

ICEVI European Newsletter

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The President's Message

Welcome everyone to the August 2022 newsletter. It has been a busy few months for us at ICEVI Europe. Planning is well on the way now for the ICEVI 10th Anniversary Conference (2025) in Padova, Italy in collaboration with the Robert Hollman foundation and as soon as we get the venue booked, we will let you all know the dates and the process to submit papers and to get it into your diary. Almost as soon as I was writing this I was contacted by my good friend and colleague Professor Lauren Lieberman. She was informing me of the save the date announcement of June the 8th to 11th 2023 of the International Symposium on Physical Activity and Individuals with Visual Impairment or Deaf blindness (IS PAVID) in Milan. As you will see from the information below my team and I, at the Scottish Sensory Centre, hosted the first PAVID conference 2019 so I am delighted to see this being hosted again by our Italian colleagues. I look forward to meeting you there, and to have significant ICEVI-European representation. As the conference progresses, we will keep you up to date with any information we receive and post it and link to it from our ICEVI-Europe website.

The summer is also a time when we often go to conferences and this year I went to Vision 2020 in Dublin. I, myself, spoke about data VINCYP (see <https://www.vincyp.scot.nhs.uk/>) collects, highlighting the significant numbers of children with brain based visual impairment (Cerebral visual impairment ((CVI)) that reside in Scotland. I aim to deliver this talk on the ICEVI-Europe webinar series. At this conference, I saw several talks given by our friends and colleagues from Bartimeus around the topic of CVI, these can be seen in the abstract on the conference proceedings which can be found here https://vision2022dublin.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Vision2022_AbstractBook_Final-1.pdf

Alongside my talk I saw a fantastic lecture given by Dr Tatiana Ghidirimschi whose talk "The Past, Present and Future of Low Vision Services in Moldova" described how much she and her colleagues had now implemented an excellent low vision service there. It was impressive and I never really told her as I had to dash out and go to a meeting. So if someone from Moldova can let her know that I thought her work was excellent I would be very grateful. Hopefully she can come and present at the 10th Anniversary conference too as well as on the webinars (soon to be launched).

If I could also acknowledge the great work of PhD students from the University of Groningen, Groningen, and their supervisor Dr. Saskia Damen for a series of very interesting and thought provoking presentations. It is great to see young people interested in working in visual impairment and studying it up to PhD level.

There is a lot of excellent work in visual impairment and deafblindness being done across all of Europe and our team/board need to think of a way and a vehicle of being able to share this research, practice presentations and data so that all can access it across Europe and further beyond. If you have any ideas please email me and let me know. If you have any talks you would like

to share and increase your impact please again let us know and we can host and link these talks on our website.

Finally, in this conference round up I also gave a talk to the American Conference on Pediatric Brain-based Visual Impairment, where my talk on CVI was based around the nature of perception and its relationship to CVI. At the conference there were some very interesting papers and I think there will be more to come out of this conference in the next few months so I will keep you all up to date if and when news comes out.

Speaking of data, I am very interested in seeing the statistics from Israel in this newsletter and I for one will be comparing what data we have in Scotland and the UK with the Israeli data and to see what similarities and differences there are.

I also notice the release of a new book from colleagues down in England, Promoting Equitable Access to Education for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment: A Route-Map for a Balanced Curriculum to be published on the 30th September. It is excellent to see that a series of new books on childhood visual impairment are currently being published. Super and congratulations to Mike McLinden and the team for this great achievement.

There is a lot I could say about Brexit, but I have been told not to be political in my newsletters and statements, so I won't, except to say how great it is to see that Erasmus+ is still providing funding for excellent work for those involved in the education of children with visual impairment. And we can see this in this newsletter by the work of our great colleague that many of you know Dr Vassilis Argyropoulos, and others, (if only if only oops strolling into politics then).

Finally, all of us at ICEVI-Europe are still monitoring the situation in Ukraine and the support Poland and other countries are giving to children with visual impairment and other disabilities. Once we are able to deliver a clear and precise plan we will let you all know what needs to be done and how ICEVI-Europe can help.

I wish you all well for the remainder of the year and if you see me around please say hi and let's talk.

