

# 2015

## 2015 IMPACT REPORT



EUROPEAN UNION OF THE DEAF

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EUD would like to thank the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility for funding this 2015 Impact Report under an Operating Grant from Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014-2020. Without their substantial financial contributions, the publication of this report would not have been possible.

The support by the EUD Board and President have been invaluable to create an accurate and up-to-date account of the EUD activities in 2015:

### Board 2013 - 2017:

President ..... Dr Markku Jokinen

Vice-President .... Dr Humberto Insolera

Board Member .... Louise "Lolo" Danielsson

Board Member .... Alfredo Gómez Fernández

Board Member .... Dr Gergely Tapolczai

All members of staff, including EUD interns: Susanna Ricci Bitti and Frederik Olsen, contributed to this up-to-date report with photos, text and signed input.

Our member associations are at the heart of our work and we thank them for assisting and co-operating with us throughout the year.

The European Disability Forum (EDF), the European disability umbrella organisation, has been a great partner in much of our work, informing us and collaborating with our Board and staff via email and in person, in and out of Brussels.

EUD has developed key associations and links with a large number of MEPs and other EU policymakers. We will endeavour to continue this fruitful co-operation in the coming years.



Dr Markku Jokinen



Dr Humberto Insolera



Louise "Lolo" Danielsson



Alfredo Gómez Fernández



Dr Gergely Tapolczai

## FOREWORD BY EUD PRESIDENT

2015 marks the remarkable and nostalgic occasion of the 30th anniversary of the European Union of the Deaf (EUD). It is hard to not be struck by the how many things have changed over that period of time. Keeping in mind the current EUD objectives of: the recognition of the right to use an indigenous sign language; empowerment through communication and information; and equality in education and employment. We can see how EUD has flourished from then to now.

Regarding 'the recognition of the right to use an indigenous sign language'. We note that no country in Europe had recognised its national sign language in legislation prior to 1985. As at December 2015, 25 EU Member States find their national sign language within the text of its legislation. This is something EUD has fought for over the last 30 years, and it is delighted to see such tangible results.

Speaking of results, hard work has led to notable accomplishments for several of our member associations. Finland, Serbia and the UK (Scotland) all saw the great milestone

of legislation being enacted concerning their respective sign languages. The Finnish Sign Language Act, the Law on the use of Sign Language in Serbia and the British Sign Language Act in Scotland. These significant legislative achievements show that hard work and dedication does reap rewards for the broader deaf community and sign language users.

You are about to read and see in detail many of the activities EUD has been busy with during the last twelve months, they include: the publication of another book in the UNCRPD – A Deaf Perspective Series; a very unique occasion this year saw the EU being reviewed by the UNCRPD Committee in Geneva involvement in the EU review at the UNCRPD and EUD's involvement in contributing to the parallel report; numerous representations at conferences and meetings reflecting the three objectives of EUD; project work for Signteach and NEXES; 30th year anniversary conference, meetings with MEPs and gala dinner; and finally a successful workshop, seminar and General Assembly in Riga.

To add to the list of those above, there have also been some changes in the EUD staff this past year. Two new staff members joined the team: new In-House Interpreter, Cindy Cave from Australia and new Project Officer

(Nexes). That enlarges the EUD team to six, in addition to interns that are work in the office through out the year.

As 2015 comes to a close, we applaud the European Commission for releasing the long awaited European Accessibility Act text, which will take the form of a Directive. This announcement was formally made on the 2 December by Commissioner Thyssen, who arranged for sign language interpretation to be provided for it to be accessible to the wider deaf community. But more than that, the Commission sought a translation of the Commissioners message in International Sign, and EUD was pleased to provide that. After examination, EUD will be providing feedback to the Commission concerning the content of the Act.

Finally EUD would like to end the year positively and thank all those that were involved in our end of year Christmas message in sign language. Showing that sign language transcends hearing status, place of employment and nationality, we asked a number of people at the European Day of Persons with Disabilities conference to sign Merry Christmas in either International Sign or in their national sign language. Do visit our EUD website or Facebook page to see the happy results.



Dr Markku Jokinen  
EUD President



## EUD INTRODUCTION

### EUROPEAN UNION OF THE DEAF

Based in Brussels, Belgium, EUD is a not-for-profit European non-governmental organisation (ENGO) comprising of National Associations of the Deaf (NADs). It is the only supranational organisation representing deaf sign language users at European level and is one of the few ENGOs representing associations in all 28 EU Member States, including Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland. EU acceding, candidate and potential member countries such as Serbia or Turkey, can choose to become affiliated members with the option to become full members as soon as they officially enter the EU.

Aiming to establish and maintain EU level dialogue with the European Union institutions

and officials in consultation and co-operation with its member NADs. EUD also has participatory status with the Council of Europe (CoE).

EUD is a full member of the European Disability Forum (EDF), the umbrella organisation of Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) in Europe and has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) to tackle issues of global importance. EUD also has signed MoUs with both the European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (efsli), the European Union of the Deaf Youth (EUDY) and European Deafblind Union (EDbU).

### MISSION STATEMENT

It is the core mission of EUD to promote, advance and protect the rights of and opportunities for deaf people (including sign language users) in the European Union to ensure they can become full citizens in their own right.

