****

# EBU Members' Newsletter

## Number four, April 2020.

## OUR CAMPAIGNS

### Accessible Lifts:

EBU continues to monitor CEN standardisation work for the accessibility of lifts, in close liaison with ANEC and EDF. This month we were involved more directly than usual, likely due to recent criticism – including in our [position paper of February 2019](http://www.euroblind.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-02-28_ebu_accessibility_of_lifts.pdf) to the European Commission – that DPOs are insufficiently heard in the process of revising the standard EN 81-70.

* We participated in the preparation of the 7 April meeting (online) of the relevant working group (CEN/TC 10/WG 7).
* On 16 April, we participated in the meeting (online) of the Steering Group meeting of the relevant joint technical committee of CEN and CENELEX (CEN-CENELEC JTC 11), where the Commission and the JTC 11 Chair were presented the compromise solution found namely on contrast of signs on control devices and on braille.

Looking ahead, we have been invited to participate in a next WG7 meeting in July in London, which will focus on the concerns of visually impaired persons, where discussion will continue on other issues touch screens, communication interfaces for alarm systems, etc. These items will be discussed before a decision is taken whether they should be considered in the revision.

The problem is three-fold:

* WG 7 is treating many of the pending issues as new issues brought by the EBU position paper, whereas in fact they had already been raised by ANEC and rejected by majority;
* The composition of WG 7 is such that DPOs are always outvoted;
* The industry representatives in WG 7 (LB I would not personalise this criticism and delete and its  chair) and its chair fail to see accessibility as a legal obligation the respect of which should be checked against the requirements of the standard for accessibility of the built environment (EN 17210).

### Accessible Books:

EBU has been approached by the Federation of European Publishers to solicit our support of the approach they propose – that already undertaken by Fondazione LIA in Italy – as a role-model at EU level for ensuring the accessibility of e-books. Currently we still lack details on the FEP pilot-project to be able to support it openly, but it deserves our attention in that it appears to be mindful of participation of all stakeholders in the value chain.

On the occasion of World Book Day, EBU issued a [statement](http://www.euroblind.org/access-books-fundamental-right) highlighting the importance at this critical time, of access to books, and the importance of the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled.

## Our gratitude and best wishes to a friend who is leaving EBU

Mokrane Boussaid, EBU Executive Director since 1993, is going to retire on 30 April. For more than 27 years he has been the centre of the EBU office and secretariat in Paris. On behalf of the EBU Board and all the national leaders of EBU member organisations who know him, I would like to express to Mokrane our heartfelt thanks for his tireless engagement and strong commitment. Also for him the time for retirement has come and we all know how deserved it will be. Mokrane has worked in all these years with great intelligence, sensitivity, balance, putting at the disposal of EBU his professionalism, expertise and natural kindness. Over the years Mokrane has created a collaborative team, a well-structured office, and a well-organized working method. He has always been there for Board members and to my recalling he hasn’t missed any Board meetings. I have always appreciated his attentiveness and carefulness in delicate situations, and his respect for people. Working with him has been agreeable and enriching. I have also had the pleasure to meet his nice family and to know about his musical and sports skills. Mokrane is now starting a new phase in his life and all of us wish him to enjoy the coming years, and be active and successful in whatever he will dedicate himself to.

Rodolfo Cattani

EBU President

## A word from the staff at the Paris Office:

We exceptionally take the opportunity of this newsletter to send our best wishes to our director Mokrane Boussaïd for his retirement.

A small team is like a family and over the years we have shared many adventures and challenges, always bearing in mind our collective mission.

Working with Mokrane has been a strong human and professional experience and we particularly enjoyed his efforts to maintain good relationships within the office.

We will miss his open-minded, refined, humane and diplomatic ways and wish him, and his lovely wife Yasmina, new fulfilling adventures.

## The 21st EBU Access Cast!

Welcome to [this month's edition of the EBU Access Cast](https://ebuaccesscast.libsyn.com/ebu-access-cast-21). As always, we are bringing you some pretty exciting news in the area of assistive technology.

The current situation caused by the spread of the novel Coronavirus has impacted our lives in multiple ways, especially so in the case of people with visual impairments. It is therefore difficult to escape this subject completely. The news, however, will definitely be useful in coping with the new reality of self-isolation, social distancing and working remotely.

To cover the most frequently asked questions, the EBU has compiled a [list of resources](http://www.euroblind.org/publications-and-resources/guidelines?fbclid=IwAR2AHhehsf6WgfxeHdEs7rWdrIVeCowJybawK9Ji-0I9tiZHMbV4kR0MoHg#_covid/) where the advice from different national partners regarding mobility, everyday life, safety and help, is provided.

We also mentioned some of those general tips and tricks that will let you stay safe as well as discussed campaigns of the disability umbrella organizations started to ensure that whatever strategy is applied to combat the virus in the different European countries, their disabled citizens will be a part of it.

Next up, we mentioned accessible resources allowing us to stay informed about the situation, including an [accessible statistics tracker](https://cvstats.net/) and an [information website](https://www.google.com/covid19/) by Google.

It is also important to be sure that help is available, should you need it. [IHelpYou](https://app.ihelpyou.app/volunteer/welcome).app is one example of a service that makes it easy to find local volunteers in your area. The website is of course 100% accessible.

