



**International Council for Education and  
Re/habilitation of People with Visual  
Impairment**

# **Annual report 2021**

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# 1 Preface

The board is happy to offer you the Annual Report 2021 of our association. As you will read, all activities in the past year are marked by the pandemic that we are dealing with. Covid-19 has affected the activities of the regions as well as at a European level. It continues to be a difficult year with new variants of COVID-19 appearing towards the end of this year altering us to the fact that COVID-19 has not disappeared and the need to be vigilant remains. We have developed a new resource <http://www.icevi-europe.org/covid19.php> for as COVID-19 continues to have implications on people's livelihoods across the globe and especially, for people with visual impairments including those with additional disabilities this webpage with research, resources, and other practical information offers links and learning resources that may be useful for you all.

As a result of this, our tenth ICEVI-Europe Conference that was originally scheduled to take place in August in Jerusalem, Israel could not. An alternative was not feasible in the short term, especially since the World Blind Summit also took place in June. This is regrettable because we all know that "sharing information and knowledge on the field of education and re/habilitation of people with visual impairment" can be significantly promoted by meetings face to face with our colleagues and friends. We know from the other nine conferences that this shared learning, and dissemination of research and practice has had an impact on all the work we do across Europe. However, all is not lost and some great work has happened in 2021.

We would like to draw your attention to one conference under the ICEVI-Europe name that did take place and that was the 8th European Conference on Psychology and Visual Impairment 'Real life (In) dependence'. The conference was hosted online by the Primary and Lower Secondary School for the Visually Impaired and the Special Centrum for Visually Impaired Children, located in Prague. The organization team worked closely with representatives of ICEVI- Europe and cooperated with colleagues from the European Network for Psychologists and related professions working in the field of Visual Impairment (ENPVI) professional interest group. This conference was supported by the capital city of Prague and was attended by a total of 54 colleagues, of which 22 were active participants from nine European countries: Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Poland, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Both Hans and I were delighted to see the themes of the conference included, the Quality of Life and Visual Impairment, Cerebral/Cortical Visual Impairment, and of course Education. Congratulations on being able to host such an impactful online conference in such difficult situations.

It was also good to hear in 2021 that 39 participants had completed the first four Pre-Employment Programme in Denmark. This programme developed by our colleague in America Prof. Karen Wolffe (PhD) who had trained our Danish colleagues who then adapted the programme to meet the Danish labour market and culture. The P.E.P courses were offered in Jylland and Copenhagen by the Institute for Blind and Partially Sighted and *All Ears*.

The teachers' experiences, participants' evaluations and the project results all indicate that the Pre-Employment Program contains what is needed for persons with vision impairment to find employment, and enabled those people who require some

additional support to seek their Municipal Job Centre to assist them in finding a flexible position.

In addition to these excellent examples of what can be achieved under extremely difficult situations ICEVI-Europe also supported the ToMIMEUs project (<https://tomimeus.eu/project-overview/>), the **ErISFaVIA** project (<http://erisfavia.sed.uth.gr/>) and the Ambassadors of diversity project (<https://www.ambassadorsofdiversity.eu/>). How excellent it is to see that despite all, these excellent projects are still happening and continuing.

And so to the President of ICEVI-Europe news. As many of you now know Hans Welling has decided to step down so that he can have more time with his family and friends. He has tirelessly given his valuable time and resources to increasing the integrity and visibility of ICEVI-Europe across all European regions and driving it forward towards achieving its mission of promoting an inclusive society in which persons with a visual impairment achieve their desire to actively participate as full members of society. He has been for ICEVI-Europe a visionary and inspiring leader and has put great efforts into facilitating the exchange of knowledge and expertise by supporting the organization of regional and European conferences, realizing the need for a strong network of professional interest groups and encouraging the implementation of training and professional development activities. The relationships he has nurtured with our members, stakeholders, and partners will ensure ICEVI-Europe will prosper and continue to stimulate cooperation and create networks between professionals, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of life of people with visual impairment.

As the new Incoming President I am Professor John Ravenscroft, Chair of Childhood Visual Impairment, at the Moray House School of Education and Sport, University of Edinburgh. I am the Head and Director of the Scottish Sensory Centre, and I am also the Editor in Chief of the British Journal of Visual Impairment. I have been very fortunate to know and collaborate with many colleagues from ICEVI-Europe and I hope to not only reinforce our collaborations but also to get to know many more people who are dedicated to the education (in the broadest sense) and re/habilitation of children and young people with visual impairment. I have a particular interest in Cerebral Visual Impairment and research shows that CVI is the most common form of visual impairment in children in the UK and perhaps across all of Europe, therefore during my presidency, I will aim to increase knowledge of CVI and develop a new professional interest group for professionals who support and work with children and young people with CVI. This presents a good opportunity to inform you that the target audience of ICEVI-Europe is focusing to support professionals and others involved in the education and re/habilitation of children and young people with visual impairment.

I also want to focus my presidency on trying to understand what inclusion means for each and every child with visual impairment. Inclusion itself is a difficult concept to define but rather than taking an adult perspective on what inclusion means, I tend to focus on the child and young person perspective and to consider what they deem inclusion means. This approach has yielded some very interesting results, highlighting and recognising how visual impairment may impact on what the child understands as being included.

I am totally aware that I am an academic, but I would like to focus on during my presidency is the connection between theory, research and practice. I am yet to be convinced that you can have each of these areas in isolation from each other yet interweaving these three elements into our work becomes more and more difficult. This may be due to the pressures of work, time and caseloads, COVID-19, however it is important as professionals that we are aware of current theories, research and practice to ensure that children and young people with visual impairment achieve their most capable potential. As such, I will build upon Hans's excellent work on the professional interest groups and will be open to discussion on how to support such groups across Europe so that all can benefit from each other's expertise including those of children and young people themselves as well as their parents and carers.

In November 2021 our board member, Dorthe Marie Degn sitting on behalf of the Baltic and Nordic Countries region, has resigned from her board membership since IBOS' target group does not include children and only offers little specialized education. The board is indebted to Dorthe for her time and contributions since she took on the position of board member in December 2020. While initial discussions have commenced on finding a suitable candidate that can fufiill this vacancy as her successor, Dorthe still retains her role as National Representative of Denmark to ICEVI-Europe.

The board would like to thank everyone for their commitment to ICEVI-Europe (for continuing to support us by paying your fees) so that collectively we can continue to support children and young people with visual impairment.

We wish everyone a happy 2022 and hope to meet you all soon.

This Annual Report was sent to all of the National Representatives, being that they are members of the General Meeting, asking for their agreement. We have made some textual changes to the Annual Report, as per the feedback provided by the National Representatives, and it was approved by them.

We hope you will read the report with interest.

On behalf of the Board,



Hans Welling, President until September 6, 2021 & John Ravenscroft, President  
<http://www.icevi-europe.org/>

*For this year under review, certain Regional Reports that follow in Chapter 2, lack information from certain countries as normally provided by the relevant National Representatives, or are missing all together. This can be attributed as a negative consequence of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on professional service providers for people with visual impairments and the possible lack of activities in certain countries.*

## **2 Report from the board**

In the past year under review, members have been informed in the usual way about developments in the field of education and rehabilitation in Europe through the periodic newsletter and via the website.

As usual, in 2021 we published and disseminated our 3 regular issues of the ICEVI-European Newsletter for members and interested parties (non-members) and kept the website up to date, but also, our Facebook page at

<https://www.facebook.com/icevieurop/>

The board met twice virtually, in February and September respectively. Of course, the upcoming European Conference in Jerusalem was an important item on the agenda. Unfortunately, the Israeli Host Committee unexpectedly announced that it had no possibility to organize the conference in Jerusalem, Israel. The board was therefore forced to cancel the conference and to investigate what other possibilities would be available.

The possibility of organising the tenth European Conference in 2022 in Cluj, Romania was currently explored, albeit virtually. The theme of the conference was unchanged," Access to learning and learning to Access," However, at an extra ordinary board meeting held in October, and due to the rising numbers of people with COVID-19 across Europe along with increasing hospital submissions, it was decided that it would not be appropriate to advertise the conference which would also be a celebration of the 10-year Anniversary of European Conferences of ICEVI -Europe.

The board continues to look forward towards enhancing the productive collaboration with our valued partner, the European Blind Union (EBU) and exploring new opportunities with mutually beneficial outcomes, by organizing joint regional conferences or workshops/conferences for professional interest groups.

As noted earlier in July, the professional interest group On Psychology and Visual Impairment (ENPVI) successfully organized its 8th conference in Prague under the title 'Real Life (In)dependence'. This conference was virtual. The proceedings have now been published.

Unfortunately, conferences of other professional interest groups did not take place.

Almost all board members and many members participated in the World Blind Summit and the General Assembly of ICEVI-World in June of the year. The World Blindness Summit Madrid 2021 was a global meeting, with Madrid as the virtual epicentre. It was organised by the ONCE Social Group and included the General Assembly of the WBU (World Blind Union) and of the ICEVI (International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment). The conference was a cutting-edge, disruptive and innovative event that embraced the benefits of technologies, creating the first global and accessible online conference aimed at addressing the significant challenges faced by blind and low vision people resulting from the severe crisis that has arisen from the COVID 19 pandemic. Over 3,500 blind and severely visually impaired people from nearly 190 countries over the world participated in the World Blindness Summit Madrid 2021 to share their experiences and practices developed over the past five years. The time available for ICEVI-Europe during this conference was meaningfully spent on two presentations given;

Andrea Hathazi from Romania, board member & Vice-President of ICEVI-Europe spoke about "Teacher training in the field of visual impairment. Opportunities and challenges".

John Ravenscroft ICEVI- Europe National Representative from Scotland, now President of ICEVI-Europe had as a theme "Cerebral Visual Impairment and Education, Three Tiers of Assessment."

In both board meetings in 2021, the presidency was discussed. The incumbent president announced that he wanted to end his position in 2021, which was the regular period.

Potential candidates were approached by the board. John Ravenscroft, Chair of Childhood Visual Impairment University of Edinburgh was prepared to take over this position.

At the September board meeting, the board appointed John as Interim President pending formal appointment at the next General Assembly of ICEVI-Europe, which date is not yet known. The members were informed about this and the website has been amended to reflect this change.

We encourage you to make frequent visits to the homepage of ICEVI-Europe, <http://www.icevi-europe.org/>, as it is regularly updated with latest developments and announcements regarding new dates for ICEVI-Europe conferences and events, as this information becomes known to us. These events present a great opportunity to meet and network with professionals across Europe in order stimulate cooperation with the goal of improving the quality of services to children and young people with visual impairments.

### 3 ICEVI-Europe activities in 2021



#### Report from the Baltic and Nordic countries by Dorthe Marie Degn

**Region: Nordic-Baltic region**

**Period: 2021**

Area of Reference	Description
How were practices and/or services regarding the education and rehabilitation of people with visual impairments affected as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic?	<p><b>Finland:</b> Despite Covid schools in Finland were not closed in 2021. The Valteri Centre for Learning and Consulting offered support for learning and school attendance to pupils, their families and staff working closely with them. We were able to take counselling visits, organize the group support periods and offer in-service training for the teaching staff almost normally. Only couple of the group support period weeks were cancelled in spring 2021 and some counselling visits were postponed.</p> <p><b>Estonia:</b> In Estonia, the COVID has influenced both education and rehabilitation. In 2021, some mainstream schools and classes have been periodically on distant learning but not special schools. Our special school for visually impaired students has provided contact learning for visually impaired (VI) children during the whole school year. However, there have been less opportunities for extra-curriculum activities for children and no workshops, conferences etc. for teachers. At Tartu Emajõe School (the Estonian State School for Visually Impaired), the activities have been focused on teaching their students, counselling VI students at mainstream schools, and providing Braille and digital study material for all visually impaired students. Tallinn Helen's School and the Support Center of the Deafblind have been focused on teaching MDVI.</p> <p><b>Latvia:</b> Special school open all the time, mainstream distance learning for two weeks, lock down during evenings. Difficult to support WhatsApp groups. Send materials and then meetings online. 3 teacher training courses this year, two of them physical and one had to transferred to online. VIP materials are not known to all mainstream schools, most learn about it, when they are at the special school. We are overwhelmed with covid. It takes focus away from the educational processes and our own initiatives.</p> <p><b>Sweden:</b> Starting to make assessments this autumn. Courses are changed to digital – more teachers participated, but fewer have fulfilled the courses. Digital courses for 10-18 yrs. and their parents. The Resource Center has moved to Lindhagensgatan with two other resource centers.</p> <p><b>Iceland:</b> Very similar to Sweden', looking more into Braille and digital distance teaching.</p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p><b>Denmark:</b> A lot of consulting, study counselling, short courses and meetings continued to be carried out online to limit the spread of virus during last winter and spring 2021. A lot of respect should also be given for all the teachers and pedagogues in mainstream having to handle changing restrictions, local school lock downs, inventing new methods, making distance teaching and outdoor activities work during Covid. The evaluations are very mixed since some children and adults have profited from a slower pace and more time spent with the closest relations, and others have suffered from insufficient and distanced support and loneliness.</p> <p>From the spring lock down till now, the Danish society has been open and back to pre-covid normal, thanks to 82% vaccinated Dec. 2021. At IBOS a physical study visit from Poland and a PD-education in ADL has been conducted. From late Oct. Covid infection numbers rose and gradually protective measures are reintroduced. Lately a valid Covid pass became mandatory for employees.</p>
Regional and Sub-regional committee meetings conducted, if any	<p>Two Subregional Baltic – Nordic online meetings were conducted 1<sup>st</sup> of March and 2<sup>nd</sup> of Nov.2021.</p> <p>IBOS has after many years decided to withdraw from the Board, since we cannot offer the preferred expertise from service of children and schools. A new representative for the Board did not turn up for the already once postponed and announced online election meeting Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>, which leaves the subregion without representation. IBOS will continue to serve as country repr. for Denmark.</p>
Seminars, workshops, capacity building programmes, if any conducted during the reporting period	<p><b>Finland:</b> Our consulting teacher, member of Finnish Braille delegation has participated in Nordic Braille Authorities meeting in Zoom 28.-29.10.2021.</p> <p><b>Sweden:</b> New films have been made on JAWS, Textview and Abacus. Pilot project for students about what kind of courses can be made digitally.</p> <p><b>Latvia:</b> New webpage developed for parents about where to get help and what to do.</p> <p><b>Denmark:</b> Employment project P.E.P. (2017-2021) showed good results. The internationally acknowledged Pre-Employment Programme, developed for job seeking visually impaired persons by career counselor and Ph.d. Karen Wolffe, USA, has been translated and tested during four courses with citizens. Teachers were trained by Wolffe to become familiar with the coherencies of the programme elements. Gradually the programme was transformed to fit the Danish labour market and culture, resulting in a Danish version called P.E.P. The courses were offered in Jylland and Copenhagen by the Institute for the Blind and Partially Sighted (IBOS) and partner the socio economic company All Ears. The success target was 30% of 40 participants getting a job, but during the project period 65% got a job and one year after participation 56% were still in employment.</p> <p>A Covid related extension of the project, that has been supported by the Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment (STAR), has given IBOS an opportunity to perform an extra online trial, 2021 not counted in the results above. As participants could stay at home, costs were reduced and more could participate from all over the country. The</p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p>experience with the online version is good, but results are still not available, since participants are interviewed and offered support till one year after participation. IBOS would like to continue offering the online version, hopefully under more normal societal circumstances, than job seeking during Covid offers.</p> <p><b>Participants</b>  In total 39 participants completed the first four P.E.P. courses. They largely consisted of two main groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students in final year or recently educated younger persons with little or no job experience, but comfortable with compensating techniques and used to perform with their vision impairment</li> <li>2. Adult persons, who relatively recent had lost their vision and still were learning how to cope with this but had former labour market experience to offer.</li> </ol> <p>This mix of participants became valuable, as experiences were shared, and network relations were built.</p> <p><b>The content of P.E.P.</b>  The Pre-Employment Programme/P.E.P. consists of 15-day modules, preparing job seeking persons with a visual impairment to seek and get a job. Through analysis of the participants' competences, their values and work-related personality, research on desired job opportunities and content, cv and training how to apply online became focused, so participants could develop their portfolios. Rehearsing job interviews with and getting feedback from real employers, teachers and peers, e.g. on how to talk about their vision impairment, builds self-efficacy. The programme advocates an empowering spirit and a job like setting with participants being treated as colleagues.</p> <p><b>Evaluation</b>  The teacher's experiences, participant's evaluations and the project results show, that the Pre-Employment Program contains, what's needed for persons with a vision impairment to find a job on ordinary terms for themselves or make those with a reduced capability able to get their Municipal Job Center to assist them in finding a flexible job. An average of three out of four participants finds the course excellent and just what they need to find a job. The rest evaluate it as good.</p> <p>The P.E.P. results show a contrast, P.E.P coordinator and labour market consultant Lise Plagborg, IBOS, states: "Our results shows, that group oriented rehabilitation and the investment in time, economy and effort is efficient in order to bring the target group into employment. But that is contrasted by a reality, where the public employment policy target is about saving time, short sighted economy and reducing rehabilitation offers."</p> <p><b>Transfer of knowledge</b>  Because of the good results the Association for young persons with a handicap (SUHM), assisted by IBOS' transfer of knowledge, are now trying to expand the program methods to other target groups as well in cooperation with local municipalities in project "Ban Vejen" (appr. translates to pave the way) (2020 – 2024).</p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p><b>Facts</b>  In Denmark, numbers from The Danish Center for Social Science Research (VIVE) (2020) shows that only 36,8 % of persons with a handicap are in job.  Incitas analysis (2019) of Danish employers' attitude towards applicants with a handicap shows, that 9 out of 10 would not hire a blind person.</p> <p><b>Other projects</b>  Several IBOS projects involving citizens suffered a postponement because of covid and were resumed during the year. E.g., Project Blind Tech with the Copenhagen University, that via video-ethnography studies how Artificial Intelligence products, such as Google Home, are used by persons with a visual impairment. The aim is to develop instruction materials and guides for professional assistance.</p> <p>Currently IBOS also participate in three EU-projects: TOPON on setting up and implementing an O&amp;M education for instructors with the Polish State and local partners, VR4VIP on the implications for VIP VET-students, when using Virtual Reality, VR in education and 3D-VIP on teaching VIP students and instructors to print in 3D.</p> <p><b>Iceland:</b> „Just imagine“  The National Institute for the blind, visually impaired and deafblind in Iceland is currently working on a project called „Just imagine“ with a child culture designer and illustrator, Ninna Þórarinsdóttir. The goal of the project is to give blind children access to fun and interesting tactile books. We find it extremely important that all children are given the opportunity to have access to books they can read and enjoy using all their senses. By experiencing the world through tactile books they can learn and understand pictures, forms, texture and are introduced to Braille from a young age. The project will be finished in the spring 2022 with four books for our Icelandic children. We hope that we can show our products at the Nordic Congress in low vision in September 2022.</p> 

