

EUD

Minutes

17th General Assembly

1-2 June 2002

FINAL VERSION

EUROPEAN UNION OF THE DEAF

***MINUTES
of the
17th General Assembly Meeting***

1-2 June 2002

Madrid, Spain

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MINUTES

Saturday 1 June 2002 & Sunday morning 2 June 2002

1. Welcoming address

The President, Knud SØNDERGAARD (KS) opened the 17th EUD General Assembly, and welcomed the delegates by expressing that it was nice to see 14 countries present. He reported that the Deutscher Gehörlosen-Bund couldn't attend due to financial reasons. KS also welcomed Norway as affiliate member of EUD. KS further explained that WFD had not been able to attend, nor had EUD Director, Helga STEVENS since she had recently given birth to a little girl. He then thanked the CNSE for hosting the General Assembly. KS introduced the EUD Administrator employed in November 2001, Margit ANDREASEN.

KS noted that the invitation for the EUD General Assembly had been sent out in the required time according to EUD internal rules. He apologised for other papers having been sent out late, and explained that this was due to the limited resources at the EUD office at the moment.

The Agenda was approved, and KS went through the programme of the General Assembly.

2. Roll call

2.1 Delegates:

Helene JARMER and Günter ROISS (ÖGLB-Austria), Alfred FIEVET and André LATHOUWERS (BDF-Belgium), Dan OLVHØJ (DDL-Denmark), Jorma KUOSMANEN (FAD-Finland), Adrien PELLETIER and Anette LEVEN (FNSF-France), Ioannis CHRISTODOULAKOS (HFD-Greece), Eddie REDMOND and John GILES (IDS-Ireland), Sebastiano MANCIAGLI (ENS-Italy), Jacques BRUCH and Marc WALERICH (VGSL-Luxembourg), Paulo GARCIA and Arlindo OLIVEIRA (FPAS-Portugal), Luis J. Cañón REGUERA and Feliciano SOLA LIMIA (CNSE-Spain), Lars-Åke WIKSTRÖM and Tord LIND (SDR-Sweden), Allan MURRAY (BDA-United Kingdom), Jan BLOEMKOLK (Dovenschap - The Netherlands). Sonja MYHRE HOLTEN and Sissel GJØEN (NDF-Norway) as affiliated members.

Deutscher Gehörlosen-Bund, Germany was unable to send delegates to the GA.

2.2 Observers:

Abilio NUNES (Portugal), Mar AMATE GARCIA, Dolores FRENANDEZ SUNIER, Trinidad MORENO JIMINEZ, Luz Esteban SAIZ, Luis Alberto MARTINEZ, Jesus M. VALDES SANCHEZ, Maria GARCIA PEREZ, Olga MORA RODEMAN, Fatima IGLESIA VILLEMEL, Olga LUQUE GARCIA, Ana M. VAZQUEZ, J.A. MUNOZ, Concha DIAZ ROBLEDO.

2.3 EUD Board:

Knud SØNDERGAARD (President), Markku JOKINEN (Vice President), Terry RILEY, Helly CHRISTOPOULOU, Amilcar MORAIS

2.4. Staff:

Margit ANDREASEN (EUD Administrator), Thierry HAESSENNE (EURO Project Coordinator). Apologies from Helga STEVENS (EUD Director)

2.5 Interpreters:

Mindy BROWN and Gerdinand WAGENAAR

3. Adoption of the Minutes of the General Assembly 2001 in Blankenberge, Belgium.

KS informed that written comments regarding the draft minutes should be forwarded to the EUD office within 1-2 months (as agreed at EUD GA 2000). No comments had been received, so KS called on the GA to formally adopt the minutes of the 16th GA of EUD, 2001. The minutes were adopted.

4. Adoption of the EUD Annual Report 2000-2001

KS informed that EUD received funding for a certain period of time, and the European Commission had accepted the request to extend the funding period from 12 to 15 months (June 2000 – August 2001 (instead of June 2000 – May 2001). He also explained that the Annual Report could not be amended, since it had been sent to the European Commission (EC), but the following comments were made.

The UK had the following remarks regarding page 39: The budget on what we received and what we expected to receive is different. KS explained that our budget comes in a part from EC and a part from our own income, and that the EC had not accepted all our expenses.

No further questions were addressed so the Annual Report 2000-2001 was approved.