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

- 1 Recognition of the right to use an indigenous sign language;
- 2 Empowerment through communication and information; and
- 3 Equality in education and employment.

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. The majority of staff are deaf sign language users and all hearing staff must know at least one national sign language as well as International Sign. Gender equality is also taken into account in all employment policies and when organising events and speakers.

### SIGN LANGUAGES AS A HUMAN RIGHT

Inherent to EUD's work is the belief that the right to sign language is a basic Human Right. Sign language users, similarly with national minorities, are in need of specific targeted and coherent protection regarding their language and all Human Rights. National sign languages are the mother tongues of deaf sign language users across the EU and the world.

The right to sign language in itself is a Human Right but access to sign language is also essential for the fulfilment of other basic Human Rights, such as the right to

equal education, information or to a fair trial. Without early access to sign language programmes and an educational system that fosters the acquisition of the national sign language(s) (and the national written language) deaf children will not be able to enjoy their basic Human Rights as children or later in their adult life.

EUD therefore advocates the right to sign language as an essential prerequisite to ensure full and equal citizenship for all deaf people.

EUD regularly plans and carries out campaigns, workshops and other pan-European events to reach out to the deaf community, in addition

to the wider hearing society and key European and national policymakers.

EUD celebrated our 30th anniversary, thereby marking its founding on the 11 November in 1985. This occasion was marked by a

conference in the European Parliament being hosted by the deaf MEPs, Helga Stevens and Ádám Kósa.

### 30 YEARS ANNIVERSARY

The 'Exploring the meaning of Reasonable Accommodation' conference in the European Parliament was an EUD event that was hosted by deaf MEPs, Helga Stevens and Ádám Kósa.

The topic of the conference was to unpack the meaning and coming to a clear understanding as to its definition and application in deaf peoples lives. MEP Stevens opened proceedings with how access to sign language interpreting in employment and education is an important aspect of reasonable accommodation and its context within the UNCRPD. MEP Ildikó Pelczné Gáll, the Vice President of the European Parliament, then took the floor highlighting the two European Parliament resolutions on sign language, one from 1988 and one from 1998. The keynote speaker, Ms. Emmanuelle Grange, Head of Unit from Disability and Inclusion within the European Commission set the scene from a pan European perspective. Followed by

a very impressive panel consisting of: Dr. László Gábor Lovász, UNCRPD Committee member; Ms. Astrid Eichstaedt, representative of the European Ombudsman; Dr. John Bosco Conama, Trinity College Dublin and Prof. Dr. Christian Rathmann, Hamburg University.

Final remarks were given by Dr Ádám Kósa, MEP, and with that the conference drew to a close in front of 150 satisfied delegates.

EUD, and MEPs Ádám Kósa and Helga Stevens invited delegates from EUD members of NADs from EU Member States to attend this Brussels conference. Furthermore, the event garnered interest from community members and professionals alike, attracting various representatives from a number of organisations from the deafness, hard of hearing, Deafblind sectors from all over of the world.

### INVISIBLE IN EUROPE

Invisible in Europe Conference  
European Parliament



## MEETINGS WITH THE MEPS

Political participation was brought to life after the conference with 15 very active NADs pre arranging private meetings with 42 MEPs from 15 different countries. The primary goal of these meetings was to press them on issues concerning: the legal recognition of sign language, the UNCRPD, the upcoming European Accessibility Act, the EU Disability card and other local issues facing the deaf community locally.

The Swiss Federation of the Deaf also seized the opportunity to meet with a representative of the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the EU in Brussels.

As EUD encouraged all of its members to take advantage of being in the European Parliament for the conference to meet with their MEPs, it was pleasing to see so many meetings take place. Thereby underlining how crucial it is for deaf leaders to take an active role in advocating for and representing deaf rights, and communicating those issues across to parliamentarians, thus showing EUD's aim and vision in action. We are buoyed by the visibility, awareness and political participation of deaf delegates and we aspire to see this positive achievement continued into the future.





NADs that took part were:



Denmark



Finland



Germany



Greece



Ireland



Italy



Luxembourg



Malta



Poland



Portugal



Slovenia



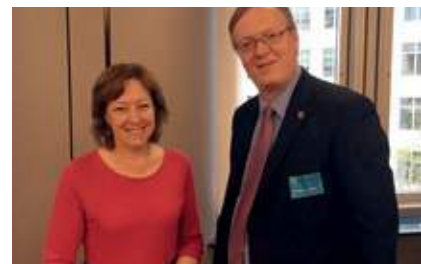
Spain



Sweden



Switzerland



United Kingdom

## EUD INITIATIVES

### 30 YEARS ANNIVERSARY GALE DINNER

The delegates of the NADs were invited to the Gala along with honorary members of EUD to celebrate the milestone achievement with the EUD Board and staff members. Deaf MEPs, Helga Stevens and Ádám Kósa also attended the gala.

The guests were entertained by the master of the ceremonies, Mark Wheatley along with a moving, yet amusing feature length documentary of EUD's 30 years of achievements.