Kind regards

Dr John Ravenscroft

Professor of Childhood Visual Impairment

President



A Comparison of causes of visual impairments in infants seen at Eliya, The Association for Blind and Visually Impaired Children, in a four-year period

Prof. Kenneth Koslowe, OD MS FCOVD-A

Director of Professional Services: Eliya

ELIYA is Israel's leading organization for the care and advancement of children who are blind and visually impaired, including children with additional developmental challenges. Founded in 1982, ELIYA now serves populations in centers throughout the country, from its first and central location in Petach Tikvah, to Jerusalem, Rehovot, Beer Sheva in the south and Kfar Hamaccabi in the north. ELIYA's focus is on children from birth to the age of six, in the belief that professional and intensive intervention during these formative years is critical for the development of skills that will help them to successfully integrate into mainstream education and the community at large.

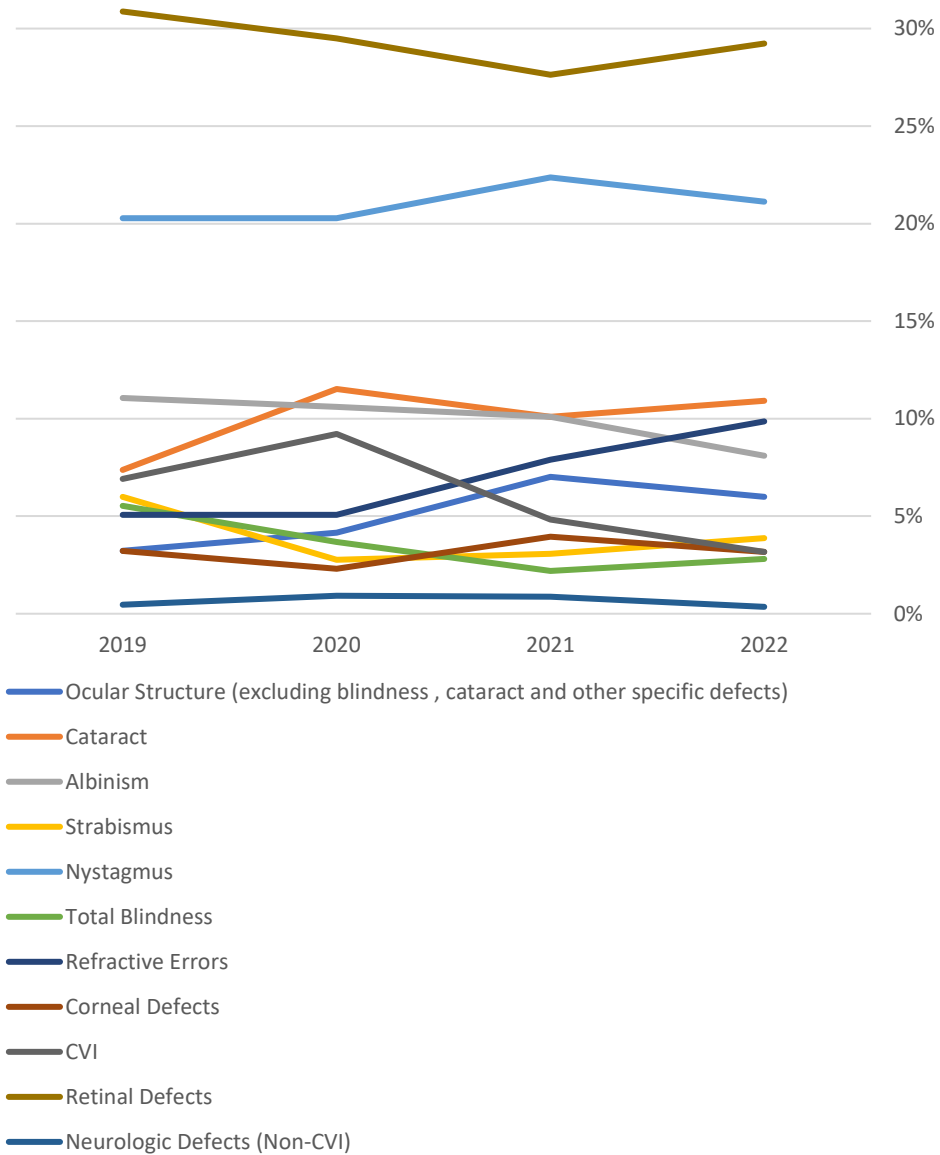
This report deals with those infants/children with primary visual impairments and no other significant impairments. As can be seen by the dates, this study covers the two years prior to the onset of COVID 19 and the first two years of the pandemic. Almost all types of causes of visual impairment have remained unchanged over this period. One finding which may have significance is the two-fold increase in significant refractive errors. It is possible that this could be related to significantly

decreased time spent outdoors (with much less exposure to sunlight) by families during the first two years of the Corona pandemic.

