

# 2020

# 2020 IMPACT REPORT



EUROPEAN UNION OF THE DEAF

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EUD would like to thank the European Commission for funding this 2019 Impact Report under the REC Work Programme. Without their substantial financial contributions, the publication of this report would not have been possible.

The support of the EUD Board and President have been of invaluable help to create an accurate and up-to-date account of the EUD activities in 2019:

### Board 2017 - 2021:

President ..... Dr Markku Jokinen

Vice-President .... Dr Gergely Tapolczai

Board Member .... Louise "Lolo" Danielsson

Board Member .... Daniel Büter

Board Member .... Sofia Isari

The EUD interns Roy Maguire and Serafine Duss, along with all members of staff contributed to this up-to-date report with photos, texts and signed input.

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

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

In support of its daily work, EUD has been in contact with a large number of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and other EU policymakers and aspires to continue this fruitful co-operation in the coming years.



Dr Markku Jokinen



Dr Gergely Tapolczai



Louise "Lolo" Danielsson



Sofia Isari



Daniel Büter

## FOREWORD BY EUD PRESIDENT

The year 2020 was like no other, as an outbreak of COVID-19 imposed unprecedented challenges globally. The pandemic affected everyone and showed how vital it is to ensure accessibility, inclusion, non-discrimination and equality. This year, the EUD and its stakeholders were united more than ever before and joined forces to advocate for full and meaningful inclusion; equal access to information and communication in national sign languages, including in healthcare settings; and full implementation by the EU Member States of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The global pandemic provided us with concrete evidence on how barriers to access create disproportionate effects and lead to discrimination and exclusion, but it also showed us that by working together, we can overcome these barriers and strive for meaningful inclusion.

During this time, EUD staff have worked from home on a regular basis, converting the 2020 programme to online and remote formats. All of our planned events were cancelled, and the EUD started to expand its webinars which became a vital means of showcasing our work to the public.

Because our meetings and General Assembly were virtual, all of the National Associations of the Deaf were able to gather with EUD board members and staff. This was a first, even though we already had the communications technology for it. This experience has encouraged us to use the video conferencing platform more often in the future.

The EUD board and myself are entering our final year of the mandate term, and we look forward to staying united and overcoming this crisis together with all of our stakeholders.



**Dr Markku Jokinen**  
EUD President



## EUD INTRODUCTION

### EUROPEAN UNION OF THE DEAF

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

EUD aims to establish and maintain EU level dialogue with its relative institutions and

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

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

### MISSION STATEMENT

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

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

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

These key values are also mirrored in the daily work of its Brussels headquarters. The office provides a fully accessible signing environment with international staff from many different countries across the EU. Most staff are deaf sign language users and all hearing staff must know or learn one national sign language as well as International Sign. Gender equality is also taken into account in all employment policies and when organising events and speakers.

### SIGN LANGUAGES AS A HUMAN RIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

to the wider hearing society and key European and national policy-makers.

The General Assembly was meant to take place in Zagreb, Croatia, in May 2020 but instead it was held via video conferencing seven months later, on 12 December. It was our first virtual General Assembly, and all of

the delegates were present. The agenda itself was shortened and focussed on the financial report, the EUD's work programme for 2020, and our upcoming projects.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

General Assembly via video conferencing



## BOARD MEETINGS

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, board meetings were held online throughout the year. The first one was held on Saturday 21 March and the main topics were the proposed amendment to the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) programme and the possibility of postponing the General Assembly. At the second board meeting on 30 May, we reviewed the result of the consultative meetings with the full membership of the EUD, approved the proposal to hold the General Assembly in November, and discussed the freedom of movement position paper. On 29 July, at the third board meeting, we decided to cancel the physical General Assembly and authorised

the organisation of an online one. The board also approved the amended REC work programme and budget for webinars. The fourth board meeting on 31 August was where we confirmed the date of the online General Assembly and discussed the procedure for this event, and then approved the titles of the webinars which were launched in September. At the fifth, on 26 November, the board concentrated on preparations for the General Assembly and approved the position papers on freedom of movement and COVID-19 as well as the contents of the new book which will be launched during May 2021. The sixth and final board meeting on 8 December was entirely focussed on preparing for the General Assembly.



EUD Board Meeting on Zoom

WEBINARS

In 2020 EUD started hosting the webinars for first time. EUD decided to host the webinars virtually as we were not allowed to travel and host physical meetings due to COVID-19 pandemic. EUD organised a number of webinars including webinar series

on COVID-19 pandemic, which replaced originally planned seminars which would have coincided with the board meetings in various EU Member States. In total, five webinars were dedicated to COVID-19 related issues.

Transposing EU accessibility legislation into national laws: the role of National Associations of the Deaf

On the 19th of June, the EUD hosted its very first webinar which focussed on the transposition of the revised Audio-Visual Media Services Directive (AVMSD), the European Electronic Communications Code (EECC), and the European Accessibility Act (EAA), which is a milestone achievement for the EU. During the webinar, experts from the European Disability Forum, the European Parliament and the European Commission discussed the most important elements of each piece of legislation for deaf persons in the EU. They also explained the role of National Associations of the Deaf (NADs) in advocating for more accessibility at the national level during the period of transposition of these recently-adopted EU laws.



25,000 views

110 peak live views

### COVID-19 short webinar series

In October, the EUD hosted a short webinar series on COVID-19-related issues. Due to the containment measures imposed by EU governments and inability to host physical meetings, the webinar series replaced the EUD seminars that had been originally planned to take place in different EU Member States.

During the webinars, the specific barriers and disproportionate effects that deaf people were experiencing due to the new containment measures were discussed. The EUD also aimed to highlight best practices to combat such barriers, and encouraged NADs to learn from each other and devise common solutions. The topics of the five COVID-19 webinars were as follows:



#### 1. Requirements to wear masks

For deaf persons, strict rules on wearing masks have hindered the right to accessible communication, so NADs across Europe have advocated for alternatives. Therefore, during this webinar we explored different approaches to guaranteeing access to communication for the deaf during the pandemic.

