

## **EUD Update**

### **What's up for Deaf people in the European Union?**

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## **European Union of the Deaf**

**Coupure Rechts 314**

**B- 9000 Gent - Belgium**

Fax: +32 9 225 08 34

E-mail: [info@eudnet.org](mailto:info@eudnet.org)

Websites: [www.eudeaf2003.org](http://www.eudeaf2003.org) and [www.eudnet.org](http://www.eudnet.org)

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Development in Sign Language, Spoken Language and read and written Language

International Cinema and Video Festival of the Deaf

Deaf Arts Now! 2007

## **EUD MEMBERS NEWS**

### **New website on Sign Language in Belgium: correction**

EUD was informed that the short article about a new website on Sign Language in Belgium (EUD Update May 2006) contained a mistake.

The [www.lsfb.be](http://www.lsfb.be) website has been created, not by FFSB (Fédération Francophone des Sourds de Belgique) but by PROFILS (Institut Libre Marie Haps, Brussels):Thierry HAESSENNE, Bruno SONNEMANS and Claude GERDAY.

EUD wishes to apologise for this mistake.

## **EUD NEWS**

### **EUD Seminar Report and EUD Leadership Workshop Report online**

Reports from the EUD Seminar and Leadership Workshop, held in Vienna in May 2006 are now online.

The presentations made at the EUD Seminar (12<sup>th</sup> May) and those made during the Leadership workshop (11<sup>th</sup> May) are also available online.

Please have a look at our website: [www.eudnet.org](http://www.eudnet.org)

## CONFERENCE NEWS

### High Level Ministerial Conference sets out a Riga Declaration on e-Inclusion on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2006



Viviane REDING, Commissioner for Information Society and Media, made a powerful speech on the need to ensure that no one is excluded from the booming Information Society and new technology. She stated “Many Europeans still get too little benefit from information and communication technologies, and millions are at risk of being left behind. Enabling all Europeans to participate on equal terms in the information society is not only a social necessity – it is a huge economic

opportunity for industry. By implementing their Riga undertakings, European countries will take a big step towards making e-inclusion a reality.”

The action framework as signed by the Ministers sets out the following specific targets:

- halve the gap in internet usage by 2010 for groups at risk of exclusion, such as older people, people with disabilities, and unemployed persons
- increase broadband coverage (i.e. the availability of broadband infrastructure) in Europe to at least 90% by 2010. In 2005, broadband was available to about 60% of businesses and households in the remote and rural areas of the EU15 and to more than 90% in the urban areas
- ensure that all public websites are accessible by 2010
- by 2008, put in place actions in the field of digital literacy and skills to reduce gaps for groups at risk of exclusion by half in 2010
- by 2007, make recommendations on accessibility standards and common approaches, which could become mandatory in public procurement by 2010
- assess the necessity for legislative measures in the field of e-Accessibility, and take account of accessibility requirements in the review of the electronic communications regulatory framework beginning in June 2006



This is an opportunity for NADs throughout the EU to ensure that their Deaf communities are being included in the above programmes and to lobby their national governments to adopt the splendid examples as shown by the Deaf Austrian hosts (Österreichischer Gehörlosenbund) at the EUD General Assembly last month in relation to web access as it was cited that only 3% of the public and government sector websites are fully accessible. For further information see the link: <http://tinyurl.com/q6xuj>

Article by: Jeff McWhinney - Photos taken by Edgars Vorslovs of LNS (NAD Latvia)

## **Mainstreaming of disability in local policy: Agenda 22**

On June 16<sup>th</sup> the Belgian Disability Forum (BDF) and the National Council for persons with a disability in Belgium (NHRPH) hosted a seminar in Brussels with support from the European Commission. The purpose of this conference was to exchange information, experience, knowledge and ideas between NGOs, local authorities/municipalities and local political representatives.

At the beginning of conference, the concept of “mainstreaming” was explained. Mainstreaming is a term that was introduced by the European Commission. It means that a subject/topic should be part of society at large. When relating mainstreaming specifically to disability, it means disability matters should be considered in the planning and execution of any policy work that impacts on the general public. Disability policy should be integrated into all policy areas.