#### Honorary EUD Membership was extended to:

Knud Søndergaard ..... Former EUD President

Johan Wesemann ..... Former EUD Executive Director

Berglind Stefánsdóttir ..... Former EUD President

#### Certificates of Appreciation was extended to:

Helga Stevens ..... MEP

Dr Ádám Kósa ..... MEP



Honorary EUD Membership Awards



Gift from Slovenian Association of  
the Deaf and Hard of Hearing



120 invited guests  
Brussels, Belgium



The SignTeach project will develop, implement and evaluate an Open Educational Resource (OER) for sign language teachers and their trainers in EU member states. The OER will include information for new and experienced sign language teachers about a.o. didactics, class management, the CEFR for sign languages, meta-linguistics, ICT and entrepreneurial skills, as well as interviews with beginning and experienced teachers and their learners.

The sign languages of the EU are recognised as fully fledged indigenous languages of the EU (Leeson, 2006), and are an important part of Europe's multilingual diversity. In most EU countries the opportunities to learn a sign

language however are limited. Mainstream schools and colleges do not – as a rule – offer sign language courses to their students. Deaf sign language users who want to train to become a sign language teacher or who want to further professionalise their teaching skills will find it even more difficult to find a training course and/or accessible resources.

The SignTeach consortium consists of experienced sign language teachers and other experts in this field from 11 organisations in 8 EU countries, each with extensive national and international networks.

SignTeach is a 3-year project. The starting date was 1 September 2014.

## SIGNTeach PROJECT



## EUD INITIATIVES

### NEXES PROJECT – NEXT GENERATION EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Grant Agreement for NEXES has just been signed between the European Commission and the NEXES partners, delivering almost 6 million euros to the research and development of next generation emergency services that integrate IP-based communication technologies and interoperability.

The NEXES Consortium presents a strong multi-disciplinary and complementary collective, with solid competences and experience developing research and innovation projects, that ensure significant contributions will be handed to Europe's standardisation effort on emergency services.

The NEXES Consortium includes 17 participating organisations from 10 countries, coordinated by RINICOM (United Kingdom), co-coordinated by the Police And Crime

Commissioner For West Yorkshire (United Kingdom) and including the Ambulance and Emergency Physicians Association (Turkey), Aimtech (United Kingdom), Azienda Regionale Emergenza Urgenza (Italy), Ministero Dell'interno (Italy), Deveryware (France), European Union of the Deaf (Belgium), Institute Of Communication And Computer Systems (Greece), Insta (Finland), Omnitor (Sweden), Orange Romania (Romania), Police University College (Finland), Préfecture de Police (France), Teamnet (Romania), Telekom Slovenia (Slovenia) and the University of Ljubljana (Slovenia).

EUD are very excited to contribute towards the NEXES project to ensure the emergency services will be fully accessible for the deaf people across the Europe.



It was an historic moment by having the 30th General Assembly hosted in Riga, Latvia.

The GA agenda addressed a number of issues, foremost however was the finance report of 2014 and the associated lengthy discussion regarding membership fee restructure and potential ways in which to do so. The aim of the discussion was to find a way to come to a system to calculate a membership fee that would be fair for each NAD and their national circumstances. As national contexts vary greatly throughout Europe, many different opinions and proposals were suggested, hence the extended time devoted to exploring various options. The result was

a list of proposals that will be examine with the goal of coming up with something that is feasible for all concerned.

Johan Wesemann, former Executive Director of EUD, chaired the General Assembly throughout the weekend. EUD wishes to thank Mr Wesemann for his dedication and support during the GA.

All the GA delegates attended the 95th anniversary celebration evening of Latvian Association of the Deaf. It was a great opportunity to learn more about the Latvian culture and Latvian sign language.

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY

EUD General Assembly  
Riga, Latvia



Every year EUD organises a workshop for its members prior to the General Assembly. This year's workshop focused on the UNCRPD Article 33, National Implementation and Monitoring. Contributions and experiences were shared from NADs who had been involved in drafting their national parallel reports that were sent to the UNCRPD Committee and during the Constructive Dialogues that occur when State Parties

were reviewed by the UNCRPD Committee in Geneva.

All of the NADs participated in the workshop to share their knowledge and involvement regarding the UNCRPD Article 33, National implementation and monitoring. These contributions assisted in the development and content of the 3rd book in the EUD UNCRPD Series.

## WORKSHOP

Helmut Vogel  
President, German Deaf Association





## EUD INITIATIVES

### SEMINAR

EUD seminars are open to members and other interested and relevant stakeholders, including: those from the deaf community, wider society, professionals and policy makers. Having just released the 2nd UNCRPD Series publication on Article 27: Work and employment. EUD held a seminar on that very topic entitled: Deaf individuals in the EU Labour Market, Equal Rights on Employment in Europe.

The joint seminar was organised in co-operation with the Latvian Deaf Association (LNS). The



formal opening began with interventions from a number of representatives from EUD partner organisations, such as WFD, efsli and EUDY. The second session was chaired by LNS President Edgars Vorslovs and included representatives from the European Commission, Members of European Parliament and a Latvian ministerial spokesperson.

The densely packed seminar programme meant numerous perspectives were provided. Presentations gave participants insights into topics as broad as: employment with an EU focus to the current statistics on employment for deaf people in Latvia. Finally the EUD Executive Director and the EUD Policy Officer introduced delegates to the second EUD publication series on Article 27: Work and Employment of the UNCRPD.