5. Presentation and adoption of the Co-ordination Financial Report 2000-2001 as submitted to the European Commission

This item was already discussed under item 4, so KS proposed to have these two issues under the same item for the future Agendas of EUD General Assembly.

The following questions were asked:

Ireland: Asked whether the EUD no longer accepted checks, since the EUD office insisted that payments should be made by money transfer, and this cost 44 Euro from Ireland. Margit ANDREASEN explained that it also was very expensive for the office in Brussels to cash foreign checks, so this was the reason for insisting on electronic money transfer.

The financial report was approved.

6. Presentation and adoption of the accounts for 2001

KS apologised for the accounts being sent out late, and explained that this was due to the late work of the accountant, Lieven KIND. KS informed that the EUD Board had approved the accounts for 2001 but there were the following problems:

1. The Financial Report from the Sign Language Project 1996-1997 was not fully accepted by the European Commission: some expenses had been rejected, which meant that EUD would have to pay these expenses from own sources, which was unforeseen. This small deficit has been carried over from year to year. HS had been trying to get the European Commission to at least accept some expenses. An audit by European Commission auditors followed which took many years.

The official audit of the EUD Accounts back to 1996 now is officially closed with the remark that no irregularities were found. However, after the audit we have been informed that we will receive no more funding for the Sign Language Project and the outstanding debts therefore can not be paid.

2. Some members had still not paid outstanding invoices to EUD, some old dating back to 1999 or 2000. KS would follow up on this with HS later.

3. Regarding the question from Ireland under item 5, KS explained that due to the high bank costs on money transfer from Belgium to other EU countries, he had made money transactions on behalf of EUD from Denmark, using the Danish EUD bank account. He acknowledged that a bank charge of 44 Euro was high, but that there was no solution to the problem.

The delegates made the following remarks:

Ireland: They had not received reimbursement for their travelling expenses for past two General Assemblies. They had sent all the requested documentation to the EUD office.

KS asked for Ireland to be patient, and said he would take the matter to HS, who would then see to it after her maternity leave, in September. HS would take contact with each NAD individually to ensure that the reimbursements would be made.

UK: 1. There seems to be 136.000 € in the bank, left from the sign language project. Why can't the travel reimbursements be made from this amount?

KS replied that the EUD does have money in the bank, 60.000 € is part of the Euro project which cannot be used for other purposes. A total of 45.000 € in invoices received by EUD has to be paid. This leaves about 31.000 € which must be left in the account to enable EUD to adhere to its financial obligations at least until the end of August and until EUD gets the 2nd payment of its grant for 2001-2002. Thus the money in the bank is committed to other expenses. KS further added that if the Euro project did not use the allocated money, the rest had to be given back to the EC. However, Knud would investigate together with HS and the accountant in September how EUD could pay its outstanding invoices to members.

KS informed that the EUD has to report to the European Commission for the financial period of 1 September – 31 August as laid out in the coordination contract, but the EUD accounts

follow the calendar year, which creates a mismatch between the budget and finances. KS proposed to change the EUD financial year in order to match the EC budget year.

UK supported the idea of changing the EUD financial year from calendar year to follow funding year.

Sweden mentioned the problems, which occur every year, when the EC is late with the financial funding, and the EUD does not have any money for some months due to that. It would be an advantage to have money in the bank to be able to manage "dry" periods

KS affirmed and said that the issue would be discussed at the next EUD Board meeting in September.

The accounts were adopted.

7. Presentation of the Financial situation January – April 2002 and EU funding 1/9/2001 -30/4/2002

KS informed that EUD haven't made payments to the NADs this spring, because the accountant had not worked on this. KS further explained that he had no information at this time, but would send it out later.

HS had informed KS about last years, when members had committed themselves to provide financial support to EUD, and asked if some members could commit themselves to financial support again this year. The DDL had already promised to support and KS said that HS would send out a request for financial report to all members. He encouraged to support EUD, and stressed the fact that if the EUD members' support is not high enough then it would have consequences on the funding from the EC.

UK asked for the letters regarding the financial support to be very clearly formulated, stating which aims, which strategies, and the exact reasons for the request for financial support.

KS made two other important announcements:

1. The DDL would sell the property Rue Franklin 110, during 2002 maybe 2003, which means that EUD would have to find a new office. The EUD Board asked the two Belgian associations to help the EUD to find a new office. The EUD board had discussed whether the EUD office should stay in Brussels, or whether any NADs can propose to house the office of the EUD.

