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**EUD Affiliate Members news**

Norwegian TV channel broadcasts live Sign Language interpretation

The Norwegian Digital TV channel, *NRK1 Tegnspråk* (Sign Language), broadcasts every day from 18.00h till 20.00h. The digital channel only shows a Norwegian Sign Language interpreter, who interprets the program, shown on the other (normal) Norwegian TV channel, NRK 1. Deaf viewers can thus follow the programs broadcasted between 18.00h-20.00h on NRK 1, with the simultaneous translation provided in Norwegian Sign Language on NRK1 Tegnspråk, if they have the receiver for the digital signal of the NRK1 Tegnspråk.

The channel can either be seen on a separate TV-set next to the ordinary TV-set, or it can viewed as a small screen pasted on to the large screen, while having the first channel still in view. This depends on whether the TV set has a PIP feature (Picture in Picture) or not.

The service still have a few flaws: i.e. the digital signal arriving trough satellite is a few seconds delayed compared with the ordinary antenna reception, and thus the interpretation is not really simultaneous with the program it translates.

In the future, more advanced satellite receivers should solve the problem of lag time.
**EUD News**

**EUD Director visits the Council of Europe on 29 January 2003**

As you will also read elsewhere in this issue of EUD Update, EUD was part of a delegation to visit the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France, on 29 January 2003.

As part of the programme, Helga STEVENS, EUD Director, attended the meeting of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Among the items on the agenda of this Committee was the draft Report on the “Protection of sign languages in the member states” as prepared by the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights. The Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee is to deliver its opinion on the draft Report and the Rapporteur is Baroness KNIGHT.

Baroness KNIGHT told the Committee that she had some problems with the fact that the Report advocates the use of sign language, that teachers should be trained to know sign language to be able to use sign language in class and that deaf kids mainstreamed in hearing schools should get sign language interpreters. She also said that she was puzzled by the fact that the use of sign language is advocated in education for deaf children but how was this to be coupled with the trend for mainstreaming? She saw a contradiction there.

Baroness KNIGHT said that it would make more sense to educate Deaf kids without signs so that they could survive in mainstream education. In addition, she was concerned about the costs related to the use/provision of sign language. This concern was also voiced by the Chair of the Committee who said that MPs would like to know the costs involved before going ahead and supporting the report.

The EUD Director responded by thanking the Committee for giving EUD the opportunity to speak at this meeting. She stated that she understood their concern for the costs involved related to sign language use, but pointed out the advantage of using sign language in education and employment, since if Deaf people received a bad or inaccessible education, they would not be able to obtain a diploma and thus would be unemployed which would cost the state even more in the long term. Moreover, use of sign language is a basic human right issue for Deaf people and she called upon them not to take sign language away from Deaf people.

Helga STEVENS also said that she did not see any contradiction between the use of sign language and mainstreaming in hearing schools and she gave them a personal account of her own experience. She told them that she had been mainstreamed at the age of 10 and that she had been very lucky that she survived it and was able to go to university. But also that it was often a very lonely experience, having to find her way without the assistance of sign language interpreters and that not every deaf person was able to do that. That many deaf people unnecessarily fail in regular schools and that with the provision of sign language interpreters and support services many more would succeed in education. A debate followed and Helga STEVENS also responded to questions from Committee members.

For a good understanding, it should be pointed out that the Committee had only 1 hour to deal with the whole agenda. Since Baroness KNIGHT could not stay long, the Report on sign language was placed first on the agenda, and it much time was spent discussing this item (about 15-20 minutes).

The Report and the Opinion will be discussed and adopted during the next session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, in the week of 31 March – 4 April 2003. The Social Affairs Committee will be adopting the opinion and approving the amendments most probably on 31 March 2003. EUD will of course keep you informed regarding this issue!

Helga STEVENS, EUD Director

**EUD Director runs for the Belgian Senate**
There are federal elections coming up in Belgium on 18 May 2003. EUD Director Helga STEVENS is hoping to win a seat in the Belgian Senate, the Upper Chamber of the Belgian Parliament.

