Target: Access to communication & information
2,000,000 people in the EU are affected by deafblindness

Imagine living without the capacity to see and hear

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After overcoming not a few difficulties, we are glad to present you the first edition of the EDbN magazine. The objective is to give voice to deafblindness as a disability, and also to the entities working in this field. As a result, we will talk about all the topics we need to focus on to give visibility to this group of people as well as to achieve improvements in the quality of their lives. Thus, this magazine seeks to remain a true reflection of the situation, while being an information tool about the on-going actions and a dissemination and awareness-raising tool for the society in general.

Being a strong voice for deafblindness is one of the strategic priorities for EDbN. It is our job to inform society about this disability, its impact on the family and our work. It is usual that, while immersed in a very specialized field with great challenges and very few resources, we do not realize the tremendous work we conduct from the associations. Therefore, with this publication, we can, and must, joint efforts to inform, explain and recognize the work accomplished. We want to approach the politic, economic and social actors who may help us achieve the consideration and the appropriate resources to assist our group.

It is our goal that society recognizes that people with deafblindness have the same right to live in dignity.

We hope this magazine will strengthen the relations with our partners, collaborators, interlocutors and the society in general.

Thank you all and, particularly, to the editorial team that has made possible the birth of this magazine.

Ricard López
President of EDbN
What is deafblindness?

Deafblindness is not simply deafness plus blindness, but a specific disability. The fact that a person has a hearing loss of 20 per cent and a vision loss of 10 per cent doesn’t mean a deafblindness of 30 per cent but some 90 per cent. This happens because sight and hearing are the two reference senses: it is through them that we learn and develop our intelligence during the first stages of development.

The simultaneous loss or impairment of both senses multiplies therefore the disability of the person who suffers it. Deafblindness may have a congenital or acquired origin. Not all deafblind people are 100 per cent deafblind, there are several degrees. But we can say that 5 per cent of all cases are completely deafblind. Deafblind people have no contact with reality, since they lack the senses which make this link possible. As a consequence, they are people who cannot be self-sufficient and require a 24 hour support (1 to 1). The European socio-health system has few centres specialized in this disability, consequently most of these people end up in centres for mentally handicapped people, while they are not. Nevertheless, many of them will end up in these centers due to the lack of appropriate stimulation for their disability: psychotic outbreaks, self-harm, behaviour problems...

In most cases, dependence on family is almost total. However, and what is more serious, 1/3 of these families are mother-only families.

Most European countries don’t have a deafblind census. The incidence rate of this disability, by reference to the countries around us, is 40 cases per 100,000 population.
The European Disability Forum (EDF) is an independent NGO that represents the interests of 80 million Europeans with disabilities. The organization is made up of people with disabilities and their families and is a frontrunner for disability rights. Last May their members outlined an action plan to the Hungarian Disability Movement, helping members understand how their national campaigns fit into a wider European movement for the rights of disabled people across the continent. The EDF works not only to strengthen legislation but also to ensure that existing legislation is implemented as effectively as possible. The latest piece of legislation to be approved was the EU convention of 2011 which specifically referred to accessibility in articles 3, 4 and 9. The convention takes the form of a mixed agreement which basically consists of actions on a national level being brought together. The legislation does not provide additional competencies to the EU nor does it oblige action on a national level but rather, states are urged to implement the convention wherever possible.

Currently member states comply with the EU conventions to varying degrees. The approval of this measure is currently being blocked by several EU Member States. In the three key areas of youth environment, transport and ICT there is certainly a lack of specific legislation which leaves disabled people especially vulnerable to cuts in national budgets in response to the crisis. In this case, the EDF is working to encourage the implementation of the new European convention with regards to 7 key areas referring to accessibility by:

1: Launching a study involving the cross benefits analysis of improving accessibility
2: Exploring the possibility of having an EU accessibility act
3: Improving the current legal framework
4: Addressing digital accessibility issues
5: Continuing work on accessibility standards
6: Continuing the promotion of “accessible cities”
7: Improving the effectiveness of article 16

The EDF is working not only to strengthen legislation but also to ensure that existing legislation is implemented as effectively as possible. The latest piece of legislation to be approved was the EU convention of 2011 which specifically referred to accessibility in articles 3, 4 and 9. The convention takes the form of a mixed agreement which basically consists of actions on a national level being brought together. The legislation does not provide additional competencies to the EU nor does it oblige action on a national level but rather, states are urged to implement the convention wherever possible.

The key problem faced by the EDF is a lack of coherent, standardized information on disability and accessibility economics throughout the EU. Information is needed to both perform a cross benefits analysis of improving accessibility in order to encourage the implementation of current legislation as well as to carry out impact assessments needed to improve and build upon existing legislation. Currently, the information that does exist consists of hundreds of studies that are not organized in any standardized way. The EDF is working to develop standards in European disability information that will facilitate ease of use. For example, national information is to be brought together in one document to be written in a way that can be used for procurement by public authorities.

In order to achieve these aims the EDF is running workshops with standardization experts and disabled people, improving participation in the process and improving knowledge of both disabled people and experts. They have also written a guide addressing the social considerations of procurement. Finally, they are conducting consultations on whether to make the implementation of the recommendations compulsory rather than simply “whenever possible”.

The EDF represents 80 million Europeans with disabilities.
Edinburgh Royal Blind School hopes for an end to “post code lottery”

Staff at the Edinburgh Royal Blind School are hoping that a Scottish Government review at the end of this year will spell an end the “post code lottery” system that local authorities currently use to designate funding towards children with special educational needs. Currently, access to special education depends on a child's number literally being pulled out of hat. Hopefully, this review will be a step along the path to children's special educational needs, regardless of cost, being a universally enjoyed right rather than simply one enjoyed by a lucky few.

EDbN in the “Chef of the Year”

With the help of the Caterdata Group, we participated in the fourth edition of the contest “Chef of the Year”. It is a platform which represents an opportunity for new generations of chefs to make themselves known. Caterdata is a catering group which develops various services and products for the catering sector.

The chef Martín Berasategui is the president of the Spanish jury and Jordi Cruz (who has recently been awarded a second Michelin star) acts as its vice president. In Germany, Austria and Switzerland, Dieter Mueller chairs the jury.