EDF (European Disability Forum) initiated a pan-European pilot project using ESF (European Social Fund) funds to implement ‘Agenda 22’ in 8 different countries around Europe. The aim of the seminar was to present the experiences of Sweden, Italy and Belgium. Delegates were informed in a general manner of the experiences in implementing Agenda 22 in Sweden and Italy prior to the detailed presentations of the experiences in Belgium.

What is Agenda 22? It is a methodology for implementing the UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities through the drafting of disability policy plans. Agenda 22 was implemented in 4 towns in Belgium. Each town presented the process that they undertook to mainstream disability into their local policy action plans.

The four towns participating in the pilot project in Belgium are Brussels, Hasselt (in Flanders), Fontaine-L’Eveque (in Wallonia) and Eupen (in German speaking East Belgium).

Each municipality explained the process they underwent in developing their disability policy plans. The cornerstone of their approach was consultation with disability organisations and individuals with disabilities. This gave way to a better understanding of the needs of people with disabilities. It also led to the drafting of relevant policy solutions at local level to enable people with disabilities participate fully in society on an equal footing. Through this consultation process, a list of relevant priorities were identified. Following this, suitable policies were put in place to address the existing gaps in local policy which prevent people with disabilities from

participating actively. The general finding was that the experience had been a very positive one. It led to better communication between people with disabilities and policy makers. It also meant more active involvement and increased presence of the disabled community in activities at local level.

The conference terminated with a panel discussion involving political representatives from the municipalities participating in the Agenda 22 pilot project in Belgium. It gave NGOs the opportunity to voice their support for the mainstreaming of the Agenda 22 initiative across Belgium.

Written by Bram SCHOEMAKER, EUD Intern

## **EDF NEWS**

### **European Disability Movement launches new phase of the struggle for the rights of EU citizens with disability**

The European Disability Forum (EDF) gathered in Rome, on May 27-28 2006, for the annual meeting of the General Assembly.

The General Assembly, the most important moment in the life of the EU citizens with disability, is hosted every year in a different European Capital. It is the moment in which the main representatives of the disabled European citizens come from all over Europe to meet and discuss the actions and policies implemented so far, and to assess and plan further strategies and policies.

Rome was selected by the EDF as the venue of the General Assembly 2006, and the Italian Disability Council for the relations with the EU (Consiglio Italiano dei Disabili per i rapporti con l'Unione Europea - CID.UE), chaired by Ms Ida COLLU, had the honour of hosting such Assembly, which this year had great relevance and importance from a political point of view. The EDF President Mr Yannis VARDAKASTANIS, addressing the Assembly at the Opening Session, declared that: *"the new phase of the European Disability Movement will begin here in Rome. Rome will be the starting point of the new era for the life of the disabled European citizens, be they men, women, adults or children, who will no longer accept any form of discrimination or exclusion. Disabled people in Europe will be society's true protagonists"*.

Ms COLLU opened the General Assembly by greeting the over 200 delegates from the EU and East European countries on behalf of the whole Italian Disability Community.

In her welcoming address, Ms COLLU pointed out the importance of being UNITED as a fundamental condition for strengthening the Disability Movement. The feeling of unity and identity makes it possible that 50 million citizens with disability in the EU speak with a single voice, to which it is impossible to remain indifferent. Furthermore, though many goals have been achieved in the past years towards the promotion of the rights of the people with disability in the EU, there's still a long way ahead and thus today the unity of the disabled movement is even more important.

We wish to point out some of the more important topics discussed by the Assembly.

In the first place, the draft of **Convention of the UN on the rights of Persons with Disability** was, once again, discussed. In fact, on August, the 8<sup>th</sup>, and perhaps the last, session of the Ad Hoc Committee will take place to prepare a draft of the Convention. Ms COLLU is actively involved in this process, since she is member of the official Italian delegation in charge of negotiating the Convention. *“First of all, we must defend the interests and the wellbeing of people with disabilities living in Developing Countries and in the South of the World”*, said Ms COLLU. *“Unfortunately, they must face, still today, abuses and degrading treatments which violate the human dignity. We must work, above all, in order to draft a Convention that, once adopted, will be a real tool for the juridical protection and defence of every human being”*.

