

# EBU Members' Newsletter 2023

## Number four, April.

## Our campaigns

We responded to the European Commission’s public consultation for the three-year evaluation of seven EU executive agencies, including EACEA, the agency that manages the Creative Europe programme, to reiterate the message contained in our statement of July 2022: “Creative Europe 2021-2027: where are the incentives for audio description and subtitling in MEDIA funding to the film industry?”, where we ask the Commission to use the opportunity of the mid-term review of the Creative Europe regulation 2021-2027, to consider introducing some benchmarking in the regulation on how MEDIA funding is used to promote inclusion, and in particular **audio description and audio subtitling**.

We were interviewed by Visionary Analytics, who are carrying out a study for the European Commission to support the evaluation of the EU legal framework for the **implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty**. We circulated to our members in the EU, for information and wider distribution, the Commission’s call for evidence (deadline 11 May) on the same matter. The proper public consultation, in the form of a questionnaire, is expected in May-June, and the evaluation report at the end of this year.

On 11 April, we spoke at the European Disability Forum webinar on the **implementation of the** **Audio Visual Media Services Directive**. We highlighted some gaps and resulting shortcomings in the implementation of the Directive as far as Article 7 on accessibility is concerned. It was very worrying to hear the presentation of the European audio-visual regulator’s report of 2021, which shows that “gradual improvement through proportionate measures” is interpreted very diversely by EU Member States, often far from the spirit of the Directive.

On 25 April, we spoke at the webinar on **road safety** for all, organised by VIAS Institute (Belgium), an independent knowledge centre acting in the framework of the European Road Safety Charter. This provided another opportunity, after the meeting last month of the European Commission’s DG MOVE High Level Group of Experts on Road safety, to present our related concerns: silent vehicles and AVAS, driverless vehicles, shared spaces (‘mixed traffic areas’), and the new forms of urban mobility. The European Road Safety Charter, led by the European Commission, is the largest civil society platform on road safety.

The deadline for feedback from our member organisations on the draft EBU document “**Guidance onreasonable accommodation for visually impaired employees and applicants**” was extended to 30 May. At this point, we will be able to draw also from the draft guide on reasonable accommodation that the European Commission is scheduled to present to the EU Disability Platform’s subgroup on the Disability Employment Package on 11 May. Our attendance of the presentation, on 27 April, by the European Disability Forum of its Annual Human Rights Report, focusing on employment and the right to work for persons with disabilities in the EU—including the right to reasonable accommodation at work—is also likely provide inspiration.

We continued to collect input from our members for our response to the ongoing public consultation by the European Commission on the future **European Disability Card** (deadline: 5 May).

On 26 April, we will follow with interest the European Parliament’s Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on Reform of the European Electoral System, to monitor progress toward a new **EU electoral law** that takes into account the needs of visually impaired voters and candidates.

Through our representative in their Accessibility Working Group, we provided feedback to ANEC—the European consumers’ voice in standardisation—as coordinators of their campaign regarding the draft ‘Keep Me Posted’ **EU Digital transition legislation**, as it threatens offline rights. While supporting the message that it should remain a choice for people to receive communications in digital or paper format, we stressed that it is not a fair representation to suggest that the digital format is necessarily detrimental to the inclusion of visually impaired people; on the contrary, it can be a factor of progress if accessibility is ensured.

We were invited by the Party of European Socialists to participate in their Civil Society Consultations in the run-up for the **European Parliament elections 2024**. We are asked to present up to 3 key priorities and 10 other measures to promote (deadline 9 June). The preparation of our response coincides with our starting to prepare the EBU statement for the elections. We have also provided our comments to EDF on their draft manifesto for the European elections, to be adopted by the 5th “European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities” event on 23 May, where the EBU governance will be represented within various national delegations.

## Changes and new faces in the EBU secretariat

After a period of transition, the EBU secretariat is back to full strength and we now announce the following news to finalise this situation.