This year, EDbN will participate in several semifinals. We were offered to participate in this event as a means of making deafblindness and our organizations known.
Accessible Catalonia

Situated in the North East corner of Spain, Catalonia boasts a rich culture and history as well as a beautiful and varied landscape, from the peaks of the Catalan Pyrenees to the 580 Km of coastline. Despite having their own language and unique cuisine, you may not have heard of the Catalan people, probably because they lost their independence to the Spanish more than 300 years ago. However, since Spain's transition to democracy in the early 80s Catalonia has been progressively asserting itself as an interesting and unique place, well worth your attention. What is more, whether disabled or not, measures aimed at improving accessibility throughout the region will improve the comfort and quality of life.

The most accessible entrance is in Carrer Sardenya since there are no turnstiles there. The routes around the temple are all ramped but quite steep making it essential for wheelchair users to go accompanied. Unfortunately it cannot be visited in a wheelchair. The site also includes adapted toilets, accessible rooms, audio guides and touchable cardboard models for the visually impaired.

For wheelchair users not able to enjoy the fabulous views of Barcelona from the towers of the Sagrada Familia do not fret, the funicular of Montjuic goes from Barcelona metro station to the top of Montjuic mountain where you can enjoy some of the best views of Barcelona. There are several other parks throughout the city and although the hills of Barcelona make accessibility a bit difficult, it is not impossible.

Art lovers will find most Barcelona's galleries and museums far more accessible. Barcelona Contemporary Art Museum, for example, houses an important collection of artistic creations from the last 50 years. The floors of the building are connected by ramps (8% gradient) and large lifts. Adapted toilets and audio guides are also available.

With many other beautiful close cities such as Girona, Lleida, Vic and Tarragona, excellent music, culture and food we can hardly do justice to what Catalonia has to offer with this short article. However, we do hope that we have at least wetted your appetite to explore Catalonia and all it has to offer.
Art is something one does

Several Scandinavian organizations including the Danish Resource Centre on Congenital Deafblindness (http://www.servicestyrelsen.dk/dovblindfodt/in-english) have carried out a collaborative project with the aim of furthering knowledge of the use of aesthetics in the support of deafblind people.

For many years Scandinavian disability organizations have been arranging various cultural and aesthetic activities for deafblind adults such as cultural weeks and camps. Their latest project has been aimed at documenting and cataloging the outcomes of these activities. With this information, Scandinavian deafblind organizations hope to demonstrate the fantastic work they have been doing in order to be able to keep doing it in the future.

Another purpose of the project was to increase knowledge of how aesthetic activities boost the self consciousness, concentration and motivation of deafblind adults; vital for improving support services. Finally, Scandinavian researchers hope the material will help them come up with ways in which experiences from the activities and the collaboration with the artists can be transferred to everyday life. Everyone is capable of artistic expression. In fact, it is diversity in this field what enriches our collective cultural experience. Deafblind people have a unique perspective on life and potentially a lot to offer if means of artistic communication are made as accessible as possible.

Please do touch

Ever wondered what it would be like to be deafblind? Although most of us have, it is almost impossible to imagine. Guido Detonni, an artist with a long career in relation to the world of disabilities, has created a sculpture that is designed to be touched and hence, raise awareness of the tactile world of deafblindness. In his unique work, Detonni learned closely from a group of deafblind people, their families and professionals who attend them. Specifically, through the Catalan Association Pro Deafblind People (APSOCECAT).

It is hoped that the project will raise awareness of deafblindness and needed funds to support those who suffer from it.

From small beginnings

On the 11th of June Sense Scotland (http://www.sensescotland.org.uk/) celebrated Touchbase, their Glasgow based resource centre, becoming a UNESCO Creative Arts and Music Centre. This recognition by the UN represents the culmination of 25 years of hard work by a group of dedicated and passionate individuals.

From humble beginnings at an afternoon of arts activities in the back of a house where young deafblind people were encouraged to “play” with the materials, talent and self expression where quickly identified and nurtured. Today Sense Scotland support children and adults in a range of activities from music and drama to painting and sculpture in their new multi million pound resource centre in Glasgow.

25 years ago the small group of anxious families that founded Sense Scotland could not have imagined themselves where they are today. Their story is an inspiration, a heartwarming example of what we can achieve if we put our minds to it.
The struggle for legal recognition of deafblindness in Poland

Despite significant advances in the promotion of deafblind rights, campaigners in Poland are far from satisfied with the current disability legislation. Several obstacles exist which prevent the Polish deafblind from enjoying the full rights and state support they are entitled to. The Polish Association for the Welfare of the Deafblind (TGP) hopes to change this by pursuing the legal recognition of deafblindness in their country, bringing Poland in line with the European Parliament’s written declaration on the rights of deafblind people.

**Hearing and vision impairment are rarely recognized. Legal recognition of deafblindness will not be enough**

Without legal recognition of deafblindness, those with disability are not able to access the services they require to participate fully in public and private life as they should according to their rights. Separately, both deafness and blindness make up two official categorized disabilities in Poland. However, as they are considered separately, the unique characteristics of deafblindness are not taken into account. Furthermore, due to a lack of awareness of deafblindness in Poland, concomitant hearing and vision impairment are rarely recognized and individuals are often only defined as having one or the other.

Practically, this has resulted in deafblind people in Poland lacking access to resources and services for one aspect of their disability as well as specific equipment and social services aimed at alleviating problems specifically associated with deafblindness. Many people, for example, have found it hard to buy hearing aids, or have only been prescribed one, due to a lack of recognition of their condition.

Due to the complexity of the issue, changes in government and a low level of interest in the media, the Polish Association for the Welfare of the Deafblind has yet to achieve legal recognition of deafblindness in Poland. However, with a clear plan and hard work, progress is being made. On its own, legal recognition of deafblindness will not be enough. That is why TGP is also proposing that deafblindness be included in the education of therapists, teachers and health professionals which will ensure improved services; the use of specific deafblind interpreters in court; improvement in accessibility for people with both hearing and vision loss.

TGP is the only specialist organization in Poland to work with the deafblind and have recently been chosen by the National Fund for Disabled People as a partner for project implementation devoted to supporting the deafblind on the world market. They have also been invited as guests of several government departments to represent deafblind people on policy matters and feel positive about increased coverage of deafblindness in the media. With a wealth of expertise, TGP is hopeful that their meetings with the commissioner of issues concerning handicapped people and several MPs on the legal recognition of deafblindness will bear fruit. Their next steps will be to promote the topic of deafblindness and the need for its legal recognition in the European Parliament.
In pursuit of legal recognition of deafblindness in Poland

In Poland issues concerning the deafblind are under the control of Towarzystwo Pomocy Głuchoniewidomym (TPG in short and common name, in translation- The Association for The Welfare of the Deafblind). It’s a non governmental organisation, which includes deafblind people, specialists working with them, scientists, activists of Polish Blind Union and Polish Deaf Union. It’s the only specialised organisation in the our country that works for people with concomitant vision and hearing impairment.

