and strategies to enhance accessibility at the European Parliament (EP) in national sign language and International Sign. Recognising the importance of effective communication, EUD emphasised the need to employ professional and accredited national sign language and International sign interpreters at the EP. This meeting marked a significant step toward ensuring that the requirements of the European deaf Community are acknowledged and embedded within the EU’s legislative body.



Petition 1056/2016: Advocating for Sign Languages in the Petitioning Process

Since 2016, EUD has been actively advocating for the PETI (Petitions) Committee to take a position on its Petition 1056/2016, tabled by EUD in 2016. This petition called to enable deaf people to submit any Petitions to the European Parliament in their national sign language. In 2023, EUD enhanced its efforts to ensure the progression of this petition. As a result, during a PETI Committee hearing within the EU Disability Rights Week, the Committee decided to keep the procedure open which signaled a continued commitment to this issue, while assessing its technical implications. EUD’s persistence and dedication, in collaboration with its partners, underscored the importance of recognising national sign languages as full languages within the EU to ensure the rights of all EU deaf citizens to submit petition in their natural and preferred languages.



Human Rights

EUD and WFD: A United Voice for Accessibility

Collaboration often yields the most significant impact, and in 2023, EUD joined forces with the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD). Together, they issued a joint statement during the 5th European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities, in May 2023. Their statement was a strong call to the European Parliament and all other EU Institutions to foster the inclusion of all deaf people in the European society by legally recognising all EU national sign languages as official EU languages.

EUD Seminar in Stockholm: Deaf Rights to Community Support

2023 also witnessed a significant event – the EUD Seminar during the General Assembly in Stockholm. This seminar, titled “deaf rights to community support,” provided a platform for in-depth discussions on various aspects of community support and rights for the deaf community. Such gatherings fostered knowledge sharing, capacity building, and advanced the cause of deaf rights and inclusion.



Working Groups

EUD has six Working Groups (WG). The purpose of the WGs is to gather diverse deaf experts from across Europe who meet once to twice a year to discuss and analyse current issues and policies relevant to the deaf community, providing a professional forum of exchange.

The members of the groups provide good

practices from their home countries, as well as giving negative examples and formulating possible recommendations at both EU and Member State level. The WGs serve as a focal point to support the EUD staff in highly specialised matters. An EUD Board Member chairs each of the Working Groups:

Deaf Lawyers

- focuses on the legal provisions regarding sign language and human rights, using the UN CRPD as the guide for discussions.
Established in 2011.

Intersectionality

- focuses on intersectionality within the deaf community where members can explore how we can work collaboratively to ensure equality, equity, diversity, and non-discrimination.
Established in 2021.

ICT and Accessibility

- focuses on the physical and digital accessibility of information and communication for deaf persons which is predominantly through national sign languages.
Established in 2011.

BIPOC

- stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour and has the purpose to identify and discuss issues faced by BIPOC deaf persons in the EU.
Established in 2022.

Gender Equality

- focuses on issues of inequality facing deaf women and to discern important efforts to ensure the rights of deaf women are ensured, in line with the UN CRPD, at EU and Member State level.
Established in 2017.

ECMRL

- stands for The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and has the purpose to discuss the ways in which EUD can effectively raise awareness about and advocate for the respect, recognition and promotion of national sign languages.
Established in 2022.


Co-operation

EUD has signed Memorandums of Understanding with various organisations sharing common values and goals.




European Disability Forum


EDF Board Members nominated by EUD following their outstanding commitment and expertise in supporting the rights of deaf people in the EU:



