

EBU

Annual Report

2022



In memory of Rodolfo Cattani



The voice of blind and partially sighted people in Europe

Pictures: Soffis textbyrå, ArtCo, Sight Savers International,
Harry Geyskens, EBU archive, [Photoaid](#).

EBU, European Blind Union

6 rue Gager Gabillot

75015 Paris, France

Tel: +33 1 88 61 06 60

www.euroblind.org

ebu@euroblind.org

EBU is a registered charity under French law, 105073 P.

Contents

A Word From The President	5
Introduction By The Executive Director	7
How EBU Works	9
Finances	11
Revenues	11
Expenditure	11
Balance Sheet	12
Conclusion	12
EBU And Its Members - Internal Communication	13
Discussion Lists	13
EBU's External Communication	14
The EBU Podcast	14
#ViewsOfLife	14
Update of our Institutional and Media Database	15
Internet	15
The EBU Focus Newsletters	15
EBU responses to EU consultations	16
The EBU Annual Conference	16
Campaigning and Advocacy	17
General remarks	17
Marrakesh Treaty	17
Creative Europe/MEDIA	17
European Accessibility Act	18

Web Accessibility and Digital Services	19
Equality	19
Political Participation	20
Social Protection	20
Mobility	20
Data on Disability	21
Review of the EU by the UN CRPD Committee	22
Specific Areas of Activity	23
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities	23
Awareness Raising	23
PARVIS Project	23
Accessible Voting Awareness Raising (AVA)	24
Gender Equality Awareness Raising (GEAR)	25
Low Vision	26
The Importance of Braille	26
Connected and Autonomous Vehicles	27
The PAsCAL project	27
Employment and Working for Younger People	28
EByouth	28
ADVISE (Aiding Young Visually Impaired Seeking Employment)	28
EBU's Networks & Friends	29
Beyond Europe - Solidarity with our Friends Worldwide	29

The board of the European Blind Union, our colleagues in the Paris office and all those who are involved in the work for blind and partially sighted people are still shocked and struck by the unexpected sudden passing of our President, Professor Rodolfo Cattani, who passed away on September 8th 2022. We lose a wonderful person who dedicated all his energy and profound knowledge to the struggle for equal opportunities in life for blind and partially sighted people worldwide. With his enthusiasm, determination, accuracy, and reliability he was a valuable guide to his colleagues. His empathy, kindness and warmth made him a friend to all those who had the chance to know him.

On September 26th 2022, EBU held a virtual celebration to commemorate the sudden passing of the EBU President. Family members, board members and representatives from various EBU member organisations contributed words of condolences and thankful memories to the celebration.

Rodolfo Cattani will remain vivid in our minds and in our hearts and stay in our memory as one of the most outstanding members of the disability movement of our time.

During its meeting on October 8th 2022, the EBU board confirmed Wolfgang Angermann as acting president until the end of the running term of office. This is marked by our next General Assembly, which - viewed from the regular constitutional period - was planned for October 2023. Due to the significant changes in the composition of our board during 2021 and 2022, the board had to delay this General assembly to the first months of 2024 to give enough time for the preliminaries.

Thus, as Acting President, it is my honourable task to introduce you to this annual report 2022. Fortunately, I have the reliable and effective support of our staff in the Paris office. I would like to thank our Executive Director and all the colleagues for their permanent and essential assistance, also on behalf of the EBU board.

Like many people in this world, our community of blind and partially sighted persons in Europe, on February 24th 2022, was faced with the destruction of peace and mutual respect by the military aggression of the Russian government against the Ukrainian people, which displaced many of our blind and partially sighted sisters and brothers in this country from their families and their homes and caused harm, sorrow and destruction to innocent people. My thoughts go out to those children, women and men, who just want to live their lives in security and peace. During the year, EBU received financial contributions from many national members. Besides that, there were a number of national members who organised housing, food and immediate assistance for refugees from Ukraine. On behalf of the board and our office staff, I would like to cordially thank all these organisations and all the wonderful people, who volunteered to help physically, for their support that was and still is so important.

This annual report, prepared by our colleagues in the EBU office in Paris, will guide you through EBU activities of 2022. It will give you a comprehensive impression of the structure and content of EBU work and outline the variety of our projects and campaigns. It is our goal to give extensive insight and gain your interest.



