

ICEVI European Newsletter

Issue 62, Volume 23 number 1, April 2017

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Preface of April 2017 Newsletter

Dear Colleagues,

It is with great pleasure to announce that the Belgian Host Committee is working hard on the last preparations for the **9th ICEVI European Conference: Empowered by dialogue**, which will take place July 2 to July 7 2017 at the facilities of the Sint-Lodewijkscollege in Bruges, Belgium. In the coming weeks, the Program Committee will organize its last meeting in Leuven, Belgium in preparation of the conference. We all hope that it will be a successful conference.

We promise this European Conference will be of great interest to the conference attendees. We would like to encourage you to visit the [Conference Website and register yourself as a conference participant](#).

Please remember that you should register online for the European Conference before April 30, 2017, in order to take advantage of the discounted conference registration fee.

Look to the [website of the conference](#) for further information regarding the important dates & deadlines, conference theme, program, registration, paper submission, venue & accommodation, and other practical information.

At the 9th ICEVI European Conference, you will have the opportunity to meet and listen to Keynote Speakers, who are well-known experts throughout Europe, as well as, listen to very interesting and special presentations during the plenary, parallel, workshop and poster sessions.

Take advantage of the opportunity to become an active part of the exchange of knowledge and expertise and sharing of best practices within a network of people and institutions promoting the social inclusion of people with visual impairment.

We kindly ask for your support in disseminating this information to other people and professionals in the field of visual impairment interested in its content and promote the European Conference within your countries.

We are sure, in dialogue, we will empower each other, and we will be looking for a way to improve the independence, social participation and wellbeing of people with visual impairments, definitely three aspects that significantly matter in human life.

As known the meetings of the sub regions and the General Assembly will also take place during the conference. Moreover, workshops of the ICEVI-Europe Professional Interest Groups will also take place during the conference.

In May, there will be an extra issue of the newsletter, the Special Conference Newsletter, which will include important information about the European Conference, the General Assembly and the Regional Meetings.

The Deadline for submission of papers is April 30, 2017. Presenters must register before April 30, 2017.

Follow the news and progress on the European Conference website!

Please do not forget to pay your membership fees of ICEVI-Europe. It will provide you with voting rights in the General Assembly, which will be held during the European Conference. The payment of your membership fees also entitles you to a discount on the conference registration fee.

We all look forward to meeting you in Bruges!

On behalf of the Board of ICEVI-Europe,

Martha Gyftakos

Executive Assistant to the Presidency of ICEVI-Europe



Last wailing letter to a Great Woman, Betty

My dear Friend, Betty,

I had never thought that I would not have time to talk to you anymore. I hope that my last letter will find you somehow, somewhere in heaven.

We met in Cracow, Poland in 2000 during the ICEVI European Conference thanks to Larry Campbell who introduced you. Since we met, we felt special likes to each other and we became good friends.

In a year time, Betty, you sent me an invitation to Athens to the ICEVI Balkan Conference of employability to give a lecture. I was honoured and impressed by the invitation. You were so nice to spend most of your free time with me – you showed me the city, the special Greek „disco“ where young people were dancing on Greek folk music, you introduced me to your nice parents. You, as the main organizer and the heart of the conference had so much energy, running around, talking to everybody constantly, hanging on your mobile phone.... I have never seen someone working so hard like you.

And conferences, workshops went by, always greeted each other as we just said goodbye a day before. We had deep conversations on professional matters – with sharing similar ideas and thoughts on the education and rehabilitation of persons with visual impairment. Our discussions always reached to the point that there was still so much to do, and even if there had been great improvement in our countries, our biggest mission was breaking down mental barriers. In 2013, during the 8th ICEVI-European Conference in Istanbul you asked me if I would run for the election of being a Board member. You were so enthusiastic that I said yes. So since then our relationship has been upgraded to an official level.

As you became the president, I had the opportunity to see closer how effectively, how firmly you could work, I often thought that you were some superhuman coming from the Mars? Yes, you have devoted your life to making people understanding blindness, fighting against discrimination, providing good quality education to children and youths with visual impairment and supporting professionals throughout Europe. Thanks to your active involvement, ICEVI-Europe has organized many events, became a vivid professional companionship. What I really admired was your special sensibility towards Eastern- and Central-European countries.

Your passing away is unbelievable. I will always remember of you as Saint Bernard wrote: "I am sure that neither distance nor death or absence can separate those who lived by one spirit, tied up by one love."

With eternal love,
Krisztina Kovács

Announcement of ICEVI European conference

An opportunity to meet, connect and exchange expertise

Make sure you're there!



To improve **quality of life** for a person with a visual impairment, different ways of support are recommended to focus on and enhance **independency, participation** and **well-being** at different stages of life.

A lot of inspiring topics are already included in the program either in oral presentations, workshops or in several poster presentations.

We are glad to present possible applications ranging from Early childhood, school-age, young adults, to adults and the elderly. You can be sure that the following topics are represented: social contact, diagnoses, independency, families, early birth, braille, ICT, teaching, reading, languages, art, leisure, work, well-being, CVI, social participation, mdvi, transition, professional training, communication and inclusion, self-confidence, deaf-blindness, MDVI, social inclusion, mobility, the elderly, technology, staff training, inclusive education, universal design, audio description, accessibility, parents, assessment, etc.

For more information and registration visit the [conference website](#).

Please note: Prices change on the 1st of May.

Looking forward to meeting you in the beautiful city of Bruges,

Sincerely,
The host committee



Final Announcement of ICEVI-Europe Professional Interest Groups



A Call to Join ICEVI-Europe Professional Interest Groups

Dear Professionals and Colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that we are announcing the continuation of the **ICEVI-Europe Professional Interest Groups**. In light of the upcoming 2017 ICEVI-European Conference in Bruges, Belgium, we would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to join a Professional Interest Group of your choice and engage in the exchange of knowledge and sharing of best practices with fellow professionals and practitioners in your same field of interest.

Professional Interest Groups of ICEVI-Europe were established with the purpose of bringing together scientists, academics and professionals who work in the same specific field in order to exchange knowledge and experiences about the education and rehabilitation of people with visual impairments. ICEVI-Europe recognizes the necessity of professional interest groups and embraces the cooperation between professionals working in the field of visual impairment, promoting the necessary framework for full participation.