**Tania Tsiora**

Policy Officer, European Commission

### WORKING GROUPS

There are three Working Groups at EUD focussing on current main issues of importance, or topics that the General Assembly decides to have been a priority:

- Deaf Lawyer
- Accessibility
- ICT

Each group is chaired by one Board Member: Dr Gergely Tapolczai, Dr Humberto Insolera and Alfredo Gómez Fernández respectively. The purpose of each EUD Working Groups are to create a forum to exchange ideas, to formulate recommendations for Member States and at European level, as well as show good practices and negative examples. In 2015 the groups mainly worked via email and online / webcam meetings.

The Deaf lawyer group was a large factor in determining the adoption of the Statutes & Internal Rules at the GA. Legal input and advice was given to ensure the documents were compliant with current legislation and models of disability.

The Accessibility working group created the latest EUD position paper, detailing the accessibility of elevators. After internal debates and approval by the Board, the paper was also adopted at the General Assembly.

The ICT group did not specifically focus on any topic in particular but was instrumental in providing valuable feedback to the EDF ICT expert group, ensuring that EDF received adequate information relating to deaf sign language users.

After a short introduction of the EUD, its core work, presentation of the Board Members and staff, the Croatian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Hrvatski savez gluhih i nagluhih) organised a seminar on the topic "Deaf in Croatia - challenges and opportunities". This seminar was organised as a part of the Association's 100th anniversary and the event attracted around 100 people. The seminar included two detailed presentations, first from Dr. Vesna

Ivasovic from the Croatian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, who spoke about deaf education and progress for deaf rights since the ratification of the UNCRPD in 2007. Secondly, from Sanja Tarczay, President of Croatian Association for Deafblind Persons, the President of the European Deaf Blind Union, who shared her view and experiences of being deaf blind in Croatia and how the association has been build up.

## SEMINAR ZAGREB

EUD Seminar  
Zagreb, Croatia



The joint seminar was organised between EUD and Solidarität mit Hörgeschädigten of Luxembourg. Representative of Solidarität mit Hörgeschädigten, Jacques Bruch, took the opportunity to give a presentation about their organisation. There was very constructive discussion on how the members of Luxembourg deaf community could

contribute and benefit from the membership of EUD. And also was a rare opportunity for both parties to learn about each other in a positive manner. The result of the seminar was the commitment from the representatives of Solidarität mit Hörgeschädigten to co-operate with EUD in the future by sending delegates to Brussels.

## SEMINAR LUXEMBOURG

EUD Seminar  
Luxembourg, Luxembourg



## UNCRPD

EUD has been working with the UNCRPD, the only international human rights treaty exclusively focusing on persons with disabilities and significantly, the only one that explicitly mentions sign language.

After the EU's ratification of the Convention in 2010, 2014 was a significant year due to the European Commission issuing its initial report to the UNCRPD Committee.

## Committee Sessions Geneva

The EU review of the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities took place in Geneva Switzerland, at Palais Wilson which is happily situated beside the majestic Lake Geneva. Idyllic surrounds to be sure.

EUD was pleased to see that issues pertaining to sign language was included in the recommendations issued by the UNCRPD Committee to the EU requiring responsiveness and redress. Concerning Article 21: "Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information", the concluding observations say that that the EU needs to concentrate more on the implementation of its legislation on access to information and communication in accessible formats, such as through sign language. The EU was also told that more work is required to promote the official recognition of sign languages. The EU needs to also improve website accessibility across

all of the EU institutions, including offering information in sign language.

With reference to Article 18, "Freedom of movement", the recommendation asserts that the EU should take immediate action to allow all persons with disabilities the right to freedom of movement on equal basis with others and that social security benefits should be portable between Member States.

Other recommendations for the EU was to: adopt the European Accessibility Act, which has just recently been released to much fanfare amongst the disability movement; to review of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 and establish more lines of communication and structured dialogue with members of civil society.

EUD is looking forward to monitoring and follow up these recommendations and see these improvements in the work of the EU, in the coming years.



**Mark Wheatley**  
EUD Executive Director



### UNCRPD: Article 27:

#### Work and Employment's book launch

On 6 May 2015, MEP Helga Stevens hosted EUD's launch of its second publication in its UNCRPD series. With each edition addressing a specific article contained within the UNCRPD. The theme for this release was: UNCRPD Implementation in Europe - A Deaf Perspective, Article 27: Work and Employment was edited by Annika Pabsch and Petra Söderqvist.

Work and employment are explored from various angles, including the right to reasonable accommodation, as well as labour and trade union rights.

We would like to say thanks to the MEPs who attended the event. Also we would like to share our appreciation to the authors, Annika Pabsch and Petra Söderqvist, and especially to all those that made the time to offer their contributions from: the European Commission, the European Disability Forum, the Social Platform, European Trade Union Confederation, EASPD, CBM, EUDY, companies Funka and Danish Crown, researchers from the National University of Ireland, Galway and representatives from National Associations of the Deaf.

