

# **EUROPEAN UNION OF THE DEAF**

## ***DRAFT MINUTES of the 22nd General Assembly Meeting***

**5th-6th May 2007**

**Berlin, Germany**

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# MINUTES

## 1. Welcoming address

Helga STEVENS (HS) opened the 22<sup>nd</sup> EUD General Assembly (GA) at 9.15h. She welcomed all delegates and observers present and thanked the EUD staff for preparing for this meeting.

## 2. Introduction of Chair for the General Assembly

HS informed participants that the GA would be chaired by Johan WESEMANN (JW). Previous GAs had requested that the EUD GA would be chaired by an independent person. In 2006 Jeff McWHINNEY had chaired the meeting. This year JW, previous director of EUD, would take up this role.

JW said to be very happy to attend an EUD GA again after such a long time. His role as chair would be to ensure to process smoothly through the agenda.

## 3. Introduction of new Executive Director: Mark WHEATLEY

HS informed the GA that Mairead O'LEARY (MOL) no longer worked for EUD. She had been hired to work for EUD as interim director (for a one year period). MOL had replaced 2005 director Craig CROWLEY, who had terminated his contract on rather short notice. Therefore, an interim director who could replace him within a very short period of time was needed. MOL had agreed to work for EUD for a short period of time in order to put EUD back on track. MOL had helped EUD to secure its financial future. Now it was time to focus on the content of the work programme again and it was very important for EUD to have a Deaf person in charge of the organisation. HS explained that at the end of 2006 job interviews for the post of director had taken place and that Mark WHEATLEY (MW) had been selected.

MW introduced himself briefly: he told he was from the UK and had worked for 10 years as director of his own company. He said he felt he was ready for a change and was very interested to come to Europe. He said he was very happy to visit different countries; he had learned much, and he had met many people in the few months he was working for EUD. He thanked everyone for their help with the questionnaires and interviews (which were scheduled over the full 4 days of the Berlin events). The future work programmes will be based upon the direction that was given by the members.

## 4. Roll call

### *4.1 Delegates:*

#### **Full members:**

Helene JARMER and Günter ROISS (ÖGLB-Austria), Renaat VAN HENDE and Kathleen VERCRUYSSSE (Fevlado-Belgium), Tasos ANASTASIOU and Costakis THEOPHANOUS (Cyprus Deaf Federation-Cyprus), Pavel ŠTURM (SNNvCR-Czech Republic), Asger BERGMANN (DDL-Denmark), Janna KESKI-LEVIJOKI and Hannele ILOMÄKI (FAD-Finland), Thomas WORSECK and Alexander VON MEYENN (DGB-Germany), Maria GOUNIDOU (HFD-Greece), Adam KOSA and Gergely TAPOLCZAI (SINOSZ-Hungary), Hjördis Anna HARALDSDOTTIR (Iceland), Sebastiano MANCIAGLI

(ENS-Italy), Donal DESMOND and Sean HERLIHY (IDS-Ireland), Edgars VORSLOVS (LNS-Latvia), Vytautas PIVORAS (LDA-Lithuania), Jacques BRUCH and Merlon DE BRUIN (VGSL-Luxembourg), Nicolette AQUILINA and Melanie ABELA (DPAM-Malta), Benny ELFERINK (Dovenschap - the Netherlands), Paal Richard PETERSON (Norges Døveforbund - Norway), Andrzej KOPEĆ (ZGPZG-Poland), Maria BENKOVÁ, Pavol AITNER and Andrei FEČ (ANEPS-Slovak Republic), Franc PLANINC and Anton PERTIC (ZDGNS-Slovenia), Feliciano SOLA LIMIA and Amparo MINGUET SOTO (CNSE-Spain), Mats JONSSON (SDR-Sweden), Roland HERMANN and Jutta GSTREIN (SGB-FSS-Switzerland) and Sylvia SIMMONDS (BDA-United Kingdom).

FPAS-Portugal and FSSB-Belgium were unable to attend the EUD General Assembly 2007 and had sent their apologies to the General Assembly. FNSF-France was not present.

#### ***Affiliated members:***

Vasil PANEV (UDB-Bulgaria), Andrija HALEC (Croatian Association of Deaf and HOH-Croatia) and Bogdan GELU (ANSR-Romania)

Affiliated member SGNSCG-Serbia & Montenegro apologized for not being able to attend.

#### *4.2 Observers:*

- **EUDY** : Seán HERLIHY, Minna KATAINEN, Kilian KNOERZER, and Jaroslav CEHLARIK
- **WFD** : Markku JOKINEN
- **ANEPS - Slovak Republic**: Róbert ŠARINA (interpreter ANEPS)
- **ZDGNS - Slovenia**: Matjaz JUHART (interpreter ZDGNS)
- **DAAFLUX - Luxembourg**: Fabio GIUSTI and Markus RIESENBECK
- **All-Russian Society of the Deaf - Russia**: Valery RUKHLEDEV and Dmitry REBROV
- **EAD - Estonia**: Piret KÕIVA (interpreter)
- **Individual members**: Mirjam HENNIG, Marek TREINAT
- **President - Berlin Deaf Association**: Jochen MUHS

#### *4.3 EUD Board:*

Helga STEVENS (EUD President), Adrien PELLETIER (EUD Vice-President), Kajetana ROCZAN-MACIEJSKA, Berglind STEFANSDOTTIR and Yannis YALLOUROS (Board members).

#### *4.4 EUD Staff:*

Mark WHEATLEY (EUD Executive Director) and Karin VAN PUYENBROECK (EUD Administrator).

#### *4.5 Interpreters:*

Gerdinand WAGENAAR and Joanna MARTIN.

#### *4.6 Members to be voted in:*

- **Full members to be voted in:** Volli PÄRNLA (EAD – Estonia)

#### *4.7 EUD Chair:*

Johan WESEMANN.

In total 25 Full Members and 3 Affiliated Members were present at the EUD 22nd General Assembly. Moreover, 1 more National Association of the Deaf (NAD) from an applicant organisation and one non-EU country (Russia) were present in the 2007 General Assembly.

CNSE-Spain observed that it took too much time to get through the roll call. Spain suggested preparing an attendants list for the next GA in order that people can sign the paper when entering the room in order to be able to spend more time on important discussions.

