



The voice of blind and partially sighted people in Europe

European Blind Union

Press release

Paris, 01/10/2018

Access to accessible format books: EU and EBU on the same page

The EU ratifies the Marrakesh Treaty and writes a new chapter in the right to read for print disabled people

At the General Assembly session of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) today, the European Union ratified the Marrakesh Treaty, binding its 28 Member States. This Treaty facilitates the making and cross-border flow of accessible format works (braille, audio etc) under a binding legal system of national copyright exceptions.

“It is a major step toward ending the book famine for the millions of people in the world – 30 million in Europe alone – who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled”, says Wolfgang Angermann, President of the European Blind Union (EBU). “The Treaty facilitates access to culture and education and, for sure, it will be one of the elements to enable blind and partially sighted persons to access better jobs, and to be included in today’s global and digital society.”

EBU campaigned intensively for this Treaty and through our members we will monitor its application. We now call on other countries to join the Treaty, and urge the EU countries that have not yet implemented the directive despite the 11 October deadline, to do so without delay.

The Treaty was adopted on 28 June 2013 under the auspices of the WIPO in Geneva and it entered into force on 30 September 2016, after the first 20 ratifications were achieved. At the crossroads of human rights and intellectual property, it uses copyright law for human rights goals, making the right to read a reality for persons with print disabilities, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

After signing the Treaty on 30 April 2014, the EU adopted in 2017 a directive to be implemented by EU countries, and a regulation to be applied in relations with non-EU countries. The deposit of its instrument

of ratification that took place today means that the EU will, in accordance with the rules of the Treaty, effectively become a party on 1 January 2019.

To date the Treaty binds 43 countries around the world, 28 of which are EBU members, including Russia and Moldova. Japan also ratified the Treaty today.

Ends

About EBU

EBU is a non-governmental, non-profit making European organisation founded in 1984. It is one of the six regional bodies of the World Blind Union. It protects and promotes the interests of blind and partially sighted people in Europe. It currently operates within a network of national organisations of the visually impaired in 41 European countries.

6 rue Gager Gabillot 75015 PARIS (France)

Tel: +33 1 47 05 38 20 - Fax: +33 1 47 05 38 21

Contact: Antoine Fobe - ebucampaigning@euroblind.org

www.euroblind.org

Twitter @euroblind