Area of Reference	Description
	 <p><b>V I V A</b></p> <p>     The National Institute for the blind, visually impaired and deafblind in Iceland has been part of an Erasmus plus project for the last years called V.I.V.A. (Visually impaired youth with vested autonomy-social inclusion via social entrepreneurship) with five other countries. The V.I.V.A. training programme combined and adapted three concepts: development of leadership skills, development of intercultural skills and development of social entrepreneurial skills, aided by an excellent example of an innovative social entrepreneurial practice and a team-building practice. The target group of V.I.V.A. included visually impaired young people aged between 18 and 30 who had the opportunity to improve their self-knowledge and awareness, improve their confidence and motivation for personal growth, achieve better understanding of available resources and identify opportunities for professional development with accompanying practical skills. You can find all the information on the project website <a href="https://www.viva-erasmusplus.eu/">https://www.viva-erasmusplus.eu/</a> as well as the Social entrepreneur training program in seven languages <a href="https://www.viva-erasmusplus.eu/intellectual-output-setp">https://www.viva-erasmusplus.eu/intellectual-output-setp</a>. The project formally ended in august 2021 but it is our sincere hope to continue working with the   </p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p>V.I.V.A. aspiration in the future and we have already taken steps in that direction.</p> <p>The National Institute for the blind, visually impaired and deafblind in Iceland has started the implementation of the Positive Looking program in the work with children, parents and other service providers. The whole staff of the Institute participated in a four-day inspiring course provided by Gwyneth McCormack the head of Positive eye. The Positive Looking program gives a good overview of the visual skills and means to communicate it in a comprehensive and fun way to parents and service providers. It also gives the professionals accessible tools to make assessment and to train the different visual skills and making goal work easier. We love the idea of toolkits to give to parents at the same time educate in visual skills and how every aspect of visual skills is important for activities of daily living. We look forward working with Positive Looking.</p> <p><b>NASEN AWARD WINNER 2017</b>  <b>Positive Looking - developing visual skills programme</b>  <i>Inspirational Publication for making a real difference to children with SEND</i></p> 
Collaborative activities and meetings with world bodies such as WBU, IAPB, UN, World Bank, and other organizations at the regional level	<p><b>Estonia:</b> On 10 March 2021, a virtual session on reviewing the Estonian report on implementing of the UN CRDP was held by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Estonia ratified the Convention in 2012, the Estonian report on CRPD was submitted to UN in 2015 and the amendments at the end of 2019. The alternative shadow report was submitted in 2019 and the amendments in the beginning of 2021 by the Estonian Council of Disabled People. The representatives of disabled people took part in the virtual session.</p> <p>The shadow report focused on the limitations of the implementation of the Convention, based on the practical reality in the lives of people with disabilities in Estonia. The main problems were described concerning the accessibility of public spaces and the web environment; uneven and insufficient availability of social services; changes in assessment practice of disability; difficulties in inclusive education; insufficient availability and quality of special care services.</p> <p>The English version of the Estonian shadow report can be found here:  <a href="https://epikoda.ee/media/pages/mida-me-teeme/trukised/b5a3d73d70-1608111331/un-shadow-report-2018.pdf">https://epikoda.ee/media/pages/mida-me-teeme/trukised/b5a3d73d70-1608111331/un-shadow-report-2018.pdf</a></p>
Forthcoming events from the region for the next six months	Currently the interest for thematic meetings for Baltic-Nordic vip professionals in 2022 is examined and a new meeting scheduled in Jan. 2022.
Any other information such as research, best practices, etc., from the region	<b>Finland:</b> We have made known LegoBrailleBricks in kindergartens and schools.

Area of Reference	Description
	<p><b>Estonia:</b> The Estonian Blind Union (EPL), the umbrella organisation of NGOs of/for visually impaired in Estonia, has been working on several projects: two projects for young visually impaired people, one of them is focused on independent living skills and the other on advocacy skills; and a project on creating video training materials on using smart phones by visually impaired people.</p> <p>The celebration of the Estonian Blind Union (EPL) 100th anniversary, took place on October 19, 2021 as part of the White Cane Day Thanksgiving Event. On that day, a special stamp and an envelope were introduced dedicated to the Estonian Blind Union 100th anniversary. The stamp (EPL 100) has a value of € 0.90 embossed in Braille.</p> <p>In 2021, two organisations were awarded by EPL: The Estonian Maritime Museum for making their permanent exhibition accessible for visually impaired and a company Itella Smartpost for their accessible parcel machines.</p> <p><b>Norway:</b> Statped sent a resignation to ICEVI, so Mrs. Tonje Lundervold is no longer Norway's representative.</p>

This report is submitted by Dorthe Marie Degn, repr. for the Baltic-Nordic countries till Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021  
Date 17.12.2021



## Report from the English speaking countries by Steve McCall

**Region: English speaking countries**

**Period: 2021**

Area of Reference	Description
Regional and subregional activities	<p><b>UK</b></p> <p>The effect of Covid on education in the UK continues to be felt across the sector in spite of the high rates of vaccination throughout the UK. The emergence of new more transmissible strains of the virus has meant continuous testing and restrictions in schools and Colleges with increased demands on teachers and students alike.</p> <p>Even in December 2021 Schools and Colleges are planning for possible home teaching and school closures in the new year as cases of the Omicron variant continue to surge. In spite of this there are many positive stories from around the region to report for this year.</p> <p><b>England</b></p> <p>In teacher training, the Birmingham University mandatory programme for teachers of the visually impaired was able to hold a residential weekend for its distance learning programme in September 2021. This was the first time students had been able to meet their colleagues face to face since the start of the pandemic. Over 100 teachers took part on the event which focused on developing those practical skills such as mobility and independence training which are difficult to do online. The students enjoyed opportunities to work together in groups and to share ideas and learn from each other's experiences. Contributors included Dr Steve McCall, the ICEVI Europe Board member.</p> <p>In spite of the pandemic VIEW, the association of the Visual impairment workforce was able to hold a successful online conference. Presentations included <i>Mental health and children and young people with vision impairment and their families in the current pandemic</i> by Claire Jackson, a Clinical Psychologist, Children's Services, Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge and <i>Prevalence of CVI in children</i> by Cathy Williams – Associate Professor (Reader) in Pediatric Ophthalmology, Bristol Medical School.</p> <p>Queen Alexandra College, a specialist College in Birmingham for students with visual impairment and /or other disabilities was able to return to face to face teaching and has expanded its student numbers to around 350 as demand for places increase.</p> <p><b>Scotland</b></p> <p>Professor John Ravenscroft, the former ICEVI Scotland representative was appointed as the new President elect of ICEVI Europe. John holds</p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p>the Chair of Childhood Visual Impairment, at the Moray House School of Education and Sport, University of Edinburgh. He is also Head and Director of the Scottish Sensory Centre, and the Editor in Chief of the British Journal of Visual Impairment. John succeeds Hans Welling who will continue on the ICEVI Europe board as past president.</p> <p><b>Ireland</b></p> <p>The 13th International Low Vision Conference by the International Society for Low Vision Research and Rehabilitation originally set to take place in Dublin 2020 and rescheduled to 2021 has again been postponed to 2022 due to the ongoing Covid crisis. <i>VISION 2022-Imagining the impossible</i> will now take place 5 - 8 July 2022 at the Convention Centre in Dublin, The Conference will be Hosted by VISPA (Vision Impaired Service Provider's Alliance). VISPA's Organisation members are: NCBI, ChildVision, Irish Guide Dogs, Fighting Blindness. For further information about the Conference and registration details go to: <a href="#">Vision 2022 Dublin Homepage - Vision2022 Dublin</a></p> <p><b>Israel</b></p> <p>Plans to hold the Tenth ICEVI European Conference in Israel were initially postponed then reluctantly cancelled as a direct result of the uncertainty and disruption caused by the Covid pandemic. A great deal of hard work had been undertaken by the host committee in planning and organising the conference but after consultation with the ICEVI board it was decided that it was not feasible to go ahead with the plans to hold the conference in Jerusalem. The President of ICEVI Europe thanked the host committee for all their support and hard work over the past years of planning. Plans for an alternative online version of the event can be found in the December ICEVI newsletter.</p> <p><b>Wales</b></p> <p>In summer 2021, RNIB, VIEW and NatSIP shared their open letters for schools and colleges on coronavirus and education support for children with vision impairment. As before, these set out some specific issues for schools and colleges to consider on meeting the needs of children with vision impairment. This included an open letter to schools in Wales available in both English and Welsh.  <a href="https://viewweb.org.uk/back-to-school-guidance/">https://viewweb.org.uk/back-to-school-guidance/</a></p> <p>A website containing key information for teachers of the visually impaired and other professionals and parents has been established by Sarah Hughes Head of the Vision Impairment Service for South East Wales and Chair of Welsh Association of Vision Impairment Educators (WAVIE),  <a href="https://sites.google.com/view/qtvisarah/home?authuser=0">https://sites.google.com/view/qtvisarah/home?authuser=0</a></p>
Global campaign activities, if any	<p>The UK took an active part on the ICEVI world online conference which took place online in June this year and was hosted by ONCE in Madrid. ICEVI Europe was represented through an excellent seminar by Professor John Ravenscroft from the University of Edinburgh and by Andrea Hathazi from University of Cluj in Romania. John's presentation on cortical visual impairment featured the latest developments on our</p>

Area of Reference	Description
Seminars, workshops, capacity building programmes, if any conducted during the reporting period	<p>understanding of CVI and their implications for practice and complemented the assured presentation on teacher training given by Andrea.</p> <p><b>The UK Specialist VI Curriculum Framework (SVICF)</b>  This is a project to create a UK wide unified framework for Children and Young People with a Vision Impairment (CYPVI).</p> <p>Project members include the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), The professional association of the Vision Impairment Education Workforce (VIEW), The Vision Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research (VICTAR) at University of Birmingham, and the Thomas Pocklington Trust. It aims to establish a UK wide specialist VI framework for children and young people with vision impairment (VI).</p> <p>The new framework will clarify and define the elements of specialist skill development, interventions and best practice support that are essential for children and young people with vision impairment. The 2-year project, funded by RNIB, is now entering the final stage of the consultation with key organisations across the UK to confirm and finalise the key outcome areas, draw together case studies as well as finalise the name of the framework itself.</p> <p>The VI Curriculum Framework will be accompanied by the development of an online resource hub to support the sharing of professional resources used by Qualified Teachers of children with Vision Impairment (QTVIs) and Habilitation Specialists across the sector. For further information, visit:</p> <p><a href="#"><u>NatSIP - UK Specialist VI Curriculum Framework Project - Update: October 2021</u></a></p> <p><b>Training materials in CVI</b>  The Scottish Sensory Centre has created a high-quality package of learning materials which will enhance the knowledge and understanding of staff supporting children and young people with Cerebral Visual Impairment (CVI). This package can be used for remote delivery of in-service training. It is recommended that the package is used for a full day of training.</p> <p>Topics covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Complexity Framework</li> <li>• Supporting Children with CVI in Mainstream</li> <li>• Supporting Children with CVI and Complex ASN.</li> </ul> <p>The package consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downloadable material:</li> <li>• Training Booklet which contains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Case Studies &amp; Tasks</li> <li>◦ Handouts</li> <li>◦ Follow-up discussion points</li> <li>◦ Evaluation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Area of Reference	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 recorded lectures (available to access for maximum of six months):   <a href="http://Cerebral%20Visual%20Impairment%3A%20Career-Long%20Professional%20Learning%20(CLPL)%20(ed.ac.uk)"><u>Cerebral Visual Impairment: Career-Long Professional Learning (CLPL) (ed.ac.uk)</u></a> </li> </ul>
Collaborative activities and meetings with world bodies such as WBU, IAPB, UN, World Bank, and other organizations at the regional level	N/A
ICEVI collaborative work with national governments within the region	N/A
Awards, Recognition, etc., to ICEVI members from the region	<p><b>Global Teacher Prize</b>  David Swanston from St Vincent's School for children with vision impairment in Liverpool, was a top ten finalist in the Global Teacher Prize (Varkey Foundation) <a href="http://David.Swanston%20(globalteacherprize.org)"><u>David Swanston (globalteacherprize.org)</u></a>. David has been helping children with visual impairments for over a decade, providing them with the necessary skills and tools to navigate a whole range of sports. Further information about David's achievements can be found in the ICEVI December Newsletter.</p> <p><b>The Scottish Sensory Centre</b>  The SSC celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. The Centre is funded by the Scottish Government and conducts education research and training in deaf and visual impairment education.</p>
Publications from the Region, that may be of interest to the viewers of ICEVI website	<p><b>New Books</b>  Among new books that have been published in the UK this year is <i>Children with Vision Impairment: Assessment, Development, and Management</i> by Naomi Dale, Alison Salt, Jenefer Sargent, and Rebecca Greenaway.</p> <p>The book provides practical guidance for practitioners who are involved in the care and management of children with long-term vision impairment and disability. The book is divided into four sections following the ICF-CY model: (1) eye disorders, vision and brain, (2) child development and learning from birth to older childhood, (3) habilitation, orientation, reading and assistive technologies and (4) social relationships and participation in everyday contexts. The publication is available as a hard copy book, an EBook and individual chapters can be purchased separately.</p> <p>A webinar about the book can be found here:</p> <p><a href="https://www.mackeith.co.uk/blog/book/children-with-vision-impairment-assessment-development-and-management/"><u>https://www.mackeith.co.uk/blog/book/children-with-vision-impairment-assessment-development-and-management/</u></a></p> <p>Also published this year is a book on teaching independence skills to children with vision impairment and their families.</p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p><i>Supporting Life Skills for Young Children with Vision Impairment and Other Disabilities: An Early Years Habilitation Handbook</i> by Fiona Broadley.</p> <p>Fiona Broadley is an experienced teacher of independence and mobility skills to children and young people. Fiona addresses the main problem areas in developing independence skills for babies and young visually impaired children and their families, by providing simple explanations of skills and offering strategies and techniques to support progression onto the next stage. For more information, go to:</p> <p><a href="https://www.routledge.com/Supporting-Life-Skills-for-Young-Children-with-Vision-Impairment-and-Other/Broadley/p/book/9780367435783">https://www.routledge.com/Supporting-Life-Skills-for-Young-Children-with-Vision-Impairment-and-Other/Broadley/p/book/9780367435783</a></p> <p><b>Other Useful Publications</b></p> <p>Online resources currently freely available from VICTAR (Vision Impairment Centre for Teaching and Research) University of Birmingham UK and the RNIB@Include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Improving access to work experiences for young people with a vision impairment</a>. A resource to help local authorities supporting their students in undertaking work placements</li> <li>• Online <a href="#">resources</a> and <a href="#">guidance</a> for young people with vision impairment going to university which draws upon research evidence from the Longitudinal Transitions Study.</li> </ul>
Any other information such as research, best practices, etc., from the region	<p><b>Scottish Sensory Centre</b></p> <p>Professor John Ravenscroft from the Scottish Sensory Centre, University of Edinburgh has been in conversation with leading researchers, academics, teachers and parents about childhood cerebral visual impairment.</p> <p>These “Conversations about CVI” discuss the nature of cerebral visual impairment, assessments, cerebral visual impairment and autism, neuroplasticity, and current and future research. These conversations can be seen either on Prof Ravenscroft’s academic link at “RavenscroftReviews”</p> <p><a href="https://media.ed.ac.uk/channel/Ravenscroft%20Reviews/160793481">https://media.ed.ac.uk/channel/Ravenscroft%20Reviews/160793481</a></p> <p>Or on his YouTube channel</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMyYdNTKCiFxV8Etgahgv4Q?view_as=subscriber">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMyYdNTKCiFxV8Etgahgv4Q?view_as=subscriber</a>.</p> <p>Other webinars produced by the SSC in 2021 include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">SSC Webinar: Introduction to the Braille Sense 6</a> with Sight &amp; Sound Technology, Nov 2021 </li> <li>• <a href="#">SSC Webinar: Introduction to the Desmos Graphing Calculator</a>, May 2021 </li> <li>• <a href="#">SSC Webinar: New Year, New Versions, New Features</a> with Sight &amp; Sound Technology, Jan 2021 </li> </ul> <p>VICTAR</p>