One of the matters that the TPG board is currently concerned with is a legal recognition of deafblindness as a distinct disability in Poland. Members of previous board cadences were trying to solve this problem by placing this disability in our legislation. Because of the complexity of the issue, quantity of govermental parties ruling over that time and also low level of interest in the subject by media the situation hasn't been resolved yet and our aim hasn't been achieved. In the current Polish regulation there's no mention of people diagnosed with deafblindness. They are being diagnosed as deaf (according to disability jurisdiction: code 03-L, which means voice, speech and hearing diseases) or blind (code 04-O, which means vision illness). At this moment in the disability jurisdiction system there are 12 kinds of disabilities approved by the law and each of them has it's own code. The handicapped people can be diagnosed based on the power of the so called standards, that include medical and functional parameters, which show stating commissions how to define the kind and level of disability that the diagnosed person has. In Poland 3 levels of disability are distinguished: mild, moderate and severe. Those indicators determine the amount and variety of welfare and rehabilitation one can have. In other words, whether, and to which point a handicapped person can enjoy their rights.

For example, if a statement of disability given by the Powiatowy Zespół do Spraw Orzekania o Niepełnosprawności (a districtical panel that diagnoses disability) lacks a code that indicates hearing disability, it's very hard to receive the amount of money that a deaf person has the right to recieve. What's more, sometimes money is given only for one hearing aid, because the commissions designate only this kind of allowance. In its written regulations they don't have deafblind people as the benefactors which is also linked with the deficiency in disability jurisdiction for one hearing aid. There is a big chance that when the statements have a code for deafblindness, this situation will be improved. There are a lot of examples just as the one above but concerning other special equipment and also social services that deafblind people don't have the right for.

Another very important issue is a regulation in Polish legislation status of interpreter-guide, a vocation that is a extremely important form of individual help to deafblind. As significant as this is, we need alternative communication methods for people with concomitant vision and hearing impairment like Lorum Alphabet and allowing qualified interpreters-guides in courts to use it just like with sworn interprets of sign language. Other cases we still need to change include the education of therapists, teachers and people of other professions working with deafblind children and adults, which isn't that simple because of lack of scientific specialization that links subject of deafness and blindness at our universities. There are also no regulations, which would define the special educational needs and programme for deafblind children at the moment. We hope that the legal recognition of deafblindness as a thirteenth disability in polish law will solve all of those problems that are bothering us.

To accomplish all those aims members of staff and activists of TPG have taken up many, various actions which hopefully will lead to realize the need to place deafblindness in Polish legislative statements regulations.
Another result we expect is an improvement in accessibility of people with both hearing and vision loss to social, vocational, cultural life as well as other areas as states European Parliament written Declaration on Rights of Deafblind People.

We aren’t only thinking of fighting for the particular rights for people who are under our care but also of finding as many of them as we can in faster and more effective ways to give them the support they need. As it was mentioned before, most people with concomitant vision and hearing impairments have written statements for one of those disabilities. Its rare to find a person who has both of them in this document. In this situation it’s practically impossible to find deafblind people based on the statements or other registers that local departments share with us. Deafblindness as a disability accepted by law with its own code would settle this matter.

Actions taken by TPG board right now contain constant control of legislation works. It’s representatives are meeting the Commissioner of Issues Concerning Handicapped People Jarosław Duda, members of parliament Marek Plura, Sławomir Piechota and Jerzy Ziętek. What’s more, they are taking part in works linked with arranging disability jurisdiction, bill defining sign language as a binding language of national minority, making local and national voting easier and more accessible for handicapped people as well as for others.

We feel that today there’s a bit more information about deafblind people and their problems in the media.

We also have influence in PFRON (Państwowy Fundusz Osób Niepełnosprawnych – National Fund for Disabled People), which have chosen our organisation as a partner for the implementation of a project devoted to supporting the deafblind on the work market.

We are being invited as consultants and guests by the staff of Parliament and Senate, President’s Cancelary, Commissioner of Issues Concerning Handicapped People Department to their special commissions and conferences. We are being treated as representatives of deafblind people, people with distinct disability.

All successes featured above are immensely significant and for sure bring us closer to the moment, when deafblind people aren’t going to be described only in a functional way but also according to their legal status.

Soon our organisation will be promoting the topic of deafblindness and its strong need to be recognized in legislation in the European Parliament President Office. We expect to be heard out and understood. Gaining positive results of legal recognition of deafblindness, however, will take some time just as the change of social perception of the subject.

Grzegorz Kozłowski (President of TPG)
This July saw the publishing of the United Nation's first ever World Report on Disability. The extensive study took over 3 years with contributions from over 380 experts from all over the world. The report tackles the bigger picture of disability as both a development and a human rights issue. In this way it represents a significant step in the improvement of the well-being of disabled people across the world.

The central objective of the report is to contribute to the implementation of the 2006 UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which aims to “promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.” The World Report on Disability will facilitate this by providing evidence based recommendations as a “must have resource” or policy makers, service providers, professionals and advocates for persons with disabilities.

Regardless of nationality, almost 1 billion disabled people throughout the world experience obstacles that entail that they are more likely to be living in poverty, achieve less educationally and experience poorer health. Deafblindness is specifically referred to throughout the report with regards to education and accessibility. For those of us working in support of the human rights and material well-being of deafblind people throughout Europe this report will make an excellent resource on how, practically, the deafblind (as well as others with disabilities) can enjoy the fundamental rights guaranteed to them by the UN.

You can access and download the full report as well as complementary resources at:
The European Union passes legislation and regulation that the 27 Member States are then required to implement in their legislation. This makes it important to influence the European Union, to make sure that the laws passed are right for deafblind people.

EDbN is able to lobby on the needs of deafblind people, families and professionals in the 27 Member States of the EU.

Lobbying work has two aims, the first is to raise awareness of deafblindness and the second is to make sure that the needs of deafblind people are included in all the policy making work of the European Union.