André, Belgium, said that FEVLADO could propose cheap office space in Gent, and EUD would only have to pay for electricity, etc.

TR thanked FEVLADO for the offer, and informed that the EUD Board would consider it very closely, and discuss further at its next meeting. He added that there were many aspects, practical as well as political.

2. KS informed that regarding future "coordination" funding for EUD,, he had been informed that EUD might be funded for two years in the future instead of one. However, an application for grants still needed to be made every year. He also

informed that HS had recently met a woman within the European Commission who informally told her that only 7 ENGOS received funding for the grant period 2001-2002, and that the quality of the applications vary very much, but that EUD was a well functioning ENGO and its application was one of the best, if not the best submitted by the ENGOS. KS reassured the GA that the EUD most certainly would get funding for next year too.

The delegates discussed possible funding methods of the EUD office through having projects, like the Euro project, but they said, that they needed the EUD office to help finding relevant projects and also that the EUD office maybe could prepare the applications since the NADs had very little resources to do this.

KS explained that the EUD office did not have sufficient resources either and that the problem regarding especially EU projects was the required co-funding of projects.

Sweden encouraged the NADs to look for young people who would like to work with EUD on a voluntary basis for a certain period of time.

8. Presentation of the draft project report and the preliminary Financial Report of the EUD Project “Not Deaf to the Euro”

Thierry HAESSENNE, EUD Euro coordinator (TH), presented the Euro Project, which he had been coordinating during the past 8 months. The aim was “Access to information about the Euro to ALL Deaf people”. The start of the project was very delayed, due to the very late arrival of the money from the European Commission, and the following delay of the recruitment procedure.

The first Euro seminar was held in October 2001, with two participants from each country. Each of these were to become the national Euro contact person for EUD, the so called national Euro coordinators. They received training regarding the Euro changeover. The aim of the seminar was that they went back to their countries giving further training seminars to groups of 3-25 people. Each national euro coordinator arranged a national seminar in their country; each country managing its seminar in its own way depending on the size of the country. In total 20.000 Deaf people received information from the initiative of the Euro Project. Further Euro coordinators’ meetings were held to follow up on the project and exchange experiences of best practise.

TH reported that he was currently working on the final report of the Euro project, which he would send to all national euro coordinators as soon as it was finished. TH further apologised for the financial report not being ready, since he had not yet received all financial information from the participating countries. When completed, TH would send it out to all the national euro coordinators as soon as it was ready.

KS complimented TH on the work done on the Euro Project.

9. Summary report of EUD action plan of 2001-2002.

KS informed about the EUD Action Plan 2001-2002:

- **New EU Treaty**

EUD is following the work of the European Convention, which consists of about 100 representatives from national countries and EU institutions, drafting a convention. In July a Youth Convention will take place, where EUDY or MA might attend. The Youth Convention will present its results to the European Convention.

- **Information flow**

Apologized for sending information late regarding the GA. Also encouraged the delegates to send the email addresses of people who wish to subscribe to EUD Update.

- **Charter of Regional and minority languages**

Some work had been done. More was to be done with the Bureau of EBLUL. (European Bureau of Lesser Used Languages)

- **Non-discrimination**

Amsterdam treaty, Article 13, KS informed that the EUD had to select certain focus points regarding the specific areas.

- **Enlargement**

- **Deaf Education**

- **Seminar on linguistic human rights**

In the context of the European Year of Disabled People 2003, EUD is planning to hold a seminar on linguistic human rights. In the application for funding for 2002-2003 as sent by HS to the EC, the EUD has requested funding for this

Verbal report of year 2000-2001 by KS:

- **European Year of Languages (EYoL)**

Many Deaf people attended the Closing ceremony of the EYoL held in the European Parliament in Brussels on 7-8 December 2001. It was a good PR for the Deaf community and for Sign Language users, due also to the presence of many Sign Language interpreters from different countries. KS also informed that many national projects had taken place during the year.

MJ informed about "the year of languages summary report", made by the EU and the Council of Europe, and encouraged the NADs to contact their national EU offices to have the report sent to them. MJ said it was a very good document, with two pages on sign language projects. It could be used as a tool on national level in the fight for Sign Language recognition.

MJ further informed that one of the projects, selected as a model project during EYoL, was a project developed by FAD. FAD had been contacted to make a more elaborate report, and was very proud to say that their project has been selected as a model project. KS informed that a Danish Sign Language project had also been selected as a model project and the report has been finished and sent out in Denmark.

