

MEP Thijs Berman
MEP Ska Keller
MEP Eva Lichtenberger

THE RIGHT TO READ FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Does the EU support a Treaty for blind
and other reading disabled people?

04 May 2010

08.45-14.00

European Parliament

Brussels

Batiment Spaak

7th floor

7C50

**08.45 Networking coffee
with croissants**
(served in front of 7C50)

09.15 Welcome words by MEP Ska Keller
and presentation by MEP Adam Kosa (Chair of
EP Disability Intergroup)

**09.45 Panel 1: How the Visually Impaired Read:
Problems and Solutions**
Rodolfo Catani (European Blind Union, Italy), Pete Osborne
(Royal National Institute for the Blind, UK), Nirmita Narasimhan
(Centre for Internet and Society, India), Moderator: Manon Ress
(Knowledge Ecology International)

**10.45 Panel 2: Why a binding treaty for the visually impaired at the
World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)?**
Barbara Martin (Organización Nacional de Ciegos, Spain), James Love
(Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue, USA), Dan Pescod (Royal National
Institute for the Blind, UK), Tilman Lüder (DG Markt, Head of Unit),
Moderator: MEP Ska Keller

12.00 Panel: What is the opinion of the EP and the Commission
MEPs: Ska Keller, Thijs Berman, Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, Oriol
Junqueras Vies and Eva Lichtenberger followed by a response from
Tilman Lüder. Moderation and closing remarks: MEP Thijs Berman

**13.00 Interactive introduction to reading techniques, informal press
briefing plus cocktail reception** (Spinelli Building, 3rd floor, Bar
besides the Passerelle).

To facilitate the organisation please register: david@davidhammerstein.org

Blind and other reading disabled people face a "book famine". In the North less than 5% of books published are available for reading disabled people. In the South the figure is less than 1%. Most accessible books are made by specialist agencies using charitable money. At present, such agencies, operating in different countries, but with a common language, often both transcribe the same book. They cannot avoid this needless and expensive duplication by sharing one accessible file or copy. This is because, under present copyright law, reading material in Braille, or formatted digitally for reading disabled people, cannot legally cross borders. This waste of scarce resources significantly hinders access to reading for the world's 300 million visually impaired people and millions of other reading disabled people, especially the poorest. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities says that disabled people have a right to read. The best way to guarantee this right is the adoption of a binding treaty that establishes limitations and exceptions to copyright for the non-commercial production and distribution of accessible books. The World Blind Union (www.worldblindunion.org), representing over 160 million blind and partially sighted persons in 177 member countries, has now drafted a "WIPO Treaty for Improved Access for Blind, Visually Impaired and other Reading Disabled Persons" to combat the "book famine". It is now being considered by the World Intellectual Property Organization where it has been sponsored by Brazil, Mexico, Ecuador and Paraguay. We have invited stakeholders, experts and EU officials to discuss a way forward and to ask the EU to support a binding treaty. This conference is supported by the European Blind Union (EBU), www.euroblind.org and the Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue (TACD), www.tacd.org.