



## EUROPEAN UNION OF THE DEAF

A European Non-Governmental Organisation in official liaison with  
European Parliament, European Commission and the Council of Europe

**19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> OCTOBER 2020**

**Every day at 10:00 CEST (90 min)**

**EUD SHORT WEBINAR SERIES**

### **LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus, all countries in Europe have taken measures to contain the virus, including lockdown, social distancing, obligations to wear masks, strict hygiene, isolation, quarantine and other measures. The global pandemic affected everyone; however, a different set of barriers related to access to information and communication in different domains were created for deaf persons.

For instance, the requirements to wear masks or the lack of accessibility of information and communication in health or education systems create barriers that are solely experienced by the deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind population. The potential barriers for sign language users are often overlooked by the governments during the COVID-19 crisis management decision-making processes and as a result some policies and measures that aim at containing the virus are not always fully inclusive and sometimes leave deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind people behind.

EUD therefore organises a series of short webinars where the specific barriers that deaf persons experience due to the new containment measures and their disproportionate effects will be discussed. EUD will also aim at highlighting best practices to combat such barriers, encouraging learning from each other and offering common solutions.

**You are kindly invited to attend the daily sessions or choose the most relevant topics of your interest to attend one or a few short webinars. If you wish to participate in all or one of the virtual sessions, please [register here](#).**

**During the week of the 19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> October EUD will focus on addressing the topics below. Each session will last for 90 min, with a short overview by the moderator (10 min), two presentations by National Associations of the Deaf (20 min), and a final interactive discussion among all participants (60 min).**

### **Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER – Requirements to wear masks**

For deaf persons, strict rules on wearing masks have hindered the right to access communication. In response, National Associations of the Deaf (NADs) across Europe have advocated for alternatives. In this webinar, we will explore different approaches in Europe to guarantee access to communication for the deaf during the pandemic.

- Moderator: EUD Vice-President, Dr. Gergely Tapolczai
- Presenters:
  - Ms Marie-Florence Devalet, French-speaking Federation of the Deaf Belgians
  - Mr Pedro Costa, Portuguese Federation of Associations of the Deaf

### **Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER – Sign language interpreting must become the norm**

Throughout the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, sign language interpretation in press conferences has increased more than ever before. In some countries, sign language interpretation of government officials was provided for the first time on TV. However, many deaf persons fear that the current level of sign language interpretation will not continue after the pandemic. In this webinar, different NADs will discuss the importance of ensuring sign language interpretation as the norm and will share good practices to ensure full sign language interpretation at all times, not only during the emergency situations such as a global pandemic.

- Moderator: EUD Board member, Mrs Sofia Isari
- Presenters:
  - Mr Kęstutis Vaišnora, Lithuanian Deaf Association
  - Mr Lars Knudsen, Danish Deaf Association

### **Wednesday, 21<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER – Accessibility in hospitals**

The COVID-19 virus has reinforced the importance of ensuring access to health care services, however, accessibility in hospitals remains unequal as thousands of deaf persons are not always guaranteed and equal access to communication with medical professionals. In this webinar, various NADs in Europe will converse about different approaches how to ensure accessibility of health care systems and discuss the way forward to overcome existing challenges.

- Moderator: EUD Board member, Mr Daniel Büter
- Presenters:
  - Mr Pier Alessandro Samuelli, Italian National Agency for the protection and assistance of the Deaf
  - Ms Elaine Grehan, Irish Deaf Society

### **Thursday, 22<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER – Distance education during the pandemic – what are the challenges and opportunities for deaf learners?**

During the first wave of COVID-19, lockdown measures translated in the temporary closure of schools, which meant that thousands of deaf learners across Europe had to follow their education virtually. In this webinar, NADs will share good practices regarding distance education, and how to mitigate the inequalities that deaf learners face.

- Moderator: EUD Board member, Mrs Sofia Isari
- Presenters:
  - Ms Ronit Laquerrière-Leven, National Federation of France for the Deaf
  - Mrs Anna Gaitani, Hellenic Federation of the Deaf

### **Friday, 23<sup>RD</sup> OCTOBER – The digital gap and isolation of deaf elderly**

Lockdown measures have also prevented deaf persons from exercising their linguistic and cultural rights. Deaf clubs closed, and sign language environments turned to the Internet. However, the lack of digital and technological skills among deaf elderly have not allowed them to exercise these rights equally, forcing many to live in isolation. In this webinar, different NADs will discuss promising practices and different solutions put forward to overcome the isolation of deaf elderly.

- Moderator: EUD Vice-President, Dr. Gergely Tapolczai
- Presenters:
  - Ms Netta Keski-Levijoki & Ms Aliisa Lehtonen, Finnish Association of the Deaf
  - Ms Elisabeta Paraschiv, Romanian National Association for the Deaf