Kindly find below the various ICEVI-Europe Professional Interest Groups and the contact information of their respective Leader(s), for your information:

- **ICT** – Marian Padure (marian.padure@ubbcluj.ro)
- **Early Intervention** – Ana Isabel Ruiz López (airl@once.es) & Elena Gastón López (egl@once.es)
- **Teaching and Teacher Training** (Advisory Teachers, Subject Teachers, Classroom Teachers, & Teacher Trainers) – Tarja Hännikäinen, (tarja.hannikainen@valteri.fi), Andrea Hathazi, Nathalie Lewi-Dumont, & Steve McCall
- **Habilitation** (Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, & Speech Therapists) – Maria Tsekoura (mariatsekoura@hotmail.com)
- **Rehabilitation** (Orientation & Mobility Instructors, Daily Living Skills and Low-Vision) – Beata Pronay (pronaybea@gmail.com)

- **European network for psychologists and related professions working in the field of Visual Impairment, ENPVI** – Peter Verstraten (pverstraten@robertcoppes.nl)
- **Vocational Training and Employment Rehabilitation** – **VACANCY**
- **Parents Interest Group** – Önder İşlek (islekonder@hotmail.com)

The ICEVI-Europe Professional Interest Groups will organize workshops during the 9th ICEVI-European Conference in Bruges, Belgium, which will take place on July 2-7, 2017 at the Sint-Lodewijkscollege. The workshops will be interactive and allow for interesting discussion. Workshops will fit with the title and theme of the conference, “Empowered by Dialogue,” centered on the Quality of Life Framework by Dr. Robert Schalock. Each Workshop will be a 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Within the 9th ICEVI-European Conference, there will be an opportunity to discuss together a permanent structure of the ICEVI-Europe Professional Interest Groups. In this instance, a small committee serving the purpose of a steering group will be formed. As one of its instruments through which it facilitates the exchange of professional knowledge and expertise, ICEVI-Europe is a strong advocate of the establishment of strong and independent special Interest Groups that promote networking with regard to specific aspects of education and rehabilitation of the visually impaired.

The ICEVI-Europe Professional Interest Group Workshops are scheduled to take place during parallel sessions within the conference program. Please note that there will be a place on the European Conference Registration Form, where you can click on and select the workshop of which ICEVI-Europe Professional Interest Group you would like to attend.

We strongly encourage you to directly contact one of the Professional Interest Group Leaders in order to sign up as a member of the ICEVI-Europe Professional Interest Group of your choice.

On behalf of the ICEVI-Europe Board, we look forward to having you join one of our Professional Interest Groups and moreover, participate in one of our workshops held during the upcoming European Conference.

Sincerely Yours,
The Board of ICEVI-Europe

Letter from the Chair of the European Coalition for Vision, David Hewlett

May I begin by putting again on public record our deepest sadness and condolences to ICEVI- Europe on the passing of Mrs. Panagiota (Betty) Leotsakou earlier this year. Betty's sad passing is a great loss to us all and our deepest sympathies go to our colleagues at ICEVI-Europe and her family.

Betty and ICEVI-Europe were founder members of the European Coalition for Vision (ECV) and they were right to be so. We at the ECV hope that we will be bold enough to continue to deliver the work and vision that Betty and ICEVI-Europe shared.

The ECV is a unique coalition across Europe in that it brings together ophthalmologists, optometrists, opticians, public health experts, academics and researchers, patients and user voices, the charitable sector and manufacturers. Although we are an informal yet committed coalition of partners, transparency and governance are key to how we operate: we do not have membership fees but rather agree collectively what projects to undertake and how we will fund them; and no commercial company can be a member other than through a representative association.

Half of our 28 members are European organisations, 25% global organisations and 25% European country-specific organisations, but collectively we represent every country, nation and population group in Europe. Our membership is also 43% NGOs with the remainder split almost equally between eye doctors, professional associations, manufacturers and academics. This makes us a unique voice for eye health and fairness at EU Parliamentary level and with Commissioners and Directorates General and accounts, in large part, for our popularity and success with MEPs, officials and other NGOs.

In recent years, we have made World Sight Day the centrepiece of our annual awareness raising activities on the importance of eye health, looking after your eyes and getting regular checks for eye pathology as well as refractive correction. In addition to our work on World Sight Day, we also support specific eye health campaigns, such as World Diabetes Day and International Glaucoma Week.

There is so much still to be done particularly as the European population, like the global population, is ageing. Longer life represents a major public health success, but we do need to take collective action to ensure that we avoid its potential downsides and preserve independence and healthy and active ageing into the new older age. Too much eye disease still goes unnoticed until it is too late, and loss of vision is closely linked with loss of independence, isolation and frailty among older people. As a Coalition we have become members of

the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing where we are contributing specifically on falls prevention and integrated care.

The ECV is also deeply concerned with the rights of people living with visual impairment. This year we have been pleased to give our strong and vocal support to the Marrakesh Treaty which facilitates access to published works that are protected by copyright for persons who are blind, visually impaired, or otherwise print disabled. We were delighted with the European Court of Justice ruling in February which allows the EU to ratify the treaty on behalf of the Member States. This will be a huge step forward in equality for partially sighted and blind Europeans and the ECV will continue to urge the EU to implement the Treaty with minimum delay.

Like everyone else in Europe we are feeling the effects of austerity. As a Coalition of volunteers we all contribute what we can, either in cash or in kind, and we fundraise for specific projects which we consider to be necessary and in the interests of the citizens of Europe.

This year in particular we are campaigning to support a public health research project to analyse Eurostat data on self-reported visual and hearing impairment. This should provide baseline data on which we can build in future years both to raise the profile of eye health issues at the European level and through our colleagues and partners in individual Member States. Raising the necessary funds is going to be a mammoth task but we are looking forward to the challenge.

We are also seeking to gain a slot at the European Public Health conference in Stockholm at the end of this year to present to the wider public health community across Europe on the relationship between vision and hearing loss and the ageing European population, how these outcomes link with health inequalities and what we can all be doing to mitigate these challenges in a cost effective way.

So, as ICEVI-Europe members will see, although funding is short we nevertheless have an ambitious and exciting programme to improve eye health, prevent more people from losing their sight and to make life fairer, easier and better for people who are living with a visual impairment across Europe.

We will continue to use all our muscle to get these messages across to political and system leaders throughout Europe and look forward very much to continuing to work with the ICEVI-Europe to deliver Betty's legacy in the coming years.

Our very best wishes to all ICEVI-Europe members.