EBU President Wolfgang Angermann speaking at the 10th General Assembly

[Back to contents](#)

As you already read in the foreword by our President, 2022 has been quite a challenging year for EBU. At the same time, the organisation continued to adapt itself to changing circumstances and to pursue its mandate: to advocate for the rights of blind and partially sighted people in wider Europe and to bring the blindness community closer together!

This annual report gives of good overview of the many areas of work EBU is involved in to achieve its mission. Besides the detailed overview of our various interventions through advocacy and campaigning, project work, communication, just to name the most important ones, I would like to stress the following highlights:

- Our solidarity with our blind and partially sighted friends in Ukraine. Through targeted support, made possible by EBU member's donations, we could support blind and partially sighted people in Ukraine to access basic services, receive shelter, equipment, psycho-social support and much more. And this in a dramatic context that we can certainly not even imagine.
- The boost we were able to give to our communications work. The extension of our presence on social media and the improvement on our website start showing measurable results, as the statistics of visitors grow steadily. You will read more about our external and internal communication in this report.
- While this is not specifically a success in 2022, last year saw a clear acceleration of the work by the European Commission to propose an European disability card. EBU has been calling for that card for many years and will put efforts into making further advances in that regard in 2023.
- The collaboration and the many tools created within our PARVIS project, were also an important feature of our work in 2022. Again, you will read more about this in the dedicated section of this report, but I would like to underline that all this material is ready for use by all of you !

Though this report provides a summary of our action in 2022, it is obviously key to look to the future. With our 40th anniversary coinciding with our next General Assembly in early 2024, the preparations for these major events will be at the heart of 2023. It is up to us all to build an even more dynamic, political, strategic and efficient EBU, an organisation that counts and is truly representative. I count on all of you to make this happen!

Lars Bosselmann,
EBU Executive Director



EBU Executive Director
Lars Bosselmann

[Back to contents](#)

The European Blind Union is a non-governmental organisation protecting and promoting the rights and interests of blind and partially-sighted people in Europe. The large number of member organisations we reunite provide us with a great deal of knowledge, expertise and experience related to visual impairment and its implications in the daily life of millions of persons with sight loss. Membership of the European Blind Union is globally stable. EBU currently has 41 members.

While the General Assembly of Members held every four years is our governing body, our work is directed by an Executive Board of up to 13 members. In 2022, the Board held three meetings in Genova (Italy), Malmö (Sweden) and Lisbon (Portugal). In addition the officers of the Board held online meetings at regular intervals to address issues requiring urgent action. The officers' decisions were reported to and confirmed by the Board at their face to face or virtual meetings.

EBU's activities are also facilitated through Networks, established to address various work areas, including ICTs, Road safety and access to transport, rights, as well as the needs of specific segments of the visually impaired population, including persons with low vision, youth and women.

EBU also participates in campaigns and activities which have a broader scope than Europe itself, in particular as the European member of the World Blind Union, a global organisation representing the interests of 285 million blind and partially sighted people in 190 member countries worldwide.

The EBU Central Office supports the Board, national members, Commissions and Networks in their work. It is also the main contact point for information to the general public, media, members and partner organisations. Ever since it was established, the EBU Office has been located in central Paris.

Headed by the Executive Director, EBU's central office team was composed of six other staff members. In 2022 the permanent EBU staff members were:

Executive Director

Lars Bosselmann

ebudirector@euroblind.org

Project Manager

Romain Ferretti

ebuprojects@euroblind.org

Head of Campaigning

Antoine Fobe

ebucampaigning@euroblind.org

Information Officer

Gary May

ebuinfocom@euroblind.org

Office Assistant

Valérie Vivancos

ebusecretariat@euroblind.org

External Communication Officer

Nacho Lopez

nacho.lopez@euroblind.org

PARVIS Coordinator

Mariem Sene

mariem.sene@euroblind.org

After almost 40 years of existence, the European Blind Union's revenues for 2022 approached one million euros for the first time, exactly double the figure for 2015, with the amount of contributions increasing by 34% and the grants awarded for our various projects multiplying by 3.4 times, significantly exceeding the inflation rate over the last eight years.