Dr. Humberto Insolera
Executive Committee



Louise Danielsson
Member of EDF Women's Committee



Elias Tebibel
Chair of EDF Youth Committee



World Federation of the Deaf



European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters



European Union of the Deaf Youth



European Deaf Students' Union



European Deaf Sports Organisation



European Deafblind Union

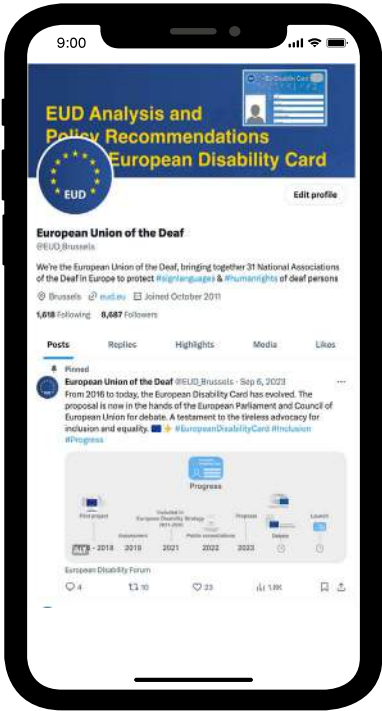


European Network of Sign Language Teachers







European Platform of Deafness, Hard of Hearing, and Deafblindness

Social Media



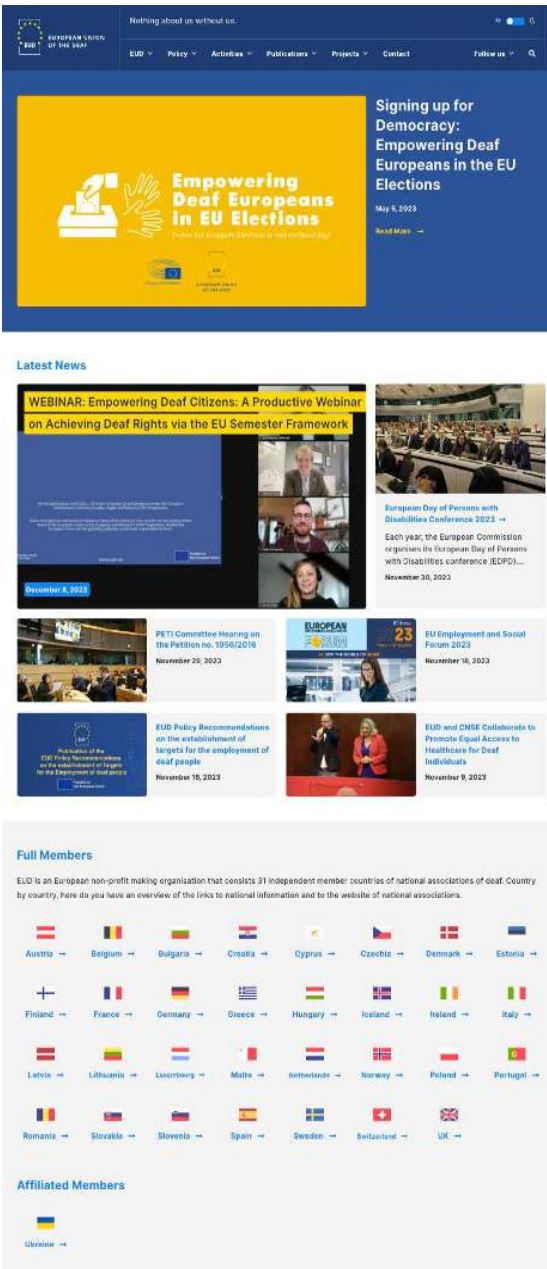
Social Tool

Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	LinkedIn
256 posts	350 tweets	148 posts	197 posts
60,800 likes	8,700 followers	5,150 followers	1,000 followers
Reached Audience	Reached Audience	Reached Audience	Reached Audience
+946k	+257k	+130k	+37k
			



Available in International Sign

Website



EUD’s website (www.eud.eu) is one of the main sources to communicate and disseminate information about EUD and its work. It ensures all EUD’s communication and information is available to the key audiences and the wider deaf community. It is an open-access website and provides details on EUD’s activities and progress, including the deliverables produced in each stage of the Work Plan, as well as meetings, events, and workshops we attend. It communicates these details through video announcements, press releases, website articles, and links to articles and projects relevant to EUD’s advocacy work.



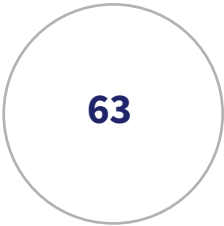
www.eud.eu



International Sign friendly.



Number of page views in 2023



Number of articles added in 2023

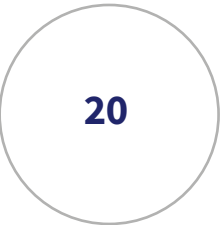
Newsletters



Newsletters enable EUD to raise awareness of EUD’s core values, objectives, advocacy activities and expected achievements through publishing material about its activities on its website, social media channels, and in the newsletters sent to its subscribers and posted on its website, ensuring that these are carefully targeted to the interests of specific key audiences.



Please sign up for our Newsletters.



External Newsletters sent in 2023



Internal Newsletters sent in 2023

Projects

European Parliament



ADPA - EED
Empowering Deaf Europeans in the EU Elections
www.eu-election.eu

Erasmus+



QSA4Disability



Deaf Museums

deafmuseums.eu



Free Tech Signs

freetechnologysigns.eu

H2020



EASIER

project-easier.eu



SHAPES

shapes2020.eu



SignON

signon-project.eu

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All the publications from 2022 - 2026 are co-funded by and produced under the European Commission's Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) Programme.



Funded by
the European Union