Type of Defect	2019	2020	2021	2022
Ocular Structure (excluding blindness, cataract and other specific defects)	3%	4%	7%	6%
Cataract	7%	12%	10%	11%
Albinism	11%	11%	12%	8%
Strabismus	6%	3%	3%	4%
Nystagmus	20%	20%	22%	21%
Total Blindness	6%	4%	2%	3%
Refractive Errors*	5%	5%	8%	10%
Corneal Defects	3%	2%	4%	3%
CVI	7%	9%	5%	3%
Retinal Defects	31%	29%	28%	29%
Neurologic Defects (Non-CVI)	0%	1%	1%	0%

*Only significant refractive errors with a large contribution to the vision impairment are included here.

Visual Impairments at Eliya 2019-2022



Promoting Equitable Access to Education for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment: A Route-Map for a Balanced Curriculum

By Mike Mclinden, Graeme Douglas, Rachel Hewett, Rory Cobb, Sue Keil, Paul Lynch, Joao Roe, Jane Stewart Thistlethwaite

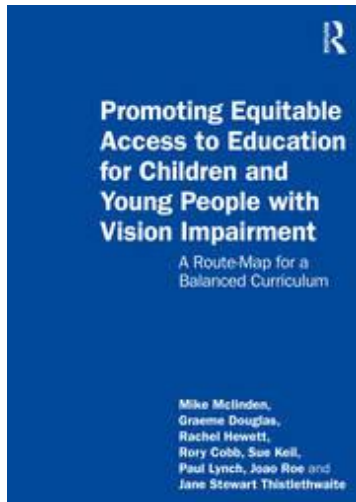
Promoting Equitable Access to Education for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment offers a vocabulary and developmental route map to examine the changing influences on promoting equitable access to education for learners with vision impairment in different contexts and settings, throughout a given educational pathway.

Bringing together a wide range of perspectives, the authors of this book argue that inclusive educational systems and teaching approaches should focus upon promoting and sustaining a 'balanced curriculum'. The book provides an analysis of how a suitable curriculum balance can be promoted and sustained through the stages of a given educational pathway to ensure equitable access and progression for all learners with vision impairment.

It is structured around a framework which provides a conceptually coherent and practical balance between universal and specialist approaches and should therefore have relevance to educators, academics, and researchers involved in vision impairment education as well as officials in government and non-government organisations engaged in developing education policy relating to inclusive education and disability.

The book is due to be published by Routledge on 30 September 2022.

<https://www.routledge.com/Promoting-Equitable-Access-to-Education-for-Children-and-Young-People-with/Mclinden-Douglas-Hewett-Cobb-Keil-Lynch-Roe-Thistlethwaite/p/book/9780367432997>



[Promoting Equitable Access to Education for Children and Young People](https://www.routledge.com)

www.routledge.com

ADD@ME: Ambassadors of Diversity and non-Discrimination @ new Methods in non-formal Education



By Vassilios Argyropoulos (ICEVI Europe National Representative of Greece)

Introduction

The ongoing project "ADD@ME: Ambassadors of Diversity and non-Discrimination @ new Methods in non-formal Education (No: 2020-2-IT03-KA205-019070) is funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. The project consortium consists of six organizations which bring a different perspective to the project according to their profile. The members of the project consortium are: the Unione Italiana Ciechi ed Ipovedenti Firenze (coordinator, Italy); Fundación Docete Omnes (Spain); Views International (Belgium); the Polish Association for the Blind (Poland); Ofensiva Tinerilor Asociatia (Romania) and the University of Thessaly (Greece).

The project evolves its activities and has come up with extremely important outcomes which enhance the presence and profiles of youngsters with vision disability in their localities and/or in their regions. For example, youngsters with vision disability are trained to develop abilities in public speaking, self-advocacy, communication and interpersonal skills, presentation skills, teamwork, leadership and creating networks.