We achieved a relatively large surplus of €57,999 in 2022, for the reasons indicated below:

- first, and I am infinitely grateful to our members, all paid their contributions, with the exception of associations in countries affected by the war, in the amount of €251,800. The few who were late (except one) even brought their account back up to date, which explains the slight surplus against the budget forecast;
- moreover, the grant of €482,194 given to us by the European Commission (for the CERV22 project) covers 90% of the expenditure incurred to carry out our various activities (staff costs, fees, rent, etc.) so that our contribution is just 10%, or €48,200; we cannot, however, assume that this will continue in the future;

1 Revenues

Total revenues amounted to €956,892, essentially made up of funds from our various projects (€668,510) and contributions. Nonetheless, we should note that two significant projects – Pas-CAL and PARVIS – came to an end in 2022. These brought in resources of €186,312, which we will not have next year.

2 Expenditure

Most of our expenditure remains stable and in line with the budget forecast. We should, however, note:

- Expenditure of €5,325 on consultancy costs, including €5,150 paid to the Spanish company ILLUNION to update our website;

- A 20% rent increase for our Paris offices, explained by leasing additional premises for our new employees throughout 2022;
- Our travel costs were much lower than forecast, with many of our meetings now taking place via conference call;
- We had allowed for increased expenditure on internet use, which did not materialise but was counterbalanced by the consultancy costs mentioned above;
- Recruitment of a new employee and agreed termination of another employee's contract, which explain the slight increase in salary costs; social-security contributions remained unchanged;
- Only our Swiss friends contributed to the Solidarity Fund, but many of you made one-off donations to support Ukraine, totalling €83,879, of which €54,079 has yet to be used. I cannot list all our donors but I would like to make special mention of our

German, British and Italian friends for the generosity of their contributions.

3 Balance Sheet

At 31 December 2022, we had €887,725 in our current accounts (including 565,218 received in advance for 2023, for the CERV23 fund, support for Ukraine and the UP-OWER project), and €381,315 in our savings accounts, for a total of €1,269,040.

Our reserves are now €497,802, representing over six months' working capital, which is very satisfactory.

Conclusion

While this is a very healthy situation, we should nonetheless remain prudent.

Philippe CHAZAL

Treasurer, European Blind Union

[Back to contents](#)

EBU endeavoured to improve its inner-workings, in an attempt to counterbalance the negative impact the Covid-19 period has had on member organisations, especially in terms of involvement at the European level. The first meeting of the new Leadership Exchange Forum was held and participants discussed the current involvement of EBU members, how it could be improved and how to better align EBU and national advocacy agendas. Two bilateral visits were also carried out between EBU's members in Ireland and the UK to enhance collaboration between their technical staff, coordinated by the EBU Secretariat. More generally, our leaders participated in an increasing number of European events. Furthermore, a webinar on EU funding opportunities was held in July where national visual impairment organisations were presented EU funding opportunities of particular interest to them, independently from their geographical location. As in previous years, EBU also committed to enhancing the participation of blind and partially sighted women in

their organisation. A gender balance survey was circulated in November, as a follow-up to the one conducted in 2018.

Discussion Lists

In order to facilitate and boost in-depth exchange of information, experience and good practices among members between meetings, we have developed email "discussion lists" according to areas of interest.

The EBU Member's newsletter is made up of contributions from our members, general news and information on issues relevant to our target group and an important feature is the regular campaign updates provided by the Head of Campaigning.

An External Communications Officer was recruited and started to work for EBU in June 2022, in particular taking over management of EBU's existing social media accounts, and expanding the activity to include others.

In terms of Social Media platforms, EBU relaunched its Facebook page (due to changes in the platform's pages policy) and created a LinkedIn page, while also expanding followership on its Twitter account.

Highlights of EBU's Social Media channels include, for example, 9,100 impressions on Twitter for the European Day of Persons with Disabilities.

1 The EBU Podcast

At the end of the year, EBU relaunched its new podcast, "[EBU in Action](#)". In comparison to previous podcasts produced by our organization, this one consists of a news section (including the most recent updates at EBU), a focus interview and a correspondents section (where

one person from a national member speaks about the reality of blind and partially sighted people in the person's country).

On December 2022, EBU produced the first episode of "EBU in Action", called "Connected and Autonomous Vehicles: challenges and opportunities." The newly produced podcast was disseminated through our Social Media channels, as well as through our media, institutional and internal databases.

