



PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION AND REHABILITATION OF PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT, EUROPEAN REGION AND THE EUROPEAN BLIND UNION SIGN AGREEMENT TO PROMOTE FULL INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

International Council
for Education and
Rehabilitation of People
with Visual Impairment
Europe

London, United Kingdom – October 27, 2015 - The International Council for Education and Rehabilitation of People with Visual Impairment, European Region (ICEVI-Europe) and the European Blind Union (EBU) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), signalling a historic moment of a new phase of cooperation between the two organizations.

The agreement was signed by the President of ICEVI-Europe, Mrs. Panagiota (Betty) Leotsakou and the President of the EBU, Mr. Wolfgang Angermann during the Gala Dinner of 10th EBU General Assembly in London, UK held on October 26-28 2015. The General Assembly was hosted by the Royal National Institute of Blind People, RNIB from the UK and the presiding theme was “Making Sense of a Turbulent World: Politics and Inclusion in the 21st Century.” ICEVI-Europe was cordially invited by the Board of the EBU to attend the assembly, wherein elections of the new Board of the EBU also took place and officially sign the MoU. Lord Colin Low, Former President of the EBU, and current Vice-President of the RNIB and President of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment, Members of the Board of EBU, Mr. Arnt Holte, President of the World Blind Union, Mr. Rodolfo Cattani, Secretary of the European Disabilities Forum, Representatives from 34 Member Countries of EBU and Mr. Dieter Feser, Chief Executive Officer of Nikolauspflege - Stiftung für blinde und sehbehinderte Menschen and ICEVI-Europe Board Member representing the German and Dutch Speaking Countries Subregion were amongst the assembly attendees.

The Memorandum of Understanding sets out a framework for close cooperation between the two organizations in order to achieve the mutual goal of ensuring and facilitating the full inclusion of people with visual impairment throughout all parts of the European Society. The foundation of this initiative was laid out by the efforts of the Immediate Past President of ICEVI-Europe, Dr. Hans Welling and has finally come to fruition by his successor and current President, Mrs. Leotsakou. This agreement signifies the commencement of an even stronger cooperation between the two parties which had begun in September 2013.

Within the context of the MoU, both organizations agree to engage in the efficient use of all resources available in order to promote the common goal of promoting the inclusion of persons with visual impairment and base their cooperation on mutual respect for roles, mandates and tasks. Furthermore, the MoU outlines possible areas and activities of cooperation to explore, including but not limited to the following: maintenance of regular, high-level contact between the Board Members of both organizations, dissemination of information on both organization platforms and circulation of respective Newsletters,

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the exchange of information and expertise regarding important developments, announcements, European Projects etc., exploration of undertaking common projects, as well as, the attendance of Principal Officers at the General Assemblies of both organizations.

“My warmest congratulatory wishes go out towards the newly elected Board of the EBU. On behalf of the Board of ICEVI-Europe, I would like to express our enthusiasm to engage in a closer cooperation with the EBU in order to educate the professionals, scientists and academics who work in the field of persons with visual impairment and our commitment to enhance our partnership with the EBU, with the common aim of advocating and facilitating the full inclusion of persons with visual impairment in all parts of the European Society,” said Panagiota (Betty) Leotsakou, President of ICEVI-Europe.

About ICEVI – EUROPE

ICEVI - Europe is a region of the International Council for Education of people with Visual Impairment, ICEVI. This is a global organisation of individuals and organisations that promotes equal access to appropriate education and rehabilitation for all people with visual impairment so that they may achieve their full potential.

<http://www.icevi-europe.org/>

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