Dovenschap-The Netherlands wanted to know why the Slovak Republic was allowed to send three delegates, while the other NADs had been restricted to two or three delegates.

HS replied that, following EUD Statutes, each NAD has two voting rights. NADs can bring more attendants but their voting rights will stay the same (the third person is considered as an observer). She clarified that EUD only pays the travel and accommodation costs for one delegate – the NAD is responsible for the additional costs for sending more people to the GA.

### **5. Ratification of membership applications**

HS clarified that EUD has 28 full members which are allowed to vote, FFSB (Belgium), France and Portugal were not present. This meant that 25 countries had voting rights at the GA 2007 (two votes per country). She explained that Romania and Bulgaria already were EUD affiliated members and had waited for the opportunity to become full members. Due to the enlargement of the EU on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 with the two countries, they were now in a position to apply for EUD Full membership, which they had done.

The EUD board had studied all the documents joining the application and had approved the application for full membership from Bulgaria and Romania.

HS explained that also EAD (Estonia) had applied for the EUD full membership. The EUD Board had carefully reviewed the statutes of the organisation and had also approved this application and asked the General Assembly to ratify this decision.

The General Assembly voted unanimously in favour of ratifying the decision of the EUD Board to accept the EUD Full membership application of EAD (Estonia).
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The General Assembly voted unanimously in favour of ratifying the decision of the EUD Board to accept the EUD Full membership application of DBU (Bulgaria).
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The General Assembly voted unanimously in favour of ratifying the decision of the EUD Board to accept the EUD Full membership application of ANSR (Romania).

After this voting round EUD now has 31 full members.

HS wished the new members a very warm welcome.

The three new Full Members briefly presented themselves and expressed their happiness to be accepted as new member of the EUD. They hoped their accession will be an example for the other Eastern European countries.

## **6. Adoption of the Agenda for the General Assembly 2007**

The agenda was approved, without any remarks from the GA.

## **7. Minutes of the Vienna EUD General Assembly 2006 : Follow up**

JW asked whether there were any comments related to the minutes of the last GA. HS said the minutes had been sent out after the GA 2006. According to EUD Internal Rules the deadline has passed (2 months after receipt of the draft minutes), so major changes to the minutes could no longer be accepted.

HS explained she would restrict herself to giving an overview of the action points which remained from the previous GA.

She summarised by saying that there were two big action points which remained over from last year's GA: the Deaf Lawyers Group and ICT Group. Both groups had had their introductory meeting in the last months of 2006.

## **8. EUD Annual Report 2005-2006: presentation and ratification**

MW explained that traditionally EUD has been dealing with only one Annual Report (AR). This year however, there were two Annual Reports since there were two funding periods: the funding period September 2005-August 2006 and a second funding period: the last four months of 2006.

MW clarified that all members had received the reports in advance in order that they could get a full overview of EUD activities.

He gave a short overview of the three main priorities for EUD: 1) capacity building; 2) advocating citizenship rights and responsibilities, 3) building awareness and support on the rights of disabled people.

**Priority 1 – objective 1:** How to improve EUD's capacity to present and convey demands for equal rights and how to strengthen the European Deaf Movement (see AR for detail of activities, eg leadership workshop);

**objective 2:** expand EUD's network to new national members;

**objective 3:** strengthen the governing body of EUD - the long discussion at the GA 2006 has led to useful decisions;

**objective 4:** partnerships and external co-operation - it is important to work with allies with one united voice (eg EDF);

**objective 5:** assertive action that responds to the difficulty of using "one working language" within EUD - membership have expressed their concerns on this item during the workshops and seminar.

**Priority 2 – objective 1:** develop/disseminate materials with the view of equipping disability organisations with necessary skills to address discrimination issues, eg. creation of DVD;

**Objective 2:** develop training/materials designed to make people with disabilities familiar with human rights treaties/conventions;

**Objective 3:** citizenship rights and responsibilities for member organisations (eg Fevlado has obtained the recognition of Flemish Sign Language (VGT) – this was supported by EUD).

**Priority 3:** EUD Update and EUD website: ways to disseminate information about EUD work.

For further details, MW referred to the AR (which all had received by email prior to the meeting).

BDA-United Kingdom had one small comment and asked whether the dates on the first page of the report could be in bigger print in order to make it more clear which report related to which period. BDA congratulated EUD with the work on the DVD but stated not to have received a copy of this DVD. BDA stressed the DVD contained information that was very important for its members. MW responded that the DVD had been sent out to all EUD members, so maybe the copy got lost somewhere in the BDA. For future correspondence the delegate present (Sylvia SIMMONDS) would be the contact person.

DGB-Germany commented that it was good to receive information but feared that EUD had sent out too much. DGB asked to include also brief summaries in the future. HS responded that there is an executive summary included in the report. MW agreed with HS and said that the Members have the right to receive a full report and to ask questions. There is also a shorter version used for external contents, members are free to read what they want.

CNSE-Spain had a different opinion than Germany and referred to the fact that EUD is a democratic organisation and brought in reminiscence that members had asked before to have extensive information. A principle decision has been taken before and it was not feasible to change this again. People are not forced to read all the documents.

**JW summarized and asked that the GA would approve the decision of sending two formats in the future: a detailed, extensive version and a short summary. This decision was approved by the GA.**

MW said the Report for the short four month period end of 2006 was carried out following the same priorities as mentioned above.

With regard to the first objective: important issues were the preparation of the funding application for the current funding period and the successful contacts with Estonia (thank to an EDF administrator who is Estonian).

With regard to the other objectives: the ICT Group and the Deaf Lawyers Group have had a first meeting.

Dovenschap-the Netherlands wanted to have more information regarding the St Petersburg meeting of the Council of Europe (CoE), which EUD Board member Adrien PELLETIER (AP) had attended. The

Netherlands referred to the discussion from three years ago about the working relationship with CoE, which focused on the European Social Charter and/or insertion under the Charter for Regional and Minority languages. The Netherlands wanted to know whether there had been any follow up to this because this was not mentioned in the report. HS admitted that the contacts with the CoE have been put a little bit aside due to the problems with the following (interim) directors but said she was confident that MW will work on re-establishing contacts with the CoE. AP informed the GA that the St Petersburg meeting was almost exclusively attended by government delegations and dealt with the CoE work programme until 2013. The CoE aims to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities. The plan has been drafted, and the idea of the conference was not to formally adopt it but to give workshops and information about it. By consequence there was no opportunity to make comments to change the programme. AP added that one thing really had struck him: the trend towards de-institutionalisation. This should be a big concern for EUD since EUD doesn't want to see Deaf schools being closed.