The Flemish party Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie (New Flemish Alliance, abbreviation: N-VA) contacted Helga STEVENS shortly after she had appeared on Flemish TV in a programme called "Koppen" ("Heads") on 9 January 2003. "Koppen" featured Helga working as Deaf lawyer/attorney pleading in court in Gent and also as Director of EUD. It was a 10 minutes item and the whole "Koppen" programme (duration 20 minutes) was fully subtitled that evening. Normally the programme is not subtitled. The move of the EUD office from Brussels to Gent happened to be filmed by the film crew and a piece of it was shown in the programme!

N-VA is a young political party, founded in the autumn of 2001. Being the continuator of the Volksunie (1954-2001), she is however based on an established political tradition.

For more information see http://www.n-va.be/nva_en.asp

Helga STEVENS stands 3rd place on the N-VA's Senate list and also stands as 2nd place on the N-VA's substitutes' list for the Senate. The latter means that if the first candidate on the Senate's list, who is also running for the Federal Chamber of Representatives, gets elected into the Chamber to represent the Province of West Flanders, the 1st substitute will replace him in the Senate. However, the 1st substitute is also running for the Federal Chamber, and if she gets elected into the Chamber for the Province of Limburg, the 2nd substitute (= Helga) replaces her in the Senate. So there are two ways for Helga to get into the Senate: either by direct election, or indirect through replacement of candidates who prefer to take their seat in the Federal Chamber.

The N-VA's announcement on 28 January 2003 that Helga STEVENS would get the 3rd place and the 2nd substitute place received enormous and positive media attention. Helga appeared in all Flemish newspapers and also on the evening news as well as on the current affairs TV programme "Terzake" ("To the Point"). Her sign language interpreter was also featured on TV.

The electoral district (constituency) for Senate candidates is the whole of Flanders for the Flemish candidates, and the whole of Wallonia for Walloon/French-speaking candidates. Candidates for the Chamber of Representatives must get votes in the provincial electoral district where they live. Hence the decision to stand on the Senate's list since this way Helga STEVENS can target Deaf people and their families and allies all over Flanders instead of limiting herself to one provincial district.

In this context it should be noted as well that the President, Salvatore FALLETTA, of FFSB, the French-speaking Belgian Deaf Federation, is also standing for the Senate, as 3rd place substitute for the French-speaking Green party Ecolo.

**EUD General Assembly 2003**

EUD is pleased to announce that it will hold its Annual General Assembly in Athens, Greece on 16-18 May 2003, in cooperation with the Hellenic Deaf Association, HFD.

The location of the EUD's General Assembly follows the rotation of the 6-month EU Presidency, as was decided at the EUD General Assembly 2001. Greece currently holds the EU presidency.

In addition to the General Assembly, EUD is also planning a Seminar on Bioethics and Genetics to be held on Thursday 15 May 2003.

Relevant information regarding the General Assembly as well as the Seminar will be published on the EUD website and in EUD Update in the coming weeks.

**EDF News**

**Capacity building in the EU Accession Countries**

The European Disability Forum (EDF) has started a 22 months project called “Capacity building of disabled people’s organisations in ten Accession Countries”. The project is
funded by the European Commission in the framework of the Phare Programme. The ten countries concerned by the Project are: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. The project has divided its aims under four headings:

- Capacity building
- European Year of People with Disabilities 2003
- Information
- Dialogue and networking

The main aim is to support the creation of a national disability council in each accession country where they do not yet exist; and to strengthen the existing ones through information and assistance. The project also aims at providing information about the EU legislation and decision making process.

For further information about the EDF’s project, please contact:

Jean-Paul PRITCHARD, Capacity Building Coordinator at EDF, email: jean-paul.pritchard@edf-feph.org


European Union News

Treaty of Nice came into force on 1 February 2003

On 1 February 2003, the Treaty of Nice entered into force. The Greek Presidency underlined in a statement that:

“This amended Treaty opens the way for the greatest enlargement in the history of the European Union, and lays the institutional bases required to achieve this strategic goal of historical importance.”

The institutional changes foreseen by the Nice Treaty will take concrete effect in 2004, the year when enlargement will happen:

➢ The new European Parliament, which will be elected in June 2004, will have 732 members. This is the new maximum number defined in the Nice Treaty, which also contains a new division of seats per Member State.