<b>Area of Reference</b>	<b>Description</b>
	The final report from an important longitudinal study begun in 2009 was published this year. The study investigated the experiences of young people with vision impairment as they make the transition from school to adulthood. See here for further details: <a href="http://Lost in Transition? (birmingham.ac.uk)"><u>Lost in Transition? (birmingham.ac.uk)</u></a>

This report is submitted by Steve McCall  
Date December 2021



## Report from French speaking countries by Nathalie Lewi-Dumont

**Region: French speaking countries (Belgium, France, Switzerland)**

**Period: 2021**

Area of Reference	Description
How were practices and/or services regarding the education and rehabilitation of people with visual impairments affected as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic?	<p>As everywhere, our countries and schools were affected by the pandemics: masks in schools and classes, reduction of inside physical activities, constant changing rules (closing classes or school if a case is detected, testing children, etc.). In Belgium, school closed one week before regular Christmas vacation, due to the aggravation of the Covid cases.</p> <p>As far as students with disabilities are concerned, inclusive settings have had problems in France: in case of partial inclusion in a regular school (from a resource room), since the rule was that students from different classes could not be mixed, depending on the decision of local authorities, some students with disabilities were prevented to attend their inclusive class and had to stay in the same setting. Covid crisis had consequences, like for all children, on academic achievement and progress, social interactions. In France, however, schools did not close in 2021 (except in case of cluster in a school). In case of students with a health condition (tumor, excessive weight, diabetes...) in addition to his/her visual impairment which could be the cause of damage, some students had to be very careful at school.</p>
Regional and Sub-regional committee meetings conducted, if any	France: May 10-11th Visual impairment and inclusive education: What's new? Suresnes <a href="http://www.icevi-europe.org/inclusion-integration.php">http://www.icevi-europe.org/inclusion-integration.php</a>

Area of Reference	Description
Seminars, workshops, capacity building programmes, if any conducted during the reporting period	<p><b>Belgium:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- March: creation of “La bulle solidaire” to help isolated people with VI due to Covid 19: <a href="https://www.braille.be/fr/a-propos-de-nous/actualites/2021/08/brailletech-2021">https://www.braille.be/fr/a-propos-de-nous/actualites/2021/08/brailletech-2021</a></li> <li>- March: all the schools and services for children with VI can ask for Lego Braille Bricks. The Ligue Braille organization is responsible for the free distribution of the boxes. <a href="https://www.braille.be/fr/documentation/lego-braille-bricks">https://www.braille.be/fr/documentation/lego-braille-bricks</a></li> <li>- October 8-14th: sensibilisation campaign on visual impairment <a href="https://eqla.be/campagnes-et-actions/ca-nous-regarde/">https://eqla.be/campagnes-et-actions/ca-nous-regarde/</a></li> <li>- October 14-20: BrailleTech 2021 <a href="https://www.braille.be/fr/a-propos-de-nous/actualites/2021/08/brailletech-2021">https://www.braille.be/fr/a-propos-de-nous/actualites/2021/08/brailletech-2021</a></li> <li>- October 16th: symposium on new technology and visual impairment <a href="https://www.amisdesaveugles.org/doc-doc_id-1291-lq-1-page-1-rub_id-104-site-1.html">https://www.amisdesaveugles.org/doc-doc_id-1291-lq-1-page-1-rub_id-104-site-1.html</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Switzerland:</b> May, 20th: Symposium Neuro-Pedagogy Lausanne. <a href="https://events.ophtalmique.ch/evenement/symposium-neuropedagogy-of-vision-and-beyond-from-perception-to-cognition/">https://events.ophtalmique.ch/evenement/symposium-neuropedagogy-of-vision-and-beyond-from-perception-to-cognition/</a></p> <p><b>France :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jan 21st : National meeting on accessible books. Lyon. <a href="https://www.braillenet.org/rencontres-nationales-livre-numerique-accessible-2021-auront-lieu-21-janvier/">https://www.braillenet.org/rencontres-nationales-livre-numerique-accessible-2021-auront-lieu-21-janvier/</a></li> <li>- May 10-11: Visual impairment and inclusive education: What's new? Suresnes <a href="http://www.icevi-europe.org/inclusion-integration.php">http://www.icevi-europe.org/inclusion-integration.php</a></li> <li>- May 12th : Training on Lego braille bricks use. INSHEA. Suresnes</li> <li>- October 7 to 9 : Journées d’Étude ALFPHV (Nantes): Genetics and Visual Impairment</li> <li>- November 17 and Décember 8 (online) : GPEAA Days : « The body of the child with VI and his learning »</li> <li>- December 2 et 4 : Ariba Congress in Strasbourg : « Children visual impairment and genetic diseases »</li> <li>- <b>December 3<sup>rd</sup>: Meeting about theater and Visual impairment in the Odéon national Theater (Paris)</b></li> <li>- Décember 6 and 7<sup>th</sup>: “Technology and visual impairment” FAF (online)</li> </ul>
	September, 30 <sup>th</sup> : Nathalie Lewi Dumont received the Legion of honor medal from Susie Morgenstern, a Franco American writer for young people. ICEVI Europe has been cited during the speeches.
Human interest stories from the region as a result of ICEVI initiatives	<p><b>France:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Podcasts and resources from the National parents' association of blind children: <a href="https://anpea.asso.fr/a-l-aventure-des-mots/">https://anpea.asso.fr/a-l-aventure-des-mots/</a> <a href="https://podcast.ausha.co/1-noemie-nauleau/7-jade-et-rachida-teraouimere-et-fille-pour-un-developpement-harmonieux-de-l-enfant-aveugle">https://podcast.ausha.co/1-noemie-nauleau/7-jade-et-rachida-teraouimere-et-fille-pour-un-developpement-harmonieux-de-l-enfant-aveugle</a></li> <li>- February: Beginning of the Homer research, a large scale national study on all the aspects of life of children and adults with visual impairment <a href="https://etude-homere.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Communique-de-presse-etude-Homere-11_02_2021-1.pdf">https://etude-homere.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Communique-de-presse-etude-Homere-11_02_2021-1.pdf</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Switzerland:</b></p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p>Cevpol Project: A research on visual functioning in people with profound and multiple disabilities (Fribourg, Pr Petitpierre):  <a href="https://polyhandicap.ch/recherche-2/">https://polyhandicap.ch/recherche-2/</a></p>
<p>Publications from the Region, that may be of interest to the viewers of ICEVI website</p>	<p><b>France:</b>  September: a study on the impact of Covid on people with VI  <a href="https://aveuglesdefrance.org/wwp-actu/covid-19-publication-dune-etude-dimpact-et-de-5-pistes-daction/">https://aveuglesdefrance.org/wwp-actu/covid-19-publication-dune-etude-dimpact-et-de-5-pistes-daction/</a>  December: Report: <i>Reading and writing practices among French braille users of various generations.</i>  <a href="https://www.inshea.fr/fr/content/les-pratiques-de-lecture-et-d'écriture-chez-des-personnes-braillasses-de-differentes">https://www.inshea.fr/fr/content/les-pratiques-de-lecture-et-d'écriture-chez-des-personnes-braillasses-de-differentes</a></p> <p><b>Switzerland:</b>  - Caron, V., Diacquenod, C., Melloul, V., Ruffieux, N. (2021). Évolution des comportements sociaux d'enfants d'âge préscolaire avec déficience visuelle: un projet pilote au jardin d'enfants inclusif du Centre pédagogique pour élèves handicapés de la vue (CPHV). <i>Revue suisse de pédagogie spécialisée</i>, 1(2021).  - Videos on professional access from the Lausanne institute:  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/c/ophtalmiquelausanne/videos">https://www.youtube.com/c/ophtalmiquelausanne/videos</a></p>
<p>Forthcoming events from the region for the next six months</p>	<p>- French speaking day: June 10th, Visual impairment and inclusive education: access to culture. Suresnes  <b>23, 24 et 26 Mars 2022 - Institut des jeunes sourds, Bourg-la-Reine (92).</b> Days for orientation and mobility instructors: “Adaptations, adapt: why? when? How?”</p> <p>-</p>
<p>Any other information such as research, best practices, etc., from the region</p>	<p><b>Belgium:</b>  27-09-2021 New rules for accessibility of TV programs:  <a href="https://www.csa.be/document/accessibilite-des-programmes-le-secteur-fait-un-pas-de-geant/">https://www.csa.be/document/accessibilite-des-programmes-le-secteur-fait-un-pas-de-geant/</a></p> <p><b>France:</b> Opening of the first large print bookshop in Paris (Latin Quarter)  <a href="https://actualite.com/article/97872/librairie/paris-ouverture-de-la-premiere-librairie-en-grands-caracteres">https://actualite.com/article/97872/librairie/paris-ouverture-de-la-premiere-librairie-en-grands-caracteres</a> (can be ordered online too) and Creation of a new publisher focused on books for partially sighted people (adults and children): <a href="https://grandscaracteresjeunesse.fr">https://grandscaracteresjeunesse.fr</a></p>

This report is submitted by Nathalie Lewi-Dumont  
Date: February 26th



## Report from the South European countries by Ana Isabel Ruiz López

**Region: Southern European Countries**

**Period: 2021**

Area of Reference	Description
How were practices and/or services regarding the education and rehabilitation of people with visual impairments affected as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic?	Last year's experience, with the confinement imposed by the Covid 19 pandemic, has been a great challenge for teachers, families and students who are served by the specific educational teams for students with blindness or visual impairment. Supporting these students requires presence and continuous supply of materials. Despite not being able to count on it, the supporting teachers, together with the classroom teachers, have made a great effort to maintain the continuity of the support in a non-face-to-face way, for which they themselves have had to do an updating of their technological and typhlotechnical knowledge and a great methodological change. It is worth highlighting the work of the teachers of the teams who, with their own resources and great creativity and motivation have been able to complement more than ever and support students and their families in following a particularly difficult school year, since not only have they had to replace face-to-face support with digital support, but they have also had to compensate on many occasions other classroom stimuli, like the presence of classmates, work with emotions, motivation, creation of suitable materials for learning, etc.
Regional and Sub-regional committee meetings conducted, if any	We have contacted with the national representatives of Malta and Andorra, who wants to pass the representation to another person, as she is now retired. We continue looking for national representatives of Italy, Portugal and San Marino
Global campaign activities, if any	There hasn't been any Global Campaigns, though we are starting to attend the meetings and webinars of the Global Disability Summit 2022
Seminars, workshops, capacity building programmes, if any conducted during the reporting period	In Spain, as usually, we have organized several training courses for teachers and professionals of ONCE, both online and face to face. We also have workshops in specific topics.
Collaborative activities and meetings with world bodies such as WBU, IAPB, UN, World Bank, and other organizations at the regional level	The activities dealing with this kind of organizations are carried out by the International Section of ONCE.
ICEVI collaborative work with national governments within the region	In Spain, ONCE works together with the national and regional governments in the education of blind and partially sighted students all around the country.

<b>Area of Reference</b>	<b>Description</b>
Awards, Recognition, etc., to ICEVI members from the region	As far as we know, no awards were given to anyone in the region on 2021
Human interest stories from the region as a result of ICEVI initiatives	We don't have any information about this item
Publications from the Region, that may be of interest to the viewers of ICEVI website	In Spain, ONCE has an online journal, specialized on different topics about people with visual disabilities. The articles are written in Spanish. There have been two issues in 2021: <a href="https://www.once.es/dejanos-ayudarte/la-discapacidad-visual/revista-red-visual/numeros-publicados-red-visual/numero-77-red-visual">https://www.once.es/dejanos-ayudarte/la-discapacidad-visual/revista-red-visual/numeros-publicados-red-visual/numero-77-red-visual</a> <a href="https://www.once.es/dejanos-ayudarte/la-discapacidad-visual/revista-red-visual/numeros-publicados-red-visual/numero-78-red-visual">https://www.once.es/dejanos-ayudarte/la-discapacidad-visual/revista-red-visual/numeros-publicados-red-visual/numero-78-red-visual</a>
Forthcoming events from the region for the next six months	We are planning an online meeting with the national representatives, in order to analyze the situation in our region and try to collaborate between all the countries within it.
Any other information such as research, best practices, etc., from the region	ONCE is working in different projects and research with the British council, the LEGO foundation, universities. We are also finishing BRAITICO, the new braille literacy method and we are also adapting it to adults and the deafblind. ONCE also works in different apps to make the life of blind and partially sighted easier. One of the ones developed in 2021 is Dactyls, that helps people to communicate with a deafblind person.