David Hewlett
ECV Chair



Inclusive Education in Azerbaijan and Russia: Institutional aspect

Ruchin Vladimir, Assistant professor of Department of philosophy SSTU
Y.A. Gagarin

Haciyeva Melahet, Azerbaijan Republic Ministry of Education, Head of De-institutionalization and Child Protection Department

According to the historical challenges, Azerbaijan and Russia carry out the fundamental social transformations. At present, the institutional order is being formed, which is realized by a set of democratic social institutions, as evidenced by the reports of the World Bank and the International Financial Institutions.

One of the modern institutions - the Institute of Education – is being formed today in close cooperation with UNICEF and ICEVI, which really contributes to synergetic processes in the transitive period of society. Today, this renewed Institute is successfully integrating society, being based on the principle of inclusion, in both countries. Socialization and social solidarity, especially with unprotected groups of populations, are the main goal of inclusion.

As for the structure, inclusion in education is a system based on three main components: an accessible environment, education of people with disabilities and the technology of social adaptation through an extensive network of care and rehabilitation, including people with visual impairments. As a rule, these components are being created step-by-step in accordance with the regularity of the institutionalization process, which has the identical temporality both in Azerbaijan and Russia. Identity is represented by the synchronicity of key state decisions and the identity of the practical steps in the social sphere. The existing differences in the regional transformation processes are related, as a rule, with the socio-cultural peculiarity.

Similarities and differences in the social policies of the two countries are easy to detect by the statement of the key decisions in the field of inclusive education. Let us turn to the facts. Azerbaijan has today approved the state educational programs, such as: "Azerbaijan 2020: Look into the Future", "State Strategy for the Development of Education in the Republic of Azerbaijan", "State Program on development of inclusive education for disabled people in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2016 - 2023", the joint project of the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan and the Fund UNICEF called "Implementation of inclusive education at the primary level of education", The program of Heydar Aliyev Foundation on strengthening of the material, technical base and training resources of schools for children with disabilities.

In Russia, there were recently adopted the Government Decree "On approval of the state program of the Russian Federation "Accessible Environment" for 2011 - 2020", the Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation", which takes into account the problems of inclusive education, Presidential Decree "On the National strategy for children's interests for 2012 – 2017".

Along with government decisions, many activities are carried out within public organizations, including international ones. Among them, there was the first International scientific-practical conference of ICEVI (Saratov, 2008) and the fifth International Scientific and Practical Conference of ICEVI (Baku, 2011). Both conferences were carried out with the participation of representatives of the Blind Society, Teachers' Unions, educational organizations and academic institutions.

The process of institutionalization, in terms of Parsons' ideas, is traditionally divided into three stages. The first one - preparatory – is the emergence of certain cultural, social and economic conditions, the second stage - is the so-called objectification, expressed in a consolidation in the mass consciousness of cultural symbols, rules and regulations of the new social phenomenon, and the third one - is when there is a legitimation of the social order and the new social institute goes beyond one generation.

Thus, Azerbaijan and Russia, except focusing attention at the contradictions of the historical process, are successfully overcoming the second phase of the institutionalization of inclusive education. This stage requires close interaction both with the CIS and EU countries, which will allow us to select the effective country-specific social policies on continuing basis.

Nano's Mischief

Romana Chalupová

In 2016 a book called NANO ´S MISCHIEV was published by the Země, z.s. association. The book is meant for children of early age with visual impairment and multiple disabilities who have difficulties understanding common illustrations.



The book includes real objects: guide Nanous, doll Rozarka, a spring powered toy car, set of cups, set of cutlery, optotypes Lea Symbols(R). First the child gets to know the objects by touching and feeling them. Then the child will see photos of these objects in the book. Personal experience will help the child to further understand what it sees. The book starts with simple activities and continues with more advanced tasks. The objects also serve as a basic set for sight development.

The book includes above mentioned optotypes LEA SYMBOLS(R) (a wheel, a square, an apple and a house). Parents can get ready for the check up at the eye doctor's in the relaxed ambience of their own homes. The multisensory set contains also Nanous ´s Braille sheets with samples of the Braille alphabet and a memory game (pexeso). The book also includes a manual for parents on how to use the objects and the book and how to develop sight and the child's other skills in the form of a game and other simple activities.

The book has 34 sheets. Sheets are laminated with a matte or glossy finish. 10 photographs have a relief finish, the book also contains a spring powered toy car and three haptic graphomotor exercises.

Consultants: Dr. Lea Hyvärinen, PaedDr. Markéta Skalická, Mgr. Lucie Bartusková, Mgr. Irena Assis dos Santos, Tereza Janošková, Dis.

The book was published with the help of foundations, private companies and volunteers. 160 books are being distributed to the families of children with disabilities through the network of social services around the Czech Republic.

We are currently preparing publishing the book NANO 'S MISCHIEF in the Slovak Republic with the support of IKEA Bratislava, s.r.o.



We would like to publish the book around the world now. If you are interested in cooperation with us, if you are working in early care or if you are interested in contributing by donation, please contact us.

Let's change the world together

ZEMĚ, z.s.

Romana Chalupová, David Najbrt

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How to introduce a real world through the EDA PLAY ELIS app

Authors: **Markéta Skalická**, low vision therapist, **Ivana Bajgarová**, app development coordinator



The non-profit organization EDA, its Early Intervention Centre in Prague, Czech Republic, provides early intervention services to help the families of visually and multiply impaired children, from the child's birth up to 7 years of his/her age.

EDA has been developing the iPad apps for more than 3 years, always inspired by the vision training of real visually impaired children and always on the basis of methodology of vision perception development.

EDA has developed 4 applications: EDA PLAY, EDA PLAY TOBY, EDA PLAY PAULI, and EDA PLAY ELIS for iPad devices (see more at <http://www.edaplay.com/>). These apps help children train their vision and fine motor skills. Designed under the supervision of experts in the field of vision stimulation and early intervention.