2 #ViewsOfLife

At the end of 2022, our organization started producing the segment [#ViewsOfLife](#) in cooperation with Austrian Broadcaster ORF Connect journalist Julius Kratky. The aim of this segment is to bring the reality of blind and partially sighted people in Europe closer to our audience.

In order to achieve this, Julius interviews people from different EBU members, so people who follow our organization can get a better insight on what is going on in our different national members.

In terms of production, Julius was tasked with editing the interviews, while our organization took care of the segment's supervision as well as finding the contacts to participate in the interviews.

3 Update of our Institutional and Media Database

In order to complement our dissemination strategy through our Social Media channels and website, EBU also updated its institutional and media database, thus adding new contacts to our list. In the long run, our objective is to keep developing our network in order to increase the external outreach of our work.

4 Internet

The [EBU website](#) is regularly updated and continues to be a major channel of communication for EBU activities and issues related to the visually impaired community. The website attracted an average of 10000 visitors every month. As part of a major

update of the back-office site management system we took the opportunity to introduce the google translate feature to our website to offer greater possibilities to visitors.

5 The EBU Focus Newsletters

The [EBU Focus](#) newsletters were also related to a mix of campaigning topics, ongoing activities and specific projects. The topics for the Focus newsletters in 2022 were:

- January – **Employment, keys to inclusion**
- June – **The CRPD**

The Focus newsletter is an excellent means of involving and thus making the most of both experts from EBU member countries and staff members as well as guest authors.

6 EBU responses to EU consultations

In 2022 EBU published [Position Papers](#) or responses on 8 key topics including the development of the European Disability Card and driverless vehicles.

7 The EBU Annual Conference

The EBU 2022 conference was held online in October. Addressing non-discrimination in the field of access to information, it resulted in the [“EBU Declaration on the Accessibility of information: key areas of discrimination for visually impaired people”](#).

1 General remarks

During 2022, EBU actively participated in the new EU Disability Platform and its sub-groups, in the new European resource centre “AccessibleEU”, as well as in various ‘strategic dialogue’ meetings organised by the European Commission and hearings at the European Parliament and the ECOSOC regarding the implementation of the EIU Disability Rights Strategy for 2021-2030. We responded to various relevant public consultations by the European Commission through the ‘Have Your Say’ portal. Members of the EBU Commission for Liaising with the EU also met in Prague in October and agreed on future joint activities. Besides our two thematic campaigns, our advocacy work focused on the following areas: accessibility, equality (including in employment), political participation, social protection, mobility, and data on disability. We also participated in the review of EU by the UN Committee of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

2 Marrakesh Treaty

EBU continued its campaign to promote the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled.

Within the EU, we started to gather feedback from our member organisations with the aim of contributing to the European Commission’s announced assessment of the EU directive that implements the Treaty.

In wider Europe, we continued to push for countries that have not yet joined the Treaty to do so, with particular focus on the Western Balkans where now only North Macedonia is still expected to join.

3 Creative Europe/ MEDIA

EBU was also busy with its other main campaign, looking at EU funding to the film industry through the MEDIA strand of the Creative Europe Programme. Referring to the announcement

by the EU that it would make the “effort to make culture accessible and disability inclusive with support from EU funding such as the Creative Europe Programme”, we have started to monitor the extent to which MEDIA calls effectively use the leverage of funding to promote audio description, and communicated our disappointments with our observations so far, namely through [a statement](#).

We aim to make recommendations for the mid-term review of the Creative Europe Regulation 2021-2027.

4 European Accessibility Act

As far as implementation of the Accessibility Act is concerned, EBU focused on the following areas:

- In liaison with ANEC, the consumers’ voice in standardisation, we continued to lobby the relevant working group of CEN, the EU standardisation body, about the review of EN 81-70, the standard on accessibility to **lifts**. We achieved a step-stone success with the final approval of a technical revision to accommodate the needs of partially sighted users in respect of colour-contrast requirements for operating buttons.
- In liaison with the Daisy Consortium, the European Disability Forum and the Federation of European Publishers, we successfully pushed for **e-books** to be pragmatically approached, not through the standardisation route, but rather the technical specifications route, building on the EPUB format.
- We have set up a working group of experts to draft recommendations for making **payment terminals** accessible, and this work is now well under way. We aim to propose these recommendations to the EU standard-makers, with the help of ANEC.