- **EUD conference 6 December 2002**

The Sign Language day had been a great success, with 150 people attending. The event had clearly affected the view of EBLUL on Sign Language, and this would influence the Charter of Minority Languages.

- Charter of Minority Languages

Sweden asked how to follow up on it. The Swedish parliament had expressed that they would accept SL, but according to the Charter SL was not eligible for acceptance within the framework of the Charter, since it doesn't follow the criteria. Sweden informed that a new charter was being made, and asked whether EUD should get involved in this, or do wanted to get an annex to the current one?

MJ answered that regarding the separate charter or a common charter that EUD should try to be in the current charter, since the new charter was not the best political solution at the moment, but maybe for the future.

MJ encouraged the members to use a document prepared by Tove SKUTTNAB-KANGAS, since it had very strong arguments in favour of Sign Language. It could be a very good tool when difficulties occur with governments.

Austria informed about their current fight for recognition, and urged the members to help them find relevant experts on the matter, both juridical and linguistic.

MJ suggested that the legal experts and linguistic experts of the NADs should set up a network through which they could advise each other.

TR mentioned that many cases are taken to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. the Court rulings have to be followed by the national governments. He stressed the importance of using this as a tool, and encouraged all NAD to find one individual person and take their case to the court in Strasbourg. He noted that the case would have to go to national court first, then later to European level.

MJ thanked for the very good discussion, and it was decided two people from Austria, two people from Sweden and two from Denmark would establish a small committee and develop the idea further. The EUD Board would follow up on this committee.

- Euro Project

This had been discussed under item 8.

Austria asked the members to pay attention to EUD Update and asked how they disseminated the information. She encouraged the members to make greater use of the information published in EUD Update.

MA urged the members to send her information in English about important events and actions in their countries in order for her to publish this information in EUD Update. Up to now she had only been able to print the information from Deaf magazines which language she mastered, and this resulted in "discriminating" information from countries such as Spain, Italy, Germany.

10. Presentation and adoption of the EUD application for EU co-ordination grant 2002-2003.

This point is merely just for information since the EUD Board was unable to ask the GA for comments and amendments, due to the fact that the deadline for application had been on 13 May 2002. KS informed that the EUD Board expected to receive 100.000 Euro for the period September 2002 – August 2003, hopefully after the Summer.

The EUD application for EU co-ordination grant 2002-2003 was approved.

11. Presentation of proposed EUD Work Programme for 2002-2003 & discussion.

The following points for EUD to work on were made, and the people responsible for the follow up are noted in brackets () :

- The Deaf Survey (EUD secretariat)

KS explained to the GA that the EUD office had had a stagiaire/intern – Deidre Hase from Canada - working on the project and the EUD Board had discussed how to proceed with this work. He mentioned that the EUD work programme foresees a follow up on this work.

MJ further explained regarding the issue: FAD had proposed the idea three years ago to make a Europe wide Deaf education survey.

MJ informed about the work, which had been carried out prior to the GA: Questionnaires had been sent out and responses had been collected. Deidre HASE who was working on the survey had moved back to Canada but she would try to follow up on the work she had done while she was at the EUD office. The EUD board hoped to be able to finish the survey by December 2002 or Spring 2003.

- The European Year of Disabled People 2003 (EUD secretariat and NADs)

MJ gave information about funding possibilities from the European Commission and national governments for projects related to 2003. He proposed that EUD develop a project on setting up a special home page, and suggested that Antti RAIKE join in a group of other ICT experts. The EUD GA accepted MJ's proposal.

Austria asked how EUD planned to make people aware of the existence of such a website? KS responded that the EUD Board would discuss how to make people aware at its next meeting in September.

- The European Charter (Austria, Sweden, Denmark)
- Denmark suggested "CI and bioethics" (UK, Denmark and EUD secretariat)

Sweden encouraged the members to contact Susan GREGORY from the UK, whenever they dealt with the issue of CI since she had given an excellent presentation at a CI conference.

She had researched 150-160 children with CI regarding their quality of life, 90 % of them had problems with communication.

Sweden further explained that maybe the theme should be broader than just CI, maybe "segregation versus integration". Sweden had come up with a slogan called "integration leads to isolation".

KS asked how EUD could organize a conference, when the EUD office had so limited resources. He urged the members to provide support and resources.