Another important document which was discussed by the EDF Assembly was the **EDF 10th Anniversary Declaration**. This paper is also very important, since the Disability Movement, after ten years of successful activity, towards the European Institutions, for the advancement and promotion of the rights of the persons with disability, wishes today to take a step ahead and start a new phase in which the demands and needs of 50 million of people with disability will be fully accepted and recognized. Thus, the Declaration constitutes a sort of Identity Card that will state, in a clear and unmistakable way, *Who We Are* and *What We Want*.

During the Assembly Ms COLLU also underlined the deep confidence achieved by the EDF as a towing force, thus she really hopes that it will soon be possible to work together for the recognition of the sign language in the EU, which should by now be a right of European Deaf Citizens.

At the closing of the General Assembly, Ms COLLU donated a plaque to EDF made by an Italian Deaf artist Graziani, as a sign of recognition and esteem, and to confirm this important event hosted in the wonderful city of Rome.

Article written by ENS - Italian Association of the Deaf

## **Landmark EU Regulation to stop daily discrimination against disabled air passengers**

Until this day, no European binding legislation existed in Europe to protect disabled people from discrimination when travelling by air. A person could be refused boarding or assistance on the ground of disability and some air companies had even established a quota system defining a maximum of disabled passengers per plane, regardless of the type of disability.

“The air industry has been very reluctant to have binding legislation protecting the rights of disabled air passengers. With the new regulation they will have to realize that, in addition to a basic question of fundamental rights, there is also a business opportunity for them”, said the President of the European Disability Forum, Yannis VARDAKASTANIS.

The new Regulation adopted by the European Ministers of Transport will prohibit denied boarding or booking on the ground of disability. Disabled passengers should receive seamless assistance at no additional charge, a responsibility that lies in the

hands of the managing body of the airport. An important measure will also be disability equality training for all staff dealing with the travelling public.

Despite the lobbying efforts of the European Disability Forum, the regulation still allows a possibility to deny boarding of disabled people for “safety reasons”, which have not yet been clearly defined. Although these safety reasons must be properly justified, if they are defined at Member State level they could become a barrier for disabled passengers “Safety criteria must be harmonized at international or EU level; otherwise a disabled person could be allowed to travel from one country to another, but not to return home, as different legislation would be applied. Having harmonized criteria also makes it easier for disabled people to be aware of their rights and makes the whole system more transparent for everybody”, stressed the EDF President.

“Europe’s efforts to eliminate borders and to facilitate the free movement of its citizens is most of the times a distant reality for disabled people. People with disabilities and their families are stopped daily from travelling due to arbitrary reasons or the specific policy of an air carrier. The Regulation adopted today will change the lives of people with disabilities and it is a long-awaited step in our combat against discrimination,” said the leader of the disability movement, Yannis VARDAKASTANIS.

The right not to be denied boarding or booking will be applicable by the summer of 2007. The entire regulation will be totally effective a year later and directly applicable to European airports and airlines.

Source: EDF Press Release

## **Study visits in Brussels for delegates of disabled people organisations from the Western Balkans on 20-22 and 27-29 June**

In the framework of EDF project “Supporting disabled people’s umbrella organizations and networks throughout the CARDS\* region”, delegations from the Western Balkans took part in EDF Annual General Assembly in Rome on 27-28<sup>th</sup> of May.

(CARDS : Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation)

In order to build on this initiative and to further develop their knowledge of the EU institutions, study visits will be organised in Brussels on 20-22 and 27-29 June for delegates of disabled people’s organisations from Albania, FYROM, Kosovo, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro as well as Bosnia-Herzegovina.

These visits aim at providing participants with an insight into the EU decision-making process, with a particular focus on disability issues and the Stabilisation and Association Process of the European Union. Participants will meet Members of the European Parliament, officials from the European Commission and representatives of diplomatic missions of their countries.

On the first day, they will have an information session delivered by EDF on the functioning of the institutions and lobbying. The objective is also to meet with

representatives of European specific impairment organisations to share views and experiences. To this end, two meetings are planned on 20 and 27 June 2006 during which various ENGOs will have the opportunity to present their work.

