



The voice of blind and partially sighted people in Europe

## **European Blind Union**

### **Press release**

**Paris, 17/01/2018**

**The European Parliament is discussing and voting this Wednesday and Thursday, the 17th and 18th of January, its recommendation on the draft Council decision on the conclusion on behalf of the European Union of the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons who are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled.**

This procedure allows the Council to fulfil the ratification and later deposit the Treaty in Geneva at the World Intellectual Property Organization, an important step that completes the already approved implementation of the exception within the legislative acquis of the Union, developed through the Directive (EU) 2017/1564 and the Regulation (EU) 2017/1563.

Thanks to this legislation, the adaptation and cross-border exchange of copyrighted books will be assured for non-profit uses to serve blind and visually-impaired persons. This regulatory improvement will then result in an increase of the availability of accessible books both in Europe and third countries that have ratified the Treaty, reducing the important book famine that affects this population worldwide; currently, only 5% of all published books in the developed countries and less than 1% in the developing countries are produced in accessible formats.

The European Blind Union acknowledges and appreciates the rapidity of the Council and the Parliament in proceeding with the conclusion and recommendation, respectively, and hopes for a final unhindered approval in the plenary voting scheduled for this Thursday. The transposition deadline of the Directive and the entry into force of the Regulation next October requires the ratification and deposit of the Treaty with no further delay, and the current schedule fulfils this need.

Hence, the European Blind Union urges the Members of the European Parliament to approve the recommendation proposed by the JURI Committee, as the necessity of the people with disabilities and reading-related impairments is a long-standing request that has already waited far too long.

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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