Dovenschap-the Netherlands asked to insert such observations and short reports in future Annual Reports. AP said it was discussed within the EUD Board meeting and would be followed up.

JW repeated the importance of having reports of meetings included in the Annual Report. He said it was very important that EUD to have as much as possible EUD representation.

Germany insisted on having a full voting procedure regarding the approval of both the Reports.

The GA approved both the EUD Annual Report 2005-2006 and the September – December 2006 Report. There was one abstention.

## **9. Financial Reports**

### **9.1 Financial Report for the period September 2005-August 2006: presentation and ratification**

HS clarified that regarding the financial reports there is one general overview, but also tabs with more detailed information. Everyone should have received the same file.

DGB-Germany asked to send the balance and details both by post and email or to send it out with the request for a delivery report. DGB stated not to have received the emails. MW was very surprised that DGB had not received the documents since the email hadn't bounced back and none of the other countries had experienced problems. MW would make sure that DGB receives copies.

SINOSZ-Hungary was of the opinion that NADs also had to act proactive. Everybody was aware of the deadlines for receiving GA material. NADs should take up their own responsibility to contact EUD if they felt they might have not received all the necessary documents.

CNSE-Spain agreed with this idea but stated to have received other papers than were shown on the screen.

HS proposed to postpone this item until later in the GA and asked staff to make meanwhile copies of the financial reports in order to hand them out at the meeting itself.

The budget plan that is submitted at EC aims at receiving 70% EC money and finding 30% co-financing. The budget plan differs from the real expenses: if the whole budget is not spent, than the

received amount is adjusted to the lower amount of real expenses. HS said the EC is very strict on this; if money is not spent at all, it goes back to the EC. The amount that is received from the EC is totally dependent on real expenses.

The budgeted plan that was submitted was for 177.539,66€ (123.000€ EC money + 54.539,66€ EUD co-financing) – the real expenses were for 137.187,59€ (95.043,97€ EC money + 42.143,62€ EUD co-financing). The final payment based on actual expenses of 10.843,97€ still had to be received at the moment of the meeting.

All this information was sent to NADs.

DDL-Denmark wanted to know how EUD got co-financing. HS responded that this was received by membership fees, support government etc, support from Austria NAD (for GA 2006 in Vienna).

SNNvČR-Czech Republic wanted to know who was responsible for the accounting. HS said that the budget plan September 2005-August 2006 was drafted by previous director Craig CROWLEY. Regarding the real expenses : EUD has an official accountant for drawing the books and everything is revised by an external auditor (as demanded by the EC). The statement by the auditor is available.

## **9.2 Financial Project Report for the period September 2006-December 2006: presentation and ratification**

The budgeted plan that was submitted was for 52.796,78€ (36.471,78€ EC money + 16.325€ EUD co-financing) – the real expenses were for 49.681,48€ (34.319,97€ EC money + 15.361,51€ EUD co-financing). The final payment based on actual expenses of 16.084,08€ still had to be received at the moment of the meeting.

HS explained that the same rules were valid for this budget plan for the four last months of 2006 (among others there had been meetings for the Deaf Lawyers Group and the ICT Group etc.) The real expenses were a bit less than planned, so the EC money was adjusted slightly. Also these accounts were approved by the auditor.

DGB-Germany asked that in the future the auditor report would also be sent out. HS apologised for this oblivion, in the past this was always done. The auditor statement will be added to the minutes.

FAD-Finland said there should be a formal approval of the books of the past year. The Board should be discharged for the financial responsibility.

CNSE-Spain thought that following EUD statutes it was not possible to discharge the board? HS said that the Board is responsible solely. Once the GA members have been informed, this becomes a shared responsibility.

DGB-Germany said EUD statutes must be in accordance with the Belgian law. HS suggested that the EUD staff would make a basic overview with the Belgian rules.

IDS-Ireland wanted to know who signs for the books. HS said there was no formal procedure in this regard. She clarified that the accounts were submitted to EC, since they will be the ones who have to pay. The finances are approved by the board, signed by the president and if the EC is happy after their review, they ultimately pay EUD with the money we are entitled to.

SNNvČR-Czech Republic wanted to know why not all the money was spent and whether this would not endanger future funding? HS said that, on the opposite, underspending gives EUD a good reputation. The EC knows EUD remains within the budget. She added that it was better to spend less than to have negative figures.

Dovenschap-the Netherlands wanted to know more about the future financial planning and current financial state? HS said the budget was granted for 2007 but also for 2008 and beyond EUD is likely to receive further funding. EUD will be rather safe for the next 7 years period.

BDA-UK asked whether it was possible to have a visualisation of the division of the budget and the expenditure.

DGB-Germany agreed with this and especially was interested to know how much of the co-funding was covered by the membership fees.

ZDGNS-Slovenia wanted to know the current state of pay for 2007. HS agreed that this information will be given as from next years GA.

## **B. Global Annual Accounts**

Balance sheet at 31/12/2006 was a snapshot of the situation at the end of 2006 with an overview of assets and liabilities (to be paid by creditors).

Statement of income & expenditure 2006 gave a more detailed overview - among others not eligible costs (eg EDF membership fee – EDF is already funded by the EC so this would be double funding EDF); money in reserves (in case of emergency) and the net result. Since EUD is a non-profit organisations, this money cannot be considered as real profit.

SINOSZ-Hungary requested the delegates to study the accounts before the future GA. Questions for clarification can be sent to the EUD office by email. It would be better not too waste time on this here but to have constructive discussions for the future.

DGB-Bulgaria asked to give mandate too a small financial committee that can do this work for us. A group of eg. three people can be elect from within the delegates.

MW informed the GA that from now on the Project year will run from January to December following the new EU Programme PROGRESS. Consequently EUD members will exceptionally receive two membership invoices in September: one for the period September to December 2007 and one for the period January to December 2008: 2000 euros. MW urged upon NADs to pay these amounts rather fast in order that the accounts can be closed in December.