Source: EDF Weekly Mailing 17/2006

## EUROPEAN UNION NEWS

### European Union - "European Year of Equal Opportunities for All" gets green light for 2007

The European Commission welcomed the decision by the Council and Parliament to designate 2007 as 'European Year of Equal Opportunities for All'. The year will aim to make Europeans aware of their right not to be discriminated against, to promote equal opportunities in areas from work to healthcare, and to show how diversity makes the EU stronger. The year will have four themes: rights, representation, recognition and respect, with a total budget of €15 million for the 12 months activities.

The year's budget will be spent on, inter alia, an EU-wide information campaign, new Eurobarometer surveys on discrimination and attitudes towards it, as well as hundreds of national initiatives such writing competitions for schools on the theme of respect and tolerance or prizes for companies with the most effective diversity training. There will also be the first ever Equality Summit gathering together ministers, equality bodies, civil society and social partners.

Most activities will be co-ordinated nationally to ensure that they take place as locally as possible. The €7.6 million dedicated to national, local and regional activities will be matched by co-financing from national public and private sources.

Further information about the Year can be found at this new website:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/equality2007/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equality2007/index_en.htm)

Source: For diversity against discrimination

### MEPs evaluate EU actions on human rights in the world

The report, by Richard HOWITT, President of the European Parliament Disability Intergroup (PES, UK), is a reaction to the EU Council's annual report on human rights in 2005. The report welcomes the inclusion of human rights issues in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), but warns that *"there is a general failure by the European Union to systematically and continuously address human rights concerns"* and that *"EU activities in the UN with respect to human rights are too introverted."* MEPs want to see a much more significant proportion of European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights funding devoted to grass-roots projects.

They want a "clear system of sanctions" to be applied to countries that violate the human rights clause in agreements with the Union. In future annual reports, MEPs want to see a list of *"Countries of Particular Concern"* according to the EU's Human

Rights Guidelines. They call for the reports to "address explicitly discrimination issues" based on ethnicity, religion, gender, disability and sexual orientation.

More information:

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress\\_page/015-8235-138-05-20-902-20060512IPR08070-18-05-2006-2006-true/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/015-8235-138-05-20-902-20060512IPR08070-18-05-2006-2006-true/default_en.htm)

Source: EWL Newflash – EDF Weekly Mailing 17/2006

## **DEAF NEWS AROUND EUROPE AND THE WORLD**

### **Aids threatens Deaf in Uganda**

The deaf people will be wiped out if no action is taken to increase their access to information about the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The Uganda National Association of the Deaf (UNAD) director, Alex NDEEZI, said 90% of the deaf population in the country cannot write or read and some people were taking advantage of their ignorance to sexually abuse them.

"Our community faces extinction as the trend of HIV infection is rising due to lack of information on its prevention, care, treatment and even available services. The situation is worsened when some people in society think deaf people are safe from HIV/AIDS and flock to them to have unprotected sex," he said.

NDEEZI, who is also the central region MP for the disabled, was addressing a workshop on involving deaf people in development programmes in Kampala.

The meeting was organised by UNAD, a local NGO advocating for promotion of human rights and equality for the deaf.

There are about 500,000 people with varying hearing loss in Uganda. About 300,000 of them need sign language to communicate.

NDEEZI said while Uganda is applauded for its successful fight against the AIDS scourge, the deaf community has been left out.

"We're not part of the famous comprehensive HIV/AIDS package that has reduced HIV prevalence to about 6% from 15% in 1990s.

We feel ignored and it's impossible to sustain the current trend or improve on it if the disabled, particularly, the deaf, are not brought into the development mainstream," NDEEZI said.

Joseph MBULAMWANA, UNAD information officer, said the information about HIV/AIDS is mostly disseminated through radios and the press, which are not accessible to the deaf.

Participants noted that although the sign language was recognised in the Constitution, it was not included in most national development programmes.

They also expressed concern that the sign language translations during the news bulletin on the national television (UBC) has been scrapped.

NDEEZI said deafness should be a concern for everybody and concerted effort was needed to put it high on the development agenda.

Deaf participants asked the media and public to stop referring to them as social misfits. They said nicknames like kasiru (stupid) were discriminatory and made and them feel stigmatised.

