

**European Blind Union**

Action Plan 2023

Notes:

This document sets out actions to be conducted in 2023 to implement the Strategic Orientation Plan agreed by the 11th EBU General Assembly (Rome, 28-30 October 2019). In cases where the actions are directly taken from, or reflect the content of the Orientation Plan, they are numbered in the same way as in the original document. In addition, this document contains other key actions to be conducted in 2023, all in line with the Orientation Plan. This is in a view to show the links between different areas of EBU’s work which are part of a coherent agenda. For our EU advocacy work, a number of our actions fall within the implementation of the EU Disability Rights Strategy 2021-2030. This document also tries to identify the bodies/people responsible for implementing the action, as well as the source of their funding. The lead body identified for implementing the various actions will obviously consult other EBU sources such as our sectorial and thematic networks. All activities can count on the support by the EBU secretariat, though individual staff should only in exceptional cases be leading activities. For example, the Head of Campaigning is providing support to all activities falling under the LC’s remit, although not being listed every time the LC is mentioned in this document. For the project-supported activities, more detailed work plans do exist. It should be noted from the outset, that objective 8 will be given top priority in 2023, as its achievement determines many of the other activities both in 2023, but also beyond.

# Objective 1 – Improving Braille teaching and literacy

Description: Braille means for generations of blind people accessibility in so many areas of life and a key to independent living. In times of new technologies, learning, promoting and using Braille undergoes significant changes. Against that backdrop, EBU will:

* Develop a position paper on Braille in the 21st century (Action 2).
* Search for resources to organise a Braille essay contest.

Led by: Braille Working Group

Resources: CERV for position paper and to be identified for the contest.

# Objective 2 – Employment:

Description: While we are still lacking reliable, comparable and disaggregated data on the employment situation of blind and partially sighted people, we know that they are disproportionately represented amongst the unemployed population and, when employed, often in precarious jobs. New sectors of employment become available to blind and partially sighted people, also thanks to technology, but others are threatened. Employment is not only a right, but also a formidable means of inclusion of blind and partially sighted people in society. Against that backdrop, EBU will:

* Contribute to the implementation of the EU package to improve labour market outcomes of persons with disabilities by developing guidelines on reasonable accommodation from the standpoint of blind and partially sighted people.

Led by: LC.

Resources: CERV.

# Objective 3 – Access to ICTs

Description: Access to technology is more than ever a key to inclusion in literally all areas of life. For blind and partially sighted people, technology has already opened-up so many possibilities unthinkable a few years ago. At the same time, when designed in an inaccessible way, technology can also lead to further exclusion. Against this backdrop EBU will:

* Co-organise and support ICC camps (International Camp on Communication and Computers). Including preparatory meeting for 2024 (Action 7).
* Contribute to the development of a training tool on how to use the feedback mechanisms under the web accessibility directive (UPower project).
* Organise a test event for that toolkit in France.

Led by: EBU Youth Network for ICC and Project Officer for the UPower activities.

Resources: CERV and UPower project.

# Objective 4 – Participation in public life

Description: Equal participation by blind and partially sighted people in public life is one of the most powerful means of inclusion, and at the same time a prerequisite for it. Today, there are still many barriers to participation, e.g. when it comes to voting. Against that backdrop, EBU will:

* Further develop its AVA activities by extending them to accessible political processes (not just voting) (Action 9).
* Contribute to the development of the EC guide of good electoral practice to address the needs of persons with disabilities.
* Lobby for a reform of the electoral law to be in place for the 2024 Elections to the European Parliament (Action 10).
* - Ensure that our voice is heard in the EU high-level event (Q3 2023) on elections, announced in the Democracy Action Plan.

Led by: LC for lobbying activities and Project Officer for AVA.

Resources: CERV.

# Objective 5 – Non-discrimination

Description: While there is a growing body of legislation in the field of anti-discrimination, including on grounds of disability, many blind and partially sighted people are still facing discrimination in their daily lives. This can be exacerbated by discrimination on other grounds such as gender. Against this backdrop, EBU will:

* Identify most problematic aspects revealed by the EU comparative study in the area of social benefits for persons with disabilities in different countries, and set the grounds for campaigning about these.
* Building on the above, assist the EC in guidance to the Member States in reforms of social protection, focusing on PWDs and disability assessment methodologies and procedures.
* Continue to lobby for disaggregated data and statistics including in the SDG implementation (Action 24).
* Influence the constructive dialogue between the CRPD Committee and the EU so it reflects EBU’s main areas of interest.