To raise awareness of deafblindness, EDbN members need to take every opportunity to talk to Members of the European Parliament, European Commission officials and representatives of their own national government to make sure they know about the needs of deafblind people around Europe.

Members of EDbN are watching the policy proposals that are being developed by the European Commission and discussed by the European Parliament and Council. At the moment a directive is being discussed that would outlaw discrimination for disabled people in areas such as transport, the physical environment, goods and services. It would be really good if as many EDbN members as possible could get involved in this campaigning.

Anyone who is interested in campaigning/lobbying work in the European Union can get involved in this work by joining EDbN and signing up to the email list.

Please visit the EDbN website or email Lucy.Drescher@sense.org.uk

Get involved in this campaigning

Member of Steering Group of Edbn
Lucy Drescher
Public consultation with a view to a European Accessibility Act

The European Deafblind Network (EDbN)

The European Commission is reflecting on the development of a European Accessibility Act containing measures to improve the accessibility of goods and services in the European market. This consultation is part of the preparatory data collection that will underpin the assessment of the impact of the measures.

The target is all citizens, including persons with disabilities and older people, enterprises and organisations of public and private sector as well as civil society in EU Member States, EFTA/EEA and candidate countries.

The European Deafblind Network (EDbN) as a network of deafblind people, people significant in their lives and professionals working in this field has the aim of working to raise the profile of deafblindness in Europe and ensure that all relevant policymaking work at the European level takes account of the needs of deafblind people and the significant people in their lives. Consequently EDbN has submitted its response to this public consultation answering only to the significant points for us.

Contact email for enquires and suggestions: rlopez@sordoceguera.com

31. The accessibility for persons with disabilities of which goods and services should be given priority?

Many deafblind people are isolated, unable to participate in their communities because goods and services are not accessible to them. EDbN believes that this situation needs to change, so that all goods and services within the EU are accessible to deafblind people. For goods and services to be accessible for deafblind and other disabled people, they need to work easily for them and their specific needs. They need to assist deafblind people to live independent lives; to be able to participate in their communities and to have the same choice of affordable products as other people have. At the moment there is no onus on the manufacturers to make this happen as part of the design process.

EDbN believes that it would not be helpful to make a definitive list of the goods and services that should be covered by the Act. This is because any list would be impossible to agree upon, as disabled people have different priorities and requirements. In addition, new products and services are being developed all the time, which would not be included if a definitive list was made now. Therefore, instead of a definitive list we have written about areas of life that should be included and some definition of why they are important. These areas of life are all interlinked, to form an independent life and so it is important for all of them to be accessible.

The principle of Universal Design needs to be followed in all areas to ensure that the needs of disabled people are involved in the development of goods and services.
Access to Information

The need to access information is common to all areas of life. For so many deafblind people inaccessible information makes the sense of isolation greater. In 2011 our member organisation, Sense did a survey of deafblind people in the UK, to find out about their needs and experiences in terms of belonging and participating in society. When asked what it means to them to be an active member of society, access to information was in the top five activities people listed. In the same survey access to information was listed in the top ten barriers to their participation in activities. This means that access to information which could be so important in enabling people to take part in activities, is in fact a barrier for many, because the information that is provided is not accessible.

For people to purchase goods and services they need to be aware that those goods and services exist. Unfortunately information on products and services is generally done in a visual way, using television, posters, flyers, magazines and leaflets. This can be very difficult for deafblind people to access, due to small print, lack of colour contrast and text being put over pictures. On television information and advertising for products is done in a very visual way. Key information is generally given in a visual form scrolling across the screen, with only limited audible information.

Website and applications ('apps') are now a major source of information about all areas of life. They should be designed accessibly, so that people with sight loss can access them using assistive technology such as text-to-speech software (e.g. JAWS) or screen magnification software. We have been supporting the campaign led by RNIB and the European Blind Union for binding EU legislation to ensure that public websites and websites providing basic services to citizens are fully accessible. We look forward to the introduction of new provisions in this area, as outlined by the European Commission in the Digital Agenda for Europe.

Instruction manuals are another important area. Having decided to purchase a product it is important to be able to find out how it works and, if it has a problem how to repair it. Unfortunately, manuals are often written in small print, with difficult language and hard to understand diagrams.

Customer service and customer care are important elements of providing goods and services. Staff who are providing support to customers need to be trained, to ensure that they are able to provide an accessible service for customers with disabilities. In shops and other places that provide a service it needs to be really clear where the customer service help points are, so that they can easily be found by people with disabilities.

Transport, journeys and travel

Like anyone else, deafblind people want to be able to travel freely around their local areas, nationally and internationally within the EU. There are a number of barriers to them being able to do this. Staff training is a key issue for deafblind people on all forms of transport, and it is very patchy at the moment. This applies to the experience of purchasing tickets, getting on to the right train/bus/flight, coping with changes to journeys and then knowing when to get off. It also applies to inconsistency in the level of assistance provided to passengers with disabilities. Another issue is a customer finding their way around bus stops, bus stations, train stations, airports and other transport centres. This is about physical access, lighting and signage.
Shopping and retail

The shopping experience needs to be accessible to customers both in shops and online. However, at the moment this is not always the case unfortunately.

Shops are often difficult for deafblind people to find their way around. Unfortunately, the lighting is not always uniform, creating areas of shadow; the signage is often not clear and there are often hazards such as free standing displays that are difficult to see. As with transport, staff are a key element of the service received in a shop and without training staff are often unable or not confident enough to provide an accessible service to disabled customers. Packaging and labelling of products is in most cases inaccessible to people with a visual loss, making it difficult for them to find the products they are looking for when shopping independently.

Online shopping has become a very important resource for customers to find a greater range of products, often at cheaper prices and with the ease of being able to shop whenever they want and wherever they want (home, whilst travelling etc.). It also enables customers to browse supermarket aisles virtually. For all these reasons it is a perfect way for disabled people to shop. It is essential that the shopping experience is accessible from the beginning to the end of the online customer journey. Unfortunately, many companies implement a security step ‘3D Secure’ or similar features causing serious accessibility issues (see section on e-payments below). So it is not uncommon for a supermarket website to be perfectly accessible up to that point, leaving users with sight loss unable to get through the security process and ultimately unable to purchase their goods. This shows just how essential it is that the banking industry also understands the need for accessible security features.

Financial services

ATMs can be very difficult for people with a visual loss to use. Their design varies from machine to machine which is confusing and the receipts and statements they issue are all in small print that is difficult to read.