**10,500**  
views

**104**  
peak live views



#### 2. Sign language interpreting at press conferences

Throughout the public health emergency, sign language interpretation at governments' official press briefings has increased more than ever before. In some countries, this was the first time that sign language interpretation of government officials appeared on TV. During this webinar, NADs discussed the importance of ensuring that this provision becomes the norm and shared good practices to lobby for full sign language interpretation of all government communications, not only those relating to emergencies.

**36,000**  
views

**160**  
peak live views

### 3. Accessibility in hospitals

COVID-19 has reinforced the importance of ensuring access to health care services; however, accessibility in hospitals remained unequal as thousands of deaf people were denied equal access to communication with medical professionals. In this webinar, various NADs in Europe conversed about different approaches to improving accessibility in health care systems and discussed the way forward to overcome existing challenges.

**16,700** views | **123** peak live views

### 4. Distance education

The lockdown measures required the temporary closure of schools, which meant that thousands of deaf learners across Europe had to access their education virtually. In this webinar, NADs shared good practices regarding distance education and how to mitigate the inequalities that it causes for deaf learners.

**27,800** views | **154** peak live views

### 5. The digital gap which isolates deaf seniors

Lockdown measures also prevented deaf people from exercising their linguistic and cultural rights. Deaf clubs closed, and the only sign language environments available were on the internet. However, the lack of digital and technological skills among deaf elderly people has rendered them unable to exercise these rights equally, forcing many to live in isolation. In this webinar, NADs discussed promising practices and put forward solutions aiming to mitigate and reduce this isolation.

**20,000** views | **119** peak live views



### Best practices of the NADs

During the webinars we also focused on the best practices at the national level and invited the National Association of the Deaf to present them.



#### 1. Measuring the quality of sign language interpreting on TV

The EUD often receives questions from national-level organisations on how to assess the quality of sign language interpretation on audio-visual media, and the standards, guidelines and/or qualitative targets which should be followed.

As currently there is no harmonised European standard that regulates the quality of sign language interpretation for audio-visual media, the EUD organised a webinar where NADs, sign language interpreters' organisations, and other stakeholders shared the ways in which the quality of sign language interpretation for audio-visual media services is regulated at the national level, including the existing qualitative targets, standards and guidelines and how were they developed. the deaf during the pandemic.

**16,400**  
views

**148**  
peak live views



#### 2. Support for victims of domestic violence

During this webinar, the existing best practices to support deaf female victims of domestic violence were discussed. The webinar specifically aimed at encouraging NADs across Europe to exchange information to ensure that deaf women and girls who have been victims of domestic violence are afforded the best level of support.

**15,000**  
views

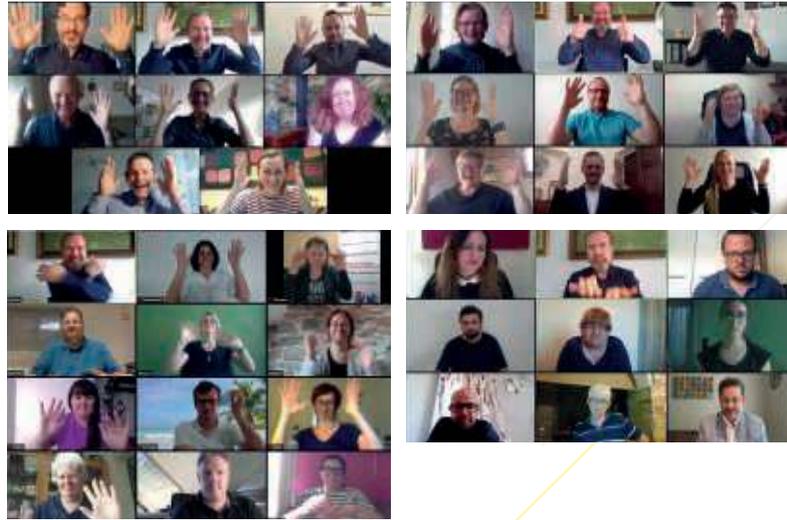
**91**  
peak live views

EUD consulted the National Association of the Deaf to have a better understanding how the unexpected pandemic affected deaf people in Europe. Several consultations took place in 2020.

## CONSULTATIONS WITH THE NADS

### Regional consultations to discuss the impact of COVID-19

In order to monitor deaf people's access and inclusion during the pandemic, the EUD carried out four virtual regional consultations in the Nordic, Eastern, Western and Southern regions of Europe on 20, 22, 27 and 28 May 2020. As a result of these sessions, the EUD received an overview from its member organisations of the effects of the pandemic on deaf communities together with good practices in ensuring equality and inclusion, and has published a report on the findings.



### EUD internal consultation with members: Position paper on freedom of movement

On the 7th of September 2020, the EUD had an online internal consultation with its members to discuss the final draft of its position paper on freedom of movement. The paper was finally adopted on 27 October by the board.

Due to the pandemic, the General Assembly had to be postponed to December, and therefore it was not possible to adopt the position paper in May 2020 as planned. This allowed the EUD to have a longer consultation process on the final draft before adoption. The board provided feedback on 30 May at a board meeting, and EUD members were then given the opportunity to send written feedback on the position paper in July and August. Finally, EUD members exchanged ideas on the final draft during the internal consultation on 7 September.



## EUD INITIATIVES

### WORKING GROUPS

EUD has three working groups: Gender Equality, Deaf Lawyers, Accessibility, and ICT.

### GENDER EQUALITY

#### EDF webinar: Women with disabilities during COVID-19

On the 19th of June, the EUD took part in a webinar on the rights of women and girls with disabilities during COVID-19. This webinar was organised by the European Disability Forum (EDF) and included representatives from organisations including the European Women's Lobby, UN Women, the European Commission and the European Institute on Gender Equality.

All of the participants agreed that while persons with disabilities suffered additional impacts during the pandemic, for example due to their lack of access to essential information in national sign languages and lack of access to communication in healthcare settings, women with disabilities have been affected disproportionately.

During the webinar, EUD representatives learned about ways to connect these women with one another, especially those who have been survivors of domestic and gender-based violence. They also learned about the EU's Gender Equality Strategy and efforts to include an intersectional perspective when conducting research about women.