5 Web Accessibility and Digital Services

EBU produced a short guide for its members organisations outside the EU, to promote the EU Web Accessibility Directive as a role model in wider Europe. Within the EU, we participated in various Web Accessibility Initiative – Communities of Practice (WAI-CooP) meetings on the monitoring of the implementation of the Directive.

We also lobbied—without success, unfortunately—for an EU Digital Services Act that pays the necessary attention to accessibility issues.

6 Equality

EBU contributed comments to the European Commission’s proposal to strengthen the role of **equality bodies** in the EU Member States.

In close concertation with the European Disability Forum, we also contributed input, and this through a variety of consultation channels, to the EU

package to improve the labour market outcomes of persons with disabilities (**‘Disability Employment Package’**). This was all the more important as the Commission soon dismissed any perspective of a review of the Equality in Employment Directive.

Our yearly event, held online in October, addressed non-discrimination in **access to information** and resulted in the [“2022 EBU Declaration on the Accessibility of information: key areas of discrimination for visually impaired people”](#).

We continued to use every opportunity to keep alive the call to the EU Council to adopt the proposed horizontal **anti-discrimination directive**, blocked since 2008. We have nevertheless also started to push the European Commission to consider alternatives.

7 Political Participation

EBU continued to lobby, jointly with the European Disability Forum, for and around the reform of the EU electoral law. We welcomed the adoption by the European Parliament, in May, of an own-initiative legislative resolution for a reform of the EU electoral law, in which the accessibility of the European elections for voters and candidates are largely taken into consideration. Our focus since is on pushing the EU Council to endorse this resolution and give it effect.

8 Social Protection

EBU has taken great interest in the European Social Policy Network study published in December, which compares the social protection systems of 35 European countries (including all EU countries) and contains recommendations to individual states and the EU. We are still in the process of analysing this report to see what we can draw

from it in our future campaigning efforts. Meanwhile, we participated in a strategic dialogue meeting about the Council Recommendation on adequate minimum income schemes in the EU, to stress the need to take into account the extra costs of disability and to look at income as a whole.

9 Mobility

In the area of mobility, the EBU action related to two very distinct issues:

- The first, very topical, is the future **EU Disability Card**. Our effort consisted in encouraging the Commission in its intention to propose a legal instrument to introduce an EU-wide disability card, building on the experience—positive and negative—of the existing pilot-project covering 8 EU countries. We participated in various consultations on the matter, including a [call for evidence](#), where we stressed how important the card would be to ensure equal treatment in mobility

within the EU for citizens with disabilities, by facilitating the mutual recognition of disability status. We also argued that the card could play a role in the transitional recognition of the status when moving permanently to another EU country.

- The second issue is one on which we are rather calling for early attention: the need to take into consideration, from the outset, the needs of visually impaired people—both as pedestrian and as users—of **connected and automated vehicles** (‘driverless vehicles’). We responded to a European Commission’s public consultation on technical specifications for driverless vehicles. We produced a [position paper on the matter building on the output of our PAsCAL project](#), which we published in the context of the European Mobility Week 2022.

10 Data on Disability

EBU continued to use every opportunity to point the absence of reliable statistics on disability, disaggregated per type of disability. We did so, for instance, in a [response to the European Commission’s public consultation on making the statistical system fit for the future](#).

We were also very active in a consultation about the review of the EU’s SDG indicator set, calling for a disability breakdown for the data sets “People at risk of poverty or social exclusion” and “Long-term unemployment rate”. On the occasion of the presentation by Eurostat of its annual report on the monitoring of progress toward the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In reaction to our deploring that disability was not mentioned once about SDG 10 (Equality) other than to describe the goal, Eurostat recognised “a gap in the lack of comparable statistics across the EU, which makes it hard to use disability as an indicator for the monitoring report.” We however welcomed

that, as a first significant result of the EU Disability Rights Strategy, the disability employment gap was added as a new headline indicator of the EU Social Scoreboard.

11 Review of the EU by the UN CRPD Committee

Besides contributing to the European Disability Forum alternative report and in close concertation with them, EBU participated in consultation meetings with the CRPD Rapporteur and Committee members, including by delivering a statement on our priority concerns for the review of the EU at the private meeting with the Committee, i.e.: the implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty, in that compensation for rights holders is allowed in some EU countries; the EU funding to the film industry (see above); and the accessibility failures that characterise European Commission public consultations.