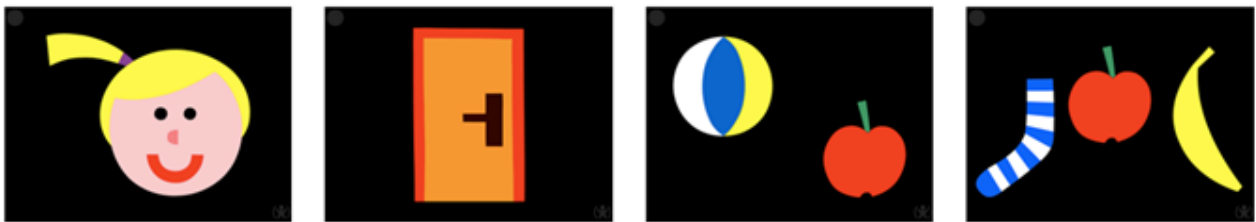
Apps for CVI children

The EDA PLAY PAULI app, a story of a single day in life of a girl called Pauli, for its simplicity, has become a favourite app among parents of children with central vision impairment (CVI). This game can be played by children at the stage when they start discovering the sequence of a plot and when they begin to understand simple stories. This app was developed considering children with fine and even severe motor disabilities. The player progresses through the game by simply touching the screen. A new game, released this January, the EDA PLAY ELIS app, could be played by CVI children as well.



About the new EDA PLAY ELIS app

This simple but highly motivating game provides cause and effect actions as well as the EDA PLAY PAULI app, but the scenes and touching activities are more challenging: there are several situations where children have to touch a specific picture or area, and the illustrated scenes often consist of two or more pictures. All the pictures are in bright colours and rendered against the black background.



The EDA PLAY ELIS app is tailor-made for children with central vision impairment (CVI). These children prefer perceiving through their other senses, especially hearing and the sense of touch. That is why interesting sound effects are integrated into this app. A repeated moment of opening a door drives the motivation to follow the plot. Through repetition, children with CVI learn to recognize shown activities.

Children know from their home life about baking a cake or doing the laundry. In the EDA PLAY ELIS app, they can try baking a cake or putting the laundry in the washing machine. These situations might appear easy, yet children with CVI have a problem connecting the illustration with a real-life situation. For a satisfactory life, they need to understand such connections.

Play together, describe and enjoy everyday activities

By showing real-life situations, we can help children understand what is depicted in the picture. Take your iPad with the app to the washing machine and compare the reality and the image in the game. When baking the real cake, we can describe how the activity is portrayed in the app and what the real eggs, flour or bowl look like. By touching the real things and comparing with the illustrations in the app, we can help children grasp the meaning of a picture and reality.



Join up more senses in the game

As a parent or assistant get inspired by the iPad game to play the real-life games: In the app by simple touch we get a yellow duck in the bath. We can play with a real yellow duck toy, in a bowl full of water or full of rice. Children can touch the real toy, hear the real sound of splash-splash water and compare it with the sound in the app. When filling the bowl with rice, children can look for the duck popping up in the bowl, and then pull out the toy. Watch how the kid's attention is captivated by the crackle sound of grains of rice. Let children engage with as many types of senses as they can.

Report of the 6th ECPVI

The 6th European Conference on Psychology and Visual Impairment (6th ECPVI) this time was held in Budapest between 10-12 November 2016. The „Psychological Survival Skills in a Sighted World” was the title given by Peter Rodney the originator of this interest group of ICEVI EUROPE.

The conference was a worthy follower of the series of successful conferences which started ten years before and was first held in Copenhagen, Denmark in the Instituttet for Blinde og Svagesynede (Institute for the Blind and Partially Sighted (IBOS)). The second of the series was held in Huizen The Netherlands in Royal Dutch Visio and was organized by Peter Verstraten with a great

success. Third time we gathered in Vilnius, in the Lithuanian Training Centre for the Blind and Partially Sighted (LASUC). That was organized by Ingrida Gabrialaviciute with the participation of professionals from 18 countries within Europe. The 4th Conference was organized by Vera Heyl in the Pädagogische Hochschule Heidelberg, visited by the representatives of 21 European countries. We met for the 5th time in Bratislava in 2014 with the participation of 70 professionals, organized by Tímea Hóková and her team with the support of the Slovak Blind Union (UNSS) and the Comenius University Bratislava.

This time we had the honour of hosting the 6th ECPVI in Budapest by the Eötvös University Faculty of Special Educational Needs and by the Foundation for the Development of Special Educational Needs. This time we had 88 participants from 17 different countries. The presentations were held in two plenary sessions and the conference offered place for two workshops and also for poster presentations. All presentations and posters can be visited on the website <http://enpvi.net/budapest-2016/>.

The Conference started with the informal meeting on the 10th of November in Central Café (http://www.centralekavehaz.hu/galeria_epulet) with a great atmosphere. The Conference was opened on the 11th in the morning with the greetings of the Dean of the Faculty Prof. Dr. P. Zaszkalicky, Prof. Dr. P. Szalay, Vice Rector of Science of ELTE, P. Nádas as the President of the co-organizing Foundation, by Betty Leotsakou as President of European Committee of ICEVI, and by P. Rodney and P. Verstraten in the name of ENPVI of ICEVI and Krisztina Kovács as director for the Disability Center of ELTE.

The chair of the morning session of the first conference day was Peter Rodney, the key note presentation was given by Dr. Sabina Kef, from Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam with the title: Social participation from adolescence to young adulthood: results from an accelerated longitudinal research from 1996 through 2016. The following 6 presentations covered different fields of social participation from university studies to sports and necessary social skills.

The afternoon programme continued with the two workshops: how to support adults with VI and different additional problems, the other about a framework of practice with clients in our field. After the workshops the plenary session had two topics: Ageing and visual impairment with autism 4-2 presentations.

After the interesting but long working day we had a reception in the School for the Blind in Budapest, in its beautiful auditorium and a short concert was included by musicians with visual impairment, members of the Harmony Foundation. Among the five pieces were Liszt, Fauré, Rodrigo.

On the second conference day, the keynote paper was about early childhood mental health by B- Prónay and I. Góczan-Szabó and the first plenary session was organized around the topic of the Family with 4 presentations. The second part of the day followed by 4 presentation on Assessment.

In the poster session 9 different topics were presented.

Special thanks for the very successful organization to the Co-Dean Dr. Krisztina Stefanik responsible for scientific and international relations and to her team!

Beáta Prónay

EU ratifies the Marrakesh treaty

Dear ECV Members,

I am delighted to inform you that the European Court of Justice has today ruled that the European Union has the competence to ratify the Marrakesh Treaty on behalf of all member states. This is an excellent outcome for blind and partially sighted Europeans as it will provide access to the same standard and range of works in alternative formats throughout the EU. We hope and will continue to urge the EU to implement the treaty with the minimum of delay.