UK responded by informing that BDA had prepared a CI position paper, which also explained the opinion put forward by BDA. He said that the focus should be more on information exchanging rather than holding conferences. He encouraged the NADs to send their policy papers to the EUD office, which could then disperse the information. If there was to be a conference it should deal with future issues like genetic engineering, not CI alone.

There was a great deal of discussion regarding CI and genetically engineering. KS thanked for the interesting debate and it was decided that UK, Denmark and EUD office would work together to develop a EUD position paper.

- France suggested "Internet and videophone should be standardised in EUROPE" (France)

12. EUD and NADs strategy regarding the EU Year of Disabled Persons 2003

This item was discussed under item 11.

KS encouraged the NADs to contact their national disability councils to get information about funding for projects related to "2003" and to submit as many projects as possible, like they did for the European Year of Languages 2001. Most national disability organisations work closely with their own government to select projects and allocate funding, so it was important for NADs to contact them and submit project in order for Deaf people to take advantage of the funding available for "2003".

In addition MJ encouraged the NADs to carry out projects, which are related to the work programme themes of the EUD.

Sweden raised the question to the delegates present whether and how many NADs had been involved at this time in the preparatory work for "2003", and encouraged all the members to stop complaining about the EC always being late and get themselves prepared for the year.

Sweden also asked whether the EUD will be involved in the big conference in Athens next year or will it leave it to EDF.

KS explained a little more about this opening conference to open the EYDP 2003. Unfortunately, the content and the programme were not known yet at the moment, so therefore the EUD Board couldnot yet decide whether to get involved or not.

TR suggested finding a member NAD to go to the opening conference and represent EUD; this should be done to similar events as well.

Spain also encouraged the members to get more involved in their national disability organisations and make sure they take an active part in the year 2003. And mentioned the importance of the Madrid Declaration and to use it as a tool since it includes a specific reference to Sign Language.

13. Report by EUD Vision Group and discussion.

KS apologized and said that the previous EUD general assembly decision on setting up a Vision group was not implemented, so the group had not met, therefore there was no report to be made.

14. Ratification of membership of Norway in EUD.

KS explained that the Norwegian Deaf Association had applied to become an affiliated member. According to the EUD statutes, the GA must ratify the decision of the Board to accept Norway as affiliated member. The delegates ratified the decision of the Board to accept the request for affiliated membership of Norway. The two observers from Norway expressed the wish of their NAD to be an affiliated member of EUD since they could not be full members as Norway was not an EU member state. The Norwegian observers briefly described the structure of the Norwegian Deaf association, and its background. Norway also invited all delegates to take part in the Nordic Culture Festival taking place in Norway in July.

KS explained that the EUD Board had previously discussed the possibility of full membership for Norway and other EFTA countries, in EUD. KS informed about how the EDF deals with the possibility of having non-EU countries as full members but that this required a change of EUD statutes if the same was to happen within EUD. The GA accepted that the EUD Board would look at possibilities to change EUD statutes in order to allow Norway full membership, under special circumstances. It should be noted that the EU funding regulations stated that it will not be possible to refund the travel expenses and other expenses of the EFTA members, and therefore it is necessary to have a change of statutes and internal rules in order to clarify the exact procedures and conditions.

15. EDF

KS informed the GA about the elections for the EDF Board which took place last year, with the result that EUD is no longer represented on the EDF Board. He also informed about the EDF GA held some weeks prior to the EUD GA, during which EDF informed its delegates that it has accumulated a debt of 20 000 Euro due to the EC not accepting all expenses made by EDF.

The Board of EDF consists of 23 members, and during Spring 2002 two places became vacant on the EDF Board. There were three candidates: EUD and two parents associations, FEPEDA and an organisation of parents to children with severe learning difficulties to fill these vacant seats. The two parents associations got elected and so EUD was left out again. KS then took the word at the EDF GA in May 2002 in Madrid after the election and expressed his concerns regarding the election procedure as it meant that Deaf people, who could represent themselves, were represented by parents which was unacceptable and in fact went against the

spirit of EDF, but the answer to this was that the election procedure had been democratic. KS asked that EUD react strongly by proposing amendments to EDF statutes, and informed the assembly about the position of the Parents association.

KS had prepared a letter, which he presented to the GA. The proposed letter was approved by the GA, after giving the EUD board the mandate to change the exact wording. The letter will be sent as a complaint to the EDF Executive Committee, regarding the recent election to fill vacant seats on the EDF Board. A copy of the letter will be sent to all members.