Just like you, we are hoping to go back to normality as soon as possible, although the world Post-Corona will not be the same as it was. Perhaps we will be able to move freely again but how do we make sure that we are safe then? An [initiative by Google and Apple](https://thehackernews.com/2020/04/iphone-android-coronavirus-tracing.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+TheHackersNews+%28The+Hackers+News+-+Cyber+Security+Blog%29&_m=3n.009a.2204.rs0ao07weh.1dpi) may provide a solution to detect the virus where it appears before it spreads too far.

Meanwhile, as a significant part of work has moved online, video conferencing has become the everyday reality of communication and zoom is one of the most used tools to facilitate that. Fortunately, it provides a really accessible and pleasant to use experience which becomes even clearer after listening to Jonathan Mosen's "[Meet Me In The Cloud](https://mosen.org/zoom/)" audiobook, now available for free.

The [PEAT](https://www.peatworks.org/futureofwork/a11y/telework) have also compiled a list of useful resources that may come in handy when arranging different aspects of working away from your office desk.

In addition to this virus-based news there are also lot of updates on the regular technology issues, so there is a lot to listen to in these confined times!

Watch this space for the next episode coming by the end of May where we'll be sure to deliver even more exciting news. Meanwhile, feel free to reach out with your thoughts and suggestions through our [Email](mailto:ebuaccesscast@euroblind.org%20) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/EBUAccessCast/).

For more on this and much more useful information, go to [the podcast page](https://ebuaccesscast.libsyn.com/ebu-access-cast-20)!

## The EBU Access Cast is looking for new contributors

Are you young and ambitious, passionate about technology, and think that you know something about assistive technology? If so, then you can perhaps become a new contributor to the EBU Access Cast podcast.

Yes, we are looking for more people from across Europe who are visually impaired and who have knowledge about today’s modern technology and accessibility. If you speak good English, and you would like to have your voice heard on our podcast, please send us a short biography about yourself, including participation in similar projects.

Our team would like to expand with new and fresh minds who are ready to help us in taking our podcast to an even more professional level. After we receive your propositions, we will contact you for a short interview.

Also, beyond the general contributors for our podcast, we are looking for a sound editor, with good experience in audio editing and postproduction. If you think that you are the right person for making our podcast sound good, send us your CV and a small reference with audio examples and we will contact you.

All enquiries should be sent to [ebuaccesscast@euroblind.org](mailto:ebuaccesscast@euroblind.org)

## COVID resources page

As many of you will be aware EBU has created a [COVID 19 resource page](http://www.euroblind.org/publications-and-resources/guidelines#_covid) on our website, to which some of you have already contributed. Thank you for these useful contributions!

We will regularly update this resource centre, so please continue to send us your stories, good practices and other practical information to feed into this page. In particular, as some countries gradually come out of the lockdown situation, this may give rise to new questions, problems and ideas, which will also be interesting to hear about.

Amongst the latest editions to the page is an [interview with our new Executive Director, Lars Bosselmann, with Allan Russell on RNIB Connect Radio](https://audioboom.com/posts/7557471-european-blind-union-supporting-sight-loss-charities), on the impact of the crisis on associations for the visually impaired.

We hope you find this page useful and we wish you continued good health and safety as we all fight with the consequences of this virus.

## New Council of Europe document

The Council of Europe has launched an updated version of its free online “[Introduction to the European Convention on Human Rights](http://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/)”, a 5-hour interactive training course aimed at legal professionals, public authorities, civil society and students.

“Europe has the strongest system of international human rights protection anywhere in the world, thanks to the European Convention on Human Rights. For the system to fulfil its potential, we need lawyers, judges, government officials, NGOs and other professionals across Europe to learn how it functions and to use that knowledge in their daily work,” said Council of Europe Secretary General Marija Pejčinović Burić.

The updated course is part of the Council of Europe’s extensive [HELP programme](http://help.elearning.ext.coe.int/) of Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals.

It contains modules on the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Court of Human Rights and – for the first time – the execution of judgments from the Strasbourg court, which is essential in helping to raise human rights standards.

An initial version of the course was developed in 2016 and is now available in 17 different languages.

It has so far been followed by over 5,700 professionals and has also been included in training curricula at judiciary schools in various countries including Spain and the Republic of Moldova.

The updated course is now available in English, with several other language versions due to be released in the coming months.

The course has been partly produced with the financial support of the European Union, as part of the EU/Council of Europe “[Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey II](https://www.coe.int/en/web/ankara/horizontal-facility-for-the-western-balkans-and-turkey)”.

The latest annual report on the execution of judgments from the European Court of Human Rights is due to be published on Wednesday 1 April.

Useful links:

* [Impact of the European Convention on Human Rights](https://www.coe.int/en/web/impact-convention-human-rights)
* [European Court of Human Rights](https://echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=home)
* [Department for the Execution of ECHR Judgments](https://www.coe.int/en/web/execution)

Directorate of Communications

[Council of Europe](https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/home)

ENDS.

**European Blind Union**

6 rue Gager Gabillot, 75015 Paris, France

+33 1 88 61 06 60 | [ebu@euroblind.org](mailto:ebu@euroblind.org) | [www.euroblind.org](http://www.euroblind.org)