



Engagement, Balance, Unity: 40 years of the European Blind Union

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Having served as the main advocate for the rights of visually impaired people in Europe during the last four decades, the European Blind Union (EBU) celebrates its 40th anniversary today. “We are taking advantage of this commemorative date to underline the organisation’s role in bringing about change in the daily lives of persons with visual impairment”, says the newly elected EBU President, Tytti Matsinen. “There are still many obstacles we are facing every day. But with more political will, more inclusive and accessible services and public awareness, most of these obstacles could be overcome!” she underlines.

Thanks to its close ties with its 42 Member Associations, EBU has been promoting the full implementation of the UNCRPD under the principles of cooperation and solidarity. Its Executive Director, Lars Bosselmann, has reflected on the importance of this working dynamic. “Our Network is our strongest asset; exchanging good practices between our different organisations and running joint action allows us to give strength to our demands and to achieve breakthroughs towards a more inclusive society”, Lars states.

Throughout its 40 years, EBU has played an important role in achieving several milestones within the disability field, such as the adoption of the European Accessibility Act (EAA) or the development of the CEN Standard for braille in leaflets and packages, achieved in collaboration with the pharmaceutical industry. Our organisation was also approached

by the European Central Bank in the design of more accessible Euro notes and coins. EBU has also carried out its advocacy work in other key areas for visually impaired persons such as the adoption of the Marrakesh Treaty or the ongoing struggle for the accessibility of elections, amongst many others. These achievements are outlined in our [40th anniversary brochure](#).

New cycle, new goals

Last month, the European Blind Union held its 12th General Assembly in Lisbon. This event, which takes place once every four years, served as the starting point of EBU's Working Plan 2024-2027, as well as for choosing a new board. After that event, the newly elected president, Tytti Matsinen, outlined that the focus on innovative action will go hand in hand with our continuous work to fight for access to education, employment, healthcare and mobility services, among others, where many obstacles for blind and partially sighted people remain. "In a few months, we're choosing a new European Parliament. This will be an excellent opportunity to remind authorities and candidates that there's still much to do to improve the lives of blind and partially sighted people", Ms Matsinen stated.

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 42 European countries.

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