The activities following on from the previous ICEVI newsletter are described as follows:

Project Meetings

The third project meeting took place in Spain/Granada on the 15th of July 2022. The meeting was hosted by the **Fundacion Docete Omnes Spain**. Representatives from all partner organizations joined the meeting, reflected on what has been done (e.g. overviews of the Local Training Sessions in partner countries, overviews of the LTTA activities which took place in Belgium as well as finalizations of Intellectual output 2 ADD@ME Mobile Toolkit for Visually Impaired Youngsters and Intellectual output 3 ADD@ME online Trivia game for VI ambassadors). The project consortium also took decisions for the next steps in the project workplan.



Figure 1: Members of the ADD@ME consortium during the third transnational project meeting in Spain, Granada (Fundacion Docete Omnes Spain)

Highlights of the Intellectual Output Activities

IO2-ADD@ME Mobile Toolkit for Visually Impaired Youngsters

The Mobile Toolkit for the Visually Impaired Youngers is now ready in all languages. The ADD@ME Mobile Toolkit is a Web App containing a large number of non-formal learning methods/activities, designed with attention to accessibility and usability features in order to be used by people with visual impairments. The main objective of this output is to help students implement awareness raising workshops on visual impairment for the local community (e.g. sighted friends, mates, colleagues, etc). The Web App is available from the project website (Add@Me Toolkit (ambassadorsodiversity.eu) as well as from partner organizations' websites and is translated into English, Spanish, French, Greek, Italian, Polish and Romanian.

IO3-ADD@ME Online Trivia Game for Visually Impaired Ambassadors

The online Trivia Game for Visually Impaired is ready!! The IO3-ADD@ME Online Trivia Game is an educational tool created to support visually impaired youngsters / facilitators in animating and facilitating, in an engaging and funny way, awareness raising workshops on visual impairment. It includes a Multilingual User Guide and consists of quizzes relevant to the history of visually impaired famous persons as well as artists & musicians with a visual disability, assistive technologies, the braille code, disability-related knowledge and sports for visually impaired people (<https://toolkit.ambassadorsodiversity.eu/>).

ADD@ME Local Training Events

All local training events took place in each partner's country. The local training events started in December 2021 and were carried out before the second LTTA which took place in Liege. In the Blended Training Programme, participants were trained in managing groups, leadership skills, interpersonal communication and were given basic knowledge on visual impairment for informing sighted people and shown how to plan and implement awareness raising workshops for their local community. More than 80 youngsters with visual impairment participated in the local training events, discussed and reflected on the ADD@ME Blended Training Programme for Visually Impaired Youngsters. The participants were excited about this training and in many cases they asked for more training sessions.

ADD@ME LTTA in Belgium (C2)

The second LTTA took place in Liege (16.5.2022 – 22.5.2022). It was a big achievement organized by VIEWS International AISBL. More than 30 youngsters with visual impairments travelled to Liege with their accompanying partners to participate in an intensive and fruitful training programme. The training programme put great emphasis on ADD@ME Awareness Raising Workshops, ADD@ME Mobile Toolkit and on the ADD@ME Online Trivia Game. All youngsters were happy and commented that they had lots of opportunities to ask questions, to experience the outputs of the project and talk about real life examples and of course that they had a lot of fun.



Figure 2: Snapshots during the ADD@ME learning teaching training activities in Liège, organized by VIEWS International

For more information you may visit

- **ADD@ME website:** www.ambassadorsodiversity.eu
- **ADD@ME Facebook:** [Ambassadors of Diversity](https://www.facebook.com/Ambassadors of Diversity)

Contact

Project Coordinator:
Unione Italiana Ciechi ed Ipovedenti Sezione Provinciale di Firenze, Florence-Italy
Contact Person: Lisa Bucciolini
Email: firenze@irifor.eu

Towards a Multisensory and Inclusive Museum for Individuals with Sensory Disabilities



By Vassilios Argyropoulos (ICEVI Europe National Representative of Greece)

