

# EBU Members' Newsletter 2023

## Number one, January.

## Our campaigns

We are starting to get organised to produce EBU guidelines on **reasonable accommodation at work** for visually impaired employees, as a contribution to the implementation of the EU Disability Employment Package – itself an important element of the EU Disability Rights Strategy for this decade. For this we will build on the EBU working group “Rehabilitation, Vocational Training and Employment” and some desk-research by the EBU Secretariat for a start.

The European Parliament own-initiative legislative resolution calling for a **reform of the EU Electoral Law** is facing opposition at the Council, we are told. We have called our members to give us feedback on their related lobbying action.

The European Social Poverty Network’s report comparing the **social protection** policies of 35 European countries was published in late December. We circulated it to all our membership, and started analysing its implications for future EBU advocacy. The incoming Swedish Presidency of EU plans to work on a strategy for health and social care, and the forthcoming report of the High-Level Group on the future of social protection and of the welfare state in the EU.

We received from the Commission’s EU Sustainable Development Indicators team a substantial response to our remarks about the EU SDG indicator set 2023 (now final). In reply, as part of our continued advocacy for improved **data on people with disabilities**, we pointed at the relevant recommendations in the ESPN study.

We explored the potential of referring to the EU Regulation on Conditionality for Access to EU Funds, in our campaign for conditionality in EU **funding to the film industry** to promote audio description and audio subtitling, in the perspective of Creative Europe/MEDIA mid-term evaluation in 2024. Unfortunately, after careful reading of related Commission guidelines, this regulation does not appear to be relevant as it concerns European structural investment funds.

As part of our effort to monitor and promote the implementation of the **Marrakesh Treaty** within and outside the EU, we have continued to ask for feedback from our members in the EU about the implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty Directive. We have contributed to the International Federations of Librarian’s Associations annual monitoring report. We have learned that has ratified the Treaty and passed national reform in late 2022 – to which an EBU letter to their minister of justice in June 2022 in concertation with our Albanian member possibly contributed. We are sounding out our member in Turkey about possible action there to activate the process after that the Turkish parliament has decided to ratify the Treaty already in March 2021. About non-EU countries in Europe that have not yet joined the Treaty, it is noteworthy that all except Andorra and Monaco nevertheless already allow libraries to use produce accessible versions of works without having to pay a compensation for rights-holders; instead, it is unclear whether there is an obligation to be registered as authorised entity for that (except the Holy See where there is such obligation).

As part of its effort to produce recommendations for accessible **payment terminals**, representatives of our ‘Pay-Able’ task-group have met with the company Global Payments, and a meeting is now being sought with the company CCV, one of the leading payment terminal manufacturers in the EU. The outcome of these meetings will allow to refine the existing still very draft recommendations.

After our response to the European Commission’s call for evidence in December, we have successfully recruited and set up an EBU task-group to inform the EBU position in upcoming consultations and advocacy around the future legislative initiative for an **EU Disability Card**.

We attended the following **meetings**:

* Info-Session on **European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities 2023** (13/01), on which the European Disability Forum intends to build for its Manifesto for the European elections 2024. We informed our members in the EU about liaising with national coordinators for participation through national delegations.
* **EU Disability Platform Employment Package subgroup** meeting (19/01), where national good practices to facilitate the hiring of persons with disabilities were discussed. We pointed at the practices, among those presented in the European Platform for Rehabilitation and European Disability Expertise reports, that seem most important to us to promote EU-wide.
* Continue to follow and influence the dialogue between CRPD Committee and the EU, in the context of the on-going review of the EU.
* 24/1: recap of our issues and how they played into the CRPD’s list of issues prior to reporting, and suggested strategy.
* EDF coordination meeting (27/01) to prepare the structured dialogue meeting organised by the Commission’s Disability and Inclusion unit (31/01) to inform the EU response to the **UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** list of issues prior to reporting on the EU.

## European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities 2023

Our friends at EDF have announced the date of the next European Parliament of persons with disabilities. The European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities is a one-day event that reunites over 600 disability advocates, policymakers and other stakeholders. It is hosted at the hemicycle of the European Parliament in Brussels. It serves as a platform to discuss the rights of persons with disabilities and decide on the political demands of the European Disability Movement. The previous edition was in 2017 and the next and 5th edition will be on **23 May 2023**.

The theme this time is “Building an inclusive future for persons with disabilities in the EU.” EDF intends to build on this event to adopt its manifesto for the European elections of 2024.

This is an important platform to put forward our agenda in a highly visible context. However, **being part of your national delegation** is the only way to participate (including for EBU representatives) and also how you obtain cover of travel expenses. We therefore strongly encourage you to ask for your organisation to participate in your country’s delegation, to ensure that BPS people are well represented.

Being part of this event will give you a good opportunity to meet with high-level decision-makers of your country involved in EU affairs, namely MEPs and representatives at the Council.

We urge you to **approach the designated national coordinator** for this, using [this list of contact points](https://www.euroblind.org/sites/default/files/documents/EPPD_Heads%20of%20national%20heads%20of%20delegations%20and%20coordinators.docx) (head of delegation and coordinator) with links to their email.

The deadline for communication of the composition of the delegations to the European Parliament organisers is 15 March, so you should step forward as soon as possible ahead of that. This is a good opportunity not only to make your voice heard, but to also to meet and exchange with colleagues.