The Financial Reports were unanimously approved.
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## **10. Summary report on EUD Action plan for 2007**

MW explained that no preparatory documents were sent out regarding the EUD Action plan 2007 and that the presentation would be given at the GA.

- **Deaf Lawyers Group**

- **ICT Group**
- **PROGRESS:** 7 year EU funding programme 2007-2013. MW explained that EUD was selected for the 7 year period as eligible for funding. The funding period has been cut off in three parts: one year-period (2007), two three year periods (2008-2010 and 2011-2013). MW added that the contract had been signed only very recently, but said that EUD was very pleased to be granted under this action plan. In the past EUD was forced to make very short plannings, now it will be possible to look ahead for a longer period of time and to plan events in a longer time frame. This also means that EUD will no longer work with September-August work programmes, but that from 2007 on the calendar year will be followed.
- **Questionnaire:** MW explained that during the Summer time the plans for 2008-2010 will have to be presented to the EC - it was very important for him to have input from the members by having short personal meetings with each of them and by means of the questionnaire. The answers will be compiled and the section on the internet will be passed on to the ICT Group.

CNSE-Spain asked why this Action Plan had not been sent out in beforehand? MW said this was just a point of information in order to give a rough idea for the work for 2007 and added that all the information could be found also in the work plan.

Dovenschap-the Netherlands agreed with the question from Spain and considered the work programme and the summary report to be two different items. HS clarified that in the past EUD had September-August work periods but that since PROGRESS the time frame would follow the calendar year. She suggested to merge agenda items 10 and 11 in the agenda since there was not much to report for the current year yet (⇔ before: September – May).

SDR-Sweden found the agenda confusing and asked to deal with each item as given on the screen. (Deaf Lawyers Group-ICT-PROGRESS-questionnaire). Sweden thought it makes sense to start with 2007 and then move on to 2008.

DGB-Germany agreed the summary report is important but brought in memory that EUD cannot forget the boundaries as set by EC. EUD totally depends on the funding and grants from the EC. Germany stressed the importance of having a clear overview of funding and rules beyond 2008. Eg the number of Deaf people is increasing, this should be considered in the plans for the future. HS proposed to discuss this under agenda point 17 (7 year strategy). She clarified that EUD had been granted funding under the EQUAL programme (time frame of 5 years); since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 the PROGRESS programme (7 years) has started. She added that a SWOT analysis by EUD had started already in Dublin 2004 and was carried forward to the Luxembourg GA in 2005. In that way members were already indirect asked for ideas for 2008 and beyond.

BDA-United Kingdom asked what the link was between the questionnaire and the summary report. HS made the suggestion to discuss this at agenda point 11.

SINOSZ-Hungary remarked that the powerpoint presentation should be adapted with the correct years: "Summary report on EUD Action Plan **2006-2007**".

## **11. Proposed work programme for 2007**

MW said all members previously had worked together to create the EUD mission and vision: 1) *right to use indigenous sign language* (cfr seminar: opportunity to exchange information); 2) *empowerment*

*through information* (workshops on linguistic diversity and state of play in deaf education) and *communication* (between EUD and its members eg. use of webcams, EUD Board meetings) and 3) *equality in education and employment*.

- MW said the link with the working groups should be strengthened. EUD could achieve this by expanding its website and by continuing giving information to its members. It is extremely important to keep EUD informed about recent developments, so members are urged to send information about new development in their countries.
- The Deaf Lawyers Group will focus on legal issues in relation to education, employment and will be advising the board with actions to undertake regarding the UN Convention.
- EUD will attend the WFD congress in order to gather information, provide information, and to be available in Madrid for meetings with members.
- EUD will participate in the celebration of 10 year EDF. Also JW (as first EDF President) will attend the EDF anniversary.
- The EUD membership base now covered all the EU countries. However, it will be necessary to explore ways to optimize the working relationship. Since EUD relies on funding for carrying out the work programme, more funding opportunities at EU level should be explored.
- The importance of liaising with other NGOs in order to speak to the European institutions with one voice. The EUD office has moved back to Brussels and now shares a building with another NGO; It is located 5min walk from European institutions – this will increase the chance that EUD will be asked more to attend conferences, it saves organisers travel costs.

MW summarised that the outcome for EUD looks positive: the work programme is in place and the funding has been obtained.

JW wanted to know whether the EUD programme was composed in discussion with the EC? MW responded that the EUD work programme is in accordance with the vision. MOL had asked the EC for clarification regarding the funding. Apparently the EC was pleased with the proposed work programme, since it had been approved without comments. MW considered it to be a decent work programme, well structured, with clear objectives for 2007. Nicola BEDLINGTON had reviewed the programme as external evaluator. Her report and recommendations were very clear and it was useful to take her recommendations on board.

CNSE-Spain congratulated EUD on the good job done. As point of information Spain referred to the WFD Special Interest Groups (SIG) on equality in employment. This will also be a theme during the World Congress.

SGB-FSS-Switzerland questioned the role of the chair of the meeting: JW was only there to chair the meeting and not to ask the questions.

Dovenschap-the Netherlands wanted to work more proactively on the domain of equality in employment and education. They also wanted to include the relations with the CoE regarding the recognition of sign languages. They missed a reference to partnerships with EFSLI (European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters) and ESMHD (European Society Mental Health and Deafness)? The Netherlands wanted to know whether EUD will attend the upcoming ESMHD conference which will be held in their country?

MW responded that the EC is very rigid: in the 2007 budget the conferences which EUD will attend are listed. Additional conferences can be added but only upon invitation (when the organisers pay for the costs). With regard to EFSLI: the question for partnership with EFSLI is an ongoing item within the EUD board.

HS repeated the contacts with the CoE will be re-established again. She added that if the financial situation will allow it, EUD can send representation to the ESMHD conference (there is a little flexibility since travel costs from Brussels to the Netherlands will rather cheap).

MW clarified that the work programme for 2007 is set. The list of actions will be carried out during the current year. The ideas that come up during the discussions will be inserted in the 2008-2013 plan.

MJ suggested to add the lobby work regarding the UN Convention to 1.2 and to link it to the item of respect for the linguistic diversity. He stressed that several articles in the Convention need to be made visible.