This report is submitted by Ana Isabel Ruiz López

Date 11/02/2022



## Report from East European countries by Vladimir Ruchin

**Region: Eastern European Countries**

**Period: 2021**

<b>Area of Reference</b>	<b>Description</b>
Regional and Sub-regional committee meetings conducted, if any	<p>The organization of annual events in the Sub-Regional Committees of Eastern European countries today depends on three factors: 1. The pandemic has significantly reduced offline contacts. 2 The effectiveness of socio-economic development in a particular country; 3. Adaptive potential of the national education system.</p> <p>First factor. Improved medical legislation related to the dynamics of morbidity, the practice of using QR codes.</p> <p>The second factor. Decreased socio-economic activity and living standards in a number of regions.</p> <p>Third factor. Pedagogical activity develops in new forms of communication.</p> <p>International contacts are maintained, activities (online consultations, online workshops, reviews of practical activities are conducted and described.</p> <p>ICEVI members actively use the site and learn new experiences in the Newsletter publications.</p>
Global campaign activities, if any	Participation in the congress in Madrid ICEVI, WBU. - World Blindness Summit Madrid 2021
Seminars, workshops, capacity building programmes, if any conducted during the reporting period	<p><b>Azerbaijan</b></p> <p>The number of general educational institutions with inclusive classes has increased (lyceum schools No. 246 (Baku) and No. 2 (Guba), complete secondary schools No. 39 (Ganja), No. 4 and 21 (Sumgayit), No. 10 (Shirvan city), No. 2 (Gazakh city) and No. 12 (Sheki city).</p> <p>Local authorities organized the involvement of children with disabilities in inclusive education in general education institutions. Children were selected on the basis of the decision of the psychological, medical and pedagogical commission.</p> <p><b>Belarus</b></p> <p>Institute of Inclusive Education in Belarusian State Pedagogical University. The main purpose of the Institute is training teachers for special education including schools for visually impaired children.</p> <p>Conferences</p> <p>Conference concerning visually impaired person. Minsk, December 2021. International scientific-practical conference "Continuing professional education of persons with special needs."</p> <p>(In December 2021, Belarus hosted the International Scientific and Practical Conference "Continuing Professional Education for Persons with Special Needs").</p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p>During 2021, ICEVI-journal was distributed among special schools for blind people in Belarus.</p> <p>We have some visits to Molodechno special school; A project on inclusive education was prepared at the Molodechno.</p> <p>10 students from Molodechno Special School take part in the excursion to the United Institute of Information Problem of Academy of Sciences. The students were informed about the news;</p> <p>During 2021, Belarus accepted materials from the Camerata Center for the Education of the Blind.</p> <p><b>Russia</b></p> <p>International scientific and educational forum in the format of a teleconference "Special education of the XXI century" St. Petersburg, April, 2021</p> <p>Main workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Systems of special education, regional experience, specificity, requirements of the time;</li> <li>Inclusive Education Systems and Psychology</li> <li>2. -pedagogical support for persons with visual impairment and disabled people: regional practices;</li> <li>3. Models of interdepartmental comprehensive support for children of preschool and school age with signs of developmental disabilities and families raising them;</li> <li>4. Organizational, educational, methodological, consulting and monitoring support for career guidance and training of people with disabilities and people with disabilities in vocational education organizations;</li> <li>5. Psychological, pedagogical and medical and social assistance to children with early childhood autism;</li> <li>6. Comprehensive medical-psychological-pedagogical rehabilitation of children with cochlear implants;</li> <li>7. Socio-cultural rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and disabled people in organizations of secondary vocational and higher education.</li> </ul> <p>International Practical Conference "Special Education and Socio-Cultural Integration - 2021: Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication and Correctional Educational Technologies in the Digital Age"</p> <p>The main workshops are: traditions and innovations in the education of people with disabilities; comprehensive psychological, medical and pedagogical support for persons with disabilities; social and cultural rehabilitation, adaptation and integration of persons with disabilities; diagnostics,</p>
Collaborative activities and meetings with world bodies such as WBU, IAPB, UN, World Bank, and other organizations at the regional level	Participation in the congress in Madrid ICEVI, WBU. World Blindness Summit Madrid 2021
Human interest stories from the region as a result of ICEVI initiatives	<p><b>Belarus, Molodechno.</b></p> <p>Visits to Molodechno special school. A project on inclusive education was prepared at the Molodechno. 10 students from Molodechno Special School take part in the excursion to the United Institute of Information</p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p>Problem of Academy of Sciences. The students were informed about the news. This school organizes links with other special schools. On December 29, Molodechno hosted a conference on admission of schoolchildren to universities and on the study of foreign languages. (Filipovich Fedor)</p> <p><b>Russia, Saratov</b> Online counseling for parents of children with early childhood visual impairments</p>
Publications from the Region, that may be of interest to the viewers of ICEVI website	<p>1. Lazurenko S.B., Venger A.L., Sviridova T.V., Afonina M.S., Sklyadneva V.M., Fisenko A.P., Zinchenko Yu.P. Organization of psychological and pedagogical assistance to children and parents in the "red zone" Psychological support of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>2. Myasnikova L.V. Socialization of preschool children with visual impairments by means of theatrical activities. - Modern scientific views in the era of global transformations: problems, new vectors of development: materials XXXXII.</p>
Any other information such as research, best practices, etc., from the region	<p><b>Russia</b></p> <p>Interuniversity scientific and practical conference of students and young scientists "Modern problems of preschool defectology: a look into the future." March 2021</p> <p>Main workshops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Training of preschool defectologists: traditions and innovations.</li> <li>1. 2. Modern problems of upbringing and education of children with disabilities in the context of inclusive and special education.</li> <li>2. Correctional and developmental technologies in the education of children of early and preschool age with disabilities.</li> <li>3. Problems of education and upbringing of children with disabilities in the context of solving the tasks of the GEF of preschool education.</li> <li>4. Continuity of preschool and school education of children with disabilities.</li> </ul>

This report is submitted by Vladimir Ruchin  
Date 25.01.2022



## Report from the Balkan countries by Andrea Hathazi

**Region: Balkan Region**

**Period: 2021**

Area of Reference	Description
How were practices and/or services regarding the education and rehabilitation of people with visual impairments affected as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic?	<p><b>BULGARIA</b></p> <p>Special schools for VI, regular schools, special education teachers quickly moved to different accessible for the VI online platforms of teaching. The same applied to the MDVI pupils. The Ministry of Education approved as official platform Microsoft Teams, although other platforms were in use, too.</p> <p>Rehabilitation centres for VI also transferred fast to online and distance support and provision of rehabilitation services.</p> <p><b>CROATIA</b></p> <p>In <b>MALI DOM Zagreb</b> measures for prevention were implemented in classrooms, but other than that program activities were, with slight adjustments, carried on accordingly.</p> <p>In <b>SchoolVINKO BEK</b> services were provided according to the measures, sometimes reduced in the number of rehabilitation activities</p> <p><b>Croatian Blind Union</b> reports that in the first half of the year, all sessions and trainings were provided via phone and/or Zoom.</p> <p><b>Faculty of Educational and Rehabilitation Sciences, Department of Visual Impairments (ERF)</b> reports that during the pandemic they held online classes for the courses. Materials for students with visual impairments were accessibility checked before being released for use.</p> <p>Students from rehabilitation of persons with disabilities section received Rector's award for their research on carrying a medicine mask on one's face during COVID pandemic on orientation and mobility.</p> <p><a href="https://www.flickr.com/photos/190927014@N02/sets/72157720098202267/">https://www.flickr.com/photos/190927014@N02/sets/72157720098202267/</a></p> <p>In <b>Rehabilitation Centre SILVER</b></p> <p>Where applicable, O&amp;M classes were held in domicile environment, not in Rehabilitation Centre Silver. Epidemiological measures for preventing COVID-19 infection were taken in both cases of organizing courses.</p> <p><b>GREECE</b></p> <p><b>AMIMONI:</b> Because of health protocols and corresponding law restrictions, all early intervention programs of AMIMONI were impeded. As alternative paths to the pandemic, online support services were created to ensure the continuity of care and support to people with disabilities during the pandemic. In addition, the staff of Amimoni participated in webinars, such as the EASPD Webinar (European</p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p>Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities), to enhance their services during this crisis. Representatives of organizations from all over Europe discussed the steps they have taken and their ideas for future management of the situation.</p> <p><b>SYZOI:</b> During 2021 the organization provided all the educational and therapeutical programs using the appropriate health protocols regarding Covid-19 pandemic. However, outdoor team activities were minimized to avoid Covid-19 dispersion.</p> <p><b>ROMANIA</b></p> <p>Due to COVID pandemic and health restrictions, schools for the visually impaired carried out their activities online, using various online platforms. Schools relied on the involvement of parents, teachers sent out materials and recommendations for activities to be carried out together with parents for children who needed the support. Later in the year, schools managed to deliver courses onsite and there was a great interest of the educational authorities to keep the schools open for activities, respecting all health protocols.</p> <p><b>SERBIA</b></p> <p><b>School for visually impaired pupils "Veljko Ramadanović, Belgrade</b></p> <p>Lack of physical, social, emotional contact between VI pupils in an online environment</p> <p>An excursion could not be held</p> <p>Sport connections is reduced. Other competitions for talented pupils were postponed or organised virtually</p> <p>Ceremonial events in school were organised with preventive measure</p> <p>Not every family is equally digitally equipped (many of them do not have a PC, stable internet connection)</p> <p>The parents followed more or less successfully the therapist's advice they received online</p> <p>During Covid peak, many students and teachers were absent due to Covid infection and illness</p>
Regional and Sub-regional committee meetings conducted, if any	<p><b>SERBIA</b></p> <p><b>School for visually impaired pupils "Veljko Ramadanović, Belgrade</b></p> <p>Meetings of principals from schools for visually impaired pupils from the former Yugoslav republics were held regularly. In addition to that cooperation,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a regional singing competition was held between VI students (virtually, video sharing)</li> <li>- a regional meeting “licensing young professionals in the field of peripathology” was held in Belgrade. It was the hybrid way of meeting (in person and Zoom platform) on 26.11.2021</li> </ul>
Global campaign activities, if any	<p><b>CROATIA</b></p> <p><b>Faculty of Educational and Rehabilitation Sciences, Department of Visual Impairments (ERF)</b></p> <p>Raising awareness on developmental milestones of vision in early ages through Pampers campaign “World form baby's shoes”.</p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p><b>ROMANIA</b>  The Special Education Department from Babes-Bolyai University organized on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December 2021 on the International Day of People with Disabilities the event with the title "Values in Action, accessibility and leadership"</p> <p>On the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2021, the Department of Special Education, Babes-Bolyai University together with PONTES Association, The Romanian Blind Association Cluj branch, the Office for Students with Disabilities and the Center for Assistance in Access Technologies for People with Visual Impairment organised on The White Cane International Day an event of raising awareness in traffic and the importance of using the white cane.</p> <p><b>SERBIA</b></p> <p><b>School for visually impaired pupils "Veljko Ramadanović, Belgrade</b>  Workshop on what violence is preventive measures held with VI pupils in our school, 22.02.2021</p>
Seminars, workshops, capacity building programmes, if any conducted during the reporting period	<p><b>BULGARIA</b>  Sofia University, Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts held a scientific online conference in November 2021 dedicated to Education and the Arts: Traditions and Perspectives. Department of special education was active part of it.</p> <p><b>CROATIA</b></p> <p>During reporting period, Mali dom's Education Center continued with various Education programs and in 2021 educated more than 244 experts in 14 total trainings. As a part of EU projects and cooperation with Perkins International, we held 7 workshops with 300 experts from Croatia and the region.</p> <p><b>TOPICS OF CONDUCTED TRAININGS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Developmental Support (6 modules, from Croatia and Serbia) 12 participants, held online via Zoom and Moodle and in person</li> <li>• Low Vision Assessment and Rehabilitation Advanced Level, 6 participants in Croatia, in person</li> <li>• Augmentative communication for MDVI children, for IRIS Slovenia, 26 participants</li> <li>• Deafblindness, for IRIS in Slovenia, 26 participants</li> <li>• Encouraging movement through everyday routines and activities for children with developmental delays and Strategies of encouraging learning and exploration for Public Open Courses in Samobor, Croatia, 54 participants, via ZOOM</li> </ul> <p>Collaboration with Perkins International has continued throughout 2021. on the project "Strengthening expertise of staff through mentoring" for employees of Special hospital for children's chronic diseases Gornja Bistra. This year, with the support of, Mali dom-Zagreb continued to co-operate with Special hospital Gornja Bistra with the aim of further strengthening the competencies of hospital staff. Topics of the encounters</p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p>via Zoom were: Active learning, Implementing developmental and functional goals in activities and Augmentative communication for MDVI children. There were 8 participants. Also separate training was done on the topic of Applying the use of vibroacoustic therapy in rehabilitation, for SB Gornja Bistra, 4 participants.</p> <p>Following trainings were also conducted through various projects in collaboration with Perkins International for the respected institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perkins International Academy Advanced Course for 21 participants from Croatia and Serbia, which have finished Basic course.</li> <li>• Making IEP-s, for School Šubićevac and Ozalj, 16 participants, via Moodle and ZOOM</li> <li>• Making IEP-s, for School M. Petrović, Orphanage Kolevka, School D. Kovačević, 18 participants, via Moodle and ZOOM</li> <li>• Creating meaningful activities, for School Šubićevac and Ozalj, 18 participants, via Moodle and ZOOM</li> <li>• Creating meaningful activities, for Schools M. petrović, Orphanage Kolevka, School D. Kovačević, 21 participants, via Moodle and ZOOM</li> <li>• Low Vision Assessment and Rehabilitation Advanced Level, for 9 participants in Serbia for Dragan Kovačević, in person</li> </ul> <p><b>PROJECTS</b></p> <p>In November partners visited Mali dom from the ERASMUS+ project ERISFAVIA. They participated in lectures: Early intervention organizational model at Mali dom-Zagreb, Experience groups, Team around child, Halliwick concept of swimming in early intervention Collaboration with Croatian institute for brain research.</p> <p>Within Erisfavia project we held 4 workshops via ZOOM on topics;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Motor Learning Strategies for Children with Visual Impairments and Additional Conditions, 77 participants</li> <li>• „Components of individual support model, creating goals and creating functional activities“, 69 participants</li> <li>• „Building Professional Capacity to Strengthen Parent/Professional Relationships in Early Intervention - Mali dom-Zagreb“. 63 participants</li> <li>• „Early Childhood Intervention: Views from the Field - Mali dom-Zagreb and Parental awareness of movement and communication in early child development“, 37 participants</li> </ul> <p>In December, partners in Erasmus project „THE PATH TO INDEPENDENT LIFE“ visited Mali dom, participants from 16 partner organizations.</p> <p>Mali dom is a partner in project NOVI JELKOVEC – PLACE OF INDEPENDENT LIVING. We held two internal workshops among partners in the project. First on the topic of Person Centered Planning and second on Transition to Adulthood and possibilities of programs for MDVI students.</p> <p>In this period, we held 16 internal educations for our own staff, some of the topics were: Positioning, Therapy feeding, Challenging Behaviors, Newborn Behavioral Observation NBO, Making IEP-s.</p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p><b>WEBINARS</b>  In collaboration with Perkins International 13 new webinars presented, some of them were repeated, in total screening 37 webinars. 2 575 persons registered to view the webinars, from Croatia and Serbia.</p> <p><b>School Vinko Bek</b> organized educations for teacher in regular school (27 live and 1 online). Their employees had some educations, workshops live and more of them online  CBU conducted workshops/training sessions in the framework of the project “In the ring of life” aimed at VI women, persons with diabetes and older persons. We conducted different upskilling trainings for experts in the social welfare and education field, related to the visually impaired persons.</p> <p><b>Rehabilitation Centre SILVER</b>  Rehabilitation Centre Silver held 8 mostly online workshops about programs (orientation and mobility and daily living skills for visually impaired, assignment of assistance dogs, sensory integration therapy with therapy dog, etc.) In workshops is emphasized how to approach visually impaired and other persons with disabilities and role of assistance dogs in lives of persons with disabilities.  Rehabilitation Centre Silver held 2 workshops for employees of an international clothing company who were educated with the basics of communication with the visually impaired persons, workplace accommodations and procedures for interacting with job candidates with visual impairment.</p> <p><b>GREECE</b>  1. Capacity building programme: ErISFaVIA (Early Intervention Services for Families with Children with Vision Impairment and Additional Disabilities) was approved by the Erasmus+ Programme in relation to Key Action 2/2019-1-EL01-KA201-062886). The project started September 2019 and the consortium consists of the following organizations: University of Thessaly, Greece (Coordinator)/, Babes Bolyai Univestity, Romania/ Blindeninstitut München, Germany /Amimoni &amp; Syzoi, Panhellenic Associations of parents and friends of visually impaired people with additional handicaps, Greece/ Liceul Special pentru Deficienti de Vedere Cluj-Napoca, Romania/ Ayse Nurtac Sozbir Gunebakan, Turkey/ Istanbul Medeniyet University/ Turkey, Mali dom – Zagreb/Croatia, and St. Barnabas School for the Blind, Cyprus. The project refers to children with vision impairment and additional disabilities or deafblindness with their families regarding early intervention programmes and services.  In 2021 six online workshops and two 4-day face-to-face intensive learning/training events took place in order to enrich and empower professionals in terms of assessment and implementation in their early intervention programs.  The on-line workshops started on the 19th of February and finished by the end of May 2021. The first learning/training event (C1), took place in Blindeninstitut (Munich) in October 2021 and the second training event (C2) took place in Mali dom (Croatia) in November 2021.</p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p>2. Capacity building programme: ToMiMEUs (Towards a Multisensory and Inclusive Museum for Individuals with Sensory Disabilities). The project is financed by the European Social Fund (Erasmus + Programme/Cooperation for Innovation and the exchange of good practices Project Agreement Number: 2019-1-RO01-KA202-063245 and the coordinator is the Muzeul Etnografic al Transilvaniei (Romania). In 2021 six online workshops took place aiming at enriching museum professional's knowledge and experience in many topics such as: "Inclusive education: development, implementation and implications", "Accessibility in museums for visitors who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HoH)", "Creating meaningful museum experiences for all including persons with sensory disabilities", "Museum awareness and people with deafblindness", "Museum visits and accessibility barriers: the case of deaf and/or hard of hearing persons". The workshops were delivered from Babes-Bolyai University and University of Thessaly.</p> <p>3. Capacity building programme: ADD@ME (Ambassadors of Diversity and non-Discrimination @ new Methods in non-formal Education). The project is financed by the European Social Fund 2020-2-IT03-KA205-019070. The coordinator is Unione Italiana Ciechi ed Ipovedenti Sezione Provinciale di Firenze, Florence- Italy. University of Thessaly participated in the first intensive training event which took place in Warsaw (Polish Association of the Blind) from the 31st of August to the 4th of September 2021. During this training event delegates from the project organizations presented and tested all modules. The reflective element was very much involved at the first joint staff training event and the members of the project provided amendments and modifications in the training material improving its clarity and coherence.</p> <p>4. Capacity building programme: Accessibility and Support of Individuals with Disabilities Laboratory, University of Macedonia In the interest of international participation and engagement, the "Accessibility Webinar – Level B" was organized on 30/3/2021 by the Accessibility and Support of Individuals with Disabilities Laboratory (Director of the Lab: Professor K. Papadopoulos, University of Macedonia, Greece). The aim of the workshop was to inform/educate staff working in higher education supporting students with visual impairments on specialized knowledge in the field of accessible educational material, such as the production of tactile and audio-tactile graphics.</p> <p>5. Capacity building programme: Amimoni Amimoni organized in September 22 a series of workshops and games for young and old people! By closing their eyes, the participants experienced daily functions... otherwise! They walked, ran, played, and socialized. The goal was to find that even if we lack vision, we can live happily and creatively, adapting our activities to our capabilities.</p> <p>6. Capacity building programme: Syzoi The association Syzoi, organized Web conference with the theme: "Snoezelen multi-sensory approach in educational and therapeutic environments".</p> <p><b>SERBIA</b>  <b>School for visually impaired pupils "Veljko Ramadanović, Belgrade</b>  Dissemination of results on the Erasmus+ project ( KA201)- "Training program for teachers of visually impaired pupils in mainstream schools in inclusive education – EQUAL" was held in two terms: 26.05.2021 and</p>