Firstly, we would like to introduce you to Leslie Nachbaum our new Administrative Assistant who will replace Valérie Bertrand-Vivancos, our Membership Officer, on all the administrative tasks of the office.

In terms of professional experience, Leslie worked in a private surgical clinic for 15 years as a management assistant, referent communication and a Human Resources Assistant.

After all those years in the same work, she wanted to change for a new experience. Leslie is pleased to have joined the office and her new position.

Finally, after this brief introduction, we wish Leslie the best of luck in this new adventure in EBU.

Welcome on board, Leslie !

We would also like to inform you about Valérie Bertrand Vivancos’ change of position within our organisation.

Most of you will have known Valerie for the past 7 years as EBU Administrative Assistant.  With her deep knowledge of EBU and its members network, in agreement with the Board, she has now moved on to the role of Membership Officer and will coordinate interactions between and with members.

Before moving to Paris, Valerie lived, studied and worked for 11 years in England, she holds a Master's degree in English and American Studies, specialising in Civil Rights, from the Sorbonne University. In her own time, Valérie is also very active in areas of inclusion and intersectionality. Considering the above, she is particularly and ethically committed to facilitate and improve the EBU Members network, as well as support the EBU leadership in implementing reflections and actions.

Feel free to reach out to her at [membership@euroblind.org](mailto:membership@euroblind.org) with any query or comment you may have.

## Online launch of the EBU Handbook for high quality audio description on screen

Registration now open

Invitation to the online launch of the EBU Handbook for high quality audio description on screen, taking place on May 17 at 13:30 CET on Zoom.

In the 2 hour event, our panel of experts will present and discuss the EBU Handbook for High Quality Audio Description on Screen. This publication sets out to analyse what constitutes good description, based on more than three decades of practical experience from both a describer´s perspective and that of blind and partially sighted audiences.

EBU  promotes the rights and interests of more than 30 million people with sight loss in Europe, including the right to access information and the right to participate in cultural life, as set out in the UNCRPD. With the Handbook, EBU wishes to ensure the same high quality of description across Europe for millions of blind, partially sighted and other users to benefit from and enjoy.

For whom

This new AD Handbook has been compiled for beginning as well as more experienced describers, editors, those wishing to set up or contract an AD service, film makers, script writers and universities or training institutes that offer AD education, as well as anyone interested in learning more about on-screen audio description.

Accessible event

EBU is committed to provide an inclusive  experience for all. Description is offered by the speakers and automatic captions  are activated during the session.

Registration

Participation in the event is free and registration is open until Monday, May 15. You will receive a confirmation email with all necessary details to join the Zoom session. We invite you to register here:

[registration form for EBU online launch event on 17th May 2023](https://form.jotform.com/231101697242045)

Participants receive a digital copy of  The EBU Handbook for High Quality AD I

Should you have any queries, please contact [nacho.lopez@euroblind.org](mailto:nacho.lopez@euroblind.org)

We look forward very much to meeting you on May 17.

Óran O´Neill, moderator

Veronika Hyks, panelist and co-author of the Handbook

Birgitta J. Blokland, panelist and co-author of the Handbook

Henrik Götesson, panelist

Nacho Lopez, event support

## EBU Comprehensive Members Survey

As you may already be aware, we recently launched a broad consultation with all EBU member associations. Its overall aim is to hear your expectations, hopes, wishes etc. as to how EBU should grow in the coming years. Based on the wealth of information collected, we will draft ideas for the future EBU Strategic Plan. This draft will then be discussed within the EBU leadership (Autumn) and fine-tuned, also with the support of an external consultant. The result of the whole process will be brought to the 2024 General Assembly in Portugal, where final discussions and approval are to be expected.

Please take the time to provide detailed information in the questionnaire.

Let us make good use of the time in 2023, in a view to come with a well prepared, truly strategic and members-led agenda to the next GA!

For any practical query on the above, please contact Valérie BERTRAND-VIVANCOS, EBU Membership Officer, at [membership@euroblind.org](mailto:membership@euroblind.org)

## Switzerland - parliamentary session of people with disabilities

The inclusion of people currently enjoys increased attention in Switzerland. This is due to two important projects.