Annika Pabsch and Petra Söderqvist  
UNCRPD Series: Article 27 Editors



### UNCRPD series: Article 33: National Implementation and Monitoring

Furthermore this year, the third publication in our UNCRPD series, Article 33: Monitoring and Implementation, was showcased in European Parliament on 3 December 2015, on the occasion of the European Day of Persons with Disabilities. A networking session and deaf awareness taster then followed, led by the Equality Unit of European Parliament in collaboration with EUD. We were pleased to be able to arrange a soft launch of our third book of the series on that significant day.



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# TH ANNIVERSARY NFERENCE





### Member workshop

As part of EUD's commitment to capacity building of its members and the European deaf community in general, EUD regularly offers training in a number of areas, most notably the UNCRPD. Trainings are offered to



**Petra Söderqvist**  
EUD Policy Officer

both member association staff and Boards, as well as regional representatives or other interested parties.

In 2015 EUD organised a full-day workshop for its member association, Croatian Deaf Association, to ensure that representatives could fully benefit from this year's UNCRPD Committee sessions, which analysed Croatia, amongst others. This workshop was greatly appreciated and generated lively discussions on the various articles of the Convention, good practice of implementation and challenges still faces by deaf people in Croatia.

### Publication Series

The EU's ratification of the UNCRPD means that there is now an obligation to implement enshrined rights in a timely manner. The legal implications of the Convention have been widely discussed at institutional level. As a result, it has become increasingly



**Etienne Cuche**  
European Parliament Officer,  
European Disability Forum

evident that this is a new and complex area, where international, European and national orders of law overlap. The publication aims to contribute to and provide possible interpretations of the implementation of the Convention with regards to deaf citizens, including sign language users and hard of hearing persons. Each contribution in the series will explore a specific UNCRPD article from both an academic and best practice perspective, at all levels, from European to regional.

### Monitoring and Implementation

As highlighted earlier, this third book in the series focuses in particular on Article 33 of the UNCRPD. National implementation and monitoring is analysed and good examples are presented from the different stakeholders involved in the process; from the view of the decision makers, to the independent monitoring organisations and civil society organisations (Disabled People's Organisations, DPOs), both at European and national level.

The diverse chapters represent a range of disciplines and professionals. Their backgrounds span from political and institutional stakeholders and representatives, to academic scholars and NGO representatives. In particular, the authors explore how the rights enshrined in Article 33 are applicable to deaf and hard of hearing citizens, and how they are involved in the process of assuring that the UNCRPD is implemented in the best way possible.

## MEDIA

For a number of years now, EUD has been determined to produce high quality and fully accessible information to its members and other interested parties. This is done to increase EUD's visibility for two reasons. Firstly for our campaigns to become known to political stakeholders and secondly so the wider deaf community knows what we are working for.

Dissemination of information generally takes the form of International Sign with selected feature(s) of: English subtitles; and/or a voiceover in English; and / or a transcription of video in English text on the same page of the video. The format of dissemination is aimed to be fully accessible for all. It brings to life the disability movement slogan "Nothing about us, without us".

## WEBSITE

The next generation EUD website was worked on this year with its new look and functionally more accessible, as the former website had features that had aged over time and were obsolete. It opens the potential of releasing various catalogued information while enabling us to include rapidly evolving innovation, such as press statements in

International Sign and English. We hope the website's new design will attract more people, as website visits have been steadily declining these past few years, due to most people accessing information via emerging social media channels, such as EUD's facebook, instagram and twitter feeds, instead of EUD's website.

## Statistics

Over 600,000 hits for website

Over 105,000 hits for videos

## Clare Canton

IS Translator, British Deaf Association (Scotland)



## Pilar Lima

Spanish Senator from Valencia



## EUD INITIATIVES

### SOCIAL MEDIA

Although the EUD website are valuable and beneficial tools in connecting with Deaf people in Europe and around the world, EUD uses social media to disseminate content in real

time. EUD has grown to one of the most visible organisations at European level, surpassing many other equally sized associations in geographic and quantitative reach.

#### Facebook

The official EUD Facebook page is attracting many more fans this year, in fact we have increased our 'likes' from 33,000 to 39,000. The information that is being disseminated on our website is also shared on the Facebook page, along with additional photo albums of past events. The page is targeted at the general public and its exposure illustrates our lobbying work in addition to various events and subjects that EUD addresses. We attract an average of 30,000 fans to our Facebook page every day.



#### Twitter

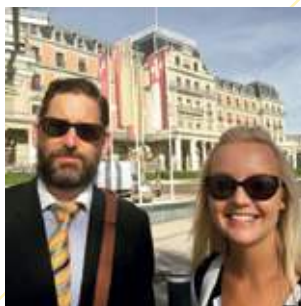
Twitter enables the daily activities of EUD Board members and staff to be shared with the multitudes immediately. It also serves as an ideal platform to share information regarding special events, including the EUD 30 Years Anniversary, the annual General Assembly in Riga and Board meetings when they occur. Although currently being used in a small scale manner, we believe that twitter is an ideal way to communicate our work to the broader community who seem to embrace this way of communicating topical issues. We anticipate this area of our work will connect with are much larger audience in time.





## Instagram

The introduction of Instagram began back in September 2013. It is a distinctive way to capture political life through an artistic lens. This is a small but growing niche audience for us. Currently we have 500 followers.