#### Training on reporting to the committee for the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

On 25 September, the EUD attended a virtual training session on reporting to the Committee for the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This session was organised by the EDF and gave the EUD an opportunity to learn about the importance of CEDAW for women and girls with disabilities. We also explored

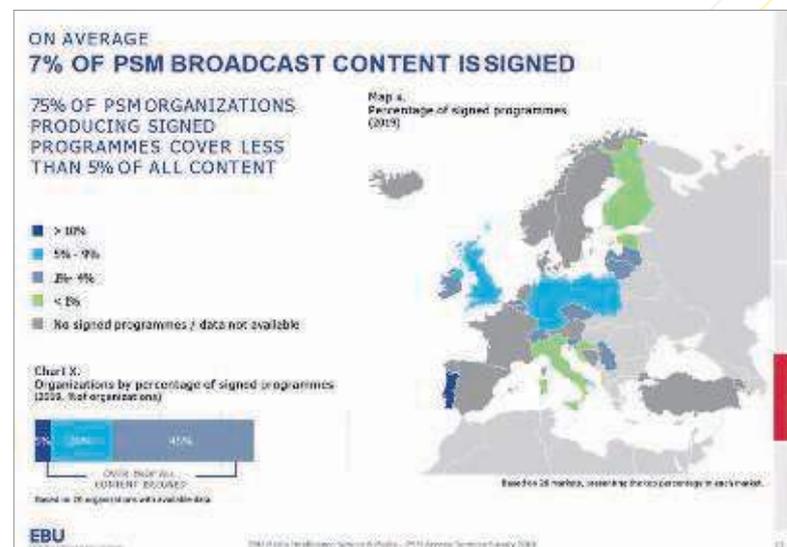
how to engage with the Committee and found out about the experiences of organisations that have already reported to them.

After the training, which was delivered by Committee member Ana Peláez Narváez, the EUD began aiming to encourage and support its members' engagement with the UN CEDAW Committee.

## ICT AND ACCESSIBILITY

The EUD's ICT and Accessibility Working Group participated in an online workshop on the 29th of October 2020, entitled 'Rolling Out Accessibility'. The workshop was organised by the EDF, and included important stakeholders including Facebook, Microsoft and the European Broadcasting Union. During this workshop, the EUD learned that broadcasters in four EU Member States (Estonia, Finland, the Netherlands and Poland) and one EFTA country (Switzerland) are considering the use of avatars powered by artificial intelligence (AI) to provide information in sign languages. Our Working Group has been engaging with EUD members at the national level to ensure that they are involved in the process of providing information in sign languages through the use of AI.

The EUD's Executive Director had regular meetings with Google's head of accessibility and discussed the work that Google have been doing for the deaf community, especially their automated captioning. The Executive Director also had a meeting with Chris Hughes, a computer science lecturer at Salford University in the UK. His work focuses on championing accessible media and developing new methods for providing accessibility services within an immersive context, such as virtual reality. The Working Group is now following up with this technological evolution which will eventually impact the deaf community.



Dr Gergely Tapolczai, chair of the Deaf Lawyers Working Group, had a series of meetings with the Executive Director about the EUD statutes to be updated and the amendment of the internal rules. They also explored the impact of COVID-19 on EUD

legislation as there was no allowance in the existing statutes for using video conferencing to hold the board meetings and General Assembly. They also checked the new Belgian Code of Companies and Associations which requires a royal decree for the new statutes.

## DEAF LAWYERS

## SHAPES PROJECT

Since the end of 2019, the EUD has been part of the four-year project called Smart and Healthy Ageing Promoting Empowering Systems (SHAPES), which is funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 programme. It aims to create Europe's first open ecosystem enabling the deployment of a broad range of digital solutions for supporting healthy and independent living conditions and lifestyles for older individuals while enhancing the long-term sustainability of health and care systems. It specifically focuses on those people who are facing temporarily or permanently reduced functionality and capabilities. SHAPES will develop an interoperable platform integrating smart digital solutions to collect and analyse older individuals' health, environmental and lifestyle information, identify their needs, and provide personalised solutions that protect their data and inspire their trust.



The large-scale piloting campaign of SHAPES engages ca. 2,000 individuals at 15 pilot sites in 10 EU Member States and involves hundreds of key stakeholders including deaf and deafblind people. SHAPES's multidisciplinary approach to piloting is reflected across seven themes that, together, provide a clear understanding of the reality of European health and care systems and

enable the validation of cost-efficient, interoperable and reliable innovations capable of supporting the independent lifestyles of older individuals within and outside the home. By constructing an ecosystem attractive to European industry and policy-makers, SHAPES develops value-based business models to open and scale-up the market for AHA-focused digital solutions. It also provides key recommendations for the far-reaching deployment of innovative digital health and care services.

The EUD and its partners have been active since the beginning of the project and have completed the concept development cycle despite the challenge of operating under COVID-19 restrictions. The work of the Project Management Board, on which Mark Wheatley, Accessibility Manager, also serves, has resulted in a mitigation plan. In particular, the project's consortium worked on a Pan-European Pilot Campaign Plan and organised two virtual Dialogue Workshops.

The first SHAPES Dialogue Workshop, which took place on 12 May 2020, was a consultation that attracted 150 partners, academics, students and NGO representatives, who discussed the project work including some preliminary findings.

The second Dialogue Workshop on 29 October focussed on integrated care and user perspectives and had 124 registered participants. It was a dynamic event and an excellent opportunity for SHAPES to explore new ideas and practices with an emphasis on knowledge transfer.

The SHAPES project illustrates the need to respond, more than ever before, to current global health challenges by thinking about the crucial role of supporting older people's quality of life at home.

The four-year project Artificial Intelligence for the Deaf (aiD), which started in December 2019, is also funded by the Horizon 2020 programme and aims to address the multifaceted challenge of enabling deaf people to effectively communicate, interact, and participate in social life. Its goal is to bring about a major breakthrough to the lives of hundreds of thousands of European citizens. Working from an understanding of the deaf community and the capacity of modern machine learning (ML) and augmented reality (AR) technologies, aiD is pursuing cross-disciplinary innovation that builds on the latest academic research to offer a comprehensive suite of solutions catering to deaf people's communication needs. Specifically, the aiD consortium is targeting the following: a) ease of communication by means of translation from and to sign language (SL) that is amenable to commodity mobile devices; b) novel educational

solutions for deaf children; and c) intelligent relay services for deaf people, including for accessing emergency assistance.