Actions

The ECV has tweeted our support for the ruling, and retweeted some helpful links from our partners. We encourage members to share these tweets or write their own.

Resources

A concise explanation of the ruling can be found here:

<http://www.euractiv.com/section/digital/news/copyright-waiver-for-visually-impaired-people-greenlit-by-eu-court/>.

The press release from the ECJ can be found here:

<http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2017-02/cp170013en.pdf>.

The World Blind Union is producing a guide to implementing the Marrakesh Treaty, which includes advice on putting the treaty into practice within national law. The guide is unfortunately not free to access and is available for pre-order here: <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-world-blind-union-guide-to-the-marrakesh-treaty-9780190679651?cc=us&lang=en#>.

As a reminder, the ECV's original press release in support of the Marrakesh Treaty can be found here: <http://www.ecvision.eu/proct2016>.

Presenting the EBU Manual for Inexperienced Jobseekers with a Visual Impairment

By: **Gary May**, EBU Information Officer

Within the current economic climate it is difficult for many people to find employment. This difficulty is considerably increased for blind and partially sighted people, as was clearly illustrated in the European Blind Union (EBU) ['Hidden Majority'](#) reports produced between 2008-2012 and which examined the economic inactivity of blind and partially sighted people in a range of European countries. In order to help rectify this situation, EBU carried out its first training scheme in 2015 to assist young blind and partially sighted people to gain employment. The training was repeated in 2016. The course was free to participants, but in return they agreed to organise discussion sessions of their own, in their individual countries and languages after finishing the training. This means that by training a limited number of people, EBU was able to reach out to much larger numbers on a local or national level. As a result of the courses a manual was produced, which has been improved and refined with the experience gained.

The objective of the manual (and the training courses) is to assist young people through all the stages of the job seeking process, from important first steps such as reflecting on their competences (skills, knowledge and attitudes) and their professional objectives, to writing an effective C.V. and cover letter. It then continues through the interview stage, helping young blind and partially sighted job seekers acquire skills in order to prepare for and face job interviews, focussing on sometimes neglected areas such as presentational skills and how to deal with non-verbal communication. Most importantly, the manual contains information that is specific to visually impaired job seekers, for instance on how and when to communicate about their disability.

The manual is of course primarily aimed at the young job seekers themselves, but will also prove extremely useful to job counsellors, employment agencies and national government job centres, as the people working in such institutions often have little or no experience in meeting and interacting with people with a visual impairment. Employers will also be able to benefit from the Manual as it will give them hints on how better to greet and adapt to the needs of visually impaired candidates and employees, and thus help break down the barriers and the preconceived ideas that employing a visually impaired person is excessively costly and difficult.

EBU is very pleased that, with the financial assistance of our member in Switzerland, the Manual is now also available in French and German. EBU hopes that this Manual will be useful and encourages all relevant organisations to use it and spread the information as widely as possible. Any further translations of the manual would also be most welcome, but please inform EBU

if you plan to do so, in case, in the meantime we already have a translation available. Further information is available from the EBU office at ebu@euroblind.org. We also invite you to consult the [employment page](#) on the EBU website and check out the [employment information](#) on the useful links page.

The manual can be downloaded in pdf or docx formats in English, French and German from the [EBU website](#). The manual was produced with financial support from the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union.

Nature for All Launches New Website www.naturefortheblind.com to Bring Outdoor Experiences to the Blind and Visually Impaired

Nature for All has launched a new website, Nature for the Blind, at www.naturefortheblind.com to provide information about Braille trails, sensory gardens and other outdoor experiences available for the visually impaired and others with disabilities. Founded in 2013 by Evan Barnard, Nature for All is an organization dedicated to providing outdoor experiences for the visually impaired and others with disabilities through the construction of inclusive Braille trails and sensory gardens in public areas all over the world, as well as outdoor programs and events for the visually impaired and opportunities for student volunteers to join visually impaired youth for nature experiences. The new website provides information on 165 Braille trails and sensory gardens located in 28 countries around the world, plus other opportunities for the visually impaired such as schools for the blind, other educational programs, outdoor sports, and travel resources.

According to the World Health Organization, approximately 285 million adults and children worldwide are blind or visually impaired. Some are born blind or with limited vision, others lose their vision over time through disease or aging, and some, such as veterans, experience traumatic injuries.

Access to the outdoors and nature is important to the health and education of all individuals regardless of age, location, or physical capabilities. Navigating the outdoors is especially challenging for the visually impaired, but there are opportunities to make experiencing the outdoors safer and more accessible for those with disabilities. Imagine being visually impaired and trying to walk along an outdoor path with only a cane, a seeing-eye dog, or a companion for guidance. Braille trails and sensory gardens offer the visually impaired opportunities for increased mobility and access to nature through an independent outdoor experience. Tactile additions such as Braille signage, guide ropes and path markers allow the visually impaired to enjoy trails and

gardens without assistance, and accessible pathways remove barriers to mobility regularly experienced by those with disabilities.

A Braille Trail is a nature trail with Braille informational signage and physical aides that allow the visually impaired to experience the trail unassisted. Braille trails usually include a guide rope or rails for the visually impaired to hold and follow along a guide dog friendly path, with Braille informational signage about the natural surroundings and stations to experience physical trail features placed at key points along the guide rope. Some trails have tactile walkways to provide direction, others have audio components such as guided audio tours or smartphone access, and many have features making them wheelchair-accessible.

A sensory garden is designed to provide tactile experiences through the usage of specific plants in a specially designed layout to create opportunities and accommodations for the visually impaired and others with disabilities to enjoy the touch, sounds and scents of the outdoors. Sensory gardens utilize aromatic and textural plants, and often have Braille informational signage, guide ropes or rails, audio features, and tactile pathways for the visually impaired to walk along the paths unassisted. Many sensory gardens have wheelchair-accessible walkways and raised garden beds.

Always interested in nature, Evan Barnard started working with the visually impaired community at age 12 in 2010 when he helped clear pathways and replace stolen Braille signs along a vandalized Braille trail in the Nature Conservancy-owned Marshall Forest in Rome, Georgia. Barnard became involved with the local Rome-Floyd County chapter of the Georgia Council of the Blind and was immediately drawn to the people. He learned about the difficulties the visually impaired face in everyday life and especially outdoors, and began advocating for increasing their access to natural areas. Barnard eventually designed and built another Braille nature trail, the Whispering Woods Braille Trail, to give more visually impaired people access to the outdoors. The trail was designed with input from members of the Georgia Council of the Blind and built by student and adults volunteers with grants and corporate donations. The finalized Braille trail was officially dedicated with a nature walk for Georgia Council of the Blind members in 2014.

