



**EUD – efsli joint statement on access to information
related to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak and during its containment efforts**

There is a global consensus that the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak is now a health emergency in Europe. The European Union of the Deaf (EUD) and the European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (efсли) highlight that during such emergencies, access to up-to-date information in national sign language(s) on the national level and in International Sign on the EU level is of a crucial importance for the deaf Europeans.

Approximately 800.000 deaf sign language users as well as 51 million hard of hearing persons live in the EU and have the right to access information, communication and knowledge on an equal footing with others as well as the right to receive accessible health care services. All the Members of the European Union and the EU itself are obliged to make information accessible to all under Articles 9 and 21 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD).

Given the current situation, the European Union of the Deaf (EUD) and the European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (efсли) urge all the EU Member States to ensure that up-to-date information, public statements and announcements regarding the Covid-19 outbreak and its containment efforts broadcasted via audio-visual media services *in any format* are fully accessible for sign language users in national sign language/s and subtitling. The information produced by the European Institutions must be accessible in International Sign.

The information should be accessible in any alternative form of communication for people with deafblindness and hard of hearing people too.



We stress that trained and/or certified interpreters and translators should be recruited regardless of their hearing status and according to non-discrimination principles. Equally, we recommend that all informative materials should be conveyed by native signers of each country's respective national sign language/s. The materials produced by the European Institutions should be available in International Sign.

We also encourage all the EU Member States to cooperate together with the National Associations of the Deaf and National Interpreters Associations in their countries to monitor the recruitment of professional sign language interpreters and ensure the quality of their interpreting services. We also encourage the European Institutions to cooperate with the European Union of the Deaf and the European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters. Deaf persons have a right to receive information in sign language(s) under the UN CRPD.

The European Union of the Deaf (EUD) and the European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (efсли) remain at the disposal of European Bodies and Authorities for further information and mutual cooperation to combat discrimination and provide best practices for full enjoyment of the right to information by all European citizens, without exception, in their everyday life and especially in emergency situations.