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	<p>2.06.2021, lasting for 8 hours. Dissemination was held through ZOOM (Erasmus+ Programme Agreement no. 2019-1- RS01-KA201-000878) Dissemination of EQUAL results on the Erasmus+ project (KA201) – Multiplier event in Belgrade held in person and virtually, 25.11.2021 Round table “licensing young professionals in the field of peripathology”</p> <p><b>ROMANIA</b> Projects Erasmus + ErlSFaVIA (Early Intervention Services for Families with Children with Vision Impairment and Additional Disabilities) was approved by the Erasmus+ Programme in relation to Key Action 2/2019-1-EL01-KA201-062886) Erasmus + ToMiMEUs (Towards a Multisensory and Inclusive Museum for Individuals with Sensory Disabilities). Project Agreement Number: 2019-1-RO01-KA202-063245</p> <p><b>TURKEY</b>        - Online Seminar        Ayyıldız, E. (2021). Çok engelli görmeyen çocukların çalışma neden zorlanıyor? Yanlış bildiklerimiz, önyargılarımız ve gerçekler. İl MEM Öğretmen Akademileri Özel Eğitim Akademisi Görme Yetersizliği ile Ağır Çoklu Yetersizlikler Eğitim Programı, 29 Mart 2021, İstanbul.        (Ayyıldız, E. (2021). Why do we have challenges when we work with children with multiple disabilities with visual impairment (MDVI)? Our misbeliefs, prejudices and the facts. Istanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education Teacher Academies, Special Education Academy, Education Program for Children with Severe and Multiple Disabilities, 29th March 2021, Istanbul.)        - Panel        1) Ayyıldız, E. (2021). Devlete bağlı bir özel eğitim okulunda inisiatif gerektiren bir çalışma yapmak ve değişime direnç, Açıłış Paneli 2: Özel Eğitim Okullarında Özerklik: Anlam ve İşlev, 25 Haziran 2021, Uluslararası Okul Yöneticileri Konferansı (ISPC 2021), 24-27 Haziran 2021, İstanbul. *        (Ayyıldız, E. (2021). Proactive work and the resistance to change in a public special education school, Opening Panel 2: Autonomy in Special Education Schools: Meaning and Function, 25 June 2021, International Conference of School Principals (ISPC 2021), 24-27 June 2021, Istanbul)        *The speech was about the early intervention and preschool programs initiations for the children with MDVI at Turkan Sabancı School for the Blind.  <a href="https://www.oncuyoneticipler.org.tr/ispc2021/">https://www.oncuyoneticipler.org.tr/ispc2021/</a>        2) 31. Ulusal Özel Eğitim Kongresi “Özel Eğitimde Disiplinlerarası Çalışmalar” (22-24 Ekim) Online, İzmir        PANEL #1 Çoklu Yetersizliğe Çok Yönlü Bakış 22 Ekim 2021        Moderator: Doç. Dr. Ayşe Dolunay SARICA        Panelistler: Doç. Dr. Pınar ŞAFAK, Dr. Öğr. Üyesi. Müzeyyen ELDENİZ ÇETİN, Dr. Öğr. Üyesi. Emel SARDOHAN YILDIRIM, Dr. Öğr. Üyesi. Emine AYYILDIZ        (31. National Special Education Congress “Multidisciplinary Studies in Special Education” (October, 22-24 Online, İzmir.        PANEL #1 Oct. 22, 2021 Multi-Faceted View of Multiple Disability</p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p>Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ayşe Dolunay SARICA        Speakers: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pınar ŞAFAK, Assist. Prof. Dr. Müzeyyen ELDENİZ ÇETİN, Assist. Prof. Dr. Emel SARDOHAN YILDIRIM, Assist. Prof. Dr. Emine AYYILDIZ).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conference</li> </ul> <p>The Early Intervention Services Conference for Little Children with MDVI and Their Families (MDVI-EI Conference 2021) organized by İstanbul Medeniyet University (IMU), IMU Child Education Science, Application and Research Center (CESARC) and Ayse Nurtac Sozbir Gunebakan Association for the Children with Multiple Disabilities with Visual Impairment and Their Families (ANSGA) (Online, 29th of May 2021)*</p> <p>*This conference is supported by ErISFaVIA (Early Intervention Services for Families with Children with Vision Impairment and Additional Disabilities) Project approved by the Erasmus + Program (Key Action 2) -2019-1-EL01-KA201-062886 (<a href="http://erisfavia.sed.uth.gr/">http://erisfavia.sed.uth.gr/</a>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Webinar</li> </ul> <p>Ayyıldız, E. (2021). Özel gereksinimli çocuklar ve aileleri, İnsan ve Medeniyet Hareketi, 21 Ocak 2021 (Moderatör: Din Psikolojisi Araştırmacı Münevver Karataş), İstanbul.  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lm5wu61deUU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lm5wu61deUU</a></p> <p>(Ayyıldız, E. (2021). Children with special needs and their families, Human and Civilization Movement, 21st January 2021 (Moderator: Researcher of Religious Psychology, Münevver Karataş), İstanbul.  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lm5wu61deUU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lm5wu61deUU</a>).</p>
Collaborative activities and meetings with world bodies such as WBU, IAPB, UN, World Bank, and other organizations at the regional level	<p><b>CROATIA</b>        CBU participated virtually at the World Blindness Summit 2021.</p> <p><b>GREECE</b>        Many transnational project meetings and training events took place within Erasmus + projects such as ErISFaVIA (Early Intervention Services for Families with Children with Vision Impairment and Additional Disabilities, ToMiMEUs (Towards a Multisensory and Inclusive Museum for Individuals with Sensory Disabilities), ADD@ME (Ambassadors of Diversity and non-Discrimination @ new Methods in non-formal Education), etc.</p> <p><b>ROMANIA</b>        Andrea Hathazi, ICEVI Balkan Region representative, ICEVI Europe Vice-President presented Teacher training in the field of visual impairment. Opportunities and challenges at the WBU-ICEVI General Assembly (GA) 28 to 30 June 2021.</p>
Awards, Recognition, etc., to ICEVI members from the region	<p><b>GREECE</b>  <b>Syzoi:</b> THALIS Seal of excellence – mapping &amp; evaluation of NGO in Greek Region</p>
Human interest stories from the region as a result of ICEVI initiatives	<p><b>BULGARIA</b>        The Union of Blind in Bulgaria celebrated its 100 anniversary in 2021.</p>
Publications from the Region, that may be of interest to the viewers of ICEVI website	<p><b>BULGARIA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Journal of Education and Rehabilitation of Bulgarian Association for Education of VI Children was publishes in 2 issues.</li> </ul>

Area of Reference	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prof. Radoulov published two materials in Bulgarian language dedicated to Hellen Keller and Anne Sullivan, revealing interesting facts from their lives and work. The publications are in regard with Helen Keller's 140 birth anniversary in 2020.</li> </ul> <p><b>GREECE</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Koustriava, E. (2021, in print). Readiness of individuals with visual impairments for participation in distance education. British Journal of Visual Impairment.</li> <li>2. Papakonstantinou, D. (2021, in print). Work Disability and Rheumatoid Arthritis: Predictive Factors. WORK: A Journal of Prevention, Assessment, and Rehabilitation.</li> <li>3. Argyropoulos, V., &amp; Yfantis, C. (2021). Tracing conceptual understandings and misunderstandings of science by students with and without vision impairment through a pilot study: the case of density and heat. International Journal of Special Education, 36(1), 77-88.</li> <li>4. Nikolaraizi, M., Argyropoulos, V., Papazafiri, M., &amp; Kofidou, C. (2021) Promoting accessible and inclusive education on disaster risk reduction: the case of students with sensory disabilities, International Journal of Inclusive Education, DOI: 10.1080/13603116.2020.1862408</li> <li>5. Martos, A., Kouroupetroglou, G., Argyropoulos, V., &amp; Papadopoulos, K. (2021). Tactile Identification of Embossed Lines and Square Areas in Diverse Dot Heights by Blind Individuals. Universal Access in the Information Society, 20, 333-342</li> <li>6. Argyropoulos, V., Cascio, V., David, A., Elek, D., Hurtado Martínez, F., &amp; Lemanczyk, A. (2021). Empowering young people with visual impairments to become active agents for social inclusion: the case of the ADD@ME project. Proceedings of ICERI2021 Conference (PP. 4832-4837). ISBN: 978-84-09-34549-6.</li> <li>7. Syzoi (2021). THALIS Seal of excellence – mapping &amp; evaluation of NGO in Greek Region</li> </ol> <p><b>ROMANIA</b></p> <p>Hathazi, A. (2021). The implementation of reflection-based approaches in the education and rehabilitation of children with disabilities. Zbornik radova-11. Međunarodni naučni skup „Specijalna edukacija i rehabilitacija danas“, Beograd, Srbija, 29–30.10. 2021., 23-26.</p> <p><b>SERBIA</b></p> <p><b>School for visually impaired pupils "Veljko Ramadanić, Belgrade</b> Manual of the project EQUAL: Professionals support for the teachers of visually impaired pupils in mainstream schools (Erasmus+ programme Agreement no. 2019-1- RS01-KA201-000878)</p> <p><b>TURKEY</b></p> <p>Book Chapter</p> <p>Ayyıldız, E., Güven, Y. &amp; Akçin, F. N. (2021). Söz öncesi iletişim becerileri ve iletişim becerilerinin öğretimi. A. E. Sardohan Yıldırım &amp; M. Eldeniz Çetin (Ed.).Özel Gereksinimli Çocuğu Olan Anne - Baba El Kitabı Serisi: Çoklu Yetersizlik içinde (s. 197-223), Ankara: Eğiten Kitap. (Ayyıldız, E., Güven, Y. &amp; Akçin, F. N. (2021). Preverbal communication and teaching communication skills. In A. E. Sardohan Yıldırım &amp; M. Eldeniz Çetin (Ed.). Handbook Series of the Parents of Children with Special Needs: Multiple Disabilities (pp. 197-223), Ankara: Eğiten Kitap.)</p>

