



Re: European Day of People with Disabilities Conference

1 December 2010

Dear Sir / Madam,

The European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (efсли) represents the interests of sign language interpreters in Europe, and does this in close cooperation with the European Union of the Deaf (EUD).

The European Day of People with Disabilities draws attention to the possibilities available to, but also to the barriers people with disabilities face to equal participation in European society. Sign language interpreters across Europe witness daily of the mobility and communication barriers for deaf people in Europe. Due to the national laws and regulations on accessibility, deaf people are unable to study or work abroad. In the majority of the European countries, they lose their right to a sign language interpreter as soon as they cross their national border. In addition, there are countries where deaf citizens do not even have the right to a sign language interpreter in education or employment, or there are simply not enough trained sign language interpreters. As a result deaf European citizens cannot equally participate in society.

The European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters therefore urges the European Commission to establish mobility regulations and policies for the provision of sign language interpreters in education and employment across member states. Deaf people should have the right to a sign language interpreter regardless of their nationality or the member where state they live, work, or study. An increase in the mobility for people with disabilities is essential as is mentioned in the new EU Disability Strategy 2010 – 2020.

We wish you a successful and fruitful conference.

Sincerely,
Maya de Wit
efсли president