For further information regarding the financial situation of EDF, the delegates were advised to look at the EDF website.

The UN Standard Rules were also discussed at the EDF GA in Madrid together with the EU Directive prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability in employment. More information regarding this can be found at on the EDF website.

Sweden expressed its concerns with FEPEDA having gained more influence in EDF since they have very opposite opinions on SL compared with EUD. However, in FEDEPA itself there is a strong disagreement on this issue, and on the matter of who they represent. Representatives from South Europe claim that FEPEDA represent Deaf adults too and representatives from Nordic countries say they could only represent Deaf children, and that it is very important that parents associations cooperate with Deaf associations. Sweden therefore stressed the importance of changing the EDF statutes. FEDEPA has an Italian president at the moment but would soon have a Swedish president and this change would hopefully have a positive effect.

The GA strongly reacted to the information provided by KS regarding the status of EUD within EDF, the problems of getting elected into EDF Board and the strained relationship with FEDEPA. The GA discussed possible solutions to the problem. It was agreed that changing the statutes of EDF could be an important step forward, especially if a clear distinction between organisations OF disabled people, organisations of parents of disabled people unable to represent themselves and parents organisation (of disabled people able to represent themselves) was adopted into EDF statutes Also some rules needed to be made to ensure that the 3 different kinds of organisations were represented on the EDF Board. Because EDF is mainly an organisation of disabled people, it is unacceptable that parents' organisations have so much influence in EDF.

Those delegates who have taken part in EDF working groups briefed the GA about the work of their Committees. Further information can be retrieved from the EDF homepage (www.edf-feph.org) or by contacting the representatives directly.

TR informed about EDF Communication Committee, AM about the EDF Youth Committee, Tord LIND about the Social Policy Committee, KS about the Complex Dependency Needs Committee. KS informed that HS is Chair of the EDF Disabled Women Committee. MJ reported on the EDF Human Rights Committee.

In nearly all the EDF Committees there had been clashes of interest between the EUD representative and the representative from FEDEPA.

TR informed that he had to withdraw from the Communication Committee because of a possible conflict of interests after having promoted to the position of editor for BBC's programme "See Hear". KS encouraged the delegates to ponder on who could replace TR and to contact the EUD with names of candidates.

16. Motions tabled (see attachment): discussion and voting.

The following resolutions were brought to the meeting:

Re: Swedish motion on free movement.

MA explained that the current legal situation was so, that a Deaf European working in another EU country is entitled to have the same services as other Deaf people living in that country. She urged the Swedish delegates to follow up on the case mentioned in their motion regarding a Deaf person not receiving the services he/she was entitled too. She encouraged the delegates to send documentation to the EUD office if they encountered a similar example of a Deaf person not receiving interpreting services or other services.

The assembly voted to support the motion.

Re. Finnish motion on Centres of Excellence in Design for All

The Finnish delegate explained further regarding Centres of Excellence in Design for All being set up in all the member states. FAD asked EUD to support the idea that one of the Centres of Excellence involves Deaf issues, and to support the Finnish application for taking part in the Centre of Excellence. MJ explained further about the motion, and explained that if FAD succeeded with winning the responsibility of a Centre of Excellence, then FAD could later provide support for other NADs wanting to get involved in their national countries.

The delegates supported the Finnish initiative, and gave FAD the mandate to represent the European Deaf population.

FAD asked for a representative from each country, in order for Finland to be a good representative at European level.

TR encouraged the NADs to follow up on the issue in their home countries and find out more about the planning of their own national Centre of Excellence.

Re. Spanish motion for a common sign for the Euro.

The Spanish delegate explained that the motivation for having a common sign for the Euro was political, rather than linguistic or social. The Spanish delegate said that it would make the Deaf society stand stronger if we used one common sign. TH pointed out that many Deaf people may not accept to use one common sign and would prefer to use their own national sign.

In reaction, the Spanish delegate asked that only delegates speak at the GA meeting and not EUD staff or other "observers". A small discussion arose on whether or not the EUD staff has the right to speak at EUD GA. There was no clear comment from the assembly, but the EUD Board, TR and KS, commented that EUD staff does not represent anybody, but speak as "experts" on a topic.

A majority of GA votes was in favour of postponing this motion for one or two years in order to give each delegates the possibility to consult with their NADs regarding their opinion on this matter. The matter can then be discussed again at a future GA meeting.