The ToMiMEus project is financed by the European Social Fund (Erasmus + Programme/Cooperation for Innovation and the exchange of good practices Project Agreement Number: 2019-1-RO01-KA202-063245) and has integrated its activities by organizing multiplier events and other dissemination activities. In this ICEVI Newsletter, two multiplier events are presented. The first one took place in Volos and was organised by the University of Thessaly and the second one was organised by the Museum of Cycladic Art in Athens

The University of Thessaly (Greece) organised its ToMiMEUs multiplier event on the 14th of May 2022. It included a range of activities and presentations relevant to a) culture and inclusive museums; b) outcomes of the ToMiMEUs project; c) museum educational activities relevant to accessibility, aspects of inclusion and sensory disabilities; and d) artistic/cultural events (executed by the Laboratory of Access to formal and non-formal learning for individuals with sensory disabilities of the Department of Special Education and the Musical Ensembles of the University of Thessaly).

More than 100 people participated in the event and many museums had the chance to present their work regarding the above aspects including the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, the Athanasakio Archaeological Museum of Volos, the Museum of Cycladic Art, and the Tactual Museum of Athens. Some photos are provided conveying the “flavour” of that event.



Figure 3. Roll up of the event and a 4-page informative leaflet for the ToMiMEus project (University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece)

On the 28th of June another multiplier event was organised under the umbrella of the ToMiMEUs project. Interesting questions were addressed and discussed during the event such as “How has museum accessibility for visitors with hearing and visual impairments improved over the last 20 years?”, “Which are the key takeaways from the programs which have been implemented by museums in Greece?”, “How can a multisensory approach contribute towards the creation of an open and inclusive museum?”, “To what extent is it possible for museum professionals to plan for all?” These were some of the questions that were discussed during the scientific forum organized at the Canellopoulos Museum / Μουσείο Κανελλοπούλου and the Museum of Cycladic Art on Tuesday, the 28th of June 2022.

The talks of the forum took place at the Paul & Alexandra Canellopoulos Museum (CAMU, Theorias 12, Plaka) from 9 am to 3:30 pm. After that, a presentation and a demonstration were conducted at the Museum of Cycladic Art (Neophytou Douka 4, Kolonaki) from 4:30 pm to 6 pm regarding museum applications for visitors with visual and hearing impairments.



Figure 4. Demonstration of the mobile case (Museum of Cycladic Art, Neophytou Douka 4, Kolonaki).

Early Intervention Services for Families with Children with Vision Impairment and Additional Disabilities



By Vassilios Argyropoulos (ICEVI Europe National Representative of Greece)

The project "ErISFaVIA- Early Intervention Services for Families with Children with Vision Impairment and Additional Disabilities", is funded by the ERASMUS+ Programme (No: 2019-1-EL01-KA201-062886) and coordinated by the State Scholarships Foundation (IKY).

The last project meeting and the final event took place regarding the ErISFaVIA project; it was considered as a multiplier event which aimed at the dissemination of the project outcomes and awareness regarding multiple disability with visual impairment. More than 200 participants attended the event and project members described the outputs and activities of the project over its lifetime. The programme of the event was enriched with a range of topics (see below) and the closing ceremony was held by the Musical Ensembles of the University of Thessaly.

- ErISFaVIA: the need, the involvement, and the very promising continuation
- Early development of movement in children with BVI with some aspects of early O&M instruction"
- Early intervention: Individual, family, and social benefits
- Model of Early Intervention "Mali dom - Zagreb"
- Blindeninstitut Munich, a learning and living space for children with vision impairment and additional disabilities- insights into different areas
- Development of services and competences of professionals in early intervention within project-based training
- The Reflections from ErISFaVIA Project and Future Plans about Early Intervention Center for the Children with Multiple Disabilities with Visual Impairment at Istanbul Medeniyet University
- SYZOI Early Intervention for Children with MDVI
- Early Intervention Services of ANSGA for the children with MDVI aged between 0-6 and their families within the scope of the EriSFaVIA project
- Examples of activities in Early Intervention for Children with MDVI
- St. Barnavas School for the Blind - Our Organization's Services & Programmes with Emphasis on MDVI Pupils
- Amimoni ECI for mdvi children
- "Sky's the limit" Significant Moments of Children with Multiple Disabilities (music: Vangelis Papathanassiou)
- SYNOLA, The Musical Ensembles of the University of Thessaly, Greece



