

JURI committee vote to respect the spirit and the letter of the Marrakesh Treaty in Europe

Yesterday, the Legal Affairs Committee (JURI) of the European Parliament, sent a strong and clear message to other European Union Institutions and Member States.

Europe can end the book famine on its soil and give to its over 30 million European blind and partially sighted persons¹ and overall the 285 million visually impaired people worldwide equitable access to information and knowledge in respecting the letter and the spirit of the Marrakesh Treaty for Visually Impaired People.

As the lead Committee on this dossier, the Legal Affairs Committee has a crucial role in the Parliament. Building on the opinions of three other Committees, MEPs rejected any attempts to allow Member States to propose or maintain barriers to access to information.

These could include obligations to make supplementary payments to publishers when making or sharing accessible format books, or a requirement to confirm that there are no such copies already available on the market.

The first would drain resources away from helping people with print disabilities, while the second could block cross-border sharing, given that libraries are not likely ever to be certain that books are not available.

For this reason, the European Library Community would like to congratulate the members of the JURI committee for their commitment towards a fairer Europe for all.

Jukka Relander, EBLIDA President, declared *“This result gives confidence and trust in the European Parliament as an institution that has the capacity to protect the interest of the many against the interest of a few. That is an important win in a long overdue dossier, but much more is needed to ensure that the 30+ million Visually Impaired People in Europe can at last enjoy reading as we all do.*

EBLIDA together with its partners will continue to mobilise its members to ensure that Europe’s Member States follow the same path. If we want to be proud of the European Union, we need a fair implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty that respects its spirit.”

[END OF THE DOCUMENT]

For further information contact vincent.bonnet@eblida.org

¹ Source from <http://www.euroblind.org/resources/information/> (consulted 24 March 2017).