17. Adoption of Resolution of Year of Languages

KS informed the GA about the EUD Sign Languages Day held at the European Parliament in Brussels on 6 December 2001. The participants at this meeting had adopted a Resolution as drafted by the EUD secretariat, and this had to be approved by the EUD GA. The GA adopted the resolution with the following amendment: the word "profoundly" to be taken out of the first sentence in paragraph 7.

18. Information from the EUDY

AM, who is president of EUDY, informed about his work with EUDY and the past ups and downs, which EUDY had experienced. He was trying hard to make sure that EUDY keeps functioning and he had established a good working relationship with the EUD secretariat. AM distributed some information about the work of EUDY and asked all delegates to send him information about youth committees in the different member countries. He also encouraged the delegates to think about possible future candidates for the EUDY Board, in order to continue the positive development of EUDY. AM also reminded the delegates about the EUDY Youth Camp taking place in Rome in July 2002. AM also outlined the work plan of EUDY for the near future.

19. Any other business

Spain raised the issue of the representation of EUD at European disability meetings, mentioning the First European Congress on People with disabilities, held in Madrid on 20-23 March 2002, as an example. It is important that the EUD informs all NADs or at least the NAD of the host country that nobody from EUD could attend so that a representative from a NAD could also go on behalf of EUD.

Sweden asked whether the next GA would take place in Athens, since during the first half of 2003, Greece would hold the EU Presidency? KS answered that it up to the Hellenic Federation of the Deaf to answer this. HFD said that they would discuss it and inform the EUD board about their decision.

Belgium (FEVLADO) said that The Flemish Deaf Association will shortly send out a questionnaire to all NADs to ask for advice on how to get the Government to support SL. This is a huge problem in Flanders at the moment.

Spain asked about how the EUDs relation was with EFSLI. The question was raised because the Spanish interpreter situation states that EFSLI has the same opinions as them, and the Spanish delegates wanted to ask if the EUD could monitor that national interpreters associations refer accurately to EFSLI. Norway promised to follow up in October at EFSLI conference would take place in Oslo.

TH distributed chocolate candy from Belgium, on behalf of HS and her baby daughter Duive, who send their warm greetings to the GA. Handing out chocolate candy after the birth of a baby is a typical, Belgium tradition.

KS closed the meeting of the EUD GA 2002. He thanked CNSE for hosting this GA, and gave a small present to Luis J. CANON REGUERA, the President of CNSE, a box of Belgian chocolates. Mr REGUERA thanked EUD for having had the opportunity to host the GA in Spain, and said he would share the chocolate with all the staff that had helped with the organisation of the GA. In addition, KS thanked the three CNSE ladies: Elena, Trini and Loli for their great help. They also received a small box of Belgian chocolates. He also thanked MA for the good preparation of the GA.

Furthermore, KS thanked all the delegates, the interpreters, and MA for their cooperation. He noted that there had been excellent discussions during the GA and that the delegates were very active participants at the GA.

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Minutes drafted by Margit ANDREASEN, EUD Administrator
Revised by Helga STEVENS, EUD Director and Knud SØNDERGAARD, EUD President

Note: This EUD general assembly was also videotaped. The tapes are kept at the EUD office.

Signatures:

Knud SØNDERGAARD, EUD President

Margit ANDREASEN, EUD Administrator, since Helga STEVENS, EUD Director was not present.

C2: EUD Files/EUD 01-02/EUD GA 2002/Minutes of GA DRAFT



Année européenne des langues 2001
European Year of Languages 2001

EUD SIGN LANGUAGES DAY

RESOLUTION (proposed draft 2)

Whereas it is the vision of EUD and its members to achieve equal status for Deaf people as citizens of Europe;

Whereas Deaf people cannot achieve equal status in society if their preferred language, i.e. their indigenous sign language(s) are not recognised and respected by society at large;

Whereas sign languages have been oppressed and prohibited since 1880, and nowadays still are oppressed in one way or another in many countries;

Whereas only a few European countries, even in the 21st century, have constitutionally or legally recognised sign language(s);

Whereas Deaf people all over Europe are still not getting full and equal access to services, more specifically to education and employment, information and media, due to the fact that their right and need to communicate in sign language are ignored;

Whereas many Deaf children all over Europe are still denied the right to receive a bilingual education, meaning an education in the indigenous sign language of the country or region –the only language that is fully accessible for them and in which they can express themselves with fluency and ease– and the written language(s) of the country;

