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**European Blind Union
Press release
Paris, 29.09.2016**

**The Marrakech Treaty comes into force – but not for EU citizens!**

**On September 30, the Marrakech Treaty will enter into force for those countries that have already ratified but not in the European Union.**

**When will the EU join the rest of the world in ending the book famine?**

On September 14, the European Commission published a series of copyright proposals, as part of the Digital Single Market Strategy. Of particular relevance and a source of satisfaction for EBU were [the Regulation on cross-border exchange of accessible format copies](http://dmail1.dods.co.uk/c/1crjOZ4MqH9HfstfRAb51KJ2Nb), and [a Directive on permitted uses of work for visually impaired people](http://dmail1.dods.co.uk/c/1crjR6J8PVi8JnNQb612AGZjLS). Just prior to this, on September 8th, the EU Advocate General published his opinion concerning the competence to ratify the Marrakesh Treaty in the EU. He concluded that it is the "***exclusive competence of the EU***" to ratify the Treaty. This effectively removes the shameful 'competence excuse' used by 7 EU member states to block EU ratification over the past two years. EU ratification will be achieved with the approval of the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council.

The Advocate General refuted point by point with clarity, bluntness and case law the objections posed by 7 EU member states to exclusive EU competence. His opinions are usually respected by the Court of Justice of the European Union, but it has not yet published its judgement, which we hope will be sooner rather than later.

The path for the Ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty is now much clearer. It is the turn of the European Parliament. We demand consensus in favour of swift, positive legislation that is a “one to one” transcription of the Treaty text with no added barriers nor new administrative burdens. It is time for the European Parliament to stand up and be counted.

EBU president Wolfgang Angermann stated ***"EBU, on behalf of more than 30 million blind and partially sighted citizens, demands that the European Parliament show a clear commitment to ratifying the Marrakech Treaty, thus increasing exponentially the number of accessible books, an important factor in access to employment, and culture and for us to be fully integrated into our global and digital societies. The time to act is now!"***

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