Information provided by banks, in statements, letters, information about pin numbers and information booklets is often not accessible to people with visual loss.

Making card payments online can be inaccessible to people with visual loss as it requires inputting information printed on a card which a visually impaired person cannot read. In many cases it requires going through the 3D Secure service which a visually impaired person cannot read. The only alternative to the 3D Secure service is an audio service which is very difficult for a hearing aid user to hear, so would not be an accessible alternative for a deafblind person.

The Built Environment

For the external built environment to be fully accessible it is essential to ensure that pavements and surfaces are designed accessibly. This should include, for example, blister warning texture on dropped kerbs and accessible road crossings with accessible audio and texture warning systems. Unfortunately, the accessibility of the external built environment varies considerably across the EU. Narrow and poorly maintained pavements and obstructions make some areas difficult to negotiate for disabled people. New and refurbished environments may also create access problems, for example the trend for ‘shared surface streets’ where there is no discernible footway/pavement and sometimes no controlled crossings.
For the internal built environment to be fully accessible, it is essential to ensure that the entrance of a building is easy to recognise and access, with appropriate lighting outside and marking on doors. Inside a building, attention should be paid to lighting, signage and adequate space to move around safely. Print signage should use a simple font (e.g. Arial), good colour contrast, with appropriate use of capitalisation - there should also be Braille signage. Floor surfaces should be marked appropriately; there should be sufficient colour contrast so that doors and fixtures are easily identifiable and furniture should not create unnecessary obstacles and trip hazards. Lifts should also be fully accessible, with Braille marking on raised call buttons and audible announcements. There should be enough space for wheelchair users to move around safely and comfortably.

**Culture, entertainment, education & citizenship**

Only a small number of books are available in accessible formats. With the move towards e-books this situation has the potential to improve significantly for deafblind people. However, the development of e-books needs to offer the potential for the display to be customised and to be linked up to other technology such as Braille displays.

New technologies may also mean higher levels of exclusion if content is created or protected in ways which put up more barriers to accessibility, or simply if content is not made available in accessible formats. We acknowledge that it is vital to ensure high levels of protection for rights holders in order to facilitate intellectual creativity but we believe that everyone, without exception, should have the right to access the fruits of such creative processes. Intellectual property legislation has meant that blind and partially sighted people specifically have been excluded from accessing content. The copyright legislative framework should not discriminate against blind and partially sighted people merely because they are unable to read print material or because they use assistive technologies. We support the campaign being led by RNIB, the European Blind Union and the World Blind Union for an international WIPO treaty to allow specialist organisations to make accessible copies of books in all signatory countries and make it legal to send accessible books across national borders.

**ICT and household goods**

According to the US Access Board’s Draft Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Standards and Guidelines, “ICT includes, but is not limited to: electronic content, including email, electronic documents and Internet and intranet web sites; telecommunications products, including video communication terminals; computers and ancillary equipment, including external hard drives; software, including operating systems and applications; information kiosks and transaction machines; videos; information technology (IT) services; and multifunction office machines that copy, scan and fax documents”.

The development of the information society, based on information and communication technologies (ICTs), has gone well beyond all forecast expectations in both its economic value and the breadth and speed with which it has been introduced. As society evolves towards an “information society”, our dependence on technology-based products and services increases. Changes of this nature have an impact on all spheres of peoples’ lives, so products, services and systems should be designed so that they can be used by the greatest possible number of people. The information society should not be creating more exclusion - it has to be an opportunity for inclusion.

While the price of mainstream electronic devices is falling, lack of accessible affordable products on the market remains a key issue for deafblind people. The cost of assistive products remains high, and these often require the use of high-end devices (with the required operating systems) to ensure interoperability. Interoperability is essential to download content to a special assistive device (e.g. a Braille display) and read content. Some formats may not be compatible with specialist assistive technology - this should also be taken into consideration when providing content.
This is a key area that needs to be covered by the Accessibility Act as the European single market means that it cannot be covered by national legislation. At the present time deafblind people cannot find accessible mainstream goods; assistive technology they use is not compatible and interoperable with mainstream goods and they are not able to access instruction manuals. All of this means that they are not able to benefit from technology and all the advances that are being made in this area.

Being able to access and use household goods plays a fundamental part in one’s ability to lead an independent life. Unfortunately, there is currently no obligation on manufacturers to design such products accessibly. As a result, common household goods are becoming less accessible as user interfaces are increasingly reliant on technology which cannot be operated by people with sight loss. For example, an increasing number of washing machines, microwaves, but also sound systems, digital radio, TV, etc. now rely on touch sensitive controls and/or visual displays with LCD screens to provide information about time, programmes, temperature, etc. Touch sensitive controls are totally inaccessible to blind people and it is very hard for partially sighted people to read LCD screens. This has set blind and partially sighted people back and made simple tasks such as cooking or using a washing machine far more difficult than they used to be. It is a well-known fact that older style dials with clear markings were much easier to use for people with sight loss. If accessibility requirements had been included when designing new touch sensitive controls/LCD screens, disabled people would still be able to use those goods without having to rely on others to operate them.

Therefore we believe that the future act should include the accessibility of all household goods within its scope.

32. Which are the most important policy and legal measures to improve accessibility in your opinion?

Many manufacturers and service providers continue to perceive disabled people as a non-profitable ‘niche’ market. There is substantial evidence to support the argument that statutory requirements for inclusion deliver access solutions of wider benefit and that a regulatory framework will drive innovation for inclusion.

In the US, for example, strong legislation in the education market and strong public procurement legislation have driven Apple to include voice access in their mobile phone and internet access products. Other global players are following in their footsteps. Many EU manufacturers are now at a commercial disadvantage as they are unable to supply off-the-shelf solutions for such markets. For deafblind people who can afford them, Apple products have made an enormous difference to their lives. It is vital that European manufacturers catch up on these advances in accessibility.

33. What should public authorities and market operators do to improve accessibility of goods and services?

Public authorities represent a large share of the market and so it is really important that they encourage the development of the market by procuring goods and services that are accessible. We welcome the changes to the Public Procurement Directive that are being proposed by the European Commission at the moment. The Accessibility Act needs to complement and work with the proposals on the Public Procurement Directive.

There is robust and unquestionable evidence from the United States which demonstrates that public procurement can be a very effective lever to increase accessibility. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act created a level playing field and triggered major improvements in accessibility features in a wide range of ICT products. The European Union should follow suit and use public procurement as a powerful lever for change.