DGB-Germany stated to be very happy with the work of the Deaf Lawyers Group, since the monitoring of the different evolutions is very important. HS agreed but said that this work could not be done by the EUD office alone, since only 1 ½ person are working there. EUD is to be considered as a bridge between various organisations and passes on information to the NADs. It is important to keep eyes open, eg regarding closing of special schools. Parents' organisations have lobbied EDF to support this. EUD did not accept this and has had a discussion with EDF. EUD needs to be active in the debate and in the networking with fellow European organisations and others (WFD).

SDR-Sweden considered it more important to focus and prioritise on political issues. Contacts with European institutions should be the core business of EUD.

SINOSZ-Hungary proposed to list the different conferences and to disseminate it under NADs. Short reports can be written afterwards and published in EUD Update. HS responded that announcements of conferences are already published in EUD Update, for more information the organisers can be approached.

BDA-United Kingdom agreed with the priorities but asked not to forget other minority groups within the Deaf Community (black people, woman, holebi). HS agreed this was an important issue but said one of the problems was that EUD doesn't have enough resources and staff. Each of the NADs should take up its own responsibility in this regard.

HS clarified for the new members that EUD has its own vision and three main aims. The EC on the other hand has its own goals. Sometimes there is a conflict between the aims of both organisations, EUD then has to be creative to match its own aims to the vision of the EC. It is very important that members know that EUD cannot work independently, if EUD would ignore the EC priorities, we will not be eligible for funding any longer.

JW concluded by saying that all comments are noted in the minutes of the meeting.

The proposed work programme for 2007 was unanimously approved.
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## **12. Proposal for a EUD Strategic Plan 2007-2013.**

MW proposed that he would explain the EUD Strategic Plan (ESP) step by step in order to make it more clear. Under agenda item 18, there would be time for discussion.

The Strategic Plan 2007-2013 consists of 6 sections:

- 1) introduction
- 2) vision and mission
- 3) core values and guiding principles
- 4) key goals
- 5) key fields of action
- 6) review and realignment.

MW, Mairead O'LEARY (previous director) and Nicola BEDLINGTON (external evaluator) have sat down to discuss the strategic plan. The input given by the members through a SWOT analysis and ongoing consultations with NADs and partners were used as a basis.

SGB-FSS-Switzerland asked all members to lobby for access, eg. subtitling on DVDs.

CNSE-Spain, questioned the wording "combat" discrimination? Spain suggested to replace this with another term since it associates to war.

Dovenschap-the Netherlands was of the opinion that there were very few references to employment and education in the three aims and six goals.

SINOSZ-Hungary said: 1) it was very important that the Deaf Lawyers Group was to be informed of Deaf lawyers in other European countries. It would be a good idea if the group could be enlarged in order that more legal experts can work together across the EU;  
2) that co-operation with EFHOH can not be overlooked. At the EUD GA 2004 meeting the EFHOH President had attended the meeting as an observer and it would be useful to keep this link between both organisations and to attend each others GAs, since we share common interests;  
3) Information should not only be sent by email, Hungary supported the proposal to establish a closed section for members only with special login. It would save time to both the EUD and the members, since they can enter themselves and look for the documents they need;  
4) It is important to learn from seminars and workshops and to disseminate the information. This often is an area of weakness for the NADs. Maybe EUD could strive to organise more seminars; countries can take up a specific theme and focus on that, eg organise training for people active in legal field (Hungary). Other NADs will have different strengths.

WFD-MJ was of the opinion that the ESP was a good document but said there were a few important elements he wanted to check. The EUD Vision and mission refers to "all Deaf persons who use sign language"- MJ questioned whether EUD should not also represent deaf people who not use sign language. Does EUD wants to exclude deaf people with CI? It is important to discuss this mission: if we restrict ourselves to "Deaf", that is a political statement. There is also lot of discrimination for deaf people who are not sign language users. The use of Deaf and to replace it by deaf should be questioned. WFD's philosophy is to represent all.

He applauded the insertion of the rights based approach – this was originally not included in the EUD mission. This links perfectly to the UN Convention which states that persons with disabilities should work towards inclusion. The old fashioned terms like socially included are no in use. MJ said he would be happy to help to develop the text in order that it would be better related to the work on the UN

Convention and its goals. With regard to the monitoring of the ratification procedures WFD asks for the help of EUD. This can be done relatively easy by means of a questionnaire. MJ asked to include WFD on page 12.

Iceland wanted to know why Fepeda was not included?

SDR-Sweden agreed that Sign Language and its recognition are priority work for EUD but said EUD should be ready to work in a different manner. EUD and EFHOH should cooperate more on different topics in order to support each other, eg campaigning for subtitled DVDs. EFHOH can focus on obtaining subtitling, while EUD should focus on Sign Language. It is necessary to prioritise. Apart from that, EUD should work on being seen by the EC as the expertise center for deaf people.

DGB-Germany thought it was important to define ourselves as being open to CI users and other groups. This should be included in Priority 5. EUD should address this issue of the increasing number of Deaf people.

MW replied :

- that the Swiss question on the subtitling of DVDs is a technical issue of importance and that it will be discussed and handled by the ICT group
- “Combat” is the appropriate word for this context. Combat means “we will not tolerate”, lack of tolerance of acceptance of discrimination
- NL: education and employment will be translated into the goals
- Deaf Lawyers: call for Deaf Lawyers – delegates and NADs can always pass on the names of interested persons
- EFHOH: EUD has been invited to Norway for the EFHOH GA but lacks budget to go there. However EUD is in very close contact with Marcel BOBELDIJK, EFHOH President. Both organisations have a good contact at meetings and inform each other mutually.
- the special login for members in the EUD website is already inserted in the ESP
- the offer from MJ is warmly appreciated
- Fepeda: the list is not exhaustive list –EUD is most interested in working together with parents organisations

### **13. Motions tabled**

EUD had received one motion for the EUD GA 2007. This motion was sent to delegates by email prior to the meeting. It is listed below.

MOTION 1 – submitted by Dovenschap – the Netherlands

*Some of the television stations that broadcast in the Netherlands are not covered by Dutch legislation, because they are not located in our country. These stations (RTL 4, RTL 5 en RTL*

*7) use a so-called U-construction. Television broadcasts are sent to Luxembourg. From there they are sent back to Holland again. For this reason the Dutch government cannot force RTL to subtitle its programmes.*

*So far, the Dutch organisations of the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing, united in SOAP!, have not succeeded in making our government end this situation.*

*We know that Belgium is also familiar with this problem. In their case, the broadcasts are sent through Britain.*

*Would it be possible for EUD to help us in this matter?*

HS responded that the EUD Board had accepted this motion. She suggested to get in contact with Richard HOWITT MEP in order that he could address the EC for harmonising deaf access to subtitling and sign language. She added that she had her own contacts in Belgium and would ask them to take this item up.