"The main goal was to promote natural environments so people without sight could enjoy the sounds, smells, tastes, and feel of nature just the same as their sighted peers," stated Marsha Farrow, past president and current treasurer of the Georgia Council of the Blind. "Blind and visually impaired children especially need the opportunity to experience the outdoors and realize that they can successfully participate in sports and enjoy nature like children who are not visually impaired. These trails promote much needed opportunities for physical exercise, and have provided many teachable moments for children and adults to respect, conserve and love the beauty of our forests."

Barnard began coordinating local nature walks and programs along the new Braille trail for visually impaired youth and adults, creating the organization Nature for All to bring student volunteers together with visually impaired youth to share nature experiences. While researching building a new Braille trail at the Georgia Lions Camp for the Blind, he discovered there were Braille trails and sensory gardens in other cities across the U.S., and even around the world. However, there was no directory or way for the visually impaired to find these mostly unpublicized trails and gardens, and many visually impaired people were unaware the opportunities existed, even in their own communities.

Now 18 years old and a freshman at the University of Georgia majoring in ecology, Barnard decided to expand the scope of Nature for All to include a website at www.naturefortheblind.com to link visually impaired people from across the U.S. and other countries with accessible outdoor experiences. The website provides locations and information about Braille nature trails and sensory gardens for the visually impaired and those with other physical disabilities in the United States and around the world. The directory lists detailed information on 165 Braille trails and sensory gardens found in 28 countries worldwide, including 93 trails in 31 different U.S. states and Puerto Rico. These trails and gardens are incredibly diverse in terms of location, natural features, trail design, and opportunities for interaction. Some U.S. states like California and Massachusetts have as many as nine different Braille trails and sensory gardens, and internationally South Africa has 14 Braille trails, most at national parks. There are even tours available for the visually impaired to travel to multiple national parks around South Africa and experience the different Braille trail locations with others. Some Braille trails have themes, such as a trail in Tennessee based on the book series *The Chronicles of Narnia* and a discovery Braille trail in South Africa based on fossils.

The Nature for the Blind website also provides information on the history of Braille trails, the importance of connecting those with disabilities to the outdoors, links to outdoor and travel resources for the blind and visually impaired, and other educational opportunities and programs. Educational resources on the website include links to schools for the visually impaired around the world, as well as summer camps, education programs and other informational links. Contacts for outdoor sports for the visually impaired highlighted on the site include golf, horseback riding, beeper ball, bowling, plus many others, including unconventional opportunities such as blind snow skiing and wind surfing.

"The website provides resources for the visually impaired to find opportunities to enjoy the outdoors wherever they live or visit," noted Evan Barnard, founder of Nature for All and the website's creator. "My goal is to allow people with vision loss to fully engage in the natural wonders of our planet and to promote

the importance of creating opportunities for inclusive outdoor experiences in public areas for people with disabilities in communities around the globe.”

Linking the visually impaired and others with disabilities to nature enhances their physical health and education, as well as encouraging interactions with non-disabled community members. Providing accessible opportunities for outdoor experiences is a way to remove barriers to mobility, increase public understanding and access to nature for disabled populations, and establish communities with sustainable and inclusive outdoor areas and other developments that benefit all people regardless of their physical abilities.

Website visitors from around the world are encouraged to share information and photos of local Braille trails and sensory garden and other outdoor opportunities and events for the blind in their community with Nature for All at communications@nature4all.org for inclusion on the website and to be highlighted on the Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/naturefortheblind/>. Additional Braille trails and sensory gardens are already under construction and will be added to the website directory as completed. Barnard hopes to expand the website to provide additional resources and opportunities for visually impaired adults and youth to connect through common interests and share outdoor opportunities in their communities with others.

For more information on Nature for All or the new website, please contact communications@nature4all.org.

Anouncing KNFB reader

KNFB Reader is happy to announce that through a partnership with Microsoft, it is now available for Windows 10 devices and computers. Not only can you use KNFB Reader on your Android and iOS devices, but you can now download it to your Windows 10 smartphones, tablets, laptops, and personal computers. And for a limited time, the app can be downloaded for 80% off the regular price for \$19.99 USD.

Like its smartphone counterparts, KNFB Reader for Windows 10 allows the blind and others with print disabilities to access the content of printed documents, including bills, brochures, books, magazines, handouts, and more. Users can simply photograph the document and KNFB Reader will almost instantaneously convert the image to text that can be read aloud in synthesized speech or, coming later in 2017, output to a connected refreshable Braille display using a compatible screen reader. It's also the perfect desktop PC or laptop application for recognizing image-based PDF files.

Using KNFB Reader for Windows 10 is easy. For use on your Windows 10 laptop or computer, you will need an external camera or scanner. Unlike many more expensive OCR programs for reading on personal laptops or computers, KNFB Reader is regularly available for only \$99.99 USD, and for a limited time, thanks to support from Microsoft, you can get it for only \$19.99 USD!

Features:

- Verbal field-of-view report and tilt guidance by audio or vibration feedback to help you take the perfect picture of the document discreetly and without assistance.
- Allows easy conversion of image PDFs and other image files directly from a desktop or laptop PC, or of image files accessed through OneDrive.
- Snap a picture and analyze a document instantly with your Surface Pro 4 or other Windows 10 device with a mobile camera; external camera or scanner needed for other devices.
- Integration with OneDrive for easy sharing and conversion of images between mobile and PC devices.
- Integration with One Drive to back up your KNFB Reader documents.
- Single or multi-column.
- Fully integrated with Microsoft Narrator and compatible with other popular screen readers such as JAWS, NVDA, and Dolphin SuperNova, as well as with Microsoft text-to-speech voices. Braille support for Narrator coming soon!
- Designed for speed and ease of use, with only four screens and lots of shortcut keys.
- It's also the perfect desktop PC or laptop application for recognizing image-based PDF files.

KNFB Reader for Microsoft is ideal for reading student materials (no more inaccessible PDFs and print handouts!), your personal mail (even complicated documents like bills, medical reports, and financial documents), plus books and multi-page documents such as owner's manuals and print magazines. It can also read package labels (including packages delivered to your door, nutritional labels on food packaging, or cooking instructions), inaccessible PDFs received via email or downloaded from the web, error messages on your computer or tablet screen, and many more previously inaccessible print items.