Area of Reference	Description
Forthcoming events from the region for the next six months	<p><b>BULGARIA</b>            A National conference in Orientation and Mobility is planned for 2022.</p> <p><b>CROATIA</b>            Conference of <b>Faculty of educational and rehabilitation Sciences (ERF) ERFCON 2022.</b></p> <p><b>GREECE</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Web Conference organized by Syzoi– Snoezelen Part II Early ‘intervention internal seminar Parents seminars - Student’s educational labs</li> <li>2. Transnational project meetings and learning training events with respect to the Erasmus+ projects: ToMIMEUs (Towards a Multisensory and Inclusive Museum for Individuals with Sensory Disabilities), ADD@ME (Ambassadors of Diversity and non-Discrimination @ new Methods in non-formal Education), etc.</li> </ol> <p><b>SERBIA</b>  <b>School for visually impaired pupils "Veljko Ramadanović, Belgrade</b>            01.03.2022 next meeting for licensing young professionals in the field of peripathology            04.05. – 08.05. 2022 Kick off meeting Erasmus + KA2 project: Steam in the secondary school with no barriers for blind and visually impaired pupils “ with coordinating organization Colegio Aurelio Gomez from Burgos, Spain            Beginning of the Erasmus+ KA2 project Borders of tangible with coordinating organization from Slovenia/ Centre IRIS</p> <p><b>ROMANIA</b>            Multiplier events within the Erasmus+ projects Tomimeus and Erisfavia will be organized in May-June 2022.</p> <p><b>TURKEY</b>            A multiplier event of ErlSFaVIA project in Istanbul Medeniyet University. This event will be held as a conference about EI services for the children with MD and their parents.</p>
Any other information such as research, best practices, etc., from the region	<p><b>BULGARIA</b>            Research was conducted on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online and distance education for SEN students, incl. VI in Bulgaria and another research in a comparative way – in Bulgaria and Greece, based on questionnaires.</li> <li>- Research on participation of VI students included in regular schools in sport classes/lessons in Bulgaria.</li> <li>- Two master programs were run by Sofia University – one newly developed on Sign language and bilingual communication in the Education, where few classes are on deafblindness are included; and the master program on Education of multiply disabled students was re-designed and run this academic year.</li> </ul> <p><b>CROATIA</b></p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p><b>School Vinko Bek</b> had presentation in several conferences in the “best practice section”.</p> <p><b>Croatian Union for the Blind CBU</b> has updated the Standards of the Croatian Braille Code in July: <a href="https://savez-slijepih.hr/app/uploads/2021/07/1-Standard-hrvatske-brajice-Funtek-2020-srpanj_2021.pdf">https://savez-slijepih.hr/app/uploads/2021/07/1-Standard-hrvatske-brajice-Funtek-2020-srpanj_2021.pdf</a></p> <p>CBU participated in the adaptation of schoolbooks for the first grade blind students of the secondary school. We have translated a manual aimed at parents of VI children, which encompasses the information related to education: <a href="https://savez-slijepih.hr/app/uploads/2020/12/Prirucnik_za_roditelje_web_FINAL.pdf">https://savez-slijepih.hr/app/uploads/2020/12/Prirucnik_za_roditelje_web_FINAL.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Faculty of Educational and Rehabilitation Sciences (ERF)</b> Is a partner in project Platforma 50+, founded from ESF (UP.04.2.2.06). The goal of the project is strengthening partnerships of persons with disabilities with other stakeholders to become an efficient partner in developing, monitoring and application of public policies. ERF is a partner in a project IP-CORONA-2020-12-3798. Studying Biology in pandemic related measures. Project will develop a highly interactive model of teaching and learning Biology in a pandemic related measures based on best practices for teaching. BUBO platform will be used and it will contain educational materials designed on ASIO model to ensure development of experienced Biology teachers. Teaching materials will be for elementary and high school education with various success degrees, including adaptations for gifted and students with disabilities.</p> <p><b>Rehabilitation Centre SILVER</b> Director of Center Silver, as chairman of the European Committee for Standardization of Assistant Dogs successfully organized and held a meetings Netherlands and Zagreb, regarding standardization in the field of work with assistance dogs. Employees of the Center participated in the meetings as working group members. The Director of the Center is the president of the European Committee for Dogs Assistants CEN TC/452.</p> <p>Two employees participated in IMC17 Conference, Gothenburg 2021, with presentation “Zagreb public transport-achievements and challenges for visual impaired and blind persons”. Due to pandemic, conference was held online.</p> <p><b>ROMANIA</b> Andrea Hathazi and Marian Padure from the Special Education Department, Babes-Bolyai University participated in the 2021 International Orientation &amp; Mobility Symposium from USA with the workshop, Orientation and Mobility Training for People with Blindness or Visual Impairment in Romania. Andrea Hathazi, Carmen Costea Barluti (Romania) and Vassilis Argyropoulos (Greece) participate with two papers in the 8th ECPVI-European Conference on Psychology and Visual Impairment, Vision Prague 2021 Online „REAL LIFE (IN) DEPENDENCE“ 1.-2. July, 2021.</p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p><b>SERBIA</b>  <b>School for visually impaired pupils "Veljko Ramadanović, Belgrade</b>  Erasmus+ KA1 project – Job shadowing with school for VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT AND MULTIPLE DISABILITIES from Athens, colleagues from Greece were visiting our school from 06.12 till 10.12.2021</p> <p><b>TURKEY</b></p> <p>1- ATASAVUN UYSAL S. AĞIR VE ÇOKLU YETERSİZLİĞİ OLAN ÇOCUKLarda FİZYOTERAPİ YAKLAŞIMLARI, 6. PEDIATRİK REHABİLİTASYON KONGRESİ (PHYSIOTHERAPY APPROACHES FOR CHILDREN WITH SEVERE AND MULTIPLE DISABILITIES, 6TH PEDIATRIC REHABILITATION CONGRESS, 7 JUNE 2021. (SPEAKER)</p> <p>2- ATASAVUN UYSAL S. SOSYAL HİZMET MERKEZLERİNDE FTR HİZMETLERİ, 8. ULUSAL FİZYOTERAPİ VE REHABİLİTASYON KONGRESİ (PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES IN SOCIAL WORK CENTERS, 8TH NATIONAL PHYSIOTHERAPY AND REHABILITATION CONGRESS, 9 MAY 2021. (SPEAKER)</p> <p>3- ATASAVUN UYSAL S, AZ GÖREN ÇOCUKLarda FİZYOTERAPİ YAKLAŞIMLARI, PROF. DR. HIFZİ ÖZCAN 8. ULSLARARASI CEREBRAL PLASY VE GELİŞİMSEL BOZUKLUKLAR KONGRESİ (PHYSIOTHERAPY APPROACHES IN CHILDREN WITH LOW VISION. PROF. DR. HIFZİ ÖZCAN 8th INTERNATIONAL CEREBRAL PALSY AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS CONGRESS, 27.2.2021. (SPEAKER)</p>

This report is submitted by:

Bulgaria: Mira Tzvetkova-Arsova

Croatia: Nikolina Juric Tanfara

Greece: Vassilis Argyropoulos

Romania: Hathazi Andrea

Serbia: Radmila Vidovic, Ana Joksimovic, Jelena Vukić and Aleksandra Grbović

Turkey: Emine Ayyıldız and Songül Atasavun Uysal



## Report from the Central European countries by Beata Pronay

**Region: Central European region**

**Period: 2021**

Area of Reference	Description
How were practices and/or services regarding the education and rehabilitation of people with visual impairments affected as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic?	<p><b>Czech Republic</b></p> <p>All schools and teachers had to learn to teach online, some pupils managed, some find it difficult, special school had online education only short time, other schools had to deal with it for months</p> <p>Most of the services for VI celebrated 30 anniversary 2020, but for the pandemic situation they could not realize them neither they could do it this year. In addition, we have lost an important colleague, the director of Tyfloservis (services for adult VI) Josef Cerha in November 2020 and the staff had to adjust and find new director Eva Machová. This year they succeeded the fun rising campaign Bílá pastelka, which had to be canceled because of Covid last year.</p>
	<p><b>Hungary</b></p> <p>School for the Blind: as many channels for teaching as possible: zoom, teams, viber, FB, messenger, phone calls. There were some students whom we could not reach online, so we posted the school materials in Braille.</p> <p>The students really missed their peers, they became extremely isolated during the online period. After coming back to school, we found behavioral problems, and they needed our psychologists' help more.</p> <p>Those families who have multiply disabled children were in extremely difficult situation. In their cases we tried to help and support the parents instead of the children.</p>
	<p><b>Poland</b></p> <p>The situation in Poland was probably similar to that in other countries. At times of lockdown (short periods in 2021) many activities simply stopped (exhibitions, training workshops), or, (whenever possible) changed format into online services. Online education was particularly difficult for younger children with a visual impairment. For some it was difficult to access educational materials sent via e-mail. In such cases help came from family members. University students had no, or fewer problems, as most of them have specialist equipment and access to Internet.</p> <p>The pandemic had some unexpected positive effects. Museums and art galleries could use the time of lockdowns and absence (or reduced numbers) of visitors to improve the level of their services: expanding the range of audio-described exhibits and works of art, expand the range of adaptations in the form of tactile graphics or 3-D models, add Braille signs, create tactile, large print and Braille guidebooks, offer online services (e.g., audio descriptions and audio tours) etc.</p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p><b>Slovak Republic</b>  Further improvement of distant services (phone, on-line), continuous support provided to VI people (also regarding Covid-19). During summer/beginning of autumn period when situation was better, in person support was given to VI people while taking national measures concerning COVID pandemic in account.</p> <p><b>Slovenia</b>  Due to serious health situation in October 2020, all schools were closed, and distance learning started again.  In December 2020, parents of SEN children started a campaign trying to prove a negative impact the situation where schools were closed due to Covid-19 pandemic had on their children. They launched a campaign for opening special schools, they lodged a constitutional complaint before the Constitutional Court, and they were successful. At the end of December 2020, the Constitutional Court decided that all special schools needed to open their doors and start teaching in person. Thus, all special schools were opened on 4<sup>th</sup> January and have remained open until now.</p> <p>However, children and young people with visual impairment who attend mainstream schools continued distance learning almost to the end of the school year 2020/2021 which resulted in many difficult situations, unsuccessful terminations of the school year and psychological problems. Especially in spring 2021 many activities, e.g. workshops and camps for children and young people with visual impairment who attend mainstream schools were cancelled, in autumn they needed more encouragement to return or restart the activities.</p>
Regional and Sub-regional committee meetings conducted, if any	<p><b>Czech Republic</b>  We have no meetings, I am contact person, have no list of members of ICEVI in Czech Republic, so I pass information from ICEVI to all schools, resource centers and services for people with VI</p> <p><b>Hungary</b>  School for the Blind: ENVITER board meetings every month –online platform  Enviter webinars monthly</p> <p><b>Slovenia</b>  TIFLO section, a section within Association of Special Pedagogues of Slovenia, which is a group member of ICEVI and assembles professionals working in the field of education for children and young people with visual impairment, continued its mission in 2021, playing an important role in providing new knowledge and information for the professionals in the field and bringing them together. Two meetings were held virtually and one in person. The meetings took place in March, June and August. At the first one findings and activities developed within a national project on Social inclusion of children and young people with SEN were presented. In June a new didactic tool and its use for severely MDVI children was shown, besides that functional vision assessment was presented, which was especially instructive for new members of professional staff. In August, the SMILE team informed the attendees about the outcomes of their work and we heard more about life and work of one of the first teachers of children with visual impairment in Slovenia, Franica Vrhunc. An ex-colleague of ours, who is being retired, is doing a research and preparing a publication on her life.</p>

Area of Reference	Description
Global campaign activities, if any	<p><b>Hungary</b>  Hungarian Federation for the Blind and Visually Impaired (MVGYOSZ); participation in EBU Pascal project about self-driven cars (138 Hungarian respondents filled in the related questionnaire); participation in EBU Accessible Voting Awareness Raising campaign</p>

### Slovenia

Schools/centres from the Balkan region, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Northern Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, all working in the field of visual impairment, met virtually four times in 2021 to discuss their future cooperation on joint projects, they exchanged experience and good practices in relation to teaching in the situation of Covid-19 pandemic, and information on their activities in the local environment. They have been working on establishing contacts among the professionals in the field.

Active participation in several international projects:

- SMILE! Erasmus+ KA1 project dealing with socialisation issues of children and young people with visual impairment, was supposed to finish with the last training event planned for April 2020 at the School for the Blind Budapest. The training event was postponed, and eventually, carried out online in May 2021 as it was not approved to meet at the partner's location in person. The project resulted in several useful products e.g. posters, social skills school calendar, a booklet.
- There is also SMILE too, a KA2 School partnership Erasmus+ project with The Centre IRIS being the coordinator, and Sight Scotland, Scotland UK, Royal Dutch Visio, The Netherlands, High School for Visually Impaired in Prague (GOA), The Czech Republic, Lega del Filo d'Oro, Italy and Jordanstown School, Northern Ireland, UK as partners, continuing its work. There were two training events in 2021: the first one in February performed by Royal Dutch Visio and the second one in November performed by Sight Scotland. Both were carried out online due to Covid-19 pandemic. The main goal of this three-year project is to develop training programmes for teachers in mainstream school and parents of children and young people with visual impairment to assist the development of social skills. Important progress has been done in 2021 to achieve that goal. The partners continue their cooperation on the project having regular online meetings of coordinators and two working teams.
- Since October 2019, the Centre IRIS has been participating as a partner in a two-year Erasmus + EQUAL project (Professional support for teachers of visually impaired pupils in mainstream schools). There are four partners in the project, besides the Centre IRIS, there are Škola za učenike oštećenog vida »Veljko Ramdanović«, Serbia (leading partners), Instituto regionale Rittmeyer per i chiechi di Trieste, Italy and Državno učilište za deca i mladi so ošteten vid »Dimitar Vlahov«, Northeren Macedonia. The project will be finished in January 2022, therefore, members of professional staff in the participating organisations are working on the final results. The first one is a training programme for teachers of visually impaired pupils in mainstream schools on methodology approaches. The second intellectual output - the manual - is also completed. The manual, "Professional support for the teachers of