Firstly, on the 24th of March the first parliamentary session of people with disabilities was held. During this day members of this parliament worked out a resolution demanding more political participation and handed it over to the government.

Secondly, the collection of signatures for the inclusion initiative will begin end of April.

This national referendum aims to constitutionally guarantee the right to a self-determined life for people with disabilities. The various organisations of and for people with disabilities that support the referendum will need to collect 100,000 signatures within 18 months. Also our Swiss organisations of blind and visually impaired people are among the supporters of the initiative.

This challenge to participate in the use of an important democratic instrument in our country once again highlights that full political participation is not achieved yet. We continue to demand the introduction of e-collecting and e-voting, so that we can autonomously enjoy our rights as citizens.

## ****EDF Call for Action****

The European Disability Forum call for the EU’s revision of its passenger rights’ legislation to end the repeated violations of the rights of travellers with disabilities, especially during air travel.

The report “[End the nightmare: Passengers with disabilities deserve to travel by air](https://EGDFed.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=59c643ddcfe1d24aed667dc00&id=35990d7f16&e=651e30a7a3)” was released on Wednesday 19th April, to support calls for stronger legal protections for persons with disabilities when flying. Whilst this report covers all persons with disabilities, not just those travelling with guide and assistance dogs, it does include them and EDF have asked for more examples of access refusals by Airlines.

The more of these they have to show the problems we all suffer - the more power they will have to improve things.

Could you please report any access refusals directly to EDF on their [Accessibility Discrimination Database](https://accessibility.edf-feph.org/).

## World book and copyright Day – guidelines for publishers

On 23rd of April we celebrated world book and copyright day. A good moment to also promote the accessible publishing guidelines. Read the article from EBU‘s culture network.

In October 2018, the EU ratified the Marrakesh Treaty, administered by the World Intellectual Property Organization, **to facilitate access to published works for people who are blind, visually impaired, or otherwise print disabled**.

* The EU effectively became a party to the treaty as of **1 January 2019**, committing to set mandatory limitations and exceptions for the **benefit of the blind, visually impaired, and otherwise print disabled.**

As we celebrate world book Day, it is a good occasion to flag up our right to participate in cultural life, the right to access information and to books in accessible format.

The European Accessibility Act brings, from June 2025, an obligation to make a selection of products and services accessible, including e-books.

Many initiatives prepared publishers over the last year through manuals, workshops and guidelines for technical staff to learn in a very practical way how to create accessible e-books from the source. In many countries those initiatives were taken or supported by the national libraries for visually impaired and print disabled readers.

Some may be willing to translate their step-by-step manuals into English.

The [international guidelines](https://www.euroblind.org/sites/default/files/documents/accessible_best_practice_guidelines_for_publishers.docx) may help you promote accessible e-books with your national publishers. Please share widely.

## Descriptive insights series: Countdown to the coronation of Charles III

On May the 6th. King Charles III and Queen Camilla will be crowned in Westminster Abbey. This historic event will be televised around the world.

To offer blind and partially sighted viewers, detailed information about the event and its history, ahead of the great day, giving a fuller picture of the visual feast they can expect, broadcaster and leading audio describer Veronika Hyks, who is also an EBU culture network member, presents a series of descriptive insights called Countdown to the Coronation.  You can find them [on youtube](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLU19_Volygu2-qFLx-C4jPkFwJnFRgcFO)

## 6th International Competition Drawing and Painting for the Visually Impaired

Charles Emmanuel Schelfhout 2023

Year after year, the competition has become an effective tool that allows visually impaired people to avoid the trap of boredom and even depression; to create an independent activity and to rediscover lost joys.

The finalists' works will be exhibited at the major ophthalmology congress OB 2023 in Brussels, where their authors will be rewarded with magnificent prizes. More [information on the website](https://www.artandlowvision.be/en/).

**ENDS**.

European Blind Union

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