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# EBU Members' Newsletter 2021

## Number four, April 2021.

## OUR CAMPAIGNS

### Creative Europe/MEDIA

In follow-up to our exchange of correspondence around our position paper, we met with interlocutors at technical level with DG CNECT to pursue the dialogue, obtain clarification on some points and discuss how EBU can best accompany the Commission’s efforts.

Our key messages in the meeting were: to regret that, while audio description and audio subtitling are already eligible in the production and the distribution schemes of MEDIA, EACEA, the agency that manages MEDIA funding, sadly does not track beneficiaries; to welcome that all MEDIA applicants will be asked to commit to promote diversity and inclusiveness in their company strategies, and that this horizontal criterion will be taken into account in the selection of the projects, and call for bench-marking of concrete action for visually impaired persons. We clarified that it probably best to apply our recommend target (25% of films receiving MEDIA funding include AD and AST) to the promotion and distribution sub-branch, to prioritise films distributed in different languages. That would ensure compliance with the subsidiarity principle (cross-border dimension) and at the same time target the more successful films that reach a wider audience. This suggestion was very welcome by the Commission interlocutors.

In the meeting we learned: that the 2021 Work Programme for 2021 will be approved in May at earliest, and the call for proposals will be launched in June, with a retroactivity back to January 2021; that over the 7 year period, the annual work programmes will not change much, just a couple of new lines and activities; that it is too late to influence the content of the 2021 Work Programme, but our advocacy is useful in view of the next round. The 2022 Work Programme will be adopted this summer.

To support our recommendations, DG CNECT interlocutors have asked us to provide intelligence on the practice of the industry, to ensure added value of EU funding for accessible films. This has led us to send an action request to our members in the EU, to ask them to contact their national film funding agencies and ask them to respond to a questionnaire – prepared with the advice of our German member DBSV acting as campaign leader.

### EU Disability Rights Strategy.

On 27 April we released the EBU [position paper](http://www.euroblind.org/publications-and-resources/position-papers) in which we provide a more detailed reaction on the new EU Disability Rights Strategy for this decade, after our initial reaction in March. We communicated about it, and invited our members to do so as well. When sending the paper to Commissioner for Equality Helena Dalli and other contacts at all levels at the European Commission, we expressed gratitude for the very substantial and in depth dialogue toward this Strategy with organisations representing persons with disabilities and pointed out that, despite our regretting some weaknesses in the Strategy, we are content that many of our recommendations were taken on board and we believe the Strategy provides a sound framework for effective progress in this decade.

Shortly before releasing our position paper, we attended a Disability Intergroup event on the Strategy, to express some key messages contained in our paper and announce it.

### Marrakesh Treaty

We have submitted our [response](http://www.euroblind.org/sites/default/files/documents/ebu_response_to_consultation_on_availability_in_accessible_format_of_works_other_than_printed_april_2021.pdf) to the European Commission’s public consultation aiming to gather information whether it is necessary to extend the Marrakesh Treaty Directive provisions to non-print works and more types of disabilities in Europe. We used that opportunity to raise the visibility of our demands related to Creative Europe/MEDIA.

### Gender-based violence

On 22 April, we submitted the [EBU response to the EU survey on gender-based violence](http://www.euroblind.org/sites/default/files/documents/ebu_response_to_survey_on_gender-based_violence.pdf), in which we focused on the questions concerning women and girls with disabilities. Our response used feedback from an EBU internal survey in which our Women network took a big part.

### Miscellaneous

We circulated to our members the fourth of our series of ‘How To’ campaigning tips memos. After the first three memos respectively on the position paper, on the advocacy meeting and on the strategy, this memo focuses on how to use Twitter for campaigning. It comes in 17 linguistic versions – English, Croatian, Danish, Dutch, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Serbian, Spanish and Swedish – and is also available on request. This fourth memo is to be seen in the context of preparing for two Twitter-based communication campaigns in the framework of our PARVIS project.

### Events

We attended the following events:

The Disability High Level Group (9 April). This was the last meeting of this Group, to be replaced this year by the new Disability Platform announced in the EU Disability Rights Strategy, which the Commission sees as a strengthening of the Group. Noteworthy was the presentation by Ernst & Young of its study for the European Commission on the EU Disability Card pilot project, to assess the implementation and whether there is scope for extension. In its conclusions, the study supported this as the only solution to allow the mutual recognition of the disability status. The study however recommends to look carefully at subsidiarity. The Commission announced that there will be another study ahead of its 2023 proposal.