➢ The next European Commission, which will take office in November 2004, will have 25 members (one per Member State). This means that the bigger Member States will no longer appoint a second Commissioner. Once the EU reaches 27 members, the number of Commissioners will be lower than the number of Member States.

➢ From November 2004, a new weighting of votes will apply in the Council of Ministers. In addition to meeting the threshold for a qualified majority vote, Nice stipulates that a vote in the Council will need the support of a majority of Member States, representing at least 62% of the population.

The ratification of the Treaty of Nice completes the institutional changes, which are required for the accession of the Member States. However, the wider and more detailed talks on the future of Europe within the Convention are aimed at dealing comprehensively and in the long term with the demands of enlargement, both as regard to institutions and policies.

Source: EDF Weekly Mailing 04/2003

European Commission adopts Communication on UN Convention on the rights of people with disabilities

This Communication, adopted on 24 January 2003, sets out the European Commission's support for a United Nations (UN) legally binding instrument to protect and promote the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. The communication also explains why an active participation of the European Community in the development of such an instrument is indispensable.

The introduction of the Communication states:
“Active Community participation in efforts at the international level to develop effective mechanisms to combat discrimination against people with disabilities would be a natural complement to the European Year of People with Disabilities. It would also send a strong signal to the international community of the importance which the Community attaches to promoting the rights of people with disabilities.”

Prior to this Communication, the Danish Government prepared a discussion paper on the UN Convention during its EU Presidency period. All EU Member States were asked to provide their views on this discussion paper.

The next meeting of the UN ad hoc Committee, drafting the Communication, is planned to take place on 16-17 June 2003 in New York, USA.

Source: EDF Weekly Mailing 03/2003

2nd European Conference of Ministers responsible for Integration Policies for People with Disabilities

The 2nd European Conference of Ministers responsible for Integration Policies for People with Disabilities will take place on 7-8 May 2003 in Malaga, Spain.

The main theme is “improving the quality of life of people with disabilities: enhancing a coherent policy for and through full participation”.

There will also be sub-themes, such as:

- Promoting citizenship and full participation by developing effective legal and policy provisions to ensure quality of opportunities for people with disabilities;
- Developing innovative approaches in services, intended to meet the needs of people with disabilities as consumers.

It has also been proposed to include proposals to enhance the integration of women with disabilities and that of people with disabilities in need of a high level of support.

Ministers from all 44 Member States of the Council of Europe will be invited to participate, together with the European Union as well as several International Organisations.

For further information please visit the following homepage:

www.coe.int/T/E/Social_Cohesion/soc-sp/Integration/3_Ministerial_Conferences/2nd_Conference/default.asp

Source: Mental Health Newsletter n° 1/2003

European and International News

Disability at the centre of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly

On 29 January 2003, a delegation formed by EDF and seven of its member organisations, including the EUD, were present in the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. The main reason for this presence was the adoption by the Parliamentary Assembly of a report on the social inclusion of disabled people.

The day started with a meeting with Mr SCHIEDER, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. He strongly supported the view of disability as a human rights issue. He welcomed the delegation, which handed him a joint declaration, which he committed to present to the second Council of Europe ministerial conference on disability to be held on 7-8 May 2003 in Malaga, Spain. (For details regarding this conference see the article in this issue of EUD Update page 2.)

Then the delegation met the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe Mrs DE BOER-BUQUICCHIO and Mrs BATTAINI-DRAGONI, Director General of Social Cohesion. A commitment was made to support the proposal included in the recommendation to be approved later the day, of giving disability organisations observer status in the Committee that is dealing with disability issues (the so-called CD-P-PR Committee).

Main messages given by the delegation in both meetings were:
Disability is a human rights issue;
Diversity of the disability movement;
The need to combat discrimination;
Disability as a mainstream issue;
The need to dismantle the large residential institutions where the human rights of disabled people are violated on a permanent basis;
Involvement of disability organisations in policy making. “Nothing about disabled people without disabled people.”

The delegation also attended the meeting of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee, which was devoted to three items:

- A discussion on a report on sign language, at which Helga STEVENS, EUD Director, took an active part;
- The discussion of the amendments presented to the report of the assembly drafted by Mr SURJAN;
- A final intervention by the EDF delegation, which reiterated the above mentioned messages.