The list of issues prior to reporting, eventually published by the CRPD Committee, rather well reflects our priority issues, although not quite as directly as we would have liked. It does however well reflect the wider EDF input.

1 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

The [EBU UNCRPD database](#) has existed since 2008 and, since then, our members have regularly contributed despite very limited resources and the particular difficulty to identify English-speaking legal experts.



screenshot of an EBU video promoting article 20 of the CRPD

Our [online CRPD database](#) was also augmented by awareness-raising videos produced in the framework of our Parvis project, see just below.

2 Awareness Raising

2.1 PARVIS Project

In 2021, the 2-year [PARVIS project](#) (Promoting Awareness on the Rights of Visually Disabled People in an Inclusive Society) on awareness-raising activities to promote rights of blind and partially sighted people across Europe, reached a conclusion. The project involved EBU members in 9 countries: Germany, France, Lithuania, Montenegro, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain, in addition to the Netherlands and Sweden, which are partners within the PARVIS consortium.

The project activities and outcomes consist of:

- Two tailor-made Twitter campaigns to promote for such rights in 9 PARVIS countries;
- Audio and visual contents to campaign more effectively towards the enforcement of BPS persons' rights, including **podcasts**, and **awareness-raising videos** available in at least 10 languages (English, Slovak, German, Montenegrin,

French, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch and Swedish); later on, some of these videos were also translated into other languages (Czech, Estonian, Finnish, Italian, Polish, Romanian, Serbian and Slovenian)

- Building the capacity of visually impaired (VI) citizens and national visual impairment organisation to defend their rights through info-sessions and e-workshops;
- Developing generic European Guidelines on audio-description, available in several languages, with clear and harmonised technical specifications;
- Organising a coordinated awareness-raising event in 9 countries on the occasion of Europe Day (May 9, 2022) to promote political participation of BPS citizens across Europe with the aim of improving accessible voting and representation of BPS people in politics.
- Hosting an online seminar on non-discrimination.

Full details of the project and all the above materials can be found on the [dedicated page of our website](#).

2.2 Accessible Voting Awareness Raising (AVA)

Election commissions and decision-makers were approached with a tailor-made and multilingual information brochure and video in Croatia and Slovenia.

This awareness-raising work was often complemented with advocacy efforts leading to the following results:

The Croatian Blind Union (CBU) participated in a national conference on the Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Political and Public Life in June, thus reaching out to a wider audience, not only election committee members. Direct AR was carried out with representatives from the national election committee in December, resulting in CBU joining in a near future the national working group on accessible voting good practices. Also, capacity-building events targeting leaders of CBU's

regional branches but also VI women allowed to disseminate AVA materials, a preliminary step before approaching regional and local authorities.

AVA was timely in Slovenia as 3 different elections were held in April (general), October (presidential) and November (local). Contact with the national election committee was ongoing, including through a meeting in February. Following this, the Union of the Blind and Partially Sighted of Slovenia (UBPSS) was subcontracted by the Slovenian government to create audio files of parties' manifestos. In addition, in November, UBPSS trained 14 representatives from 11 local municipalities on accessible voting to blind and partially sighted persons.

The AVA activity ended in 2022 and will be evaluated in early 2023. For more information on our work on this important issuer, please consult the [accessible voting](#) page of our website.



A vote being cast at the EBU General Assembly

2.3 Gender Equality Awareness Raising (GEAR)

The EBU Gender Equality Committee updated the EBU 2018 gender balance survey to assess progress made over 4 years in this area, at the European and national levels. The survey was circulated amongst the EBU membership, results are being analysed and a report is expected to be delivered in the first quarter of 2023.

3 Low Vision



Low vision aids in use at the EBU General Assembly

Low Vision Focus Group Meetings (LVFGM) enable partially sighted persons to collectively identify low vision priority issues and aspirations, propose solutions, discuss low vision rights, the role of low vision peer support and the role of low vision networks, and finally agree on next steps resulting hopefully in the adoption of national action plans. In 2022, two LVGM meetings were held in Lithuania and in Slovenia.