The project partners consider the full pipeline of communication which entails technological development on multiple frontiers: usability issues; signal processing, signal perception and generation via advanced ML; the creation of virtual SL signals in an AR environment; and the scalability of the developed technologies on commodity mobile devices so that they are accessible to the vast majority of potential users.

## AID PROJECT



The JUSTISIGNS 2 project is an educational and training initiative run by Interesource Group Limited in Ireland to improve access to support services in gender based violence (GBV) cases. This project started in December 2019 and is led by a consortium of European experts from Ireland, Belgium, Spain and the UK. They are collaborating to undertake research within the deaf, migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking communities to investigate their experiences of GBV and interactions with victim support agencies. JUSTISIGNS 2 has the objective of responding to the obligations of the EU Directive 2012/29, also known as the Victims' Directive, which is aimed at developing education and

training solutions for professionals who support victims of violence and crime and in particular women who are victims of GBV. The EUD webinar 'Best Practices: Supporting Deaf Victims of Domestic Violence', which took place on 25 November 2020, was part of the awareness-raising activities on this issue.

## JUSTISIGNS 2 PROJECT



## EUD INITIATIVES

### DEAF MUSEUMS

This project started in October 2020 and lasts for 30 months. It involves a mix of organisations from different levels in seven European countries. Representatives from two worlds (the deaf world and the museum

world) are working together through peer- and challenge-based learning to develop open educational resources and online courses to train deaf sign language users in general entrepreneurial skills and in the promotion and preservation of deaf heritage.



### DESEAL

Launched in September 2020, DESEAL (Deaf Senior Education for Active Living) is a project with four partners from Italy, Austria, France and Belgium. It aims to promote equality, non-discrimination and diversity for deaf older people through access to digital information. By providing deaf seniors with training materials, the project enables them to access information in sign language and acquire the digital skills needed today, particularly

in the fields of finance, banking and social protection.

In addition to Italian, Austrian, French and International Sign, DESEAL uses images, graphics and animations to make the information easier to understand. The project also increases the competence of educators, training them on the specific needs of older students and people with disabilities, as well as on methods and materials adapted for deaf seniors.



MEDIA

For a number of years now, EUD has been determined to produce high quality and fully accessible information to its members and other interested parties.

This is done to increase EUD`s visibility for two reasons—firstly, our campaigns to raise our profile and become more well-known among political stakeholders, and secondly, for the wider deaf community to be aware of

what we are working towards. EUD's approach to disseminating information generally takes the form of International Sign with selected feature(s) like: English subtitles; and/or a voiceover in English; and/or a transcription of video in English text on the same page as the video. This format for dissemination is aimed at being fully accessible for all, bringing to life the disability movement's slogan "Nothing about us, without us."

Website

The website, eud.eu have gathered 140,271 users in 2020 and clicked 302,203 pages in total. The popular month were in November and December. Now to focus on the videos statistics, there were 73,000 hits on the videos embedded on our website in 2020.

140,270  
pageviews

73,152  
hits for videos

Facebook

The official EUD Facebook page is attracting many more fans this year, in fact we have increased our 'likes' from 54,300 to 56,363. The information that is being disseminated on our website is also shared on the Facebook page, along with additional photo albums of past events. The page is targeted at the general public and its exposure illustrates our lobbying work in addition to various events and subjects that EUD addresses.

169  
posts

56,290  
likes

Twitter

Twitter enables the daily activities of EUD work to be shared with the multitudes immediately. It also serves as an ideal platform to share information regarding special events, including the first virtual General Assembly and Board meetings when they occur. We anticipate this area of our work will connect with are much larger audience in time. And during 2020 we made 691 tweets for our 4500 followers.

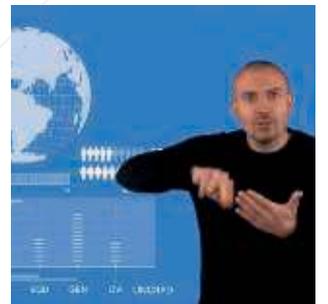
202  
tweets

6,520  
followers



Instagram

The introduction of Instagram began back in September 2013. It is a distinctive way to capture political life through an artistic lens. This is a small, but growing niche audience for us. Back in 2016, we had 950 followers, now we have 2,187 followers.



41 posts

2,190 followers

TOOLKITS

EUD has developed several toolkits in the past few years. We have developed three new toolkits in 2020.

EAA

The European Accessibility Act toolkit aims to give advocates tools and proposals to push for strong national legislation and adequate implementation complying with the Act. The toolkit provides a brief introduction of the Act with related key documents and definitions, a timeline for transposition and implementation, and a list of the main players in the process. The toolkit also explains what the Act covers, its most important provisions to consider during the transposition phase, and how these can be improved at the national level. The Act's enforcement, monitoring and reporting is also covered in the toolkit, along with the European Commission's review of how Member States should implement the Act in the years to come.

The development of the toolkit was led by the European Disability Forum, whose member organisations participated in the process and contributed their expertise. The EUD provided the EDF with input for the toolkit to ensure it is a valuable tool for deaf advocates in the EU.



AVMSD

The Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) was adopted on 14 November 2018. The toolkit gives a brief introduction to the AVMSD with key definitions and a timeline for transposition and implementation, and

indicates who the key players in this process are. It also explains that it is a 'minimum harmonisation' Directive and what this means in practice.







### EECC

The European Electronic Communications Code (EECC) is a directive that entered into force in December 2018. After being adopted at the EU level, the EECC must be transposed into national laws in the Member States. Transposition is the process of adopting new national legislation or adapting existing laws to comply with an EU Directive.

The EECC sets out an EU-level legal framework to coordinate national legislation on electronic communications networks and services, including:

- telephony services
- the single European emergency number, 112
- basic internet access that must now be considered as a universal service by EU countries

The EECC aims to ensure the provision to end users of electronic communication services that are:

- of a good quality
- affordable
- publicly available

Most importantly, the EECC also aims at ensuring that end-users with disabilities enjoy access to a wide range of these services on an equal basis with others.