**The GA formally voted in support of this motion. EUD will report back on this.**

CNSE-Spain questioned whether motions must be accepted and wanted to know whether why there wasn't a vote for the previous agenda point. HS clarified that agenda point 12 was included to give food for reflection. Formal adoption of the strategic plan is scheduled at the end of agenda point 18. Spain did not agree with this: "discussion" is not the same as "proposal". HS apologized for not having used the same consistent wording but said that the "proposed EUD Strategy Plan 2007-2013" and the "EUD 7 year Strategy" were the same.

BDA-United Kingdom suggested to write "**Proposal for EUD Strategy Plan**" in stead of "**proposed**", this would be a more correct wording. Some members might have the feeling that this is a set plan, rather than a plan that is still in the initial stage.

DGB-Germany suggested to adapt the agenda 18. with "Discussion Forum **and** decision". Germany felt it was up to the members to decide and not to the board alone.

#### **14. Report on relations with EDF and EDF activities**

MW informed the audience that EDF had started in January 2007 with a signature campaign; the aim is to collect 1 million signatures throughout Europe, which will be handed over to the EU in order to improve disability rights. MW called upon all delegates to support this action: more information can be read on the campaign website: <http://www.1million4disability.eu>

The EDF Annual Report 2005-2006 was handed out to delegates.

MW said that EDF and EUD have been working closely together and that they have constructive discussions. He added that EDF will celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in October 2007. HS asked all members for their cooperation in the signature campaign. JW has been at the cradle of EDF and all EUD members should feel responsible in order that his hard work will not cease to exist.

#### **15. Discussion about CERS**

HS gave some information about the WFD structure. Currently WFD has 6 regional secretariats - in Europe traditionally there have been 3 regional secretariats: West (EUD), Central (CERS) and East (EEMARS) Note that EUD is not an official WFD Regional secretariat. It is an independent organisation. In 2004 the EU was enlarged with 10 new members, this year two new countries joined. Almost all NADs from CERS (Central Europe Regional Secretariat) have joined EUD. WFD had asked EUD to put this on the agenda since there will be a discussion held about this at the WFD World Congress in July 2007.

HS admitted that EUD was not happy with this question, because the board felt it was not up to EUD to decide whether or not CERS should cease to exist. This discussion also has implications for the relation between EUD and the Balkan countries. The Balkan countries are historically and linguistically similar, and are facing similar problems. In that way it would make sense to cooperate with EUD. She however doubted whether the EUD GA is the appropriate place to discuss this. She concluded that EUD had not the intention to discuss this at the current GA but that this was to be considered as an announcement for the upcoming meeting in Madrid.

MJ agreed with HS that the EUD GA was not the appropriate place to discuss this. The countries belonging to CERS should make this decision. He confirmed that some of the Balkan countries were considering establishing their own Regional Secretariat. (<-> Croatia: feels they belong more to the EUD). He urged that EUD should be present at the Madrid meeting as observer.

SNNvCR-Czech Republic clarified that CERS no longer had a clear structure, nor had clear objectives and that there also had occurred financial problems in some countries. At the Canada WFD Conference it was decided to plan a meeting in Madrid where the decision whether or not to dissolve CERS could be taken.

SINOSZ-Hungary was of the opinion that this point is a non-issue for the EUD GA since EUD is a structure acting independent from WFD. HS said it was never the aim of this agenda point to discuss the nature of relationship with WFD.

The GA agreed to give Mandate to EUD to attend the meeting in Madrid.
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YY added that the EUD Board had questioned why WFD had asked EUDs opinion on this.

DDL-Denmark said that it was necessary to make a distinction between WFD as a global organisation and EUD as a regional organisation with a different structure. Apart from EUD there exist different other structures eg the Nordic Council and the Mediterranean Summit. Denmark said that there was no problem if the Balkans would want to establish their own regional secretariat, NADs can be in parallel members of EUD and another structure.

ZDGNS-Slovenia stressed the importance of encouraging other countries to become EUD Affiliated member (eg. Moldavia, Kosovo, Albania etc.). EUD cannot afford to ignore them.

JW summarised that this round has resulted in some food for thought for EUD. EUD should think how it can provide support for countries in the Balkan region. This is a shared responsibility for the members and the board.

HS clarified that EUD and WFD are not ignoring the Balkan countries. She informed that she had attended a Balkan Deaf Forum (organised by WFD) in December 2006. It had been a positive,

constructive gathering where she had been able to provide the attendants with information. She added that the EUD website is accessible for everyone and that the EUD Update is sent out to all NADs.

## **16. Report on the World Congress Madrid 2007**

CNSE-Spain gave some information about the 15th WFD World Congress, which will take place in Madrid, Spain on 16-22 July 2007. The conference theme will be "Human Rights through Sign Language". At the Congress there are several commissions (new: Deaf women), and SIGs (special interest groups). The scientific committee had received 557 abstracts, of which 180 were selected following very objective selection criteria. The keynote speech will be delivered by Don MackAY (New Zealand) and apart from the plenary presentations there will also be a cultural programme (opening and closing ceremonies, gala dinner, etc.) and social programme (international deaf theatre show, ecumenical service, children's party, international deaf cinema sessions, photo exhibition, deaf artists' and craft exhibition). There will be 180 volunteers and the conference will be made fully accessible.

Another important issue to mention is that sponsorship was found for 64 countries (84 men and 40 woman). 1400 have registered so far. WFD hoped to have in total have 2000 from 101 different countries. The EUD President was invited to attend the conference as honorary guest.

More information is available via the internet on [www.wfdcongress.org](http://www.wfdcongress.org) in English, Spanish, international sign and LSE (Spanish Sign Language). Questions can be sent to [wfdcongress@cNSE.es](mailto:wfdcongress@cNSE.es).

Dovenschap-the Netherlands asked whether a special EUD meeting is going to be held in Madrid. HS said this was not planned.