Figure 5. Snapshots from the last project meeting which took place at the University of Thessaly (Volos)



ΗΜΕΡΙΔΑ
ΟΙΚΟΓΕΝΕΙΟΚΕΝΤΡΙΚΑ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΑ
ΕΓΚΑΙΡΗΣ ΠΑΡΕΜΒΑΣΗΣ ΓΙΑ ΠΑΙΔΙΑ ΜΕ ΠΡΟΒΛΗΜΑΤΑ
ΟΡΑΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΣΥΝΟΔΕΣ ΑΝΑΠΗΡΙΕΣ
 Προσκεκλημένη Ομιλήτρια
Dr. Gombás Judit,
 Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary
7 Ιουνίου 2022
 Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλίας, Βόλος
 Αμφιθέατρο ΚΟΡΔΑΤΟΣ
 ΕΝΑΡΧΗ:
11:00
 Προσκεκλημένοι Οργανισμοί
 Mail dom, Zagreb, Croatia
 Blindeninstitut, Munich, Germany
 Babeş-Bolyai University, Romania
 Istanbul Medeniyet University, Istanbul, Turkey
 ANSICA, Istanbul, Turkey
 St Barnabas School for the Blind, Nicosia, Cyprus
 Amnion, Athens, Greece
 Liceul Special pentru Deficienti de Vedere Cluj Napoca, Romania
 SYCOA, Thessaloniki, Greece
 Πληροφορίες
<http://erisfa-via.sed.uth.gr/>
 T: 2421074860
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 F: ΕΙΣΦΑ/ΙΑ
 • Θα υπάρχει διαρκομία από την ελληνική
 στην αγγλική γλώσσα και αντίστροφα
 • Θα υπάρχει διαρκομία στην ΕΠΓ
 Χρηρηγεται βιβλωση παρακολληση
 Για την εγρηγη σας
 κλνετε κλι στον ακολουθη συνδεσμο
<https://forms.gle/P9RZKXUwηηw3TU2LCA>
 Erasmus+
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 UNIVERSITY OF
 THESSALY



Figure 6. Poster of the ErISFaVIA event and a snapshot of the presentations (University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece)

Save the Date ISPAIVID

Dear colleagues,

SAVE THE DATE ANNOUNCEMENT: June 8-11th, 2023. MILAN

ICEVI –Europe is proud to support the 2023

International Symposium on Physical Activity and Individuals with Visual Impairments or Deafblindness (IS PAIVID)

This conference will be held in Milan, Italy, from June 8-11th, 2023.

The previous conference if you recall was successfully held in Edinburgh at the Scottish Sensory Centre, <http://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/courses/vi&multi/vconf19.html> Scotland, UK , on May 9-12th, 2019.

IS PAIVID aims to provide practise oriented studies in adapted physical activities with children and youths who are visual impaired and/or Deafblind.

The conference will tackle the interdisciplinary challenge of bridging research in the field with lived-experiences and answering to practical needs of the Physical Educators community.

The IS PAIVID will involve a round table with para Olympics world champions, live-training activities on pitch, poster-blitz sessions, and open working group with educators, technology innovators, third sector organizations, policy makers.

The IS PAIVID conference will provide innovative-solutions and emerging practices for Teachers of learners with visual impairment/Deafblind, Physical Education (PE) Teachers, Adapted Physical Education Teachers, Health & Wellbeing Managers, Active Sports Coordinators, Class Teachers, Early Years Staff, Support Staff, Habilitation Specialists, Third Sector Organisations, and those who work with children and young people with complex needs.

The PAIVID 2023 is an emerging international conference on physical education and rehabilitation with practical and research activities.

The conference will be in English.

We look forward to seeing you there.

PAIVID 2023 co-chairs:

L. J. Lieberman Ph.D. (Institute of Movement Studies for individuals with visual impairments, Brockport, NY.)

Pam Hailabach-Beach Ph.D. (Institute of Movement Studies for individuals with visual impairments, Brockport, NY.)

J. Gombas, Ph.D, (Kodaly Institute, Budapest)

J. Heagele, Ph.D., (Old Dominion University)

Organizer Co-Chairs: D. Cassioli, G. Castiglioni, RealEyesSport Italy
ICEVI-Europe