



## **Emergency Resolution on the European Union's Ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty**

**Adopted by the EDF Annual General Assembly  
on 13 May 2017 in Madrid, Spain**

### **Bring an end to the book famine**

The Annual General Assembly (AGA) of the European Disability Forum (EDF), meeting in Madrid on 14 May 2017 hereby adopts the following emergency resolution:

#### **A big step taken for human rights in the EU and globally**

EDF welcomes the positive step of the European Union (EU), in regard to the agreement reached earlier this week by the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council on the text of the Directive and Regulation for the implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled.

The Directive and Regulation are a significant step for cross-border exchange of books and other written material in accessible formats for blind persons, visually-impaired persons and other print disabled persons, thanks to the exception to copyright for the production of works in accessible formats regardless of "commercial availability" requisites.

The ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty is in line with the EU and its Members States obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Accessibility, access to culture, to education and to work all depends on access to books and other printed works. 575.000 books new titles were published in the European Union in 2015, with an estimated market value of €36-38 billion. While these titles are available in electronic format, only a few of these titles are accessible to blind persons and other print disabled persons.

#### **A risk of weakening the international treaty through allowing for extra charges**

EDF deeply regrets that the final agreement allows EU Member States to impose upon all print disabled persons' organisations and libraries the payment of economic compensation for the distribution of accessible formatted copies of copyrighted works, which can severely hinder the achievement of the Marrakesh Treaty goals.

EDF regrets that the possibility of economic compensation for hypothetical economic harm to publishing rights holders will be included as an option in the Directive in transposition to national legislation.

The adoption of the Directive and the Regulation by the EU for the implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty is an important step, but not sufficient, and need to be accompanied by additional actions.

Members of the EDF Assembly:

- congratulate the European institutions for this positive step;
- call on EU Member States not to use the option to impose economic compensation on print disabled persons.
- We call on the EU and all its Member States to establish an action plan and implement programmes to ensure that the Marrakesh Treaty is fully implemented within the EU and in cooperation with partner countries around the world so that print disabled people, finally have access to the same books, magazines and other reading material as all other people.