"A simple survey of families with deaf children will show that all children have proper names, except deaf ones who are referred to as spoilt. It is a big challenge that this vice begins at family level, with some parents referring to their own deaf children as hopeless," a participant said.

MBULAMWANA said the deaf were often beaten, chained, denied food, sexually abused and abandoned in urban centres.

Source: <http://allafrica.com>

## **Book on HIV/AIDS and Deaf Communities**

Deaf people, who are part of sign language using Deaf communities around the world, are living with and dying from HIV/AIDS. The little statistical evidence available suggests that they are disproportionately affected by the disease.

This work breaks new ground by bringing together a remarkable range of qualitative and quantitative work on the topic. Included are the experiences of the first openly HIV+ Deaf man in South Africa, poetry and fiction by the acclaimed American writer Raymond LUCZAK, quantitative studies of the extent of HIV/AIDS and the amount of knowledge Deaf people have about the problem in United States, how the problem is being ignored in Japan, and the variety of strategies people are using to combat the problem in places as diverse as the Gambia, South Africa, Belgium and Brazil.

For further information please contact Doug McLean [dm@forestbk.demon.co.uk](mailto:dm@forestbk.demon.co.uk) and/or <http://www.forestbooks.com/pages/Categories/Books/0946252610.html>

## **Technology to help deaf in class**

USA Austin Peay State University is adding technology that will make classes and services more accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The Office of Disability Services is planning to add two new tools: video remote interpretation and real-time transcription services.

Video remote interpretation uses an interpreter from a remote location to translate speech into sign language for a student. The interpreter is on a video phone or computer screen and has the ability to translate between the instructor, students and anyone in the class who is deaf or hard of hearing.

The TypeWell Education Transcription System is a real-time system that creates notes on a computer for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The transcription system is a meaning-for-meaning system in which a typist does not type every word

that is said, but may instead condense language while maintaining the full meaning intended by the speaker.

The transcription service is being added to provide access for students with hearing disabilities who do not use sign language to communicate.

Source: <http://www.theleafchronicle.com/>

## **European Society of Mental Health and Deafness Special Interest Groups (SIG)**

Since the first SIG-meeting in Danbury (1999, UK) our aim has been to provide clinical practitioners working in the field of mental health and deafness with a constructive forum for discussion. The aim of the SIG is to promote the exchange of information, resources and experiences among professionals and create a trans-European network to support them in their work. Therefore, the SIG meetings seek to create a close and friendly environment where practitioners can present their work and obtain support and assistance from other colleagues

The SIG meetings are primarily set up around workshop sessions, where all participants are given a chance to present a case study from their own professional experience, which is then followed by a discussion on the presented material. These workshops offer the opportunity to exchange views between presenters and other participants, and consequently to provide all with insights that may help them in their work. It is important to highlight that the SIG meetings work as a support network of professionals working in the field of mental health and deafness.

The 20-22 September 2006 meeting in La Laguna, Tenerife will have three Special Interest Groups. Participants will choose to partake in **one** of the following:

1. Deaf Children and Families (contact SIG-DCF Secretary: [esmhdsgdcf@hotmail.com](mailto:esmhdsgdcf@hotmail.com))
2. Deaf Adult and Families - Medical Issues (Contact Ines Sleeboom-van Raaij: [i.sleeboom@via-info.nl](mailto:i.sleeboom@via-info.nl) or Viveca Schoultz: [viveca.schoultz@hus.fi](mailto:viveca.schoultz@hus.fi))
3. Public Health (Contact Alexandra Mayer-Weinreich, [alexandra.mayer-weinreich@bblinz.at](mailto:alexandra.mayer-weinreich@bblinz.at))

Source: Mrs. Martie van Arkel - ESMHD Director

## **Paper on Deaf in South and South-West Asia**

This open online full text paper is now much extended and updated:

"Signs of Development in Deaf South & South-West Asia: histories, cultural identities, resistance to cultural imperialism."

<http://www.independentliving.org/docs7/miles200604.html>

The revised article offers evidence and hypotheses for a short cultural history of deaf people, culture and sign language in South Asia and South West Asia, using

documents from antiquity through 2005. The past five years have seen some remarkable progress of deaf people, sign language and education in this vast region.