There are a number of other measures that governments or the EU could take to encourage providers of goods and services to design accessible solutions. In line with Article 4(f)6 of the UN CRPD, Member States could allocate research and development funds on the condition that account is taken of disabled persons’ needs.
34. Could you please provide your opinion on the role that SME's could play in the provision of accessible goods and service? Should there be any specific measures to that extent?

It can be much harder for SME's to lead the way in the provision of accessible goods and services but innovative companies can take advantage of opportunities to offer particular, specialist goods and services that are not being offered by others. The Accessibility Act needs to create a level playing field, to enable SME's to create innovative products and services.

35. Based on your experience with existing national or foreign accessibility legislation, which provisions do you consider as essential for the effectiveness and success of such legislation? In that context could you please explain how prescriptive and detailed do you think accessibility legislation should be and how it should be enforced?

In order to be effective, the future EU accessibility legislation should have a clearly defined and comprehensive scope, and include an effective mechanism to ensure that it is future proof. It is also necessary to ensure that there is a strong link between such legislation and existing or future accessibility standards - compliance with accessibility standards should be mandatory.

It is equally important to ensure that there is robust enforcement of such legislation. We believe that enforcement of such a fundamental piece of EU legislation should therefore include collective redress, enabling NGOs and consumer groups to challenge non-compliance in all EU member states.

We have looked at the different policy options outlined in the Commission's roadmap for the European Accessibility Act. We do not believe that non-legislative options are viable options. Relying on the market to deliver accessible goods and services is a strategy that has failed. We firmly believe that EU legislative action is necessary, and that it is the only way to ensure that there is a functioning market of accessible goods and services.

We believe that a general framework directive - or a package of directives - with general obligations on manufacturers and service providers to ensure the accessibility of goods and services before their placing on the market would be helpful. It would also be particularly helpful to have mandatory accessibility requirements in public procurement. Lastly, the proposal to have a strong link between the act and existing or to-be-defined accessibility standards is sound, as is the suggestion to comply with a universal design approach.

36. Please provide your comments about the complementary role that the EU, national, regional and local authorities could play in improving accessibility?

EU authorities should address market failure and market fragmentation through robust EU accessibility legislation to foster a well functioning internal market of accessible goods and services.

EU authorities should also fund research to ensure that new innovative accessible products and services are developed.

EU, national, regional and local authorities should all ensure that they make full use of existing accessibility provisions in public procurement legislation; they should therefore include accessibility requirements in the technical specifications of the goods and services in procurement contracts.
EDbN Biannual working plan
2012-2014

Background

EDbN is a network of Deafblind people, parents, relatives and professionals working together to raise the profile of deafblindness in Europe and make sure the needs of Deafblind people are included in the policy making of the European Union.

In 2011, as EDbN, we were able to make a strong impact on important areas related to deafblindness and disabilities. This is not, however, an exhaustive list:

European Disability Forum (EDF). We are part of an EDF group of experts on the EU Structural Funds, which is beneficial because it means we have some influence on the budgets and its management from 2014 to 2020, and we are able to acquire knowledge and establish important relationships. We participated in various seminars about accessibility. As members of EDF we have experience in many subjects at a European level.

European Platform of Deafness, Hard of Hearing and Deafblindness. We have got involved in the creation of this platform, which will offer us closer relationships with colleagues in this area and access to high quality information. It will also provide us with direct access to the Disability Intergroup of the European Parliament and will give us greater lobbying strength. All of these and many others are reasons to celebrate.

EDbU MOU. Teamworking with our colleagues of the EDbU represents a great addition.

WCPDB MOU. The preferential agreement with the recently created Confederation of parents is another reason to celebrate 2011.

Conclusion

EDbN is revealed as becoming an excellent working tool for our collective at European level. Due to this I would like to suggest that EDbN becomes more clearly focused on being an instrument to lobby at European level. Therefore I would like to suggest that members are asked if they can contribute specific expertise in areas such as, Structural Funds, Schedule 2020, Accessibility, TIC, etc.

Internal Plans for EDbN

1. Increase in members coming from all European organizations.
2. Definition of the Charter for Services for the members.
3. Formal registration of EDbN in Barcelona. Modification of its statutes to adapt to the law depending on the region.
4. EDbN Assembly in Lille 2013 (pre conference activity).
5. Continue to bring people together at coming Listen to Me events.
6. Encourage the sharing of knowledge on how individuals are progressing with advocacy work in their specific countries.
7. Collect information on the situation of Deafblind people in different European countries.
8. Collect knowledge of ways of working on advocacy in different European countries.
9. Contribute to DbI conferences and other events. Contribute with articles to DbI Review.
External plans for EDbN

These are chiefly working at the European Commission; European Parliament and at EDF level, in order to ensure that the needs of Deafblind people are being included in the policy making process.

1. Creation of a group of experts in the funds of the European Commission.
2. Creation of a group of experts in accessibility and ICT.
3. Creation of a group of experts in the 2020 Schedule.
4. Lobby about EDF, CE and PE.
5. Submit projects to the European Union from EDbN. A specific project recently submitted to the EU is quite ambitious: the Grundtvig Learning Partnership (GLP-Db) 2012 – 2014 with 13 different countries and 14 NGOs involved (more information in this magazine).

MOU with related entities:

1. EDbU
2. WCPDB
4. EBU

Participation in activities and magazines of these entities so EDbN can ensure there is a better understanding of deafblindness.

Communication plans for EDbN

We are working on a new www.edbn.org website accompanied by a blog a facebook site and a twitter account @deafblindness. This new magazine “Deafblind Europe” seeks to be the channel of communication par excellence of the European deafblind.

A final word

Everyone has a place to contribute in these plans and I ask all of you to be ambitious and to take a step forward. It is time to work at European level. Deafblindness and EDbN need you.

Ricard Lopez
EDbN President
On October 1, 2011, the formation of a new organization representing all parents who defend the rights of their deafblind multi-disabled sons and daughters was announced. Thanking the presence and support of the Presidents of Deafblind International and World Federation of Deafblind, Ricard Lopez, the representative of the DbI European Deafblind Network (EDbN) announced the news at the closing ceremony of the XV Deafblind International World Conference in the city of Sao Paulo, Brazil.