The Code generally sets out the absolute minimum requirements that have to be met, which does not mean that EU countries cannot do more. So, if there are better provisions already in place in a country, its government does not have to weaken those provisions. On the contrary, it can use the transposition process as an opportunity to further strengthen its national rules.



## UN CRPD

The review process of the UNCRPD Committee has experienced an exceptional delay due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its containment measures, which made it impossible to organise in-person sessions in the city of Geneva, Switzerland.

In March and April 2020, during the 14th Pre-Sessional Working Group, the Committee adopted the List of Issues for Croatia. The EUD worked closely with the Croatian NAD

to provide important information to the Committee's rapporteur from Croatia.

The 23rd session, planned for March and April 2020, was postponed to August and held online as a scaled-down meeting that did not include any constructive dialogues with Member State delegations. This means that no country was reviewed by the UNCRPD Committee during the 23rd session.

### Regular virtual meetings with and support for NADs

The EUD has continued to work closely with its members in preparation for the review process by the UNCRPD Committee. The pandemic has created unexpected delays in the review process, so the EUD has worked with some of its members to build their capacity and seek information from them on the most pressing issues for their deaf communities at the national level. The EUD has focused its support on the NADs that will be reviewed by the UNCRPD Committee in the forthcoming sessions.

### COSP

The EUD participated in the 13th COSP session, which took place virtually between 30 November and 3 December. An overarching theme of the session was 'A decade of action and delivery for inclusive sustainable development: implementing the CRPD and the 2030 Agenda for all persons with disabilities'. Three roundtable discussions were held, the first of which concentrated on disability and business and the importance of realising the right to work in open, inclusive and accessible environments. As an intervention for this topic, the EUD prepared a submission and highlighted that inaccessible working environments that do not embrace diversity not only breach the legal obligations stemming from the UNCRPD, but also hinder sustainable growth.

### General Comment on UNCRPD Article 27

The UNCRPD Committee is preparing its General Comment on Article 27 on Work and Employment. It has been drafting a concept note and collaborating with the International Labour Organisation. In light of this, the EUD has been following these developments so as to inform its members and prepare input on behalf of the EUD and NADs across the EU.



### Election of the new UNCRPD Committee

The Conference of States Parties (COSP) to the UNCRPD, initially planned to take place in June 2020, was postponed to the first week of December. During the COSP, nine new members of the Committee were elected:

Rosa Idalia Aldana Salguero ..... Guatemala  
 Odelia Fitoussi ..... Israel  
 Floyd Morris ..... Jamaica  
 Samuel Kabue ..... Kenya  
 Gerel Dondovdorj ..... Mongolia  
 Soumia Amrani ..... Morocco  
 Robert George Martin ..... New Zealand  
 Vivian Fernández De Torrijo ..... Panama  
 Saowalak Thongkuay ..... Thailand

### EAA

In 2020, the EUD worked tirelessly to support the NADs during the periods of transposition of the recently adopted EU accessibility legislation. The EUD highlighted that all three of these laws have a massive potential to bring about long-awaited changes and make audio-visual media and telecom services, including emergency services, more accessible for deaf persons in the EU.

For this reason, the EUD constantly supported its members and provided them with expertise, developed toolkits in International Sign, hosted a webinar on the topic, collaborated with partners and raised awareness about the need to take action.

The EUD has therefore ensured that NADs can be active players when these EU laws are being transposed into national legislation and collaborate with national governments when they are adopting or reforming laws in order to comply with their EU obligations.



### UNCRPD book

The EUD recruited Dr Goedele A. M. De Clerck on a part-time basis as a consultant for the new book in the UNCRPD series, which will focus on accessibility. Dr De Clerck specialises in interdisciplinary research with deaf people and sign language communities on their cultural diversity and wellbeing. She holds a PhD in Comparative Sciences of Culture (anthropology) from Ghent University (2009).

She has extensive experience in working with sign language communities around the world. During her doctoral and postdoctoral research at Ghent, she was a visiting scholar at Gallaudet University (USA), the University of Buea (Cameroon), and Kyambogo University (Uganda).

She has published as author and co-editor in international journals, books and edited volumes, including most recently Exploring Deaf Epistemologies: Comparative Studies in Identity, Empowerment, and Learning (Gallaudet University Press, 2016); the Proceedings of 'Sign Language, Sustainable Development, and Equal Opportunities' (Gallaudet University Press, 2016); and the volume Sign Languages of the World: A Comparative Handbook (De Gruyter Mouton, in press).

Dr. Goedele De Clerck

## Review of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 and the EUD's work on the post-2020 Strategy

The European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 has been the main instrument for the implementation of the UNCRPD at the EU level for the past decade. The EUD celebrates the achievements of the Strategy such as the adoption of the European Accessibility Act, the Web Accessibility Directive, and the revisions of the European Electronic Communications Code and Audio-Visual Media Services Directive. However, the EUD is aware that much more needs to be done in the coming decade for the EU to live up to its commitments under the UNCRPD. Understanding the importance of this instrument, the EUD has asked the European Commission to develop an ambitious strategy for the next ten years.

The EUD has also undertaken a number of other important tasks in this regard. At the beginning of the year, the EUD collaborated with the office of MEP Ádám Kósa on the Resolution on the post-2020 Strategy, which was adopted by the European Parliament's Committee on Employment and Social Affairs.

In March, the EUD presented its evaluation of the 2010-2020 Strategy to the European Commission, which also contained the recommendations for the post-2020 Strategy.

Then in July, the EUD participated in two online technical meetings on the 2020-2030

Strategy with the European Commission and the EU Commissioner for Equality, together with other organisations for people with disabilities. During these two meetings, the EUD gained in-depth information about the Strategy drafting and adoption process. These meetings were also an opportunity for Mark Wheatley, EUD's Executive Director, to communicate the EUD's priorities for the future Strategy.

In October, the EUD provided in-depth input into the European Commission's Roadmap for the post-2020 Strategy. The EUD listed concrete recommendations for action in the areas of accessibility, mobility, participation, employment, skills, education, equality, access to health and justice, other UNCRPD rights, and governance. Moreover, the EUD actively participated in four thematic consultations organised by the Commission to highlight its priorities.