An appendix gives a new bibliography of 110 items on "Deafness and Signing in the Arab Middle East" with some historical material and light annotation.

Source: Email Mr Miles (author)

## OTHER NEWS

### **Inauguration meeting of the European Network for Accessible Tourism**

On the 11th of May 2006 the European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT) held its inauguration meeting in Brussels. ENAT is a new organisation aiming at making tourism in Europe accessible for all.

Several speakers were invited to the event, from European Institutions, tourism providers, researchers on accessible tourism and the disability movement. EDF was represented at the meeting and made a presentation on Policy Challenges for Accessible Tourism in Europe.

The workshops in the afternoon session allowed for exchange of best practice and brainstorming on how to move forward in the right direction.

Before the closing of an interesting meeting, Henryk HANDSZUH, the Chief of the Quality Department of the UN World Tourism Organisation made a presentation on universal accessibility in tourism policies: an approach from the world tourism organisation.

For more information about ENAT, please check: [www.accessibletourism.org](http://www.accessibletourism.org)

Source: EDF Weekly Flash 16/2006

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS/AGENDA

### **First International Deaf Dance and Music Festival**

**Date:** 5 - 8 July 2006

**Place:** Paris, France

**Website:** [chandansedessourds.free.fr](http://chandansedessourds.free.fr)

### **Deaf pilgrims - Pope Benedicto XVI**

**Date:** 8 - 9 July 2006

**Place:** Valencia, Spain

**Website:** <http://pastoralsordosvalencia.es/> and [www.wmf2006.org](http://www.wmf2006.org)

## **The 20th Nordic Culture Festival for the Deaf**

**Date:** 10 – 16 July 2006

**Place:** Akureyri, Iceland

**Website:** [www.deaf.is/2006](http://www.deaf.is/2006)

## **Sixth (VI) Deaf History International (DHI) Conference**

**Date:** 31 July – 4 August 2006

**Place:** Berlin, Germany

**Website:** <http://iqjad.de/dhi2006>

## **1<sup>st</sup> Childrens Camp World Federation of the Deaf: “Many nations – one dream”**

**Date:** 29 July – 8 August 2006

**Place:** Castberggård, Denmark

**Website:** <http://www.ddu.nu/wfdcc2006>

## **3<sup>rd</sup> International Deaf Academics and Researchers Conference**

**Date:** 10 August – 12 August 2006

**Place:** Stockholm, Sweden

**Website:** [www.ling.su.se/dac2006/](http://www.ling.su.se/dac2006/) or contact [Johanna.mesch@ling.su.se](mailto:Johanna.mesch@ling.su.se)

## **European Union of the Deaf Youth Camp**

**Date:** 8 August – 15 August 2006

**Place:** Dublin, Ireland

**Website:** <http://www.eudycamp2006.com>

## **EFSLI (European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters) AGM & Conference: “Innovative Practice in Team Interpreting”**

**Date:** 15 September - 17 September 2006

**Place:** Prague, Czech Republic

**Website:** <http://www.cktzj.com/efсли2006/>

## **EDDE 2006 (European Days of Deaf Education) on Communication and Language Development in Sign Language, Spoken Language and read and written Language**

**Date:** 19-22 October 2006

**Place:** Örebro, Sweden

**Website:** [www.edde.nu](http://www.edde.nu)

**Early Registrations Rate** until 15<sup>th</sup> August 2006

## **International Cinema and Video Festival of the Deaf**

**Date:** 20-21 October 2006

**Place:** Milan, Italy

**Website:** [www.teatrosenzaparole.it](http://www.teatrosenzaparole.it), in partnership with ENS (Italian Association of the Deaf) [www.ens.it](http://www.ens.it)

## **Deaf people and mental health conference (call for papers)**

**Date:** 4-6 December 2006

**Place:** online conference

**Website:** <http://www.online-conference.net/mh2006/introduction.htm>

**Deadline for submitting presentations:** 1<sup>st</sup> September 2006

## **Deaf Arts Now! 2007**

**Date:** 15 – 17 June 2007

**Place:** Stockholm, Sweden

**Website:** <http://www.deafartsnow.com>

### **Editorial note**

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Editors: Mairead O'LEARY and Karin VAN PUYENBROECK.