The Portuguese Presidency High Level Conference on the EU Disability Rights Strategy 2021-2030 (19-20 April), where we noted the following:

* Commissioner Dalli asked for endorsement by the Member States at the European Council of June.
* Accessibility: the Commission announced that it is preparing a new standardisation mandate in follow-up to the European Accessibility Act.
* Disability Card: the Commission contemplated the possibility of expanding it to labour mobility; Member States reacted rather positively, maybe too much: some of them announced that they were setting up a card scheme (i.e. without waiting for the EU proposal).
* Disability Platform: all Member States welcomed the announced new tool for exchange of information and best practices; the Commission said that the platform should also have a role of monitoring implementation of EU rules.
* Disability-related targets and indicators: the Eurostat director said the issue is high on their agenda, in all areas covered by the Strategy, and that it is the responsibility of Member States to provide comparable data at national level, using existing indicators and going beyond surveys to the population.
* The German representative expressed support for a portfolio of Commissioner for Disability.

The second Strategic Dialogue meeting on the EU Child Guarantee (29 April), represented by Cecilia Ekstrand (SRF, Sweden) where the European Commission announced the adoption of the guarantee in June, followed by national action plans within 6 months and national reports every two years. The participation of civil society organisations is important at national level. Note: the [Child Guarantee](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-action-plan/skills-and-equality_en) provides guidance and funding for Member States to support children in need, i.e. persons under the age of 18 at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

## EBU welcomes the new PARVIS Coordinator

First, a bit about myself: My name is Mariem Sene, I am Finnish-Senegalese by nationality and recently based in Paris. I have a work background in non-profit organizations focused on women’s and children’s rights (e.g. Plan Finland, Plan International, Prospera International Network of Women’s Funds), where I provided technical and strategic support to the developing of organizational policies and procedures, as well project implementation. As the new PARVIS Project Coordinator, I am responsible for the operational, administrative and financial implementation of the PARVIS project and I will also work in close collaboration with EBU members to ensure that awareness-raising tools developed address their communication needs and effectively support their future campaigns.

I look forward to meet collaborating with you and meeting many of you in person in the first e-workshop on May 31st.

Now, I will take advantage of this opportunity to tell you more about the project itself. This spring has debuted a lot of new activities in EBU, one of them being PARVIS, which is an exciting opportunity for national visual impairment organisations to raise awareness on blind and partially-sighted persons’ rights with the use of audiovisual material. The project involves altogether 9 EBU member organisations: Slovakia, Germany, Montenegro, France, Lithuania, Portugal, and Spain, in addition to Netherlands and Sweden, which are partners within the PARVIS consortium.

PARVIS has already hit the ground running and the first mini-video on the right to accessible health will launch on the PARVIS YouTube Channel on May 10th, and additional translated versions in 9 national languages will be available on May 26th. The launch will be accompanied by an e-workshop on May 31st, focused on the right to accessible health. The e-workshop is part of a series of many right-based e-workshops, open to all EBU members. More info to come shortly on this!

In May, PARVIS activities will focus on the developing of the second mini-video on the right to access to information, airing at the end of June 2021; a Twitter campaign launching in September this year focusing on the right to culture and more specifically audio-description; ongoing preparations of EU guidelines on audio-description available in September 2022; and the production of a 20-minute real-life video featuring rights-related obstacles, which will be officially aired on 9 May 2022 on the occasion of Europe Day.

A bit about myself: My name is Mariem Sene, I am Finnish-Senegalese by nationality and recently based in Paris. I have a work background in non-profit organizations focused on women’s and children’s rights (e.g. Plan Finland, Plan International, Prospera International Network of Women’s Funds), where I provided technical and strategic support to the developing of organizational policies and procedures, as well project implementation. As the new PARVIS Project Coordinator, I am responsible for the operational, administrative and financial implementation of the PARVIS project and I will also work in close collaboration with EBU members to ensure that awareness-raising tools developed address their communication needs and effectively support their future campaigns.

I look forward to meet collaborating with you and meeting many of you in person in the first e-workshop on May 31st.

Mariem Sene

PARVIS Project Coordinator

## WBU 2021 Virtual General Assembly registration is now open!

The day you have waited for is here! You may now register for the 10th WBU but first completely online General Assembly happening this June 28-30 with voting and WBU business June 21-25. We want to welcome all: members, delegates, and observers. Please head over to the link below to register:

[Registration Form | World Blindness Summit](https://www.worldblindnesssummit.com/en/inscription)

For those of you who registered for last year’s in person event, we will need you to reregister for the online event.

Want to know more about what topics and themes will be covered during the General Assembly? We have attached the program for the June 28-30 GA for you to browse and of special note is that all plenary and thematic sessions will be simultaneously interpreted into English, French, and Spanish!

We look forward to seeing you online in June!

For any further information, contact the WBU office.