## A network of European universities to work on inclusion of students with disabilities

On 16 December, the European Social and Economic Committee hosted the closing conference of the EUni4All project, aimed at creating a network of European universities actively engaged in reducing the barriers for persons with disabilities to higher education. The consortium members of this project are: the European Disability Forum (EDF), the ONCE Foundation for the inclusion of people with disabilities in Spain and universities of five countries: University of Eastern Finland, the University of Trieste (Italy), the Polytechnic University of Lublin (Poland), the University of Porto (Portugal), and the Spanish universities of Murcia, Autonomous of Madrid and Seville.

Those disability organisations and main European universities joined forces in this three-year project to draft standards to make university studies more inclusive, a guide and a web platform to get information about universities engaged in inclusion and a training to provide university staff and teachers with knowledge about the right to inclusive education and how this can be implemented in concrete terms by adopting standards in inclusivity and specific support measures to promote international mobility programmes for students with disabilities. Therefore the beneficiaries of this project are both universities, that will improve their inclusive provisions and staff training, and students with disabilities, who will have access to quality information through the web platform to better decision-making when choosing their university and mobility options.

The project work carried out in these years was presented at the closing conference, sharing the hope that the synergy will continue and bring in new network members, more information sharing and further research and innovation in inclusive education.

A comprehensive description of [the EUni4All project and its output](https://www.euni4all-network.com/home) is available.

## The European youth with visual impairment voice their needs for active participation

On 28-30 October, the European Blind Union, in cooperation with EBU Cypriot member the Pancyprian Organization of the Blind, held the “Engage in Europe and the world on equal grounds” youth meeting in Pervolia, Cyprus. Participants from 7 countries attended (Cyprus, Iceland, Italy, Montenegro, Norway, Slovenia, Spain). During the event, held in the European Year of Youth 2022, many items regarding visually impaired youth in Europe were discussed while participants worked on new and efficient ways to empower young visually impaired persons and engage them in political change and social development. As a result of the young intellectual energy gathered in this meeting, the “Manifesto of young European citizens with visual impairment” was drafted, identifying the actions required to make more young people with visual disabilities aware of their potential and thus use their energy to become catalysts of social and political change at local, national and international level. The Manifesto was officially launched on 6 December 2022, day of the closure of the European Year of Youth. The text of the Manifesto is available here: [Manifesto of young European citizens with visual impairment](https://www.euroblind.org/sites/default/files/documents/Manifesto%20of%20young%20europeans%20with%20visually%20impairment.pdf), translations are now also available in [Italian](https://www.euroblind.org/sites/default/files/documents/Manifesto%20dei%20giovani%20cittadini%20europei%20con%20disabilit%C3%A0%20visiva.pdf) and [Montenegrin](https://www.euroblind.org/sites/default/files/documents/MANIFESTO%20montenegrin.pdf).

## Accessibility and diversity checklist for museums

In need of inspiration for accessibility and diversity work? Check out our checklist for museums – now available in English!

Culture for All Service published an accessibility and diversity checklist for museums in Finnish and Swedish in 2021. Now the checklist has been translated into English in cooperation with The Finnish National Committee of ICOM.

The checklist can be used to independently assess and develop accessibility and diversity in museums. The aim is to make museums pleasant and meaningful places for as many people as possible.

The checklist serves as a support for considering different aspects of accessibility and for developing your own ideas. The checklist serves as a to-do-list, a tool to support the development of ideas in the daily life of a museum. You can detach parts from the list and adapt them to your own needs, such as exhibition planning, communications development, notes for customer service desks, training material etc.

A glossary is attached to the checklist to explain the terms used.

All three language versions of the checklist are available on the website of Culture for All: [www.kulttuuriakaikille.fi/accessibility\_checklists](http://www.kulttuuriakaikille.fi/accessibility_checklists)

About the publishers:

Culture for All Service / Association for Culture on Equal Terms promotes cultural services that are inclusive, equitable and take diverse audiences and art professionals into account. cultureforall.fi

ICOM Finland is a national committee of the International Museum Council that is closely related to UNESCO. ICOM Finland promotes the visibility of the Finnish museum know-how internationally, for example by translating Finnish publications into English. icomfinland.fi

## Portugal - ACAPO certifies first inclusive cards

After 2 years of joint work with ACAPO, on World Braille Day, SIBS (the company responsible for managing the ATM Express and MULTIBANCO Networks) launched its first inclusive cards taking into account the needs of visually impaired users. This was a challenge set by ACAPO a few years ago, which has now been met by SIBS, under its Sustainability programme, aimed at ensuring the use of bank and other cards is more autonomous, private and secure.

The new cards with identification and characters in Braille allow blind and low vision users not only to identify the kind of card (bank, fidelity, access) and its type of use: ( credit, debt, pre-paid), but also the issuing entity. This new technology follows on from the half-moon-shaped cut introduced in 2018 which allows visually impaired persons to find the correct side for use.

For the President of ACAPO, Rodrigo Santos, “this project is an important step not only for blind or low vision persons, but also for raising awareness in the community about the importance of equal and accessible access to all”. Through this solution, “a greater number of entities will be able to adopt inclusive practices in their daily lives, both for the information they produce and for their relationship with their customers.

## Reminder - new language feature on the EBU website

This is just to draw our readers attention to the latest development on our website.

The EBU website now incorporates the google automatic translation tool. This can be seen via a menu at the top of the page consulted. Select your chosen language from those offered and the page is automatically translated. Of course, such automatic tools are never the same as a trained human translator, but they have improved greatly over recent years, and we are convinced that they provide a good overall translation of the site.

Our service provider, who is a specialist in accessibility, ensures us that the tool is also accessible, which was of course a key factor for us in introducing this possibility. We invite you to explore and test this new tool, though remember, it is not EBU that is responsible for the translations! Your feedback will, as always, be welcome, and we hope that this will enable all our members and users to get even more from the EBU website!

**ENDS**.

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