The purpose of this new organization, whose headquarters have been established in Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain, is to provide a voice for all parents whose sons and daughters have this disability. Through this organization, parents gain assistance from others parents. They will learn best practices towards working with their governments to ensure that their children live independent lives and receive adequate public health, education and financial support.

The World Confederation of Parents of Deafblind and Multisensory Disabled Persons (WCPDB) has now taken its first steps (www.wcpdb.org) and is inviting every organization in this field to join in.

For more information or to request an interview please send an email to rlopez@wcpdb.org or rlopez@sordoceguera.com or call +34 93 331 7366.

Follow us on twitter @wcpdb

Ricard Lopez
WCPDB
UK Landmark Supreme Court judgement clarifies social care law

A landmark Supreme Court judgement handed down today clarifies the law on whether a council can take its finances into account when assessing the needs of people for social care.

In the case of KM v Cambridgeshire CC, a blind, autistic, wheelchair user was offered a care package that he argued did not meet his needs sufficiently. As part of the case, a leading public lawyer at Irwin Mitchell representing four national charities (Sense, National Autistic Society, RNIB and Guide Dogs) sought to clarify whether a local authority can take their financial resources into account when they are assessing someone’s needs.

Although the court ruled against KM, the judgement has made it clear that “resources are not to be taken into account” when establishing the needs of disabled people which means that now, every local authority in England and Wales may have to reconsider how it assesses the needs of disabled people.

The Secretary of State for Health also intervened in the case and the Supreme Court allocated seven judges to the hearing, demonstrating the potential national significance of the judgment.

Simon Foster, Head of Legal Services at Sense, a national charity for deafblind people, said: “We are delighted that the court has made it very clear that a local authority must assess disabled people in the first instance based on their needs, rather than what is available in the local authority’s budget.”

How many deafblind people are there?

The deafblind population has been significantly underestimated and is set to rise dramatically.

Sense (a UK charity that supports and campaigns for deafblind children and adults) commissioned independent, expert research on the numbers of deafblind people now and over the next twenty years. The Centre for Disability Research (CeDR) report, summarised in the table below, found that the deafblind population has been significantly underestimated and is set to rise dramatically.

The numbers of deafblind people in the UK

It is estimated that there are currently 356,000 deafblind people in the UK (572 per 100,000 people). 222,000 of those people are aged over 70 (62%), 113,000 are adults (age 20-69) and 21,000 are children.

Taking action

Sense’s main recommendations are contained in a summary report, these include improvements in identification, planning and budgeting, assessments, social care services and government policies.

Local authorities have statutory responsibilities towards deafblind people.

Those responsible for commissioning, planning and delivering primary health care will need to know how to support deafblind people.

The new research, a summary report and info on further resource are available to download on the site www.sense.org.uk
Deafblind Shape
Tactile Symbol of Deafblindness

An original sculpture designed to be touched. A symbol designed to raise awareness of the tactile world of deafblindness. Guido Dettoni, an artist with a special sensitivity towards the world of disability, is its creator. Born with the vocation to establish itself as a worldwide symbol of this dual disability, to make it known and also, as charity project to offer the possibility of raising funds for the population living with this disability. Guido Dettoni has donated this piece to the Spanish Federation of Deafblindness (FESOCE).

"The shape is a symbol, and, when we touch it, it touches us" Guido Dettoni

Communicating through touch

Guido Dettoni, an artist with a long career in relation to the world of disabilities, began the process of creating the Deafblind Shape after learning closely from a group of deafblind people, their families and professionals who assist them. Specifically through the Catalan Association Pro Deafblind People (APSOCECAT).

The Deafblind Shape is a sculpture that the artist himself has defined as a Tactile Symbol. All the sculptural work by Guido Dettoni highlights the great communicative power of touch, for its intrinsic sensuality and its potential for awakening intuition and knowledge. “There is a close link between hands and mind”, says Dettoni. These words take on special significance with the Deafblind Shape, a sculpture designed to evoke those who cannot see or hear. As with the “object-reference” used in communicating with deafblind people, the tactile symbol of deafblindness must be known through tactile apprehension. Unlike in other works of art, with this sculpture “No touching” is forbidden.

When Guido Dettoni presents the Deafblind Shape (and he did so in Barcelona, on 2009 at the CaixaForum Auditorium), always offers it to the attendees so they can, as he says, “see it with their hands”. While people touch and discover how the pieces fit in their hands, Guido Dettoni accompanies, explains and shares views and experiences raised by the piece among people.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_mTMOKSBW4&feature=related

Deafblind Shape

Tactile Symbol of Deafblindness

The shape talks us about a face that has no eyes, of someone who does not see. About ears that are a hole so the sound goes and doesn’t stay: the world that cannot be heard.

The two halves of a face appear the outline of a shape
Hands, who crossed over the other, 
found with the thumbs the eyes that are not there. 
Hands that with the palms 
found the ears and cover the hole.

The gesture is a sign that talks us about deaf-blindness. 
The shape becomes symbol and when we touch it, it touches us. 
Guido Dettoni

Information about the author

Guido Dettoni is an artist with a special sensitivity towards the world of disability. During his artistic biography he has worked with groups of people with sensory and psycho-physic disabilities. One of his ten latest projects as an architect is designing a training and employment center for disabled people in Palma de Mallorca. From an experimental process that he has called HANDS-MATTER, which he has been developing since the 70s, he has organized in collaboration with the Catalan Association Pro Deaf-blind People (APSOCOCAT) an experimental workshop in which deaf-blind people and professionals who care for them worked together with a ductile material in four hands. Given the close link between people with a high degree of dependence and their caregivers, the workshop is an opportunity to share through plastic experimentation and out of everyday tasks, to learn and communicate through touch and emotion. This workshop inspired the creating process of Guido Dettoni’s Deaf-blind Shape work. The process was registered in an audiovisual that can be currently seen on Youtube.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ffLsOVW-2w

A charity project

Guido Dettoni has donated his original sculpture, so the Deafblind Shape is already available for a supportive purchase for the benefit of deaf-blind people through APSOCOCAT and the Spanish Federation of Deaf-blindness (FESOCE). Faithful to the spirit with which it was conceived, his sculpture the Deaf-blind Shape is now waiting to be shared with many people. Replicas of the Deaf-blind Shape can be bought online at FESOCOE’s website www.fesoce.org

FESOCOE
Looking for a White Paper on Deafblindness in Europe

In February 2012, a consortium born of the cooperation among 14 of the most important organisations working for deafblindness in Europe, most of them members of EDbN and coming from 12 EU States plus Croatia, submitted an application to become a Grundtvig Learning Partnership, inside the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission. Under the leadership of the Catalan Association of Deafblindness APSOCECAT, from Spain, the other participating countries were United Kingdom, Denmark, France, Portugal, the Netherlands, Austria, Finland, Romania, Hungary, Lithuania, Slovakia and Croatia.