By engaging with all relevant actors to promote the deaf perspective in the UNCRPD implementation at the EU level, the EUD ensured that the rights of deaf individuals are fully taken into account by the Commission in the drafting process of the Strategy. As part of this, the EUD created a dedicated part of its website with all of the recommendations and actions taken to inform the post-2020 European Disability Strategy.

## MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK 2021-2027

### Common Provision Regulation 2021-2027

The Common Provision Regulation (CPR) 2021-2027 is over-arching and will apply to a number of key EU funds going forward, including the European Social Fund+ and the European Regional Development Fund. In 2018, the European Commission released its proposal for a new CPR, and in December 2020 an agreement was reached between the

European Parliament and the Council on the final wording of the Regulation. Throughout the years, the EUD collaborated with the European Disability Forum and advocated for the Regulation to include provisions for EU funds to be used more effectively for social inclusion and accessibility. The outcome was very positive, and our demands were included in the final wording of the text.



### Erasmus+

Regularly, the EUD participates in the Erasmus Coalition meetings organised by the Lifelong Learning Platform and the European Youth Forum. It is a stakeholders' coalition where the youth and education sectors meet to discuss their advocacy related to EU-level programmes. Recently, the Coalition has focussed on the EU Multiannual Financial Framework negotiations and the upcoming Erasmus+ programme.

During the meetings, the EUD receives updates on the negotiations for Erasmus+ 2021-2027. Since 2018, in collaboration with the European Disability Forum, the EUD has advocated for an inclusive and accessible Erasmus+ and will continue doing so, ensuring that deaf students have equal access to learning mobility under the programme.



### Justice, Rights & Values programme

Under the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework, the European Commission made a proposal for the Justice, Rights and Values programme. The aim of the programme is to protect and promote the rights and values enshrined in the EU Treaties. The EUD sees this programme as an extremely important instrument to promote fundamental rights and democracy, and support the civil society in the EU. On 27 May, the Commission presented a strategy for overcoming the negative effects of the pandemic and preparing the future for the next generations. However, the EUD was deeply disappointed that the civil society's role was not adequately reflected in the draft budget. Together with the European Civic Forum and a large number of civil society

organisations, the EUD co-signed the letter asking EU institutions to increase the budget for the Justice, Rights & Values programme to ensure that civil society organisations can adequately fulfil their role when advocating for European values and human rights. On 10 November, the European Parliament and the German Presidency of the Council reached an agreement on the Multiannual Financial Framework and the Next Generation EU Fund. The EUD was thrilled to see that the deal foresees a €1.6 billion increase for the Justice, Rights & Values programme, which is very close to the demands of the civil society organisations.



### Position paper: Freedom of movement

2020, the EUD adopted a new position paper: 'Freedom of movement in Europe for economically active deaf persons and deaf learners'. In 2018, information was collected by the EUD through a questionnaire circulated among NADs on the barriers faced by deaf people while exercising their right to freedom of movement in Europe.

At the 2019 EUD General Assembly, members agreed on the drafting of a position paper on freedom of movement. The drafting started in February 2020, and lasted for three months.

The vote on and approval of the position paper was expected to take place during the 2020

General Assembly, which was planned for May. However, due to COVID-19, it was postponed to December. In light of this, the EUD carried out a longer consultation process and the board provided feedback on the document on 30 May. Then, EUD members were given the opportunity to provide written input in July and August.

On the 7th of September, the EUD held an online internal consultation with its members to discuss the final draft of the position paper, which was then adopted by the board on 27 October.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

The fourth Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) took place on 19 March 2020. In light of the pandemic, it was held as a virtual meeting. It was attended by the EUD as well as over 300 representatives of NGOs, ECE Member States, the United Nations and other organisations.

Notwithstanding the difficult circumstances, the Forum was an excellent opportunity to continue the dialogue on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Europe. During the discussions and presentations, participants shared different ideas on how to speed up the progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It was highlighted that over the past years, policy-makers and communities have become more aware of the need to deliver the SDGs, but the broad and deep transformative change that the 2030 Agenda promised has still not happened yet.

The day before this Regional Forum, a virtual Civil Society Forum was held by the ECE and the Regional Civil Engagement Mechanism. As co-chair of the ECE's Constituency of Persons with Disabilities, the EUD attended the meeting and provided input to the Civil Society's statement which was then delivered during the Regional Forum. Throughout the discussions, the EUD highlighted that the key concern in the implementation of the SDGs is ensuring the full accessibility of processes and information, for example in national sign languages and other accessible formats.

As a result, the ECE's report at the Regional Forum emphasised that while accelerating the delivery of the SDGs in Europe, it is essential to facilitate the democratic participation and active inclusion of all, especially of sign language users and other marginalised groups. This is one of the first times when accessibility in national sign languages and other accessible formats has been explicitly mentioned as an essential element of democratic participation and active inclusion while delivering the SDGs.



## High-Level Political Forum

Between 7 and 16 July, for the first time, the EUD participated in the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development, which is the UN's central platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. The HLPF, which usually consists of in-person meetings in New York City, adopted an online format due to the pandemic, which allowed EUD to participate in the proceedings, including three side events organised by partners through the Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities.

The EUD will continue to advocate for closer connections between the UNCRPD and the 2030 Agenda, and play an active role in the UN ECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. The EUD will also increase its efforts to take part in forthcoming UN High-Level Political Forum, with the objective of reminding stakeholders and the international community of the need to advance the rights of deaf persons and all persons with disabilities so that no one is left behind.



## Social Pillar and EU Semester

In October, the EUD followed the online strategic dialogue 'Launching the 2021 European Semester Cycle', organised by the European Commission. In this meeting, the EUD learned about the COVID-19 recovery fund for EU Member States facing the unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic. Each Member State needs to draft a Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) which explains in detail how they will work towards achieving the political priorities of the European Semester cycle. As a result of this meeting, the EUD communicated with its members and encouraged them to contact the relevant national ministries to request a social dialogue, so that NADs are included in the RRP drafting process and can ensure that they are in line with the UNCRPD and the rights of deaf people.

