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# EBU Members' Newsletter 2021

## Number three, March 2021.

## OUR CAMPAIGNS

### Creative Europe/MEDIA

In a letter of reply, the competent unit at the European Commission’s DG CNECT:

* Recognised that the media and the audiovisual sector have a considerable say in what shapes our values and perception of reality, and are a key channel for changing attitudes and challenging stereotypes;
* Confirmed that MEDIA is therefore committed to improve the access to all audiences and promote the circulation of the works of all talents;
* Stressed that audio description and subtitles costs are already eligible in the production and the distribution schemes of MEDIA, and confirmed that they will be maintained in the next MEDIA program 2021-2027. We find this insufficient by itself, because there needs to a proactive policy of promoting accessibility;
* Announced a further “huge step”: all MEDIA applicants will be asked to commit to promote diversity and inclusiveness (broadly intended, i.e. beyond disability) in their company strategies, and this horizontal criterion will be taken into account in the selection of the projects – a first in EU administration, which they expect to have a huge impact. This, if confirmed, would be a very welcome development, even if the new award criterion is not disability specific, and we would want there to be monitoring of the specific impact on persons with disabilities, possibly even on those with a visual impairment.

Regarding our recommendation to target, for a start, at least 25% of films to receive MEDIA funding, DG CNECT would like to investigate more the needs and practices of the industry, namely to verify to what extent these costs are born by the broadcasters rather than by the producers. A meeting is planned to pursue the dialogue, obtain clarification on some points and discuss how EBU can best accompany the Commission’s efforts.

### Marrakesh Treaty

We are still preparing our response to the European Commission’s public consultation, which aims to gather information whether it is necessary to extend the Marrakesh Treaty Directive provisions to non-print works and more types of disabilities in Europe.

EU Disability Rights Strategy.

On 3 March the European Commission presented the EU “Disability Rights Strategy” (as it is now called) for 2021-2030.

After a [provisional statement](http://www.euroblind.org/coming-10-years-european-commission-releases-its-disability-rights-strategy) on 4 March, in which we reacted on the main features of the Strategy, and related Twitter communication, we participated in two follow-up meetings:

* an EDF concertation workshop on 17 March, and
* a European Commission’s DG EMPL Strategic Dialogue meeting on 19 March. In this meeting we focused our intervention on the accessibility of elections, on the EU Disability Card, on Creative Europe funding, on the proposed horizontal antidiscrimination directive and on data collection and disability indicators. We also spoke to how we intended to support and participate in the implementation of the Strategy.

We are finalising a comprehensive statement on the new Strategy.

About our regret that the Strategy does say what the Commission is going to do in case the horizontal antidiscrimination directive remains blocked the Council, it is good news that, when presenting the Strategy to the Petitions Committee of the European Parliament on 23 March, Commissioner Dalli said it is looking at alternatives..

### Equality in employment

After approval the Employment and Social Affairs committee (EMPL) of the European Parliament in January, the European Parliament plenary adopted on 11 March – more than two months earlier than expected – the own initiative resolution on the implementation of the Equality in Employment Directive in light of the UNCRPD.

In outline, the text calls for:

• a revision of the Employment Equality Directive as soon as possible with a view to harmonising it with the provisions of the UNCRPD and to implement a participatory process aimed at ensuring the direct and full involvement of representative organisations of persons with disabilities

• harmonisation of the definition of disability and to ensure mutual recognition of disability status across Member States to ensure free movement for persons with disabilities and the enjoyment of their EU citizenship rights.

• the collection of EU-wide disability-related data with a human rights-based approach, including on employment and VET, disaggregated by gender, age, disability type, race/ethnic origin, sexual orientation, including persons with disabilities, who have until now been left out of the statistics.

EBU welcomed this resolution through its communication on Twitter.

### European Accessibility Act implementation

E-books: Following a formal exchange of letters between the FEP and EBU presidents, our respective national member organisations have been encouraged to liaise at national level with FEP members, in order to share expertise and know how to facilitate and ensure the greatest accessibility in publishing in line with the Act. FEP and its national members are also wanting to learn about the reading habits of blind and partially sighted people.

Payment terminals: our Austrian and German member organisations have joined our Dutch member in a taskforce to make technical recommendations for accessible payment terminals.

## The 29th episode of the EBU Access Cast is now available!.

In this episode, hosted by Pawel and co-hosted by Tanja, Mario and Hlynur, we find the time to look into the future indeed, but for most of the time we stay focused on what matters for now, of course.