Its main goal would be to create a common European framework for the assessment of institutional models of care for the deafblind based on indicators created ex novo: the Indicators of Deafblindness Equality in Europe (IDBEE). These indicators would take advantage of the already existing work prepared by the experts of the Academic Network of European Disability (ANED), who have designed the European Equality Disability Indicators (IDEE), and would consider relevant recent legal binding documents as the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (in its articles 21 and 26) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

The importance of these new indicators lies in the certainty that great differences in the degree of attention exist between the various European States.

The data collected through them should enable the detection of best practices on a European level and recommendations on the design of models of care in this field.

Five great mobilities encompassing all partners are scheduled during the initial two-year period of this foreseen Partnership:
- A kick-off meeting in October 2012 in Glasgow to create the working groups which will study the various fields of action and to launch a website.
- An approval meeting in April 2013 in Aalborg (Denmark) to decide the indicators, the basis on which a data collection form will be designed.
- A third meeting in August 2013, a day before the Dbi European Conference on Deafblindness in Lille (France). It would be there when the indicators should be presented.
- A fourth meeting to be held in February 2014 in Lisbon to present and approve a comparative study of all of the data and the findings obtained.
- And in June 2014, a final seminar would be held in Barcelona. In it, the organisations will present their different national models, as well as the final edition of the White Paper on Deafblindness in Europe.

The decision on the award will be taken in July 2012. Fingers crossed...

Javier Freixes
Study of the situation of the deafblind in Spain: late, in a rush and wrong

One of the most eagerly awaited advances by the organizations supporting the deafblind is the Spanish law 27/2007 (Ley 27/2007). The law considers, in one of its provisions, the execution of a study of deafblindness in Spain.

The legal text foresees the execution of a study to «determine the number of deafblind people in Spain, their living conditions and location, in order to decide which centers should be created, as well as to create appropriate resources to meet their needs».

This is a key study for the future of the deafblind in Spain and, thus, Fesoce (Spanish Federation of Deafblindness) considers it to be of its interference. It is for this reason that Fesoce states what, in our opinion, has become a sequence of absurdities.

First off, Fesoce expressed their categorical rejection of the bases for the development of the study because the organization had no opportunity to participate in its development and because the representativeness of the entities within this field was not guaranteed.

Regarding the study, the first problem came up with the definition used to identify a deafblind person. Among other reasons, this definition is remarkably detrimental to deafblind people who are primarily deaf (e.g. Usher syndrome) since it notably prioritizes the loss of vision over the loss of audition. This may cause many deafblind people, currently admitted as such by organizations, to be left out and not recognized as what they will be in a near future.

The second problem has to do with the origin of the staff participating in the assessment of the cases. Fesoce applied to execute or collaborate in this task, a proposal which was rejected. Given the fact that the evaluators are, at the same time, who manage the allowance, Fesoce considers there is a conflict of interests.

Sure enough this study is late: four years after the promulgation of the law. Moreover, it comes in a hurry and wrong, using up the legislature; a desperate political gesture.

Presumably, the intention of a study of this scope is to identify all deafblind people, learn about their actual circumstances and ensure the decision-making oriented to assist their fundamental rights as citizens and persons with a disability. However, the facts do not predict a happy ending.

The result of this study will not be a real census, let alone a plan of effective actions to assist the specific needs of this group.

Fesoce believes the whole process benefits the interest of belittling this group of people harming thousands of deafblind who will not be recognized as such and will not be eligible for the services they need.

Fesoce has let the responsible ministry know about their disagreement. Fesoce’s posture, in any case, is to not support the design and future conclusions of a bad planned study. The immutable commitment of the Federation is with the deafblind and any initiative that diverts from this principle will be flatly rejected.

From Fesoce we ask for the support of the European Organizations to help us put pressure on our administration in order to redirect the study.

FESOCE
Proposal for a European Accessibility Act:

The European Commission has recently consulting the public on whether it should introduce an Accessibility Act and what it should include. EDbN responded to the consultation, showing strong support for the proposal for an Accessibility Act. The European Commission is looking at how to define accessibility and what should be covered by the future Act. In the EDbN response we said that we did not give a definitive list of goods and services, instead we focussed on the need for access to different areas of life such as information; transport; shopping and retail; financial services; the built environment; entertainment and leisure and ICT and household goods.

The European Commission will now work on all the responses they have had to this consultation and we will wait to see what they decide to do. We will keep you informed of how this develops.

For more details see “Public consultation with a view to a European Accessibility Act” in this magazine.

Lucy Drescher, March 2012

New stage in EDbN

A new stage takes off at EDbN. Wolfgang Angermann, president of EDbN since 2004, has retired. He presented his resignation as president of EDbN and accepted to serve as the president of EBU. Acting as a spokesman of those who know him and on behalf of the EDbN steering group we want to thank him for all of his hard work. We are sure he will continue to focus his efforts towards deafblindness from his new position. As a consequence, the following has been agreed:

1) Acceptance of Wolfgang Angermann’s resignation, thanking him for all his services.
2) Appointment of Ricard Lopez as the new president.
3) Acceptance of Jutta Wiese, representative of the German Deafblind Consortium, as a new member of the Steering group.

The new Steering group is composed of the following persons:

Ricard Lopez, president
Lucy Drescher
Ursula Heinemann
William Green
Jutta Wiese

The steering group has approved a 2012-2014 working plan, please look for a brief in this magazine.
We hope you will want to use the Deafblind Europe Magazine

How to send your information

Please send your text electronically using MS Word giving clear information about who is submitting the information and where readers should go for further information. Your text will then be included in the bulletin as it is. Include the photographs, images or grafics which you would like to see attached to your text in the e-mail. Give exact information about where you want to place them in your text. Remember you have to have copyright permit to use them.

Deadline: The 1th of the last month of every semester - or soon after by agreement.

Contact: Ricard López
E-mail: rlopez@edbn.org
8th Dbl European Conference
Identities and changes
Commonalities across deafblindness
Learning from each other

August 27-31, 2013
Lille - France