To purchase KNFB Reader for Windows 10, visit the Microsoft Store and download today!

Braille Business cards



It is easy to print braille business cards on Everest-D V5 using AVERY standard business card form.

Quick and low cost

To have braille on your business card is an excellent way to present your organization as a modern and inclusive organization. In the past, braille business cards were made manually or at a braille production house. Both methods are expensive and time consuming.

With Everest-D V5 or V4, you can create braille business cards yourself using AVERY standard business card form. After printing your business cards on a standard printer, you can print braille on the business cards on Everest-D in only a few minutes.

Watch the video on how to print out braille business cards on YouTube below.

[How to print braille business cards \(video\)](#)

How to print on Everest-D

Steps to create braille business cards:

1. Purchase AVERY C32011 A4 forms. The price is 20-25 Euro for 250 cards.
2. Print your business cards on a standard printer.
3. Download the braille business card template file.ibe.
4. Open the template in Notepad++
5. Type your personal contact details in the Notepad++ file. Save as 'Your file name.ibe' and then select save as All types (*).
6. Print the braille on top of the standard print with idB on Everest-D.

Watch the Powerpoint show on how to print braille business cards on Everest-D below.

[How to print braille business cards \(Powerpoint show\)](#)

Everest-D V5

Everest-D V5 is the best choice for cut-sheet paper. It is perfect for home or office use. Everest-D V5 supports a wide variety of paper format available in your local [Office Suppliers](#).



[Everest-D presentation.](#)

European Guide Dog Federation News: Help to Set the European Standards for Guide Dogs

How guide dog users and providers can contribute to this 3-year project

Experts from across Europe are being asked to participate in a project to set standards for guide dogs and other assistance dogs under the auspices of the European Committee for Standardization (CEN). This is known as CEN/TC 452.

For over 100 years, standards have evolved for the training of guide dogs. In recent years the International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF) has been the guardian of these standards. More recently, Assistance Dogs International operates similarly to accredit other types of dogs that help persons with disabilities. Guide dogs trained in schools that meet their criteria have access rights, for example, to travel with their owner in the passenger cabin of aircraft free of charge. Similarly, they are generally entitled to free travel and almost universal access to buildings and services.

Recently, some governments, notably Austria and several Canadian provinces, have set up governmental systems to certify guide dogs. This allows access rights in their country for all qualified guide dogs, regardless of who trained them. There is a question as to whether these access rights will operate in other countries, hence the need for a European standard.

Representatives of national standards bodies from 11 countries met in Zagreb last December to start work. Croatia has volunteered the secretariat and the presidency. The first task was to agree on the title and scope of the

standard. It was agreed to use the term assistance dog to encompass dogs for blind, deaf, wheelchair users, etc. But the committee could not agree whether therapy dogs should also be included in the standard so the question has been sent to the national standards bodies to vote on before the next meeting, which will be in Vienna on 16 May.

We feel that professional guide dog organisations should be represented in the setting of this standard, and you should contact your national standards body. They choose whether to participate or not, can send delegates to committee meetings and can set up a mirror committee to work in your country between meetings. The work is a joint effort between two categories of people:

- Standards professionals who understand the CEN process and
- Experts, like us, in the subject matter under consideration.

We think it is important that people with real practical experience of guide dogs and assistance dogs for disabled people are involved in this process. Please do all you can to get appointed by your standards body and let us know the outcome. If you need any further help or information, please contact us.

Sign Our European Parliament Petition for Better Laws for Guide/Assistance Dogs

Just 5 minutes will make a difference

We have been surprised and dismayed to see that people working in the European Parliament and the European Commission have no idea of the constant problems faced by disabled people with assistance dogs.



In Brussels, where European laws are made, taxi drivers often refuse to take a guide dog and sometimes the police support the taxi driver rather than the disabled person. Hotels try to charge extra for an assistance dog; restaurants refuse service to a guide dog owner. And it can be much worse in countries that do not have a culture of accepting dogs or where guide dogs are extremely rare.

Eurocrats seem to believe that when the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was ratified, the problem was solved. But we know that every day in every country assistance dog owners are inconvenienced and even humiliated by being refused goods and services by people who do not know or do not apply the convention.



By signing our petition you support the need for a European law to guarantee that assistance dog users have full access rights to all public areas and facilities.

Please note that you do not have to be European to sign the petition; it asks for your nationality and every nationality in the world is included in the drop-down list. We would be grateful if you take the time to support this petition wherever you are in the world.

How to sign the petition:

1. Follow this link: and complete the form.
2. You will be sent an email saying that the account is created; click on the link to log in.
3. Click on "Support a petition".
4. Search on our petition number "1140/2015". A summary of the petition is at the bottom of the screen.
5. Click on "View" and then "Support" and the job is done.

Today there are 201 signatures. If each of you signs it, we can see the number climb to over 1000, which would make it one of the fastest-growing petitions in

the European Parliament. If you spread the word in your organisation and every guide dog trainer and user in Europe makes the effort to sign, we could achieve an amazing 15,000 signatures.

Why not do it now and watch the number grow?

Thank you very much

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith Jones".

Executive Director
European Guide Dog Federation

Meet up at SightCity



At SightCity in Frankfurt, Germany, May 3-5, Index Braille will exhibit the complete V5 product portfolio: FanFold-D V5, Basic-D V5, Everest-D V5, and BrailleBox V5. Additionally, Acoustic Hoods and Index Braille Stapler will be available.

You are invited to meet Index team at booth number D1 (booth of Blista Brailletec). Get the opportunity to see FanFold-D V5, our newest high-speed tractor-feed braille printer.

Furthermore, you can watch the demonstration on printing braille business cards by using a printer web app on a smart phone.

Index will be represented by Björn Löfstedt, CEO, Niels van Weele, International Sales Manager, Mikael Vikman, Production Manager, and Peter Lindberg Hallman, Service Manager.

For more information on the exhibition, please see: [SightCity exhibition](#).

