

Blind persons' access to books

European Parliament resolution of 16 February 2012 on Petition 0924/2011 by Dan Pescod (British), on behalf of the European Blind Union (EBU)/Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), on access by blind people to books and other printed products (2011/2894(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 227 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
 - having regard to the questions of 13 January 2012 to the Council and the Commission on Petition 0924/2011 by Dan Pescod (British), on behalf of European Blind Union (EBU)/Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), on access by blind people to books and other printed products (O-000005/2012 – B7-0029/2012 and O-000006/2012 – B7-0030/2012),
 - having regard to Rules 115(5) and 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas blind and visually impaired people in the European Union have severely restricted access to books and other printed products because 95% of all published works are never converted to ‘accessible formats’ such as Braille, large print or audio;
- B. whereas globally there is at present no international legal standard for a targeted exception to copyright rules for cross-border distribution of formats adapted for print-disabled persons;
- C. whereas the Copyright Committee of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) is considering an international treaty to improve access to books for blind and other visually impaired people;
- D. whereas European Union representatives have consistently opposed a legally binding text, favouring non-binding recommendations;
- E. whereas in its resolution of 12 May 2011 on ‘Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries’¹ the European Parliament called on the EU to back a binding WIPO treaty;
- F. whereas the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, in particular Articles 21 and 30, and the European Charter of Fundamental Rights establish the principles applicable to the prohibition of discrimination against persons with disabilities;
1. Calls on the Council and Commission to support a binding WIPO treaty with regard to copyright on books and printed products for blind and visually impaired people;
 2. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission.

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0240.