## EUD INITIATIVES

### TRAINING / WORKSHOP POLAND

Thanks to the Inspide scheme, the Communication and Media Officer, David Hay was invited by the Polish Deaf Youth, to conduct a media training workshop for deaf community members in July 2015. David was able to describe the tasks associated with his role at EUD, as well as train attendees on how to develop media resources, during the two day training course.



Media Workshop  
Warsaw, Poland

### TRAINING / WORKSHOP BELGIUM

The Communication and Media Officer, David Hay was invited by Fevlado, to conduct a communication strategy training workshop for internal staff and board members in January 2015. David was able to describe the tasks associated with his role at EUD, as well as train attendees how to develop media resources during the one day training course.



Strategy workshop  
Ghent, Belgium

## INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

EUD is one of the few European-level organisations that offer a regular remunerated internship programme. It is also the only internship that provides a full signing environment, enabling young sign language users to improve their International Sign skills and their knowledge of European policy. EUD's interns have come from many different EU countries to support and inspire the local deaf community and younger deaf people.

Susanna Ricci Bitti from Italy was the first intern of 2015. She stayed with us to support the General Assembly and EUD's media production.



Intern  
**Susanna Ricci Bitti**  
(March - May)  
Faenza, Italy

During her time, she attended the UNCRPD Series' second print's launch in European Parliament and contributed towards the archives of the 30 Years Documentary for Communication and Media Officer.

The second intern was Frederik Olsen who joined us from Denmark. He played a big part by organising the EUD 30 years Anniversary. Frederik also had the chance to enhance his video production skills by assisting the Communication and Media Officer. He also had a lot to do with the all the content migration required for the new website.



Intern  
**Frederik Olsen**  
(October - December)  
Copenhagen, Denmark

**Susanna Ricci Bitti**  
Update on UNCRPD review  
of the EU in Geneva



**Frederik Olsen**  
Update on Multilingualism  
and Language Diversity





## EXTERNAL CO-OPERATION

EUD's work would not be possible without external co-operation. EUD not only works together with European-level NGOs but also with organisations of global importance.

### EUROPEAN DISABILITY FORUM

EDF and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Brussels organised a workshop for countries that will shortly front the UNCRPD Committee, entitled "Strengthening Engagement with the UNCRPD Committee".

Lithuania, Portugal, Serbia, and Slovakia will go before the UNCRPD Committee at the 15th session and Italy at the 16th session, in Geneva. Dr Humberto Insolera represented the Italian Deaf Association and Frederik Olsen represented EUD. A very informative day, participants were very positive about the training.



**Dr Humberto Insolera**  
EUD Vice President

### EUROPEAN FORUM OF SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS (EFSLI)

EUD and efsli have been co-operating for many years, assisting each other in issues that concern both organisations alike and respective memberships.

### EUROPEAN UNION OF THE DEAF YOUTH (EUDY)

EUD and the European Union of the Deaf Youth (EUDY) signed a renewed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the General Assembly in Athens in 2014. The document gives a positive example to the NADs and youth organisations, showing increased co-operation at all levels.

EUD is aware of the importance of deaf youth in Europe and strongly supports EUDY's efforts in strengthening youth co-operation and cultural understanding. EUD was pleased that EUDY representative was able to attend the EUD General Assembly in Riga and the 30 Years Anniversary celebrations in Brussels.



EUD Board member, Dr Gergely Tapolczai, gave presentation during the EUDY study session in Budapest, Hungary.

**EUDY Study Session**  
Budapest, Hungary

The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) is EUD's equivalent at an international level, representing deaf associations all around the world. To avoid duplication of work and to allocate resources in the best possible manner to achieve common global and European objectives, EUD and WFD signed a MoU in 2012. EUD and WFD co-operate on a regular basis, most notably with regards to member associations' attendance at the UNCRPD Committee sessions in Geneva. During 2015, EUD and WFD cooperated on a position paper on Inclusion education related to the UNCRPD Article 14: Education.

Several EUD representatives attended WFD General Assembly and the XVII Congress in Istanbul, Turkey from 27 July to 1 August.

EUD took advantage of the fact that many EUD members would be in Turkey at that time to arrange an information session for EUD members to prepare for the EUD conference in 11 November 2015 in Brussels.

EUD Board member Alfredo Gómez Fernández held a workshop in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina on the UNCRPD, Sign Language movement in Europe and the situation for deaf rights in the Balkan Region.

Furthermore, EUD was pleased that WFD President Colin Allen was able to attend both the EUD General Assembly in Riga and the 30 Years Anniversary celebrations.

## WORLD FEDERATION OF THE DEAF (WFD)

WFD Human Rights Workshop,  
Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina



EUD Board Member Humberto Insolera attended EDSU first General Assembly, in Bilbao, Spain. EUD is happy to see this organisation growing and are happy to be invited to this event. We hope this will be a starting point for a continued good cooperation between the two organisations

in the future as we both share an important goal for equality in education including access to quality higher education. Representatives from EDSU were also present at the EUD 20 Years Anniversary celebrations.