World Water Day - 22 March 2017

International Diabetes Federation

Adopting our strategy to prevent type 2 diabetes in Portugal

Access to affordable drinking water remains a challenge for many citizens across the European region, and the cost of bottled soft drinks is often competitive to bottled water. Evidence shows that the type of liquids we drink have a long-term impact on health, influencing the development of overweight, obesity and metabolic diseases, including type 2 diabetes. With up to 25% of the daily energy intake in children coming from free sugar, especially from beverages, Portugal is facing a great threat.

On World Water Day, João Manuel Valente Nabais, former President of IDF Europe, speaks about the situation in his country, Portugal, and present actions which have recently been taken to prevent type 2 diabetes.

Joao, you have been active in the fight against diabetes since 1981. How do you explain the rapid growth of diabetes in Europe and especially in Portugal?

Like everywhere else in Europe, our way of living has changed. This is clearly illustrated in the National Survey on Physical Activity and Nutrition which was published just a few days ago. The Portuguese population has moved away from a traditional Mediterranean Diet, known to be extremely healthy, to a global diet. For example, 53% of the population eat less vegetables and fruit than recommended daily. Sugary beverages start to replace water in our meals, with the consequence that 15% of the population consumes too much sugar.

If you add to these modified eating habits a decrease in the level of physical activity -only 42% of the population is physically active on a regular basis; 87% of the children watch television up to 2 hours per day - you start to have an answer to your question. Today in Portugal, 23% of the population is overweight or obese. This is an unprecedented reality.

According to the World Health Organisation, up to 25% of the daily energy intake in children in Portugal come from free sugar, especially from beverages. How do you explain this situation?

This is a dramatic situation indeed. In Portugal the availability of sugary beverages per person per day has increased from 102 to 204 ml between 1990 and 2012. Milk and water have been substituted by sugary beverages in our diet mainly because they are available everywhere through vending machines, shops, supermarkets, and highly promoted. Children and adolescents are

exposed to aggressive marketing campaigns led by food and beverage producers. This type of advertisement has been recently banned to protect our children, but it will take a number of years until we can start to see the results of this ban.

With the support of two national diabetes associations (Associação Protectora dos Diabéticos de Portugal and Sociedade Portuguesa de Diabetologia), Portugal has recently adopted a sugar tax. Can you tell us more about this tax, which was recently adopted?

The associations, working closely with the National Diabetes Programme, have been active in multiple ways. The National Programme for a Healthy Food has played a relevant role as well. The first body approached was the Health Committee of the National Parliament, as its members are more prone to understand and be involved in advocacy efforts needed at the Parliament and Government levels. It has been a long struggle because the subject divided Parliamentarians within their own parties and also divided members of the Government. It was a long but successful struggle as the tax was implemented on 1st of February 2017. For beverages with a sugar content lower than 80g/l the tax is 8,22 euros/100l, for products with a sugar content higher than 80g/l the tax is 16,46 euros/100l.

We all hope that the implementation of the tax will mean a decrease in the consumption of sugary beverages and, as consequence, of the daily sugar intake. However, I am a bit skeptical about its real impact and I personally think it will only affect a very small number of people: studies point out that such taxes only have a positive impact if the price increases by 10 to 20%, which is not the case in Portugal. This only a first step! The government must implement action to promote the healthy lifestyle for instance on schools.

Allocation of the funds generated by the tax is another issue, in my opinion. In Portugal we cannot attribute the money collected by specific taxes, such as the sugar tax, to a specific use. The money will thus end up in the big basket of taxes collected. The Government did mention nevertheless that this money would contribute to the sustainability of the National Health System. I do hope that a prevention programme to fight type 2 diabetes will also emerge from this tax.

Sugar tax is one strategy with a proven record in several countries to decrease the incidence of type 2 diabetes. Which other strategies are you implementing in Portugal?

Various strategies have been implemented in Portugal in the last years, the most recent being that products with added sugar, high content in fat and salt cannot be made available in vending machines in any building of the Portuguese Health System, including hospitals and healthcare centers. For a

few years now, we have a good National Diabetes Plan that has several coordinated activities with the national Programme for the Promotion of Physical Activity and the Nutrition such as the latest initiative, “Não à diabetes” (No to Diabetes) which started in 2016. It is a 5-year prevention programme targeted at 50.000 people at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes. The idea is to work in close cooperation with the Municipalities and designate, in each of them, a Diabetes Manager who is trained to identify people at risk, work with them and with the local healthcare centers to change their lifestyle (<http://naoadiabetes.pt>).

You know I am a football fan. In sport, you always have to adapt your strategy to counteract your opponent. Together with all the diabetes stakeholders in Portugal, this is what we are doing. And as our national team during the Euro 2016, I am convinced that we will win the fight against diabetes!

About IDF Europe: IDF Europe is an inclusive and multicultural umbrella organization of 70 national diabetes associations in 47 countries across the European region, representing people living with diabetes and healthcare professionals. Through our activities we aim to influence policy, increase public awareness and encourage health improvement, as well as promote the exchange of best practice and high-quality information about diabetes throughout the European region. We provide essential expertise and up-to-date evidence on diabetes, support awareness campaigns through a wide network of partners and stakeholders, and work with European and international organizations towards the development, implementation and monitoring of effective public policies for diabetes.

FanFold-D V5, an affordable high-speed tractor-feed braille printer from Index Braille

The new FanFold-D V5 has speed up to 1,000 pages per hour, low noise level, smart user interface, and a competitive price. It has a simple construction using the well-proven BrailleBox's embossing platform, extended with formula tractors all packed in an acoustic hood. The shared cost with other Index V5 printers makes it possible for FanFold-D to keep a significant lower price than its competitors.

Standard braille text can now be mixed with high resolution tactile graphic in the same document. This reduces the need and cost for special handling of tactile graphic in braille book production.

Printing braille on FanFold-D is easy. You can use almost any of the existing braille editors to prepare the braille file. In addition to this, you can print easily by sending Word or PDF files directly to the printer, to be converted by Index-direct-Braille (idB). A built-in application in the printer, idB includes text-to-

braille translation, braille page size formatting, and braille page numbering. idB supports over 140 languages, all major operation systems, literary/contracted braille, and is free of charge.

FanFold-D V5 is easy to maintain at production sites with only general technical knowledge. No mechanical adjustment or lubrication is required. Technical information, exploded view drawings, spare part web shop and knowledge database are accessible on our website. With remote support, Index support team can assist you even more. The remote support is free of charge and is available for all V5 printers connected via IP port to a network with internet access.

For more information, please see Index Braille's website on:
<http://www.indexbraille.com>.