Area of Reference	Description
	<p>visually impaired pupils in mainstream schools", will be available in electronic versions in 5 languages (English, Serbian, Macedonian, Italian, and Slovenian). Until the end of the project partner organisations will work on video presentations as practical examples of how to teach different subjects. Slovenian partner will present the guidelines how to adapt materials for knowledge competitions for pupils and students with visual impairment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A follow-up of Opeye (Open and portable software library for rapid eye tracking), KA2 Erasmus+ project, called Open Eye Tracker Application for the multiple disabled visually impaired, coordinated by Institut pour Déficients Visuels from Luxembourg started its work in 2021 and a project meeting took place at the Centre IRIS, Ljubljana in November 2021. It was performed in person.</li> <li>- LCIF - Early intervention project, which started in April 2018, is in the final stages and will have been completed by May 2022. Project addresses the problem of early intervention of children with visual impairment and multi-disabled children with a visual impairment from 0 to 6 years of age in Slovenia and Montenegro. In the first year of the project, the main project activity was the creation of material conditions for the implementation of an early intervention programme at the Center IRIS and JU Resource center for children and youth »Podgorica« in Montenegro. During the first and second year of the project, we performed three cycles of training workshops for teachers and other professionals working in the field of early intervention who work at both centres. The project also provides home treatments for all children and their families who are included in the early intervention programme, but due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the home treatments were changed into center-based treatments at the Center IRIS and in a virtual environment. By the end of the project, the last, fourth cycle of workshops for professionals and workshops for parents will be held in Slovenia and Montenegro. The project is financially supported by Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF), LIONS Clubs District 129, Slovenia.</li> </ul>
Seminars, workshops, capacity building programmes, if any conducted during the reporting period	<p><b>Czech Republic</b></p> <p><b>8TH ECPVI -EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON PSYCHOLOGY AND VISUAL IMPAIRMENT VISION PRAGUE 2021 ONLINE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Theme: „Real life (In) dependence“</li> <li>- July 1 – 2, 2021, the conference had to be postponed from 2020, and even that we had to change in-person activity to online. But the Conference was successful, see Presentations of the 8th ECPVI (in the form of a video): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="https://www.visionprague2020.cz/index.php/presentation-prezentace">https://www.visionprague2020.cz/index.php/presentation-prezentace</a></li> <li>- There was a course started for low vision therapist in Prague with students from the Czech and Slovak Republic.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Hungary</b></p> <p>School for the Blind: Finished EU projects in 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I-express (IT for multiply disabled VI children, partners: The Netherlands, Iceland, Spain, Italy, Hungary)</li> <li>- Smile! (social integration techniques for VI children, partners: Slovenia, Croatia, Scotland, Czech Rep. Hungary)</li> </ul> <p>Running EU projects:</p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p>-PsycoVla (psychological and behavioral disorders plus VI, partners: The Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Croatia, Hungary)</p> <p>-TaTa Books (tactile and audio books for VI, partners: Austria, Slovakia, Czech Rep., Hungary)</p> <p>-Dental Hygiene for VI (partners: Poland, Slovakia, Hungary)</p> <p><b>Poland</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. „<i>Do it yourself Insite BAR – specialist rehabilitation programmes</i>” (01.01.2020 r. do 31.03 2023)</li> <li>2. “<i>Building a comprehensive system for the training and provision of guide dogs to blind people and the principles of its financing</i>”. Ongoing project 1.03. 2019 – 31.12.2022.</li> <li>3. “<i>I want to be a mum - a guide for women with visual impairments</i>”. Project implementer: Typhlogy Institute (Polish Association of the Blind)</li> <li>4. <i>Joining hands for tactile graphics literacy in India: an Indo-Polish Initiative</i>. Project implemented by Hungry Fingers Poland and Touch-Vision India (project introduced at Tactile Reading 2021 conference, interrupted by the pandemic)</li> <li>5. <i>Invisible Nepal: a Polish-Nepali Initiative</i>. Project implemented by Hungry Fingers Poland, HEAD Nepal, BTDC Nepal (Bhaktapur Tourism Development Committee and AANKURA Nepal (project introduced at Tactile Reading 2021 conference, interrupted by the pandemic)</li> <li>6. <b>Integrative Music University for Children</b>. Music education for children from a special school and mainstream school of music (UKW University in Bydgoszcz).</li> </ol> <p><b>Conferences:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. XIX edition of the Conference REHA FOR THE BLIND IN POLAND, under the motto " Accessibility for real" 10-13Sept. 2021 r . Organized by The Chance for the Blind Foundation.</li> <li>2. INCLUDING IN CULTURE. Museum education for visually impaired people. 23-24. Sept. 2021. Organizer: Szreniawa Museum of Agriculture (on-site and online conference)</li> <li>3. INVISIBLE HERITAGE: Conference: Part one: Invisible heritage of Ivano-Frankivsk and Lublin (on-site and online). Part two: Invisible art across the World. Making art visible to touch (youtube channel). Organizer The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, 9th April 2021</li> </ol> <p><b>Slovak Republic</b></p> <p>Lecturing 2 online webinars for the employees of public administration and local authorities organized by the plenipotentiary of the government for development of civil society aimed at accessibility of environment, information and communication for people with VI;</p> <p>5 trainings for local authorities and VI leaders aimed at accessibility in all its areas within the EDI – Erasmus+ project „From Education to Inclusion“ (EDI) aimed at accessibility (<a href="http://www.unss.sk/edi">www.unss.sk/edi</a>);</p> <p>5 on-line seminars IT Refresh for UNSS social workers (IT instructors)</p> <p>3 online seminars aimed at VI people employment</p> <p>Vision therapy course for UNSS social workers - within the project funded by the Volkswagen Foundation in Slovakia</p> <p>National meeting of professionals working with VI people – workshops aimed at seniors suffering from Alzheimer disease, people with multiple disabilities, coping with one's disability, etc.</p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p><b>Slovenia</b></p> <p>The annual two-day conference of Association of Special Education Teachers of Slovenia dealing with the problem of violence in special education environments was held in March with active participation of our members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Many training events for mainstream schoolteachers within the national project PoMoč Hand in Hand, needed to be carried out online, however, when possible it was preferred to meet in smaller groups and perform the training in person.</li> </ul>
<p>Collaborative activities and meetings with world bodies such as WBU, IAPB, UN, World Bank, and other organizations at the regional level</p>	<p><b>Poland</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>The ADVISE project - AiDing Visually Impaired Seeking Employment, supporting visually impaired people seeking employment.</b> Project implemented as part of EBU initiatives. Project implementer: ONCE.</li> <li>2. <b>PZN (Polish Association of the Blind) – continuous cooperation with EBU and WBU.</b></li> </ol> <p><b>International projects funded by EU:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>“Mobility and Orientation training for blind and partially sighted persons”.</b> Project implementer: The Maria Grzegorzewska University. Project leader: PFRON (National Fund for Rehabilitation of Persons with Special Needs. International partner: IBOS - Instituttet for Blinde og Svagsynede in Denmark w Danii (IBOS). Other partners: PZN (Polish Association of the Blind) and several local organizations.</li> <li>2. <b>Erasmus Plus Project: „DiCreNDI – Differences Create No Distances”</b> – project for social inclusion of young persons with visual impairments. Project implementer: PZN (Polish Association of the Blind). Partner countries: Albania, North Macedonia, Romania.</li> <li>3. <b>Erasmus Plus project: „ADD@ME”.</b> Project leader: UICI (Italian Asociationf of Blind and Partially Sighted People). Polish partner: PZN (Polish Association of the Blind)</li> <li>4. <b>Erasmus Plus project: “Experiencing the world through Nature”.</b> Ongoing project. October 2019 – March 2022. (Bird Life International and oranisations from several countries).</li> <li>5. <b>INVISIBLE HERITAGE:</b> exchange and implementation of good pracrice in making art accessible to persons with a visual impairment. A polish-Ukraininan project within the PL-BY-UA programme. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- workshops for museum staff and city guides in Lublin (PL) and Ivano-Frankivsk (UA) on Implications of visual impairment for appreciation of art</li> <li>- tactile graphics and tactile art workshops for persons with a visual impairment in Lublin (PL) and Ivano-Frankivsk (UA)</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. <b>Radar - Vocational Guidance and Employment of Blind and Visually Impaired People”.</b> Project coordinator: I.Ri.Fo.R. Regionale Toscano ONLUS. Ongoing project (1.11.2019 – 28.02.2022)</li> <li>7. <b>Project funded by Vysegrad Fund: "Oral health education programme for visually impaired children”.</b> Project Implementer: Medical University in Lublin (2021 – 2022)</li> </ol> <p><b>Slovak Republic</b></p> <p>Support Centre for Students with Special Needs at the Masaryk University (the Czech Republic) and FUNKA - company working in the area of accessibility (Sweden) – cooperating on an Erasmus+ project „From Education to Inclusion“ (EDI) aimed at accessibility (<a href="http://www.unss.sk/edi">www.unss.sk/edi</a>); European Blind Union (EBU) – active members of the EBU Commission for Liaising with the EU;</p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p>associate member at an Interreg project DANOVA aimed at accessibility of air transport (involved countries of the Danube region)</p> <p>EBU – AVA project aimed at accessibility of elections</p> <p>EBU – PARVIS project aimed at raising awareness of UNCRPD in connection with VI people</p> <p>EDF - board meetings, general assembly</p> <p>EBU, WBU - general assemblies</p>
ICEVI collaborative work with national governments within the region	<p><b>Poland</b>  <b>"Development and piloting of standards for organization of early intervention and family support".</b> Project implementer: The Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw - in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science</p> <p><b>Slovenia</b>  The activities and discussions on new legislation on Education of children and young people with SEN started. It will regulate the existence and tasks of centres of expertise supporting inclusive forms of education, redefine education programmes for children and young people with SEN, professional teams and placement of these children and young people into different programmes, the role of SEN guidance commission, amount of additional professional support at different levels of education, individual plans for children and young people with SEN, and the role of assistants.</p>
Awards, Recognition, etc., to ICEVI members from the region	<p><b>Hungary</b>  Beata Pronay and Emmy Csocsan were celebrated with Braille awards by MVGYOSZ for the decades of their work for people with BVI in Hungary</p> <p><b>Slovenia</b>  There were two awards of TIFLO section in 2021. The first one was received by Sara Češarek, a young, qualified teacher for children with visual impairment involved in many projects and active in professional development of the field. The second award went into the hands of our blind colleague, working in the project on social inclusion and a promoter of independent life of people with visual impairment.</p>
Human interest stories from the region as a result of ICEVI initiatives	none
Publications from the Region, that may be of interest to the viewers of ICEVI website	<p><b>Czech Republic</b>  <a href="http://www.edaplay.com">www.edaplay.com</a> and <a href="http://www.edaplay.cz">www.edaplay.cz</a> applications for iPad as well for Android for stimulation of vision for children with VI and MDVI, also they find work sheets for development of vision and communication and eye hand coordination.</p> <p><b>Hungary</b>  Gombás, J., Flamich, M., Hoffmann, R. (2021). DIGITALISATION FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT OR BLINDNESS. <a href="https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/young-people-social-inclusion-and-digitalisation">https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/young-people-social-inclusion-and-digitalisation</a>  Gombas, J., &amp; Csakvari, J. (2021). Experiences of individuals with blindness or visual impairment during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Hungary. <i>British Journal of Visual Impairment</i>.  <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/0264619621990695">https://doi.org/10.1177/0264619621990695</a>  Kiss, E., Pajor, E. (2021). Population features of VI children and their parents living in Hungary. <i>European Journal of Mental Health</i>.</p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p><a href="https://semmelweis.hu/ejmh/files/2021/06/ejmh_2021_1_KissPajor_38_52.pdf"><u>https://semmelweis.hu/ejmh/files/2021/06/ejmh_2021_1_KissPajor_38_52.pdf</u></a></p> <p><b>Poland</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Szubielska, M., Niestorowicz, E. (2021).</b> Reception of contemporary art by touch: Seeing decreases haptic aesthetic pleasure. <b>Poster</b> presented at the 32. International Congress of Psychology. Prague, 18.-23.July 2021.</li> <li><b>"Pokonamy bariery. („We'll overcome the barriers").</b> Periodicals published by PZN – Polish Association of the Blind. 1.04.2021 r. do 31.03.2024: three bi-monthly, one half-yearly, All in Braille, large print and electronic. Addressed at children, youth, adults. and parents. Onr bi-weekly addressed at parents of children with a visual impairment.</li> <li><b>"Lublin – A guidebook with tactile illustrations and Braille descriptions of historic sites".</b> Produced at The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (within the Invisible heritage Project).</li> <li><b>"Lublin - An illustrated guidebook with large print descriptions of historic sites".</b> Produced at The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (within the Invisible heritage Project).</li> <li><b>The book “Recommended Practices in Early Intervention.</b> A Guidebook for Professionals was translated and published in Polish. Warszawa: Wyd. EZRA,UKSW Sp z o.o.  <a href="https://www.eurlyaid.eu/eciguidebook-polishversion/"><u>https://www.eurlyaid.eu/eciguidebook-polishversion/</u></a>  <a href="https://www.eurlyaid.eu/eciguidebook-englishversion/"><u>https://www.eurlyaid.eu/eciguidebook-englishversion/</u></a></li> </ol> <p><b>Slovak Republic</b>  Toolkits on accessibility (environment, information, communication) designed for local authorities and people with VI – commenting on and completing, videos preparation - to be published at: <a href="http://www.unss.sk/edi"><u>www.unss.sk/edi</u></a>  10 educational videos – Basic principles of using PC – the UNSS <a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtXWVJyfCwvDgkOOGQHmQSw"><u>YouTube channel</u></a></p> <p><b>Slovenia</b>  A booklet on developing social competences produced within SMILE! project:  <a href="https://centeriris3.splet.arnes.si/files/2021/11/Publikacija_Smile_ang.pdf"><u>https://centeriris3.splet.arnes.si/files/2021/11/Publikacija_Smile_ang.pdf</u></a></p>
Forthcoming events from the region for the next six months	<p><b>Czech Republic</b>  Final exams of low vision therapist course in Prague April 2022.  Open door days in school for children with VI spring 2022</p> <p><b>Poland</b>  The eighteenth IMC (International Mobility Conference) will be held in Warsaw. Organizer: The Chance for the Blind Foundation. Dates: 22-26.05.2023</p> <p><b>Slovak Republic</b>  Publication of the above-mentioned toolkits and videos (in cooperation with the Masaryk University and Funka), final dissemination conference (Erasmus + EDI project)</p> <p><b>Slovenia</b></p>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p>Two new projects were approved in 2021 and will start their activities at the beginning of 2022:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deafblindness - raising teachers' competences for teaching deaf-blind students in the Center IRIS, a KA1 Erasmus+ project (job shadowing)</li> </ul> <p>There are two goals of the project: 1. To enhance the professional competences of teachers working in Center IRIS to work with deafblind students. New found-knowledge and experiences will help professionals working in Center IRIS: - to organize adapted learning environment, - understand the needs of deafblind students, - to form individualized programme of work - to prepare trainings for colleagues (working in Center IRIS) and parents of deafblind students. 2. To create an Action plan of educational programme adjusted for deafblind students in Slovenia. Inside this plan we are going to define all areas and stages to design adjusted educational programme for deafblind students in Slovenia. Our long-term goal is that deafblind students are recognized as a special group of children with special needs and special educational programme for deafblind students is provided as a part of school system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A new KA2 Erasmus+ School partnership project called BORDERS OF TANGIBLE.</li> </ul> <p>Partners in the project: Center IRIS (coordinator), School for visually impaired pupils Veljko Ramadanovic, Srbija, Belgrade, Scoala Gimnaziala Speciala Pentru Deficienti de Vedere, Romunija Bucuresti, Osnovna skola Dragan Kovacevic, Srbija, Beograd, Drzavno učiliste za deca i mladi so osteten vid ,Dimitar Vlahov,, Republika Severna Makedonija Skopje. The plan of the project, where the main goals are to raise the competencies of professionals who teach blind and partially sighted students and to raise the competencies of professionals who adapt tactile didactic material for the blind, addresses the needs of all participating partners. With this project, we want to establish an international network of professionals who adapt materials for the blind and partially sighted, in order to acquire new skills in adapting tactile didactic materials and use their in-depth knowledge in creating a free accessible collection. Besides that, the teachers who teach the blind and partially sighted will be informed about the collection and Instructed how to use these materials to facilitate and improve the learning process.</p>
Any other information such as research, best practices, etc., from the region	<p><b>Czech Republic</b>  New skills in using technologies by teachers and pupils when learning online</p> <p><b>Poland</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>PZN (Polish Association of the Blind)</b> celebrated 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its activities: <a href="http://www.euroblind.org/newsletter/2021/may/en/polish-association-blind-has-existed-70-years">http://www.euroblind.org/newsletter/2021/may/en/polish-association-blind-has-existed-70-years</a>  <a href="https://www.facebook.com/BlindUnion">https://www.facebook.com/BlindUnion</a></li> <li>2. <b>The “Chance for the Blind” Foundation</b> celebrated 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its activities.</li> <li>3.. <b>Museum of the city of Lodz</b> – distinction awarded by the Lodołamacz (Icebreaker) Chapter – for accessibility programmes for visitors with a visual impairment</li> </ol> <p><b>Projects implemented in higher education:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. In 2021 50 universities and colleges of higher education received grants from NCBiR (National Centre for Research and Development) to improve infrastructure and services for students and staff with special needs.</li> </ol>

Area of Reference	Description
	<p>Projects aiming at persons with a visual impairment focus on: adaptations of educational materials, specialist technology, training of administrative and teaching staff and navigation systems operating within campuses and individual buildings.</p> <p><b><u>Projects implemented by museums and art galleries:</u></b></p> <p><b>Several museums and art galleries expanded their range of audio-described exhibits and works of art. The list below includes a selection of activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Lublin, Galeria Karuzela Sztuki (Gallery "Art carousel" – "Half-shade zone" – non-visual art project for persons with a visual impairment.</li> <li>6. Lublin: Galeria Labyrinth Gallery) - "Accessible Gallery". Permanent exhibition of art works of Polish and foreign artists. The exhibition includes original art work, tactile adaptations and audio-description.</li> <li>7. National Museum in Warsaw; project "Art – Direct" - 11 workshops for persons with a visual impairment in various regional venues. Selected authentic exhibits were presented for tactual exploration (pottery, metal, sculpture, fashion), accompanied by lectures by professionals in history of art.</li> <li>8. National Museum in Gdańsk: Braille and large print guidebook to the exhibition "Dutch and Flemish paintings from the collections of the Royal Castle at Wawel and the guidebook National Museum in Gdańsk" (10.07 - 19.09.2021).</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Projects and activities implemented by Special schools:</u></b></p> <p><b>OSW Bydgoszcz (Louis Braille Center):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Erasmus Plus project: <b>A Journey to Independence</b> in partnership with "Light into Europe (Romania) and 4Youth (Greece)</li> <li>- Participation in meeting of UNESCO schools in Germany. Project" "Transforming our Schools! Polish and German ASPnet Schools Sharing Good Practices.)"</li> <li>- Social campaign "I don't see you, you see me!" – programme raising awareness of visual impairment, aiming at sighted children and students from mainstream school</li> </ul>

This report is submitted by Beáta Prónay with the collaboration of the National Representatives: Markéta Skalická CZ, Marija Jeraša SI, Judit Gombás H, Grażyna Walczak and Bogusław 'Bob' Marek PL, as well as, Michaela Hajdukova on behalf of the National Representative, Timea Hóková SK

Date: 21 December 2021

## 4 Financial Report 2021

<b><u>Balance</u></b>	<b><u>31/12/2020</u></b>
	<b>€ 48583</b>

Cash	0
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<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 48583</b>
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<b><u>Profit and Loss</u></b>	<b><u>31/12/2021</u></b>
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### Income

Membership contributions	€ 11640.00
Donations	€ 4142.00

<b>Total Income</b>	<b>€ 15782</b>
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### Expenditure

Administration Costs	€ 8035.9
Bank Fees	€ 172.32
Travel and Accommodation	€ 63.28

<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>€ 8271.5</b>
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<b>RESULT</b>	<b>€ 7510</b>
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<b>Balance as per 31.12.2021</b>	<b>€ 56093</b>
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## 5 Estimate 2022

<u>Balance</u>	<u>31/12/2021</u>
Cash	€ 56093
Total	€ 56093
<u>Profit and Loss</u>	<u>31/12/2022</u>
Income	
Membership contributions	€ 10,100
Donations	€ 4,450
Conference fees	€ 400
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>€ 14950</b>
Expenditure	
Administration Costs	€ 10,350
Bank Fees	€ 220
Travel and Accommodation	€ 380
Conference Costs	€ 2,500
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>€ 13450</b>
RESULT	€ 1500
<b>Balance as per 31.12.2022</b>	<b>€ 57593</b>

## 6 Looking to the future

In a way, it is not so easy to look to the future when we are still living with a pandemic and the outlook is not clear and now there is the threat of war amongst our neighbours and friends.

However, it is our role to look forward and positively and so we will.