Led by: LC.

Resources: CERV.

# Objective 6 – Inclusive design

Description: In the vast area of accessible goods and services, often linked with new technologies, the very daily needs of blind and partially sighted people are concerned. Working towards fully accessible goods and services therefore can have such a direct and positive impact on concrete life situations. Unfortunately, the opposite is also true. Against that backdrop, EBU will:

* Release a handbook on audio-description and ensure its follow-up.
* Continue our campaign for conditionality in EU funding to the film industry for audio description and audio subtitling (Action 15).
* Develop recommendations on accessible payment terminals.
* Consider a campaign on accessible household appliances (Action 14).
* Conduct a contest to reward best practices in the area of e-commerce.
* Continue to monitor and promote the implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty within and outside the and help the EC assess the Marrakesh Treaty Directive building on feedback from the LC.
* Monitor the implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty within and outside the EU.
* Influence and test the accessibility of the new generation of Euro bank notes.
* - - Contribute to a possible consultation for the study evaluating the implementation of Art. 30 CRPD (sport, culture and leisure) (
* Ensure EBU participation in the AccessibleEU resource centre (

Led by: LC and sub-groups and Project Officer for the AD handbook, Board for contest e-commerce.

Resources: CERV and own resources for e-commerce contest.

# Objective 7 – Mobility

Description: It is obvious that mobility is an area in which many spectacular changes can be observed, and this trend will continue. The challenges, obstacles, but also the aids and means to overcome them, are constantly changing. This requires a constant effort to adapt and develop by, e.g., urban planners, public authorities, the industry, and, of course, blind and partially sighted people themselves. Against that backdrop EBU will:

* Contribute to the development of the EU Disability Card (Action 12).
* Collect good practices on shared spaces.
* Organise its annual conference on the Erasmus exchange programme in Spain.

Led by: LC, WG on mobility (to be looked at), Organising Committee for annual conference (to be identified)

Resources: CERV.

# Objective 8 – Governance and working processes

Description: EBU strives to become even more diverse and representative of its constituency at all levels of the organisation and recognises that this requires further action. In parallel, EBU endeavours to constantly improve its working processes and methods with a view to increasing members’ participation. Against that backdrop, EBU will:

* Hire a Membership Officer and give structure to that new position.
* Work with an external consultant to develop a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) frame in parallel to the development of the next 4-year strategic plan.
* Prepare the 12th EBU General Assembly by seeking inputs from all EBU members.
* Encourage diversity in the nomination process for the next EBU Board (Action 20).
* Consider a study with a university on obstacles to diversity and representativeness at different levels of the organisation (Actions 20 and 21).
* Promote the use of the Solidarity Fund including its special section for Ukraine as a leaver to support non-EU based members.
* Evaluate GEAR, ADVISE and AVA past activities.
* Hold the second Leadership Exchange Forum (LEF) meeting.
* Conduct webinars, supported by training materials, to encourage participation by people with low vision.

Led by: Board and Executive Director, Low Vision network

Resources: CERV.

# Objective 9 – Communication and campaigning

Description: It is widely acknowledged that effective campaigning and advocacy go hand in hand with effective communication, and that communication has both an internal and external dimension. For EBU, the link between campaigning and communication is made further complex by our nature as a European umbrella organisation having to deal with the language barrier and multi-level communication. Taking stock of what we have achieved and how to improve requires ongoing attention. Against that backdrop, EBU will:

* Release up-to-date information about our work and achievements through an EBU podcast, member’s newsletter, thematic focus publication, regularly updated website and social media channels (Actions 26 and 27).
* Increase our external outreach by strengthening our network of media contacts and journalists.
* Develop communication materials such as an EBU presentation in the context of the 40th anniversary and GA in 2024.
Led by: External Communications Officer as well as by the Information and Communication Officer.

Resources: CERV.

# Objective 10 EBU and its members have increased fundraising capacity

Description: Growing and diversifying our funding resources, in order to implement and sustain our ambitious agenda is an obvious goal for EBU and its members. In this competitive, fast-changing and complex market, facilitating exchange of good and bad practice is really important. Against that backdrop, EBU will:

* Assess, with the new Project Officer, the potential to attract private sector funding or other sources that are not EU funding (Action 29).
* Prepare and submit the 2024 grant application to the EC.

Led by: Project Officer.
Resources: CERV.

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