German parliamentarian Mr HAACK, representing the Socialist Group, suggested additional actions for the future, in particular the appointment of Council of Europe Commissioner on Disability and the presentation of national disability plans by the Council of Europe Member States.

In summary, it was a good visibility day for disability issues in the Council of Europe. The adopted report on social inclusion of people with disabilities is not yet available due to some last minute amendments. However, in the meantime a summary is available on the following website address:


Source: EDF Weekly Mailing 03/2003

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**Deaf news around Europe and the world**

**Leading Japanese mobile phone provider opens centre for Deaf customers**

One of the leading Japanese mobile phone providers, J-Phone, has opened the "J-Phone Hands Sign Centre" through an agent in Tokyo, Japan, exclusively for Deaf and hearing-impaired people. This is the first experiment of its kind in Japan where a corporation provides services for persons with disabilities.

At the centre, seven staff members are able to use sign language, three of whom are always stationed and provide support and services including explanations of model usage, an after-sales service and new purchase and change of model advice, using sign language or writing. There are as many as 40 customers on busy days, and this service has been warmly welcomed by many customers with hearing impairments.

Moreover, representatives from the J-Phone Hands Sign Centre visit Deaf related organizations and schools to explain how to use the mobile phone in sign language. They also offer after-sales services by fax and e-mail.

Source: Disability world online: www.disabilityworld.org

**Other news**

**New interactive database on social inclusion**

A new interactive database for all local projects working to promote social inclusion across Europe can be found on-line now!

The database provides an opportunity for local initiatives to disseminate their work and a chance to discuss projects and the issues that arise, to identify new approaches and to find new project partners.
The database is open to all and those involved in project promotion can register their project by completing the e@si questionnaire at http://www.socialinclusion.info.

Projects that generate significant interest will be invited to present their work at an international conference in Rome on 23 May 2003.

For more information, please contact VNB, Verein Niedersächsischer Bildungsinitiativen e.V., Bahnhofstr. 16, 49406 Barnstorf, Germany, Tel. +495442-913542, Fax +49 5442 2241.

Source: Mental Health Newsletter n° 1/2003

More than 500 adults and children attend the First Moscow International Disability Film Festival

On 26-29 September 2002 around 350 adults and 200 children and adolescents from Russia participated in Mosfest, the country's first international disability film festival. In addition 20 disability media specialists from Europe, North America and Africa participated in associated workshops.

The Festival was organized by the Russian disability rights group, Perspektiva, with the assistance of Rehabilitation International and the World Institute on Disability, supported by the International Disability Exchanges and Studies (IDEAS) project, funded by the U.S. National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research.

Children and youths, disabled and non-disabled, from local primary and secondary schools attended their own two-day mini-festival of films for and/or about children. About 15 films were screened for them, ranging from short selections from television programs up to 30 or 50-minute documentaries for the older students.

The high school students voted "The Ride," a U.S. film by John Flanders as their favourite movie. It talks about the intense communication developed between a melancholy folksinger driving across the desert and the Deaf hitchhiker he picks up.

On 29 September 2002, an awards ceremony was held, and the jury worked hard up until the last minute before the event to select 11 films from Canada, France, Russia, Brazil, Belgium, the UK and the USA as outstanding.

Finally, an award was presented to the film voted best by the audience: "Alan's Rule", a Russian drama by Peter ZEKAVICA. The main character of this film is an American researcher who abandons his cold, harsh approach to life after meeting and learning to understand the experiences of a Russian troupe of Deaf performers.

The awards ceremony and reception was packed, attracting about 350 people from the Russian disability and film communities. In closing the Festival, the leaders of Perspektiva agreed it had been a major success and announced that they intend to make it an annual event.

Source: Disability world online: www.disabilityworld.org

Inclusion Europe launches special European year “easy-to-read” website

On the occasion of the European Year of People with Disabilities in 2003, Inclusion Europe launched a specific website in “easy-to-read” language for people with learning difficulties.

This website is available in all EU languages and provides information on the concept of discrimination, the European Union, including European Commission, European Parliament, disability organisations, and the Inclusion Europe travelling exhibition “Blue, me and you”.

This website is a good example to include “easy-to-read” language in other websites.

The address of the homepage is: http://www.inclusion-europe.org/information/2003/

Please note that some language versions are not ready yet.