Moreover, the implementation of the Principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights (Social Pillar) remains fundamentally important for deaf Europeans. Since the proclamation of the Social Pillar in November 2017, the EUD has undertaken various actions to advocate for its implementation. This year, through the public consultation on the upcoming Action Plan to implement the Pillar, the EUD highlighted to the Commission that for our stakeholders, Principle 17 on the inclusion of people with disabilities is essential. The Action Plan must define concrete targets and timelines and clearly outline how the principle will be implemented. The EUD emphasised that the Social Pillar should not just be a statement of principles or good intentions, but should actually strengthen social rights by means of concrete and specific tools, legislation, policy-making mechanisms and financial instruments, so that it has a positive impact on people's lives.

### ENGAGEMENT WITH MEPS

#### Equality in Employment Report

From May to September 2020, the EUD worked closely with MEP Katrin Langensiepen on a new report entitled the 'Implementation of Council Directive 2000/78/EC: Establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation in light of the UNCRPD'. She presented the report on the 23rd of September at the European Parliament's Committee on Employment and Social Affairs.

The Employment Equality Directive (EED) was adopted prior to the UNCRPD, which has resulted in the former lacking important provisions set forth in the latter. Indeed, the EED, as a piece of secondary legislation, is bound by the UNCRPD. In this regard, the EUD and other organisations of persons with disabilities, along with MEP Langensiepen

and her team, followed a comprehensive and inclusive drafting process to create the report, and agreed on the following recommendations for the EU:

- Adopt a horizontal anti-discrimination directive;
- Establish clear guidelines on reasonable accommodation;
- Include intersectional and multiple discrimination in employment;
- Ensure mutual recognition of disability status;
- Collect data on employment that is disaggregated by gender, age, type of disability, race/ethnic origin and sexual orientation;

The EUD deeply appreciates the open and collaborative nature of the work on this report with MEP Langensiepen's team.



MEP Katrin Langensiepen

### Inclusion of national sign languages in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

On the 10th of December 2020, the EUD met with MEP Alícia Homs to discuss the inclusion of national sign languages in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML). Mark Wheatley briefed her on the EUD's activities over the years to promote the inclusion of these languages, and she explained her commitment to protecting them on an equal basis with other languages. The EUD is already working with its Spanish

member to coordinate a joint strategy so that national sign languages can be included in the ECRML, and will continue to cooperate with MEPs on using all the necessary frameworks to protect and promote Europe's national sign languages.

MEP Alícia Homs



### Increasing the accessibility of the European Parliament

The EUD has actively advocated for an increase in the accessibility of all political processes at the EU level. This includes the European Parliament (EP) and all of its communications. On 10 November 2020, the EUD met with the team of MEP Sylwia Spurek to discuss increasing the accessibility of the EP. The meeting was also joined by Jukka-Pekka Piimies, from the EP's Disability Support Group.

During this meeting, the participants explored the possibilities of introducing live captioning and/or sign language interpretation at Plenary meetings. Since then, the EUD has continued to liaise with all relevant stakeholders to advocate for a more accessible EP.

MEP Sylwia Spurek



## EUD &amp; COVID-19

The COVID-19 outbreak and the EU Member States' containment measures have certainly impacted the EUD's programme of work for 2020. In reaction to these exceptional circumstances, the EUD has adapted accordingly in a number of ways.

In view of the spread of the coronavirus in Europe, the EUD closed its office on the 16th of March and implemented remote work to protect its staff members. This included the quarterly board meeting in March being held via videoconference instead of in Warsaw, Poland, and the postponement of the 2020 General Assembly, which had been planned to take place in Zagreb, Croatia, in mid-May.

The EUD endorsed a joint statement by the World Federation of the Deaf and the World Alliance of Sign Language Interpreters on the need to ensure deaf people's full access to healthcare on an equal basis with others. The containment measures introduced in March included social distancing, lockdown and the closure of borders between EU countries, and the EUD Board published a video about this in International Sign on the 22nd of March.

The EUD has also been active in monitoring the accessibility of official COVID-19 information and communication through

sign languages. We sent an open letter to the European Commission on the need to provide access in International Sign to the EU's COVID-19 response, recalling its obligation to do so under Articles 9 and 21 of the UNCRPD. Thereafter, the statements about the pandemic made by the President of the European Commission started being interpreted into International Sign.

Moreover, the EUD collected views from its members about access to COVID-19 information in all of the EU Member States, as well as Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and the United Kingdom. The findings were published in a new section on the EUD's website.

The EUD also increasingly monitored possible human rights violations of deaf persons. In light of the changing scenarios across Europe due to the different measures taken in different countries, the EUD carried out four virtual regional consultations with its members, in the Nordic, Eastern, Western and Southern regions. Following the consultations, the EUD drafted a report on how the containment measures have affected the programmes of work of NADs in Europe. The report was widely shared among all the relevant stakeholders to raise awareness on the importance of accessibility and inclusion during the global pandemic.



On 25 September, the newspaper POLITICO.EU interviewed Mark Wheatley, the EUD's Executive Director, on the impact of the pandemic on the rights of deaf Europeans.

COVID-19 and governments' responses to it have created circumstances that have infringed deaf people's rights, including inaccessible information, increased isolation, and a lack of access to communication in hospitals. In the interview, Mr Wheatley pointed out that the pandemic has been an opportunity to raise awareness about accessibility and national sign languages in the EU, but that new barriers have arisen. For instance, he mentioned that access to communication in healthcare facilities has been denied to deaf individuals, as sign

language interpreters were not allowed to accompany them due to the containment measures. He also underlined that because of distance education, many deaf children, especially those with hearing parents that do not sign, have been deprived of an accessible language environment. Another issue he covered was that many deaf people have lost their jobs due to the crisis, and face uncertainty about their future.

The EUD will continue working with its stakeholders to raise awareness about the additional barriers that affect deaf Europeans, and to ensure compliance with the legislation enshrining their rights, especially the UNCRPD. The EUD would like to thank POLITICO.EU for covering this crucial issue.

#### POLITICO.EU INTERVIEW



## EU EVENTS

## EP Disability Intergroup

In December 2019, the EUD welcomed the re-establishment of the European Parliament's Disability Intergroup, an informal grouping of MEPs who are interested in advocating for disability rights and aim at promoting disability policy. In February 2020, the Intergroup selected its Bureau and adopted its work plan.