## EUROPEAN DEAF STUDENTS UNION (EDSU)



## EXTERNAL CO-OPERATION

### EUROPEAN DEAF SPORTS ORGANISATION (EDSO)

The European Deaf Sports Organisation (EDSO) and EUD renewed their MoU at the 2014 General Assembly to establish a formal framework for their continued collaboration. For the first time, an open-ended MoU was signed, in view of their common values on the rights of deaf people. The agreement

comes at a time when EDSO becomes a fully registered Belgian NGO, a status that will no doubt improve the organisation's lobbying efforts and ultimately benefit deaf sport. EUD was pleased that EDSO representative was able to attend the 30 Years Anniversary celebrations.

### EUROPEAN DEAFBLIND UNION (EDBU)

This year, the EDBU president attended the Croatian Deaf association and EUD's Seminar in Zagreb and took the opportunity to have the MoU agreement for the first time. The MoU were signed by Markku Jokinen, EUD President and Sanja Tarczay, EDBU President.

EUD was pleased that EDBU president was able to attend the EUD General Assembly and the 30 Years Anniversary celebrations.

Mark Wheatley and Petra Söderqvist attended a working breakfast in the European Parliament. It was organised by MEP Ádám Kósa, MEP Helga Stevens and MEP Davo Ivo Stier in partnership with European Deafblind Union (EDBU).



Sanja Tarczay  
President, European Deafblind Union

### EUROPEAN PLATFORM OF DEAFNESS, HARD OF HEARING, AND DEAFBLINDNESS

The European Platform of Deafness, Hard of Hearing and Deafblindness that was established in 2012 continued its regular meetings in 2015. All members are simultaneously members of EDF, the European Disability Forum:

- EURO-CIU ... European Cochlear Implant Users
- EDbN ..... European Deafblind Network
- EFHOH ..... European Federation of Hard of Hearing
- FEPEDA ..... European Federation of Parents of Hearing Impaired Children
- EUD ..... European Union of the Deaf
- EUDY ..... European Union of the Deaf Youth
- EDbU ..... European Deafblind Union





To support EUD member NADs and EUD co-operation partners on topics and issues relevant to the EUD work programme, EUD

staff and Board regularly participate in events organised by external entities.

A number of very positive developments took place this year in achieving legislative status for national sign languages. The Finnish Sign Language Act, the Law on the use of Sign Language in Serbia and the British

Sign Language Act in Scotland. With delight, EUD has developed and released some videos regarding these languages and this attainment.

## LEGALISATION OF SIGN LANGUAGES IN NATIONAL LEVEL

### Mihailo Gordic

IS Translator, Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing for Serbia and Montenegro



The European Commission is the main legislative organ of the European Union with the right of initiative to propose laws for adoption by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU. EUD, among other

disability NGOs, is partially funded by the European Commission's Directorate-General Employment. EUD regularly attends high-level events and conferences, in particular in relation to the UNCPRD and disability issues in general.

## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

### Work Forum on the Implementation of UNCPRD

This year's Work Forum on the Implementation of UNCPRD focused on Article 12, equal recognition before the law, and Article 13, access to justice. EUD Executive Director Mark Wheatley and EUD Policy Officer Petra Söderqvist, attended the Work Forum. The two days were filled with good and bad practices on how to work with and implement

the convention. There were also discussions on the importance of training of judges and lawyers on the UNCPRD in order for the convention to have its full effect in practice and to provide reasonable accommodation.

### Mark Wheatley

EUD Executive Director



## EUD PARTNER INITIATIVES

### European Day of Persons with Disabilities

The European Day for People with Disabilities conference is an event the European Commission and EDF organise annually. This year, it was decided that it would not be held on 3 December, as it traditionally is, to honour the international day of disabilities. Instead, this year the conference took place on the 7 and 8 December, thereby allowing all those who normally would come to Brussels on the 3 December, to instead participate in national events that occur in their Member State on that day. The conference theme was 'tackling barriers for children and young people with disabilities'. A very pertinent topic for the deaf community.

The European Union of the Deaf attends this conference every year and has done since



1993. Over the years EUD has seen the number of deaf delegates increase from simply EUD representation to now EUDY as permanent attendees. Some deaf representatives from national disability councils would attend from time to time. But the 2015 conference was something special. There were about ten deaf delegates. Furthermore, two deaf (Dennis Hoogeveen from EUDY and MEP Stevens) and one deafblind (President Sanja Tarczay) presenters were on the conference programme. There was also time for questions and comments from the floor, of which numerous deaf delegates took the opportunity. There were also eight working sign language interpreters at the conference. The conference itself provided an excellent avenue for deaf people to actively participate in the conference. Many interventions from deaf delegates concerned what inclusive education means for signing deaf students and the importance of respecting linguistic and cultural norms for the deaf community, as highlighted within the UNCRPD.

Access City Award: an award issued annually for the last six years in conjunction with the conference. Every year the Commission together with a jury of experts hands out the Access City Award, which aims to encourage cities with at least 50.000 inhabitants or more to share their experience and examples of how they have improved accessibility within their city, that would benefit all citizens and tourists alike. The Award for 2015 went to Milan, Italy.

Emmanuelle Grange  
Head of Unit, Disability and  
Inclusion, European Commission

### Strategic Dialogue Meetings

There were several meetings focussing on the strategic dialogues on the proposal for a Council Recommendation on the integration of long-term unemployed people in the labour market and the topics and the organisation of future strategic dialogue meetings, the

migration crisis and the convention (planned for early 2016). It was attended by 50 representatives of civil society organisations. Dr Gergely Tapolczai, Mark Wheatley and Petra Söderqvist attended the meetings on behalf of EUD.