Whereas at least one out of each thousand Europeans is profoundly Deaf, and the number of people, both Deaf and hearing, using sign language is much larger;

Whereas sign languages are languages through which Deaf people can have access to communication and information, just like spoken languages are for hearing people;

Whereas the European Parliament has supported the struggle of Deaf people to achieve legal recognition of their sign languages by adopting two Resolutions on Sign Languages in 1988 and 1998;

Whereas the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a Recommendation [Resolution 1492 (2001)] which recommends in paragraph 12.xiii that the Committee of Ministers “give the various sign languages utilized in Europe a protection similar to that afforded by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages”;

Whereas the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union prohibits any discrimination based on any ground such as language, and/or disability (Article 21), and states that the Union recognises and respects the rights of persons with disabilities to benefit from measures designed to ensure their independence, social and occupational integration, and participation in the life of the community (Article 26). Furthermore, the Charter of fundamental Rights states in Article 22 that the [European] Union shall respect cultural and linguistic diversity;

Whereas the EUD and its members fully support all other minority and regional language users in their struggle to achieve full recognition for their minority and regional languages;

Whereas Europe cannot be truly multilingual if it continues to exclude sign language users by not fully including sign language users into all its programmes and activities.

We call upon all national governments to accept the principle that sign languages fall within the remit of the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and, therefore,

- 1) to include sign languages when they list minority or regional languages upon ratification of the Charter; and
- 2) for those governments which have already ratified the Charter, to add sign languages to their ratifications.

We call upon the Council of Europe and all its member states to annex a new Protocol to the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, recognizing sign languages as minority or regional languages in their own right, on equal footing with the other (spoken) minority or regional languages, so that sign language users can enjoy the same protection as that afforded by the Charter to other regional or minority language users.

We call upon the Council of Ministers of the European Union, the European Commission and the European Parliament to finally include fully the needs of sign language users in all aspects of their work.

We call upon the interpreting services of the European Commission and the European Parliament to include sign language interpreters in their procedures so that Deaf sign language users can get sign language interpreters upon simple request in order to be able to attend events or meetings organized by the European Commission or the European Parliament.

We call upon the European Commission to take into account the cost of sign language interpretation provision for Deaf people and Deaf organizations to be able to participate successfully in European Union programmes.

As adopted by the audience at the EUD Sign Languages Day held on 6 December 2001 at the European Parliament, Brussels.

Follow up points from the EUD GA 2002

HS:

1. Some members had still not paid outstanding invoices to EUD, some old dating back to 1999 or 2000. KS would follow up on this with HS later.
2. HS would take contact with each NAD individually to ensure that past reimbursements who had not yet been carried out would be carried out.
3. HS would investigate together with KS and the accountant in September how EUD could pay its outstanding invoices to members.
4. HS would send out a request for financial report to all members, clearly formulated, stating which aims, which strategies, and the exact reasons for the request for financial support.
5. The GA adopted the resolution of the Year of Languages with the following amendment: the word "profoundly" to be taken out of the first sentence in paragraph 7.
6. TH would send the EURO report and financial report to all the national euro coordinators as soon as it was ready. HS to follow up

KS:

7. KS would send it out Financial situation January – April 2002 and EU funding 1/9/2001 - 30/4/2002
8. Letter to be sent as a complaint to the EDF Executive Committee, regarding the recent election to fill vacant seats on the EDF Board. A copy of the letter will be sent to all members.

EUD Board:

9. EUD is planning to hold a seminar on linguistic human rights.
10. MJ suggested that the legal experts and linguistic experts of the NADs should set up a network through which they could advise each other. Two people from Austria, two people from Sweden and two from Denmark would establish a small committee and develop the idea further. The EUD Board would follow up on this committee
11. The Deaf Survey
12. EUD Board would discuss how to make people aware about the special home page developed for 2003
13. The European Charter (Austria, Sweden, Denmark)
14. UK, Denmark and EUD office would work together to develop a EUD position paper on "CI and bioethics"
15. TR suggested finding a member NAD to go to the opening conference of EYPD and represent EUD; this should be done to similar events as well.
16. EUD Board would look at possibilities to change EUD statutes in order to allow Norway full membership, under special circumstances
17. KS encouraged the delegates to ponder on who could replace TR and to contact the EUD with names of candidates