On the 30th of April, the EUD was present at its first online meeting, which gave an overview of the impact of COVID-19 on people with disabilities. It included the participation of the EU Commissioner for Equality Ms Helena Dalli, as well as interventions from members of the board of the European Disability Forum.



New Years' Reception of the Disability Intergroup at the European Parliament.

## The European Economic Social Committee

On 26 February, the EUD attended a public hearing organised by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) on the 2020-2030 EU agenda for disability rights. The aim of the hearing was for the EESC to present its proposal for the new strategy at a crucial

moment in the EU landscape. During the discussions, the presenters highlighted that with a new European Commission, Parliament and budget programming period, it is now the perfect time for a new disability strategy that fully takes into account the UNCPRD and SDGs.



### EU High-Level Group on Disability

Throughout the year, the EUD regularly attends the High-Level Group on Disability meetings organised by the European Commission. This year, during the meetings the Commission presented the state of play of the evaluation of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 and explained how they are preparing for the new post-2020 Strategy. Then the participants had a chance to share their ideas and priorities.

In October, the EUD took an opportunity to highlight that when ensuring accessibility in the EU, not enough attention is paid to people with non-visible disabilities. For deaf people, accessibility means the provision of information and communication in national sign languages, so the next Strategy should pay more attention to this, particularly as the EU is the union of multilingualism.

### EUROPEAN COMMISSION



### EU vs Discrimination

On the 11th of September, the EUD took part in a webinar on the topic of disability-based discrimination in employment. The webinar was organised by the Disability Unit of the European Commission (EC), with keynote presenters including Ms Katarina Ivankovic, Director for Social Affairs at the EC's Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion; Ms Emmanuelle Grande, Head of the Disability Unit; and Ms Catherine Naughton, Director of the European Disability Forum.

Ms Ivankovic presented the awareness-raising campaign 'EU vs Discrimination', which was launched in May 2018. She explained that despite the existence of the Employment Equality Directive 2008/78, 50% of Europeans do not know their rights

regarding discrimination. She highlighted that as part of the campaign, workshops on reasonable accommodation were carried out in those EU Member States with the largest employability gap between persons with and without disabilities.

Equal access to employment and the labour market must be a priority at both the EU and national levels, as enshrined in Article 27 of the UNCRPD, and other legislative and policy instruments. The EUD will continue to underline that accessibility legislation and policies, such as those relating to inclusive education and lifelong learning, must effect structural change. Reasonable accommodation must become the norm, and failure to provide it must always constitute discrimination.

### European Day of Persons with Disabilities 2020 and Access City Award

On 1 and 2 December 2020, the EUD attended the annual European Day of Persons with Disabilities conference, which was held virtually due to COVID-19.

The conference was opened by the President of the European Commission, Mrs Ursula von der Leyen. She highlighted that her goal is for the EU to be the Union of equality and non-discrimination, and emphasised that the post-2020 European Disability Strategy will contribute to the achievement of this goal by paving the way for further implementation of the UNCRPD. The EUD agrees that the post-2020 Strategy will play a key role in this and therefore promoted its policy and advocacy work to ensure that the deaf perspective will be visible in the Strategy.

The 2020 conference also included discussions on the impact of the pandemic on people with disabilities. During the discussions with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the EUD asked about the use of transparent masks. The EUD's Executive Director Mark Wheatley wanted to know if the ECDC had a position on whether transparent masks are as safe as medical masks, and generally what the requirements are for a mask to be considered safe. A representative from the ECDC answered that there is no official information on this yet, but that it will be published soon.

Moreover, the ceremony for the Access City Award 2021 took place during the conference, and was presented by Helena Dalli, the Commissioner for Equality. The EUD congratulates Jönköping, Sweden, for winning first place, and Bremerhaven, Germany and Gdynia, Poland for winning second and third place respectively.



**Helena Dalli**  
Commissioner for Equality

## The Petitions Committee takes another step toward allowing the tabling of petitions in national sign languages

In July 2020, the European Parliament's Committee on Petitions discussed Petition No 1056/2016, which was tabled by the EUD's Executive Director Mark Wheatley and requests that the European Parliament allow for the tabling of petitions in the national sign languages of EU Member States.

During the meeting, he gave a remote presentation explaining the content of the petition and how the requested provision could be implemented. He stressed that national sign languages are fully-fledged natural languages that have the same linguistic properties as any other EU language, and that the EU must enable access to information and communication in national sign languages as laid down in Articles 9 and 21 of the UNCRPD, which was ratified by the EU in 2010. He also made reference to the 2010 Brussels Declaration on Sign Languages, which called on the EU to ensure that 'sign language users have access to public services in their national sign languages'.

Mr Wheatley further explained that there are no technical barriers to implementing the petition, as the Petitions Portal is already technically equipped to accept multiple file types, including video files, which would permit the submission of petitions in sign languages.

Various representatives of Directorate Generals participated in the discussion, including those for Innovation and

Technological Support (DG ITEC), Translation (DGT), and Logistics and Interpretation for Conferences (DG LINC). Valter Mavric, from DGT, stressed his full commitment to finding a solution to allow petitions to be submitted in sign languages, and a representative from DG ITEC explained that 'from a purely technical point of view, submitting a petition in sign languages in a video format would be possible'.

The EUD was gratified that all of the MEPs who took the floor during the discussion expressed their full commitment to implementing the petition. MEP Ádám Kósa reminded those in attendance that the European Parliament's President, David Sassoli, had conveyed his support in a May 2020 letter to the Petitions Committee. Dr Kósa also talked about the need to increase the representation of people with disabilities in the Committee's procedures, and explained that this petition would help to achieve this, especially with respect to the participation of deaf and hard of hearing citizens.

At the end of the meeting, MEP Dolors Montserrat, Chair of the Committee, announced its decision to keep this petition open and draft a letter to the President Sassoli, requesting that he responds by 1 January 2021.



Xyz...

## EXTERNAL CO-OPERATION

### NGO

EUD has signed several Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) with several NGOs with which EUD has common goals.



European Network of  
Sign Language Teachers

# EUD ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

## NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS OF THE DEAF

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

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### Objectives of the Programme

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

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

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