HS thanked the speaker for this presentation and wished WFD all the best with the conference organisation.

## **17. EUD – EUDY Cooperation**

Sean HERLIHY, EUDY President, gave a short presentation on EUDY. He focused on the fact that EUDY has had parallel board meetings with EUD and said that EUD Board member BS had attended the EUDY Camp in Dublin.

He thanked EUD for the support and hoped to see some EUD representation at the EUDY seminar and GA in September 2007.

He informed the EUDY 2008 camp will be organised in Belgrade, Serbia (20-28 July) and mentioned the first EUDY Junior Camp 2009. Info: [www.eudy.info](http://www.eudy.info)

EUDY Secretary Minna KATAINEN asked to share historical information with EUDY, this demand was especially for people who had been active in the past in EUDY.

## **18. Discussion Forum: Proposal for EUD 7 year strategy**

### **Goals:**

- SL recognition throughout the EU
- Combating discrimination
- Access to new technologies and the media
- Strengthened membership base & build strategic alliances

- Raising EUD's profile
- Organisational sustainability

Dovenschap-the Netherlands asked why there was no reference to employment and education in the goals, nor in the aims? HS clarified that the EU already has adopted a non-discrimination directive regarding employment. She admitted that although the legal document is there, the request for support to include this goal to reflect work on employment and education is valid.

DGB-Germany agreed that priorities should be made because of the limited staff capacity in the EUD office. EUD should be very explicit when it comes to determining goals, since often the outside world doesn't know what we are talking about (cf discussion Deaf-deaf). Germany thought it was very important that EUD should work on European wide standards (3<sup>rd</sup> goal). EUD should monitor the developments, while the NADs themselves should have to campaign on new technologies. Germany added that there was a lot of funding available in the EU; it was important for NADs that EUD would support them when they apply for projects. EUD should take up a more active role when it comes to thinking about possibilities for funding.

FAD-Finland was very concerned about the deaf schools closing. Finland suggested that EUD could create a DVD or brochure in order that children become aware of existence of EU and EUD, since a lot of EU information doesn't reach them.

SDR-Sweden also wanted to focus on the quality of work. They warned that EUD should also work for the interests and rights of the silent majority of deaf people (grassroots deaf people). Sweden suggested creating some merchandise and PR material.

ÖGLB-Austria wanted to emphasize the profiling aspects of the organisation. In Austria publicity events are planned one year in advance. The Accessibility theme is very high on the agenda in Austria; this has to be translated and made relevant to Deaf people also. Austria asked EUD to write a position paper regarding this theme. EUD should also think which manner is the best to make information available (EDF and other information).

NDF-Norway supported the six goals but was concerned the link with deaf children was missing. Education should be an essential goal. Deaf schools are closing, we might miss the different trends that are currently taking place. EUD should look forward to the future and address these changes.

DDL-Denmark shared these concerns, and added that information is very important. Denmark agreed that EUD has to prioritise. There is an absolute need to have access in communication; eg. webcam, mobile telephony, remote interpreting, etc. EUD should lobby for compatibility in technology. It is equally important that Deaf people can enjoy the same rights. Also the evolutions in CI and education should be monitored and EUD should think about how to involve the children with CI.

BDA-United Kingdom was of the opinion that all six goals were equally important. But for the BDA the recognition of sign languages was the most important goal, without which the other goals cannot be achieved. There should also be strong campaigning for deaf people's rights. Research has shown that 50% of the deaf population is unemployed and that Deaf people often have difficulty to access the labour market. Another major goal for deaf people according to the BDA is the quality of life. BDA feels this is decreasing, eg. There is mobile telephony competition in the market, but deaf people are still forced to buy the most expensive packages. Also the quality of videotelephony is not high enough. EUD should raise its profile as it is important to be a strong organisation. NADs have to realise the relevance of EUD and we should mutually support each other, in order to achieve our goals.

Board member AP also focused on the quality of life (eg; quality of interpreters can differ which means that deaf people often have no (good) access to university; idem for quality and quantity of subtitling on television). AP stressed this item should be included in the seven years plan.

ÖGLB-Austria said PR should be included in the six goals and said EUD should think about the strategic plan in a stepwise approach with concrete steps and measures. EUD should support members in planning projects and should organise more seminars (eg. Seminar on the introduction of the Euro). In Austria a lot of presentations are given in schools. This kind of sensitivity training is very useful.

SINOSZ-Hungary warned not to underestimate the importance of PR. The hearing world needs to be better informed, since often there still exist prejudices around deafness (link with mental health problems etc). EUD should also not forget the group of elderly deaf people, who often get isolated after they have retired. Hungary said their most important aim was not to have sign language an sich recognised, but to lobby for access in all areas (eg interpreters). It was important to inform that deaf people need other forms of accessibility. The allocation of funds is not in proportional fashion now.

CNSE-Spain considered all issues to be important, especially the first goal. We should raise awareness since often social problems of deaf people are not visible enough.

DGB-Germany stressed it was important to monitor adequately the changes in EU rules – this can be included in goal 5. EUD should publish a magazine that can be sent out to hearing people (very informative), this would be a good PR instrument. Reaching children in mainstreaming schools, and children with CI are very important.

Dovenschap-the Netherlands questioned how NADs could work more closely together instead of working in one way-direction with the EUD.

JW summarised:

- **Deaf/deaf?:** the target group and the environment (schools) have changed – EUD should create a new definition that is applicable to the new situation. Maybe a broader definition where also CI is included? Maybe it would be a good idea to set up a small working group. EUD cannot work with the definition that was valid ten years ago. Before there was a clear distinction but now between either Deaf, either HOH but now there exists a diffuse range of identities.
- **Technology:** access and standards are necessary. However EUD cannot do this work alone. The EUD ICT Group can do a lot of practical work. Hopefully more members will be found and the group will be very involved in meetings for developing different standards. Developments should be monitored to find out whether they are relevant to deaf people (eg Galileo satellite project; alarm systems for blind people already exist).
- **Equal access to employment:** the situation is deteriorating. Equality should be obtained by recognition of sign language, but also by availability of services. This should be a priority for EUD.

MW added:

- Regarding goal 3: EUD has a 1 1/2 staff and has created an ICT and Deaf lawyers group. However EUD cannot attend all the meetings – other people should also represent the organisation at expert meetings. Support from the various NADs is very important.