In Slovenia the meeting was organised as 2-day event whereas in Lithuania it was held in 1 day. With minor differences, in both countries participants pointed out more or less the same areas of concern: accessibility of the built

environment (poor or bad contrast, to small signs, bus numbers, unmarked staircases or glass surfaces, insufficient lighting, obstacles/street furniture, bicycles, scooters and other silent electric vehicles on pavements or shared spaces), mobility (accessible and available transport), access to information in general, employment, accessibility and availability of IT and other LV assistive technology or aids.

4 The Importance of Braille

As part of ongoing important and extensive work on Braille, EBU produced a high quality video on the importance of Braille, created by our Braille working group and led by EBU's member in Germany with strong support from our member in Slovakia.

In addition, the group also created a web forum (www.livingbraille.eu) which enables any braille expert or user in the world to exchange on the usage of paper and digital braille. The forum is of course accessible to VI users and regularly updated with new content, in English.

Finally, a statement on Access to Reading and Using Braille was delivered. It will be a very solid basis for the future EBU position paper on the issue, to be finalised in the second semester of 2023. All the above can be found on the [Braille page of our website](#), along with other important information.

5 Connected and Autonomous Vehicles

5.1 The PAsCAL project

[Connected and Autonomous Vehicles](#) (CAVs) are a fantastic opportunity to improve blind and partially sighted persons' independent mobility. This is part of our wider work on promoting the 'Design For All' principle with industrial or research entities, thus endeavouring to voice the specific needs of our community as early as possible in any product/service development process. Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAVs) have been drawing increasing interest over the past years. For blind and partially sighted persons, they open up fantastic

independent mobility possibilities... as long as such vehicles are accessible to them.

In March 2022, we [presented the second survey report](#), gathering responses from more than 1000 blind and partially sighted persons across Europe, as well as a [free online comparative tool](#) to extract statistics per country.

As part of the PAsCAL consortium EBU participated in the [Guide2Autonomy](#), an online toolbox with more than 100 technical, political, legal and economic recommendations for the industry, public authorities and user representative organisations. It is expected to help accelerate a user-friendly evolution of CAVs and transport systems at an international, national and local level.

EBU also put together a paper entitled "[Connected and Autonomous Vehicles and Visual Impairment. Opportunities and Challenges](#)". It focused on the Design for all principles.

For more information on the project, please visit the [EBU PAsCAL web page](#).

6 Employment and Working for Younger People

gathering 7 and 9 participants. This activity drew to a close in 2022 and will be evaluated in early 2023.

6.1 EByouth

EBU continued to dedicate resources to facilitate younger VI generations' employment perspectives and identify vivid forces for the future of the network. We led workshops in the [International Computer and Communication Camp](#) held online in August and prepared for the 2023 edition. We also organised a youth meeting in Cyprus in October, which participants drafted a specific [manifesto](#).

6.2 ADVISE (Aiding Young Visually Impaired Seeking Employment)

This multi-annual activity is led by EBU's member in Spain.

In 2022, the two [ADVISE manuals](#) (for trainers and for young VI jobseekers) were translated into Croatian. Two full-day ADVISE sessions were held in Zagreb (Croatia) on 25 and 26/10,

In order to share our specific experiences and expertise, promote exchange within networks and combine our voices on common dossiers, we regularly work with partners and friends. These fruitful and friendly collaborations take the form of exchanging expertise to prepare joint position papers, articles or press releases, or responding together to consultations.

Our wide range of activities also allow us to collaborate with third-party organisations (universities, industrial partners, other NGOs).

The collaboration with EDF, the European Disability Forum, is ongoing as we were one of the founder members, together with other disability organisations. EBU is represented in a number of EDF working bodies so that the visual impairment dimension is fully considered. EBU continues to collaborate closely with EDF on a number of important campaigns, and this has proved to be an effective collaboration.

ICEVI Europe continued to work closely with us, and the two organisations regularly

share information through their respective newsletters. These are just two examples of continuous and long-standing partnerships of which EBU desires to build more in the future.

1 Beyond Europe - Solidarity with our Friends Worldwide

As one of its regional bodies, EBU continued to play an active role within the World Blind Union (WBU).

In 2022, EBU took part in the work of WBU with a strong focus on the situation in Ukraine. Through that collaboration, our common Ukrainian member, UTOS received financial support to cope with the dramatic situation on the ground.



The voice of blind and partially sighted people in Europe



The voice of blind and partially sighted people in Europe



This publication is co-funded by the European Union.

www.euroblind.org

Follow us on: [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [LinkedIn](#)