In absence of new gadgets from either of the Podcast crew, Mario shares with us [the Story of how the name Bluetooth](https://today.rtl.lu/news/world/a/1681803.html) came to signify the popular data transmission protocol and it turns out to be a valuable lesson of common history and geography as well as an insight into how technological inventions receive their often unusual names.

Did we already mention that this episode is out of this world? This is not us bragging about it, rather we had a chance to discuss [the landing of the Perseverance rover on Mars](http://a11y.report/dostepnosc-dotarla-na-marsa/) which, apart from the next foray onto the red planet, brought us the first ever recordings from out of Earth, some of which we are happy to present to you in the podcast directly. In this section we also find out how far it is really from Iceland to Mars and that the European Space Agency is actually thinking of recruiting disabled astronauts in the framework of their [Parastronaut Feasibility Project](https://www.euronews.com/2021/02/16/european-space-agency-in-bid-to-recruit-more-female-and-disabled-astronauts).

For those who are hungry for more space adventure, here are [some more sounds of Mars](https://www.newsweek.com/nasa-wind-mars-sound-insight-listen-video-audio-1249864).

While space agencies of the world are busy exploring other planets, [the new Talkback has moved outside of the Galaxy](https://blog.google/products/android/all-new-talkback/) and is now available on many more phones than just the latest Samsungs. Those of us running Android share the first and not so first experiences and mourn the slow demise of some old TTS voices that cease to work on many devices due to the lack of support for the 64-bit infrastructure. What we did not mention in the show as it happened shortly after its recording is the update of the Samsung version of Talkback which brings back the integrated Braille keyboard so there is no need to put extra work to enjoy this functionality on these phones.

Fortunately, the fate of the voices we mentioned earlier has been narrowly missed by the Icelandic-speaking community who will soon be able to enjoy [new voices and other tools for the Icelandic language](http://www.almannaromur.is/). As this has been a long-term project that is finally showing some results and everything has been built from scratch, we speak of a large-scale achievement that has the potential to improve the quality of life for an entire nation. Well done Iceland!

We also discuss the new [Humanware Brailliant line of Braille Displays](https://mosenatlarge.pinecast.co/episode/2711757a/humanware-talks-about-its-new-generation-brailliant-braille-displays-and-a-review-of-the-brailliant-bi20x). Is a device that lies in between a traditional braille display and a feature-packed Braille notetaker sporting an entire operating system something that will interest the assistive technology market? We will probably see about that in due course.

Meanwhile, we will learn how to be [Handsome](https://howtobehandsome.fr/), thanks to a French fintech that claims to be the first bank dedicated to disabled customers. Their connected payment card which allows a blind user to track the entire payment process through their smartphone sounds sweet indeed but is it the final solution to the inaccessibility of payment terminals?

Finally, as the world is beginning to enjoy access to the long-awaited COVID-19 vaccine, we wonder whether blind people can partake in this access and apply for their shot independently. We share our impressions regarding the accessibility of vaccination application procedures  and, in some cases, application for a COVID-19 test.

Remember that, should you be lost about how to fill in accessibility bug reports regarding public sector websites, there are resources available that will help you out such as this [report template from Big Hack](https://bighack.org/how-to-complain-about-inaccessible-public-sector-websites/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=organic_social&utm_campaign=gds_accessibility_complaints).

Provided we will still be on this planet in six weeks’ time, we will catch up with you in the 30th episode of the show. Meanwhile, we hope you enjoy this one. Should you have any questions, remarks or content you would like to contribute, you can reach us by email at ebuaccesscast@euroblind.org or [twitter!](https://twitter.com/ebuaccesscast)

As always, you can also explore the [transcript](https://ebuaccesscast.libsyn.com/ebu-access-cast-29-transcript) of this episode.

## EBU Glossary of current terms

We have updated and revised the EBU glossary. The aim of this document is to provide all staff, members, and others working in close collaboration with EBU a list of terms, expressions and acronyms employed on a daily basis in our work. It should be remembered that these are not standard definitions, but based on the context of EBU and so are specific to our needs. I hope this will be useful to you, your feedback is also welcome. The [glossary is available](http://www.euroblind.org/sites/default/files/documents/ebu-internal-glossary-3ed.pdf) as a pdf file.

## Assistance dogs -Travelling in and out of Europe following Brexit

Following the UK’s exit from the EU at the end of 2020, the rules applying to travelling with a guide or assistance dog have changed.

These are detailed in the links below, however, always check with your vet before you plan to travel.