- Regarding the BDA comment: the budget for research is restricted. EUD would like to ask NADs to support EUD more (not by financing), but by undertaking some work and collecting relevant information.
- Regarding information: NADs have a two-way responsibility to inform EUD and to disseminate information to the grass roots Deaf people.
- One of the individual members of EUD had suggested not only to focus on legal and ICT matters, but also to establish a Deaf Culture Group. This idea was very much welcomed. These kind of working groups could diminish the work load for the staff.
- Spain had suggested that a hard hitting impact of public opinion on deafness was needed. This can be reinforced by working together.

DGB-Germany added proactive work is necessary. EUD should focus on important issues because all the goals cannot be achieved at the same time. Eg. the UN Convention should be viewed from different angles at the same time. Research findings from different countries should be collected and be shared (via Kompetenz centers where Deaf people can go if they need specific information. Each NAD (not one specific person!) should take up the responsibility for a goal in order that the other NADs know where to go if they want more information on this.

SDR-Sweden shared this opinion and said that it will be impossible for EUD to tackle all future problems at the same time (technology, interpreters, young, elderly, etc.) Accessibility will help to reach other issues. Eg. Sweden has a lot of knowledge about merchandise

Dovenschap-the Netherlands warned that an allocation of responsibilities to different countries may raise problems with co-ordination. Dovenschap mentioned that they were interested in GRUNDTVIG projects on EU level (employment) and that they are looking for partners. Maybe EUD could have a coordination role?

SGB-FSS-Switzerland supported the idea to have experts throughout the EU, and suggested to develop a web space where all the information could be centralized. A private EUD members section should be established with archive and news from the expert groups.

NDF-Norway said there are three main perspectives regarding the recognition of sign language: sign language as a tool for communication, sign language as a human right issue ( the right to choose one's own language) and sign language as a carrier of cultural heritage of deaf people in the community. Norway has plenty of information regarding this and advised other countries to send their news also to EUD. We don't have to reinvent the wheel, when the information is already available.

JW thanked the Swedish offer to take home the request to discuss what SDR can do in developing merchandise; it's a very simple but effective tool!

Hearing people have to be informed. Concrete ideas should be developed on how we can influence thinking in society at large, not only toward governments, eg. Austria; it is effective to go to hearing schools to inform hearing pupils.

HS concluded that EUD will take all this input back to the board to be incorporated in the proposal for a strategic plan. She suggested that it would be further developed by email since it would be not very practical to wait until the next GA. Sweden agreed with this but said more concrete steps were necessary. Funding is very important: gathering ideas is not the problem, but NADs often don't have funding. EUD can support, but not in a financial way; NADs will have to look for matching funding.

MJ focused on the opportunities within Web 2.0. The media landscape changes, before it was a one way phenomenon but now everything is cross media. Blogs, vlogs, elearning, discussion amongst each other, the way information is being shared has radically changed. EUD should create a sort of Wikipedia where all the information can be gathered. Deaf people have a lot of ideas and it is worthwhile to bring all of this information together. HS liked the idea very much. She promised to discuss this further within the EUD board. The key word of the whole discussion is diversity.

DGB-Germany thought six goals were too many. Quality, not mere quantity, is important. For reaching results; goals need to be chosen and to be focused on.

Iceland said working on a campaign for recognition of sign language is vital. This is extremely essential, the other goals are a way of supporting this.

HS visualised by stating EUD is like a house: it needs to have a foundation (sustainability), flexible pillars (employment, technology) and a roof (equality of deaf people). The quality of the recognition is also important: sometimes it is just a recognition on paper (eg. no (good) interpreters ,no services ↔ UK: no official recognition but range of access to services) BDA-UK commented that they are campaigning for one BSL act because now sometimes they feel bumping into barriers.

MW concluded EUD is one big building, and all are part of it. The questionnaires are a very important tool for EUD. During the summer period EUD will have to apply for the new project period. The input from this discussion forum will be used to create a work programme for the next years. The board will make a proposal for a work programme and this will be sent afterwards by email to the members for their review. Goals have to be wide enough to allow developing such a work programme. **The GA approved the goals.**

CNSE- Spain mentioned the financial plan for 2008 had not been discussed, neither voted. HS said that that EUD had waited a long time for the approval of the commission for the financial plan for 2007. For the next GAs this will be included.

## **19. Any other business**

- **GA 2008:** the next EUD GA will take place in Slovenia. ZDGNS-Slovenia warned that hotels are booked very far in advance. Proposed date for the EUD GA 2008 is: 25-27 April 2008. Second possibility (in case of no hotel capacity): 30 May – 1 June 2008.
- **SINOSZ-Hungary:** informed that the Hungarian Deaf Association will celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> December 2007. A conference and celebrations will be held. Invitations will be sent out within two weeks to NADs.
- **SGB-Switzerland:** informed that a conference will be held in Locarno in September 2008 (weekend of World Deaf Day) – more information will be published soon on the EUD website. Switzerland also suggested that the EUD office should start to use video telephony in order that the members would be able to contact the director directly via webcam. For future GAs a script and checklist for technical events, no pillars etc. beamers, light etc should be developed.
- **Scandinavian countries:** informed that the Nordic Council exists 100 years. A one week programme will be organised in Denmark in October 2007. WFD and the Nordic Council will

have their board meeting and on 27 October 2007 a conference related to the recognition of sign languages in Scandinavia will be organised.

- **ZDGNS-Slovenia:** a clear overview of tasks and responsibilities of EUD Board and staff should be prepared. Maybe a small commission could be created to write clear descriptions.

JW asked the NADs not to forget to send information about important events to EUD.

TW added that the Berlin Deaf Association has been taking pictures. They will be forwarded to EUD.

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HS closed the meeting at 11.00h and wished everybody a safe journey home. She thanked everybody for working constructively together: She especially mentioned the staff and DGB and volunteers for their help.

JW thanked everyone for their participation in another interesting GA and especially expressed his gratitude towards the EUD staff and interpreters.

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Minutes drafted by Karin VAN PUYENBROECK, EUD Administrator on 28.05.2007

Revised by Mark WHEATLEY, EUD Director on 15.06.07

Revised by Helga STEVENS, EUD President on 29.8.07.

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