## Sight Loss Data Tool from the UK.

EBU’s UK member, the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) has released a new version of the Sight Loss Data Tool. This is a free to use stats tool for local information on eye health and sight loss. The update includes the 2020 register of blind and partially sighted people.

The RNIB’s Sight Loss Data Tool is the UK’s biggest collection of eye health datasets. It collates a wide range of publicly available datasets and allows users to view local area data easily in a report or as data tables.

This data tool provides information about blind and partially sighted people and those at risk of sight loss at a local level throughout the UK. It is widely used in the eye health and sight loss sector for local strategy, campaigning and fundraising.

The tool can be downloaded from [www.rnib.org.uk/datatool](http://www.rnib.org.uk/datatool) and you can find out more information on the update from the webpage.

## ****Swedish guide dog handlers ask for**** ****international support****

As a guide dog handler living in Sweden you can never take it for granted that shops, cafés, gyms and hospitals will let you in. When you apply for a job or attend a course, you never know if you will be told to leave the dog at home.

The anxiety about possible refusals means some guide dog handlers may stay at home. This restricts the Independence that a guide dog provides to a blind or visually impaired person. For more than a decade complaints from guide dog handlers have been sent to the ombudsman for discrimination, but have so far not lead to any consequences. We want to make it obvious to our politicians that we are far behind many comparable countries.

**If you live in a country where blind people accompanied by guide dogs may go wherever they want, please send a message to the Swedish Minister for Democracy, and tell her what it is like. Tell her that you want the guide dog handlers in Sweden to enjoy the same freedom as you do.**

It will have an impact if the minister gets postcards from all over the world. But e-mails work fine. Write to her **now on International Guide Dog Day or if possible before 05 May**

Address:

Märta Stenevi,
Regeringskansliet,
103 33 Stockholm,
Sweden.

e-mail: a.registrator@regeringskansliet.se

If you want to get in touch with the Swedish Association of Guide Dog Handlers (SLHF), send an e-mail to info@slhf.net.

Thanks for your support and solidarity

EGDF have written to Märta, and here is a draft document you can use and adapt for your convenience:

[Template letter to](https://EGDFed.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=59c643ddcfe1d24aed667dc00&id=a8e4713f9e&e=faae415ea2)[Märta Stenevi - word document](https://EGDFed.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=59c643ddcfe1d24aed667dc00&id=ab63fa348b&e=faae415ea2)

[Template letter to **Märta Stenevi - PDF**](https://EGDFed.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=59c643ddcfe1d24aed667dc00&id=cffa8e0509&e=faae415ea2)

## Free webinars by IAAP EU

Funka, a proud IAAP founding member, is sponsoring the IAAP EU Webinar Series. We are pleased to sponsor the 2021 IAAP EU Webinar Series. Enjoy our welcome message from Susanna Laurin, Chief Research and Innovation Officer at Funka, IAAP Representative to the EU and moderator of the event, in more than a dozen European languages! We hope you will join us for the series with experts across Europe.

The series will provide information on everything you need to know about accessibility in the EU. As the EU is leading the way in web accessibility, with increased legal requirements and updated accessibility standards, this webinars series is timely.

Participants will have the opportunity to hear from influencers from policy, regulation, standardisation, end user organisations, research, public sector, ICT-companies, universities, and e-commerce. The presenters offer a deep and specific knowledge about the European accessibility market.

The webinar series is free of charge, captioned and automatically translated to major European languages and will be recorded and added to the IAAP YouTube European channel for access by all.

[A message from Susanna Laurin, IAAP EU Representative. Message available in over a dozen languages! - On YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3crKspqvug)

Webinars

May 6 - 14:00 CET

A Common Ground for Accessibility Interpretation – Certification as Award Criteria or Obligation?

A panel of distinguished European experts will discuss the need for consistency, and whether the harmonised regulations are leading to increased cross border-offerings of accessibility goods and services.

May 26 - 14:00 CET

The European Accessibility Act – Focusing on E-Commerce

A panel of distinguished European experts will discuss what the increased legislation covering certain products and services will mean to different stakeholders. How will enforcement look like in different sectors? Is there a business case for accessibility – if so, why can’t we prove it?

June 17 - 14:00 CET

The Web Accessibility Directive Under Review – How May It Change and How Can You Have Your Say?

A panel of distinguished European experts from across the EU representing monitoring bodies from five member states, as well as representatives from end user organisations, will discuss the key aspects of enforcement of the directive and different ways of implementation.

Be sure to follow IAAP EU on Twitter at @IAAP\_EU

[Register for IAAP EU series](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_9tklE0NzRA6nsPeY7nKt2g)

ENDS.

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