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Welcome to the EBU Newsletter.

The EBU Newsletter is published every two months in English, French, German and Spanish. It is produced and translated thanks to the financial support of the European Commission DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. We hope you enjoy reading it, and we welcome your comments and feedback.

EU update

EU web accessibility directive: fighting for our right to access web content

In January EU governments started negotiating with representatives of the European Parliament on the content of the future EU directive. The outcome of those negotiations will define whether or not blind and partially sighted people will have equal access to web content in the future so we are closely monitoring developments.

[More](#)

The proposal for a European Accessibility Act: a new, accessible Europe for blind and partially sighted people?

Back in November 2014, in our “Access denied” report, EBU gave examples of inaccessible products and services which would likely remain inaccessible without comprehensive EU legislation.

The technology and knowledge exists to remove these barriers. The fact that some ATMs, phones, computers etc, are already accessible proves that point. Most of these devices are still not accessible, however. Unless the law requires their inclusive design, mostly these products will continue to be beyond bounds for blind and partially sighted people.

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Snapshot

The first meeting of the new EBU board in Spain.

The European Blind Union (EBU) Board held the first meeting of its present mandate on 16 January in Madrid, following its election during the General Assembly held in London in last October. The main objective was to examine the Strategic plan containing key initiatives defined

by the Assembly and targeted to the 30 million blind and severely visually impaired people living in the 44 European member countries.

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Using theatrical techniques with visually impaired young people

The present article has been developed in connection with the V.I.S.I.ON project, supported by the European Commission and the Bulgarian National Agency “Human resource development center”, through the Erasmus+ programme.

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Announcements

France – Ordev, a new project.

The French Federation of the Blind is going to start its new project “ORDEV” (Open the view on visual impairment). The 18 month project is about the development of an e-learning platform, for those helping elderly visual impaired people

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National news

Austria - bicycle mechanic qualified for the 2016 Abilympics!

After his first place at the Austrian Abilympics in 2015, bicycle mechanic Rafael Wunderer qualified for the international Abilympics 2016 in France.

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Israel - Theatres

A variety of auxiliary aids have been placed in a number of theatres throughout Israel, from the north to the south, allowing the low-vision community to view theatrical events with clearer and sharper vision.

[More](#)

Poland - Training project 'An Orientation and Mobility Instructor – Safe and Independent Mobility for a Visually Impaired Person'.

In 2015, the Institute of Typhology run by the Polish Association of the Blind carried out a successful project “An Orientation and Mobility Instructor - Safe and Independent Mobility for a

Visually Impaired Person.” The aim of the project was to train sixteen orientation and mobility instructors.

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Portugal - youth employability

The four national training workshops on youth employability that took place in different regions of Portugal, resulted from the participation in a training session held in Tirrenia last summer.

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Feature

Continuing the VISAL project and beyond – a long-term success story.

Regular readers of this newsletter will be aware of the EU-funded VISAL (Visually impaired Seniors Active Learning) project designed and conducted by the European Blind Union with six partners. The aim of the project was to develop a training course specifically designed for those working with VI seniors to help them become more active and gain in self-confidence. The project officially ran from 2012 to 2014, but such was its success that it continues to have an impact today. The following article offers some examples.

Three countries (Hungary, Portugal and Italy) held VISAL courses based on those developed during the project, to enable people working in close contact with elderly VI persons to help them regain an active role in society. The report from Italy is the point of view of an elderly VISAL facilitator, offering his special insight and experience.

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