The new rules discriminate against persons with disabilities who wish to travel from the UK into Europe with their guide dog, as a new Animal Health Certificate (AHC) must be obtained for each and every trip out of the UK.

For most people travelling with a dog is a choice; for a person with disabilities who relies on their guide dog, this is an essential.

This means that short notice trips will be impossible to arrange, whether for business, pleasure or family matters. Each trip will incur a substantial additional cost, extra planning and time taken spent in the process involved obtaining the AHC.

This is in addition to the current discrimination often experienced when travelling with a guide dog and highlights the inequalities suffered compared with other travellers.

EGDF is engaging with MEP’s, the European Disability Forum, the European Blind Union and other Assistance Dog Organisations to campaign to create a level playing field.

Travellers to Europe or Northern Ireland from the UK with their guide or assistance dog will no longer be able to use a UK issued EU Pet Passport.

[Detailed guidance for travelling into Europe or Northern Ireland can be found here](https://www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad/travelling-to-an-eu-country-or-northern-ireland)

For those travelling from the European Union into the UK however, rules have not changed and are detailed in the link below

[Detailed Guidance for travelling into the UK from Europe or Northern Ireland can be found here](https://www.gov.uk/bring-pet-to-great-britain).

## Belgium - Brailleliga / Ligue Braille week

As from 12th April Brailleliga / Ligue Braille launches its annual campaign ‘Brailleliga / Ligue Braille week’. This year we draw the attention on the many barriers visually impaired people face in everyday life and we highlight their victories in overcoming these challenges. Daily tasks, actions and habits very often form big hurdles for someone who is visually impaired. That is why Brailleliga / Ligue Braille wants to focus on big and small everyday victories. These past 12 months, these victories were omnipresent and stood out more than ever due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We collected various testimonies from our members explaining how they overcame the many challenges encountered since they lost their vision. Find out more on <http://weekbrailleliga.be> and <http://semaineliguebraille.be>. We also want to increase awareness amongst the general public by airing a broadcast on Belgian radio and television.

## Germany -Talk like a native! - Promote your language skills.

The German Federation of the Blind and Partially Sighted (DBSV) together with VIEWS International are organising online meetings for people who want to improve their language skills.

Please spread the following information about this project among your members.

Talk like a native! - Promote your language skills Do you want to promote your language skills? Help others and yourself by organizing language tandems and chat rooms.

[DBSV](http://www.dbsv.org) together with [VIEWS International](http://www.viewsinternational.eu) are planning to realize several tandems and groups to improve your language skills.

Please [use this form to register](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd229CqBA_sxBLBFdHxnS2fY9FbbKd_I3ZljFGH6CdJQ2X7yg/viewform)

Fill in your mother tongue and the foreign language you want to practice, so that you can find partners who helps you to practice another language and whom you can support (or whom you can give support) in your language.

## The European Coalition for Vision presents two important publications for eye health

The European Coalition for Vision (ECV) alerts us to two important documents:

* the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) [Vision Atlas](https://fodo.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=41fc72c4461821af2a3d34bc7&id=827153adf6&e=c0dc9c321a) on 24 February – this compares vision loss and population data between regions - including Western, Central and Eastern Europe
* the Lancet Global Health Commission on Global Eye Health: vision beyond 2020  [The Lancet Global Health Commission onGlobal Eye Health: vision beyond 2020](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X%2820%2930488-5/fulltext) on 16 February.

Despite significant progress made by the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, the World Health Organization and others, the report clearly demonstrates the mountain still to climb in preventing and tackling visual impairment globally. This includes Europe where inequalities persist in health literacy about eyes and vision, access to eye care services and inclusion and life chances for visually impaired people.

Professor Rupert Bourne ECV member and co-author of the report said: “We estimate that 21 million people in Western and Central Europe are blind, severely or moderately vision impaired and that 77% of this burden is due to preventable causes such as uncorrected refractive error and cataract.”

Fellow ECV member and co-author, Professor Tunde Peto, stresses the needs of people with diabetic retinopathy, adding: “These alarming figures further support the World Health Assembly resolution to implement the recommendations of the WHO World Report on Vision for people-centred eye care in every country’s health system.”

David Hewlett ECV President added: “This report should give everyone in Europe renewed energy to press on and make avoidable visual impairment and exclusion of visually impaired people, part of history. The ECV’s ten-year campaign to eliminate inequalities between and within European countries supports this aim.

The ECV also commented on social media [here](https://twitter.com/ECVtweets/status/1364594892362698754?s=20).

ENDS.

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