One matter that is clear is the board's position on the importance of realizing the need for a strong network of professional interest groups. Fortunately, technology is at our side. In all cases, we have the opportunity to organize virtual conferences for our professional interest groups and regional conferences and to prepare them as well. If circumstances change, it is always possible to convert them into physical meetings. The board advocates for the necessity of setting up a steering committee for all professional interest groups, which would be useful for fulfilling the goal of supporting the organization of conferences in the coming years. However, this cannot come to fruition without the initiative and contributions from our members. Please feel free to visit the following webpage at <http://icevieurope.org/professional-interest-groups.php> in order to become familiar with all 7 Professional Interest Groups under the umbrella of ICEVI-Europe and register your interest to become a member of a professional interest group of your choice, by directly contacting the relevant Managerial Responsible Person(s). As mentioned previously, we aim to start another professional interest group on Cerebral Visual Impairment so please look out for further announcements. All in all then the professional interest groups present a good opportunity to engage in the exchange of knowledge and sharing of best practices with fellow professionals and practitioners in your same field of interest in promoting the full participation of people with visual impairments across all of Europe and indeed the world.

As we work towards revitalizing the ICEVI-Europe professional interest groups in the coming year, we hope to commence discussions of the initial preparations for the organization of the postponed conference in Belgium of the Early Intervention professional interest group.

For a third time, ICEVI-Europe looks forward to organizing an ICEVI-Europe Conference in French for teachers and other professionals about inclusive education in Suresnes at INSHEA this year in 2022. We will publish further details about this event as information becomes available to us.

"Sharing information and knowledge on the field of education and re/habilitation of people with visual impairment" remains our challenge. Meetings with professionals from Europe or regional meetings are the tool for sharing information and knowledge. Of course, our website and the newsletter also offer possibilities for this. Let us once again emphasize the importance of engaging our membership network to take on a proactive role by taking the initiative to organize activities of the association such as conferences of the professional interest groups and/or regional conferences, in cooperation with a member of the board.

Given the fact that a face-to-face 10<sup>th</sup> European Conference in Cluj, Romania, in 2022 could not be organized as a consequence of the ongoing pandemic, the board's decision was instead to hold a series of online webinars throughout 2022/2023 hosted by ICEVI-Europe which will be accessible to all focusing on a range of themes under the banner of "Access to Learning and Learning to Access" which was to be the original theme of the conference. We will be chairing a series of meetings to implement this new series of lectures for ICEVI-Europe and we hope to be able to bring more news on this shortly. Please visit our website's homepage frequently to familiarize yourself with any new developments regarding our initiatives and events.

Looking to the future is a task of the board, but also the members can always take the initiative, e.g. by providing articles for the newsletter or copy for the website.

Another element of importance for ICEVI-Europe is holding the General Assembly of our association in order to account for the policies pursued in the past period and the policy to be implemented in the coming period. It is during this event that official elections take place for the positions of ICEVI-Europe President, Board Members & National Representatives.

With regards to regional conferences, the board of ICEVI-Europe hopes to explore the possibilities for the 8th ICEVI Balkan Conference and 9th Conference of Eastern European Countries (let us hope peace prevails and that this is possible).

We know a certainty and that is that of the European Conference in 2025. Our Italian colleagues at the Robert Hollman Foundation have expressed their willingness to organise the 10<sup>th</sup> European Conference in Padova, Italy. Initial plans are being developed with the Host Committee of Italy in order to get further acquainted and discuss logistical matters as we work towards our milestone conference.

We would like to wish you all the best and good luck in the coming period. And our thoughts are with the families and children with visual impairment in war affected countries. We hope that peace comes soon.

John Ravenscroft,  
President

Hans Welling,  
Immediate Past President

## 7 Members of the Board as of December 31st 2021

<p><b>Dr John Ravenscroft, President</b> <a href="mailto:john.ravenscroft@ed.ac.uk">john.ravenscroft@ed.ac.uk</a></p>	
<p><b>Dr Andrea Hathazi, Vice-President</b> <i>representing the Balkan countries</i> <a href="mailto:ahathazi@yahoo.com">ahathazi@yahoo.com</a></p>	
<p><b>Dr Steve McCall, Treasurer</b> <i>representing the English speaking countries</i> <a href="mailto:s.mccall@bham.ac.uk">s.mccall@bham.ac.uk</a></p>	
<p><b>Mrs. Kathleen Vandermaelen, Secretary</b> <i>representing the German and Dutch speaking countries</i> <a href="mailto:kathleen.vandermaelen@ganspoel.be">kathleen.vandermaelen@ganspoel.be</a></p>	
<p><b>Dr Nathalie Lewi-Dumont</b> <i>representing the French speaking countries</i> <a href="mailto:nathalielewi@gmail.com">nathalielewi@gmail.com</a></p>	
<p><b>Mrs. Dorthe Marie Degn</b> <i>representing the Baltic and Nordic countries, until Nov. 2, 2021</i> <a href="mailto:ab8e@kk.dk">ab8e@kk.dk</a></p>	
<p><b>Dr Beata Pronay</b> <i>representing the Central European countries</i> <a href="mailto:pronaybea@gmail.com">pronaybea@gmail.com</a></p>	
<p><b>Mrs. Ana Isabel Ruiz López</b> <i>representing the South European countries</i> <a href="mailto:airl@once.es">airl@once.es</a></p>	

<p><b>Dr Vladimir Ruchin,</b>  <i>representing the East European countries</i>  <a href="mailto:r-vl@yandex.ru"><u>r-vl@yandex.ru</u></a></p>	
<p><b>Mr. Francis Boé</b>          Advisor of ICEVI-Europe to GPEAA  <a href="mailto:francis.boe@free.fr"><u>francis.boe@free.fr</u></a></p>	
<p><b>Mrs. Darija Udovicic Mahmuljin</b>          Advisor of ICEVI-Europe  <a href="mailto:Darija.Udovicic@Perkins.org"><u>Darija.Udovicic@Perkins.org</u></a></p>	
<p><b>Dr Hans Welling</b>  <i>Immediate Past President</i>  <a href="mailto:wellingja@yahoo.com"><u>wellingja@yahoo.com</u></a></p>	

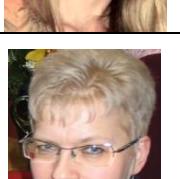
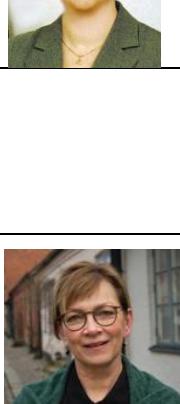


Martha Gyftakos  
 Executive Assistant to the Presidency of ICEVI-Europe

[mgyftakos@yahoo.com](mailto:mgyftakos@yahoo.com)

## 8 ICEVI REGIONS of Europe

### Baltic and Nordic Countries

Denmark <b>Mrs Dorthe Marie Degn,</b> <a href="mailto:ab8e@kk.dk">ab8e@kk.dk</a>	
Estonia <b>Mrs Monica Lövi,</b> <a href="mailto:monica.lovi@tek.tartu.ee">monica.lovi@tek.tartu.ee</a>	
Finland <b>Mr Mika Minkkinen,</b> <a href="mailto:mika.minkkinen@valteri.fi">mika.minkkinen@valteri.fi</a>	
Iceland <b>Mrs Melissa Auðardóttir</b> <a href="mailto:melissa.audardottir@midstod.is">melissa.audardottir@midstod.is</a>	
Latvia <b>Mrs Ligita Geida,</b> <a href="mailto:ligitageida@inbox.lv">ligitageida@inbox.lv</a>	
Lithuania <b>Mrs Grita Strankauskiene,</b> <a href="mailto:grita.stran@gmail.com">grita.stran@gmail.com</a>	
Norway <b>vacancy</b>	
Sweden <b>Mrs Tina Björk,</b> <a href="mailto:tina.bjork@spsm.se">tina.bjork@spsm.se</a>	

## ***English speaking Countries***

Ireland <b>Mrs Audrey Farrelly</b> <a href="mailto:AudreyFarrelly@childvision.ie">AudreyFarrelly@childvision.ie</a>	
United Kingdom, Wales <b>Mrs Sarah Hughes</b> <a href="mailto:qtvisarah@gmail.com">qtvisarah@gmail.com</a>	
United Kingdom, England <b>Mr Rory Cobb</b> <a href="mailto:rorycobb.view@gmail.com">rorycobb.view@gmail.com</a>	
United Kingdom, Scotland <b>Dr John Ravenscroft</b> <a href="mailto:John.Ravenscroft@ed.ac.uk">John.Ravenscroft@ed.ac.uk</a>	
Israel <b>Mrs Nurit Neustadt-Noy</b> <a href="mailto:nuritnoy@gmail.com">nuritnoy@gmail.com</a>	

## ***French speaking Countries***

Belgium <b>Mrs Juliette Boudru,</b> <a href="mailto:triangle.bruxelles@gmail.com">triangle.bruxelles@gmail.com</a>	
France <b>Mr Francis Boé,</b> <a href="mailto:francis.boe@free.fr">francis.boe@free.fr</a>	
France <b>Mrs Marie Renée Hector,</b> <a href="mailto:mrhector@noos.fr">mrhector@noos.fr</a>	

France <b>Mrs Michelle Collat (French speaking),</b> <a href="mailto:michele.collat@orange.fr">michele.collat@orange.fr</a>	
Switzerland <b>Mr Lucien Panchaud</b> <a href="mailto:cphv@fa2.ch">cphv@fa2.ch</a>	

## **South European Countries**

Italy <b>Mrs Maria Mencarini,</b> <a href="mailto:mencarinimaria@gmail.com">mencarinimaria@gmail.com</a> copy to <a href="mailto:archivio@irifor.eu">archivio@irifor.eu</a>	
Italy <b>vacancy</b>	
Portugal <b>vacancy</b>	
Spain <b>Mrs Elena Gastón López,</b> <a href="mailto:eql@once.es">eql@once.es</a>	
Spain <b>Mrs Ana Isabel Ruiz López,</b> <a href="mailto:airl@once.es">airl@once.es</a>	
Andorra <b>Mrs Mariona Carbonell del Castillo,</b> <a href="mailto:mariona.carbonell@gmail.com">mariona.carbonell@gmail.com</a> , school: <a href="mailto:eensm@andorra.ad">eensm@andorra.ad</a>	
Malta <b>Mr Francis Tirchett</b> <a href="mailto:socblindmalta@gmail.com">socblindmalta@gmail.com</a>	
Monaco <b>vacancy</b>	
San Marino <b>vacancy</b>	

## ***German and Dutch speaking Countries***

Austria Mrs <b>Gertrude Jaritz</b> , <a href="mailto:gerti.jaritz@hotmail.com">gerti.jaritz@hotmail.com</a>	
Belgium Mrs. <b>Stefanie Van Passen</b> , <a href="mailto:Stefanie.VanPassen@de-kade.be">Stefanie.VanPassen@de-kade.be</a>	
Germany Mrs <b>Elke Wagner</b> , <a href="mailto:wagnerluke@aol.com">wagnerluke@aol.com</a>	
Germany <b>vacancy</b>	
Germany <b>vacancy</b>	
The Netherlands <b>vacancy</b>	
Switzerland Mr <b>Christian Niederhauser</b> , <a href="mailto:c.niederhauser@blindenschule.ch">c.niederhauser@blindenschule.ch</a>	
Lichtenstein <b>vacancy</b>	
Luxembourg Mr <b>Frank Groben</b> , <a href="mailto:frank.groben@ediff.lu">frank.groben@ediff.lu</a>	
South Tirol (Italy) Mrs <b>Elisabeth Gitzl</b> , <a href="mailto:info@blindenzentrum.bz.it">info@blindenzentrum.bz.it</a>	

## ***Central European Countries***

Czech Republic Mrs <b>Marketa Skalicka</b> , <a href="mailto:marketa.skalicka@eda.cz">marketa.skalicka@eda.cz</a>	
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Hungary <b>Mrs Judit Gombas PhD,</b> <a href="mailto:gombas.judit@barczi.elte.hu">gombas.judit@barczi.elte.hu</a>	
Poland <b>Mrs Graszyna Walczak,</b> <a href="mailto:grawal20@wp.pl">grawal20@wp.pl</a>	
Poland <b>Mr Boguslaw 'Bob' MAREK,</b> <a href="mailto:forblindkids@gmail.com">forblindkids@gmail.com</a> , <a href="mailto:kulcan@kul.pl">kulcan@kul.pl</a>	
Slovak Republic <b>Ms Tímea Hóková,</b> <a href="mailto:hokova@unss.sk">hokova@unss.sk</a>	
Slovenia <b>Mrs Marija Jeraša,</b> <a href="mailto:marija.jerasa@center-iris.si">marija.jerasa@center-iris.si</a>	

### ***East European Countries***

Armenia <b>Mr Aleksan Aharonyan,</b> <a href="mailto:specschool14@yandex.ru">specschool14@yandex.ru</a>	
Azerbaijan <b>Mrs Melahet Haciyeva,</b> <a href="mailto:melahet.haciyeva@gmail.com">melahet.haciyeva@gmail.com</a>	
Belarus <b>Mr George Losik,</b> <a href="mailto:georgelosik@yahoo.com">georgelosik@yahoo.com</a>	

Georgia <b>Mrs Mariam Mikiashvili,</b> <a href="mailto:Mariam.miki@gmail.com">Mariam.miki@gmail.com</a>	
Kazakhstan <b>Mrs Karlygash (Klara) Rakisheva,</b> <a href="mailto:Klara_help@mail.ru">Klara_help@mail.ru</a>	
Moldova <b>vacancy</b>	
Russia - Central Region, North-West Federal District <b>vacancy</b>	
Russia - Ural Federal District, Siberian Federal District, Far-Eastern Federal District <b>Mrs Tsyndyma Boyko,</b> <a href="mailto:imna2002@rambler.ru">imna2002@rambler.ru</a> , <a href="mailto:imna2002@gmail.com">imna2002@gmail.com</a>	
Russia - Southern Federal District, North-Caucasian Federal District, Volga Federal District <b>Mrs Irina Sumarokova,</b> <a href="mailto:irasu@list.ru">irasu@list.ru</a>	
Ukraine <b>Mrs Evgeniya Synyova,</b> <a href="mailto:ev_sineva@hotmail.com">ev_sineva@hotmail.com</a>	
Ukraine <b>Mrs Vira Remazhevska,</b> <a href="mailto:lewenia@hotmail.com">lewenia@hotmail.com</a>	
Tajikistan <b>Mr Tengniev Kholmakhmad Ahmadovich,</b> <a href="mailto:tbu-tajiknet@mail.ru">tbu-tajiknet@mail.ru</a>	

### Balkan Countries

Albania <b>Mrs. Zhaneta Muca</b> <a href="mailto:shvsh@shvsh.org.al">shvsh@shvsh.org.al</a>	
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Bosnia and Herzegovina <b>Mr. Azur Kuduzović</b> <a href="mailto:azurkuduz@gmail.com">azurkuduz@gmail.com</a>	
Bulgaria <b>Mrs. Mira Tzvetkova-Arsova</b> <a href="mailto:miratz@abv.bg">miratz@abv.bg</a>	
Croatia <b>Mrs. Nikolina Jurić Tanfara</b> <a href="mailto:nikolinaj@malidom.hr">nikolinaj@malidom.hr</a>	
Cyprus <b>vacancy</b>	
North Macedonia <b>Mrs Elena Hristova,</b> <a href="mailto:hristova_e@yahoo.com">hristova_e@yahoo.com</a>	
Greece <b>Mr Vassilis Argyropoulos,</b> <a href="mailto:vassargi@uth.gr">vassargi@uth.gr</a>	
Montenegro <b>vacancy</b>	
Romania <b>Mrs Andrea Hathazi,</b> <a href="mailto:ahathazi@yahoo.com">ahathazi@yahoo.com</a>	
Romania <b>vacancy</b>	
Turkey <b>Mrs Songül Atasavun Uysal,</b> <a href="mailto:songula@hacettepe.edu.tr">songula@hacettepe.edu.tr</a>	
Turkey <b>Mr. Onder Islek,</b> <a href="mailto:islekonder@hotmail.com">islekonder@hotmail.com</a>	

Turkey Ms. <b>Emine AYYILDIZ</b> , <a href="mailto:ayyildizemine@yahoo.com">ayyildizemine@yahoo.com</a>	
Serbia Mrs <b>Aleksandra Grbović</b> , <a href="mailto:sgrbovic@ptt.rs">sgrbovic@ptt.rs</a> , <a href="mailto:alexandragrbovic@gmail.com">alexandragrbovic@gmail.com</a>	