## High Level Meetings on Disabilities

As highlighted during the Constructive Dialogue of the UNCRPD Committee with the EU, the implementation of the Convention is a shared responsibility of the EU and its Member States, which requires close cooperation between the two levels. These meetings are opportunities for Member States and the European Commission to

discuss issues. The most recent High Level Meeting on Disability held in Brussels, EUD was asked to present examples of best practise concerning the deaf community across Europe. Mark Wheatley, the Executive Director, used this rare opportunity to address the meeting by highlighting one of the EUD UNCRPD series publications.

## UNCRPD EU Review

After the occasion of the UNCRPD Committees first review of the European Union, Michel Servoz, Director General for DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, led the European Commission to address the issues raised.

The first meeting took place relatively soon after the EU review in Geneva. At this meeting, Mark Wheatley and Petra Söderqvist attended as EUD representatives.

In line with the request for more structured dialogue between civil society and the European Commission, DG Employment announced a number of meetings to take place to deal more comprehensively with civil society concerning relevant issues.

The European Commission discussed the UNCRPD concluding observations and asked for suggestions and proposals for action from Civil society organisations. EUD will be involved in this process.

More meetings are expected to follow.

## International Sign Translation

EUD provided the International Sign translation for the greatly anticipated announcement of the European Accessibility Act by Marianne Thyssen, the European Commissioner responsible for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility.



**Marianne Thyssen**  
European Commissioner for  
Employment, Social Affairs,  
Skills and Labour Mobility



## EUD PARTNER INITIATIVES

### COUNCIL OF EUROPE

A Council of Europe Conference that was organised in cooperation with the Department of Justice and Equality of Ireland took place in Dublin on the 5-6 November 2015. Dr Humberto Insolera took part of the conference and gave a presentation focussing

on the rights of the deaf people across Europe. Humberto Insolera also engaged with stakeholders including government officials, specialised agencies and institutions, persons with disabilities, civil society, regional and international organisations (notably, the UN).



### EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The Equality Unit of the European Parliament asked EUD to join a stall it held in honour of the European Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December in the European Parliament in Brussels. Dimitrios Papadimoulis, Vice President of the European Parliament made

an announcement which was interpreted into British Sign Language, Flemish Sign Language and International sign about the winner of the quiz competition. EUD was honoured to work with the Equality Unit and look forward to more such opportunities.



EUD's stall  
European Parliament



**Dimitrios Papadimoulis**  
Vice President, European Parliament

# EUD ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

## NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS OF THE DEAF

**Austria** – Österreichischer Gehörlosenbund (ÖGLB), **Belgium** – Federatie van Vlaamse Doven Organisaties (FEVLADO), Fédération Francophone des Sourds de Belgique (FFSB), **Bulgaria** – Съюз на глухите в България (СГБ / UDB), **Croatia** – Hrvatski savez gluhih i nagluhih, **Cyprus** – Ομοσπονδία Κωφών Κύπρου, **Czech Republic** – Svaz neslyšících a nedoslýchavých v ČR (UDHH), **Denmark** – Danske Døves Landsforbund (DDL), **Estonia** – Eesti Kurtide Liit (EAD), **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), **Lativa** – Latvijas Nedzirdīgo savienība (LAD), **Lithuania** – Lietuvos kurčiųjų draugija, **Luxembourg** – Vereinigung der Gehörlosen und Schwerhörigen Luxemburg (VGSL), **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, **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)

## BOARD



President  
**Dr Markku Jokinen**  
Espoo, Finland  
Executive Director,  
The Finnish Association of the Deaf



Vice President  
**Dr Humberto Insolera**  
Rome, Italy  
Consultant & Expert,  
National Association of the Deaf in Italy



Board  
**Louise Danielsson**  
Stockholm, Sweden  
Junior Lecturer  
Department of Special Education,  
Stockholm University



Board  
**Dr Gergely Tapolczai**  
Budapest, Hungary  
Member of the Hungarian Parliament



Board  
**Alfredo Gómez Fernández**  
Málaga, Spain  
Executive Director  
Andalucian Federation of the Deaf

## STAFF



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Administrative Officer  
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Communication and Media Officer  
**David Hay**  
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Policy Officer  
**Petra Söderqvist**  
Sundsvall, Sweden



Intern  
**Susanna Ricci Bitti**  
(March - May)  
Faenza, Italy



Intern  
**Frederik Olsen**  
(October - December)  
Copenhagen, Denmark

This report is supported by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014-2020

#### **Objectives of the Programme**

This programme shall contribute to the further development of an area where equality and the rights of persons, as enshrined in the Treaty, the Charter and international human rights conventions, are promoted and protected. Its nine specific objectives are to:

- Promote non-discrimination
- Combat racism, xenophobia, homophobia and other forms of intolerance
- Promote rights of persons with disabilities
- Promote equality between women and men and gender mainstreaming
- Prevent violence against children, young people, women and other groups at risk (Daphne)
- Promote the rights of the child
- Ensure the highest level of data protection
- Promote the rights deriving from Union citizenship
- Enforce consumer rights

The information contained in this report does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.