Source: EDF Weekly Mailing 03/2003
**Forthcoming Events**

**What:** Festival National du Court Métrage Handica  
**When:** 19-21 March 2003  
**Where:** Lyon, France  
**Contact:** HANDICA  
5, rue de la Claire  
69009 Lyon, France  
Tel: +33 4 37 64 21 65  
Fax: +33 4 37 64 21 68  
Email: handica@handica.com  

**What:** “A life like everybody else - Combating Discrimination towards community based settings for Persons with disabilities: Tolerance or Acceptance?”  
**When:** 28 March 2003  
**Where:** Graz, Austria  
**Contact:** CECOP  
European Confederation of Workers’ Co-operatives, Social Cooperatives and Participative Enterprises  
Rue Guillaume Tell 59/b  
1060 Brussels, Belgium  
Tel: +32 2 543 10 33  
Fax: +32 2 543 10 37  
Email: cecop@cecop.org  
Website: [www.cecop.org](http://www.cecop.org)

**What:** 7th Abilympics  
**When:** 25-27 April 2003  
**Where:** Konin, Poland  
**Contact:** FUNDACJA MIELNICA  
ul. Szpitalna 43  
62-504 Konin, POLAND  
Tel: +48 63 244 31 71  
Fax: +48 63 244 22 55  
Email: abilimpiada@mielnica.org.pl / fundacja@mielnica.org.pl  
Website: [www.mielnica.org.pl](http://www.mielnica.org.pl)

**What:** "Health & Well - Being", 6th ESMHDD European Congress on Mental Health and Deafness  
**When:** 21-24 May 2003  
**Where:** Bad Ischl, Austria  
**Contact:** Congress Office  
Lebenswell, Markt 18,  
A-4192 Schenkenfelden, Austria,  
Tel: +43 7214 7027-31  
Fax: +43 7214 7027-29  
Email: esmhdd.congress.2003@nextra.at  
Website: [http://members.nextra.at/congress2003](http://members.nextra.at/congress2003)

**What:** National Asian Deaf Congress 2003  
**When:** 24-29 June 2003  
**Where:** Honolulu, Hawaii  
**Contact:** Deaf of the Pacific Rim  
P.O. Box 893474  
Mililani, Hawaii 96789-3474  
Fax: +1 808 625 5803  
Email: dpr2k3@aloha.net  
Website: [www.nadc-usa.org](http://www.nadc-usa.org)

**What:** 5th DHI Conference on International Deaf History  
**When:** 30 June – 4 July 2003  
**Where:** Paris, France  
**Contact:** DHI-FRANCE 2003  
C° MDS de France  
40, rue Gabriel Péri  
93400 - Saint Ouen, France  
Tel / Fax: +33 1 40 12 57 97  
Email: contacts@dhi2003.org  
Website: [www.dhi2003.org](http://www.dhi2003.org)

**What:** “Beating the Odds with Communications Access”, 15th Biennial TDI International Conference,  
**When:** 14-16 July 2003  
**Where:** Las Vegas, USA  
**Contact:** TDI, 8630 Fenton Street, Suite 604  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3803, US  
TTY: +1 301 589 3006  
Fax: +1 301 589 3797  
+1 301 589 3786  
Tel: info@tdi-online.org  
Website: [www.tdi-online.org/tdiconference/15intro.htm](http://www.tdi-online.org/tdiconference/15intro.htm)

**What:** Miss Deaf World 2003  
**When:** 19 July 2003  
**Where:** Prague, Czech Republic  
**Contact:** Modellingová a reklamnf agentura 1  
CZECH MODEL management s.r.o.  
Václavské námesti 21, Praha 1,  
Czech Republic  
Email: Czech.model@email.cz

**What:** 3rd International Women Seminar “Quality of Life of Women with Disabilities”  
**When:** 7-9 November 2003  
**Where:** Croatia  
**Contact:** FIMITIC  
International Federation of Persons with Physical Disability  
Plittersdorfer Strasse 103  
D-53173 Bonn, Germany  
Tel: +49 228 93 59 191 / 193  
Fax: +49 228 93 59 192  
Email: fimitic@t-online.de  
Website: [www.fimitic.org](http://www.fimitic.org)