

### European Blind Union

### Press release

### Brussels, 11/11/2014

**European Blind Union publishes ‘Access denied’ report**

**'Time for the EU to stop ignoring blind people!' says the European Blind Union**

Brussels - 11 November 2014- The European Blind Union (EBU) has called today for urgent action by the European institutions to legislate to end discrimination against blind and partially sighted people including steps to get their own houses in order.

A report published today in support of legislative action, shows that in 2014 30 million blind and partially sighted Europeans continue to face unjust and unnecessary barriers when trying to access everyday goods, services and information, including online. The report details those barriers which include inaccessible ATMs and ticket machines, inaccessible websites and apps, televisions and household goods such as microwave ovens or washing machines.

Shockingly, EBU research has found that even the EU institutions themselves are routinely failing to make their information accessible to blind and partially sighted people. In particular, the European Commission and Council website pages tested were found to be respectively "far from" and "extremely" inaccessible.

"It is time for the EU to legislate to end this discrimination - and to get its own house in order too," says EBU President Wolfgang Angermann.

Today and tomorrow blind and partially sighted members of EBU are in the European Parliament, to offer MEPs "blind dates". The event, sponsored by Catherine Stihler MEP and co-hosted with Rosa Estarás MEP, provides short (non-romantic) encounters which aim to highlight the everyday barriers that blind and partially sighted people face and which the EU has a role in removing through legislation and implementation of existing standards and technology.

The EBU is asking all MEPs- many of whom are already supportive- to back its calls for strong and prompt legislation to end exclusion for blind and partially sighted people.

"Back in January 2011, the Commission promised a 'European Accessibility Act' to remove the barriers we face when trying to get information, when using goods and services and when travelling," says Angermann, "yet we are still waiting - it is now time for the EU to stop ignoring blind people!"

The report is available at <http://www.euroblind.org/>

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### 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 45 European countries.

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